

Greek Concepts

1. ***nostos*** Homecoming or return
2. ***oikos*** The primary unit of Homeric culture, the highest order of political, economic and social organization, was the noble household; one's primary loyalty was to the *oikos*, which included relatives, servants, retainers, and companions of the *agathos* in a tightly-bound support system.
3. ***arête*** *Arete* connotes all-around excellence—moral, physical, intellectual and practical. *Arete* (excellence or superiority) is proven and maintained through war; the word comes from Ares, the god of war, and indicates courage and military prowess.
3. ***agathos*** The *agathoi* are people of superior social status or noble station. An *agathos* is (or may have been) a successful warrior, one of those who fights in the first ranks. An *agathos* must be prepared to defend his *oikos* (family, retainers and servants) and his *time* (honor). War provides an opportunity for the *agathos* to establish his *time*(honor) and demonstrate his *arête* (excellence or superiority).
4. ***time*** *Time* is honor, an abstract quality involving one's position in a social ranking from gods to beggars. *Time* is also a relative quality, in that giving *time* to one *agathos* takes it from another. *Time* may be made concrete through prizes or spoils of war and may be diminished by taking such prizes or spoils, whether the person taking the prize is an ally or an enemy.
5. ***philos*** Kinsman-friend, a member of one's *oikos*, involving family and friendship ties and obligations.
6. ***xenia*** The guest-host relationship, encompassing the generosity and civility shown to those who are away from their home: A *xeinos* is a guest-friend, whether guest or host. A *xeinos* is a substitute for a kinsman, one who would defend his guest-friend as he would a member of his own household and who would react to a loss of *time* (honor) by his guest-friend as he would react to such a loss by any other member of his *oikos* (household). This concept holds dual obligations for both guest and host, and even extends to the children and grandchildren of guest-friends.
7. ***kleos*** Glory, often implying fame and immortality (in the memory of others), achieved as a result of one's ***time*** (acts of excellence meriting honor).