

κέρανδρον μέγ' ἄστν: Waging War Abroad in Aeschylus' *Persians*

1) *Persians* 1-2

Περσῶν τῶν οἰχομένων
Ἑλλάδ' ἐς αἶαν τιστὰ καλεῖται

We are the trusted ones for the Persians who
have gone away to the Greek land.

2) *Persians* 268-77

Χο: ὄτοτοτοῖ, μάταν
τὰ πολλὰ βέλεα παμμιγῆ
γᾶς ἀπ' Ἀσίδος ἦλθεν, αἰαῖ, (270)
δάαν Ἑλλάδα χώραν.

Chorus: Ahh, in vain the mixed multitude of
weapons came from the land of Asia, alas, to the
hostile Greek land.

Αγ: πλήθουσι νεκρῶν δυσπότημος ἐφθαρμένων
Σαλαμῖνος ἀκταὶ πᾶς τε πρόσχωρος τόπος.

Messenger: The shores of Salamis and every
neighboring place are full of corpses destroyed in
a wretched fate.

Χο: ὄτοτοτοῖ, φίλων
πολύδονα σώμαθ' ἀλιβαφῆ (275)
καθθάνοντα λέγεις φέρεσθαι
πλαγκτοῖς ἐν διπλάκεσσι.

Chorus: Ahh, you're saying that the bodies of
our friends, driven about and drowned in the sea,
are carried dead with their cloaks wandering
around them.

3) *Persians* 418-432

... ὑπτιοῦτο δέ
σκάφη νεῶν, θάλασσα δ' οὐκετ' ἦν ἰδεῖν,
ναυαγίων **πλήθουσα** καὶ φόνου βροτῶν· (420)
ἀκταὶ δὲ νεκρῶν χοιράδες τ' **ἐπλήθουν**.
φυγῆ δ' ἀκόσμως πᾶσα ναῦς ἠρέσσετο,
ὅσαι περ ἦσαν βαρβάρου στρατεύματος.
τοὶ δ' ὥστε θύννους ἢ τιν' ἰχθύων βόλον
ἀγαῖσι κωπῶν θραύμασιν τ' ἐρειπίων (425)
ἔπαιον ἐρράχιζον· οἰμωγῆ δ' ὁμοῦ
κωκύμασιν κατεῖχε πελαγίαν ἄλα,
ἕως κελαινὸν νυκτὸς ὄμμ' ἀφείλετο.
κακῶν δὲ **πλήθος**, εἰ δέκ' ἡματα
στοιχηγοροῖην, οὐκ ἂν **ἐκπλήσαιμί** σοι· (430)
εὖ γὰρ τόδ' ἴσθι, μηδάμ' ἡμέρα μιᾶ
πλήθος τοσουτάριθμον ἀνθρώπων θανεῖν.

And the hulls of the ships were overturned, and it
was no longer possible to see the sea, which was
full of the wreckage of ships and the slaughter of
men. The shores and the reefs were full of
corpse. Every ship rowed in disorderly flight, as
many as there were in the barbarian expedition.
Then like tuna or some net full of fish, they were
striking them and cutting them in two with
fragments of oars and scraps of the wreckage.
And wailing together with shrieking held down
the salty sea, until the dark eye of night broke it
off. Not if I should tell the story for ten days
would I be able to fully complete the multitude
of evils for you. For know this well, never before
had so great a multitude of men died in one day.

4) *Persians* 480-514

ναῶν δὲ ταγοὶ τῶν λελειμμένων σύδη (480)
 κατ' οὖρον οὐκ εὐκοσμον αἶρονται φυγὴν·
 στρατὸς δ' ὁ λοιπὸς ἔν τε **Βοιωτῶν χθονί**
 διώλλυθ', οἱ μὲν ἀμφὶ κρηναῖον γάνος
 δίψη πονοῦντες, οἱ δ' ὑπ' ἄσθματος κενοῦ·
 διεκπερῶμεν εἰς τε **Φωκέων χθόνα** (485)
 καὶ **Δωριδ' αἴαν**, **Μηλιᾶ τε κόλπον**, οὗ
Σπερχειὸς ἄρδει πεδίον εὐμενεῖ ποτῶ·
 κάντεῦθεν ἡμᾶς **γῆς Ἀχαιῶδος πέδον**
 καὶ **Θεσσαλῶν πόλεις** ὑπεσπανισμένους
 βορᾶς ἐδέξαντ'· ἔνθα δὴ πλεῖστοι θάνον (490)
 δίψη τε λιμῶ τ'· ἀμφοτέρα γὰρ ἦν τάδε.
Μαγνητικὴν δὲ γαῖαν εἰς τε **Μακεδόνων**
χώραν ἀφικόμεσθ', ἐπ' **Ἄξιου** πόρον,
Βόλβης θ' ἔλειον δόνακα, **Πάγγαιόν τ' ὄρος**,
Ἡδωνίδ' αἴαν, νυκτὶ δ' ἐν ταύτῃ θεὸς (495)
 χειμῶν' ἄωρον ὤρσε, πῆγνυσιν δὲ πᾶν
 ῥέεθρον ἀγνοῦ **Στρυμόνος**· θεοὺς δέ τις
 τὸ πρὶν νομίζων οὐδαμοῦ τότε ἠύχετο
 λιταῖσι, Γαῖαν Οὐρανόν τε προσκυνῶν.
 ἐπεὶ δὲ πολλὰ θεοκλυτῶν ἐπαύσατο (500)
 στρατὸς, περᾶ κρυσταλλοπήγα διὰ πόρον·
 χῶστις μὲν ἡμῶν πρὶν σκεδασθῆναι θεοῦ
 ἀκτῖνας ὠρμήθη, σεσωμένος κυρεῖ·
 φλέγων γὰρ αὐγαῖς λαμπρὸς ἡλίου κύκλος
 μέσον πόρον διῆκε θερμαίνων φλογί· (505)
 πίπτον δ' ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισιν· **ἠτύχει** δέ τοι
 ὄστις τάχιστα πνεῦμ' ἀπέρρηξεν βίου.
 ὅσοι δὲ **λοιποὶ** κάτυχον σωτηρίας,
 Θρήκην περάσαντες μόγις πολλῶ πόνῳ,
 ἤκουσιν ἐκφυγόντες, οὐ πολλοὶ τινες, (510)
 ἐφ' **ἔστιοῦχον** γαῖαν· ὥς στένειν πόλιν
 Περσῶν, ποθοῦσαν φιλτάτην ἤβην χθονός.
 ταῦτ' ἔστ' ἀληθῆ· πολλὰ δ' ἐκλείπω λέγων
 κακῶν ἃ Πέρσαις ἐγκατέσκηψεν θεός.

The commanders of the ships that were left
 behind hurriedly took disordered flight with the
 wind. And the remaining army were all dying in
 the land of the Boeotians, some suffering with
 thirst around a shining spring and others with
 empty breath. We were crossing over into the
 land of the Phocians and the Dorian land and the
 Melian gulf, where the Spercheus wets the plain
 with its kind water. And then the earth of the
 Achaean land and the cities of the Thessalians
 received us lacking food. Most men died there
 of thirst and hunger, for both were present. And
 we reached the Magnesian land and into the land
 of the Macedonians, to the Axios river and the
 marshy reeds of Bolbe and Mount Pangaeum, the
 Edonian land. And on that same night a god
 stirred up unseasonable winter weather and froze
 the whole stream of the holy Strymon. Someone
 who never considered the gods before was
 praying then with prayers, worshiping before
 Earth and Heaven. When the army stopped their
 many prayers to the gods, they drove across the
 fixed ice passage. And whoever of us hurried
 across before the rays of the sun scattered, he
 made it safely. For the bright circle of the sun,
 blazing with its rays, melted the middle of the
 passage, heating it with flame. And the others
 fell on each other. He was fortunate, whoever
 broke off the breath of his life very swiftly. The
 remnants who happened upon safety, having
 scarcely passed into Thrace after much suffering,
 have arrived in flight—and they are not many—to
 the land possessing our hearth. So that the
 city of the Persians groans, longing for the land's
 dearest youth. These things are true, though in
 speaking I left out many of the evils which a god
 hurled upon the Persians.

5) *Persians* 16-64

οἷτε τὸ Σούσων ἤδ' Ἀγβατάνων
καὶ τὸ παλαιὸν Κίσιον ἔρκος
προλιπόντες ἔβαν, τοὶ μὲν ἐφ' ἵππων,
τοὶ δ' ἐπὶ ναῶν, πεζοὶ τε βάδην
πολέμου στίφος παρέχοντες· (20)
οἷος Ἀμίστρης ἤδ' Ἀρταφρένης
καὶ Μεγαβάτης ἤδ' Ἀστάσπης,
ταγοὶ Περσῶν,
βασιλῆς βασιλέως ὑποχοὶ μεγάλου,
σοῦνται, στρατιᾶς πολλῆς ἔφοροι, (25)
τοξοδάμαντές τ' ἤδ' ἵπποβάται,
φοβεροὶ μὲν ἰδεῖν, δεινοὶ δὲ μάχην
ψυχῆς εὐτλήμονι δόξῃ·
Ἄρτεμβάρης θ' ἵπποχάρμης
καὶ Μασίστρης, ὃ τε τοξοδάμας (30)
ἐσθλὸς Ἴμαῖος Φαρανδάκης θ'
ἵππων τ' ἐλατήρ Σοσθάνης·
ἄλλους δ' ὁ μέγας καὶ πολυθρέμμων
Νεῖλος ἔπεμψεν· Σουσισκάνης,
Πηγασταγῶν Αἰγυπτογενῆς, (35)
ὃ τε τῆς ἱερᾶς Μέμφιδος ἄρχων
μέγας Ἀρσάμης, τὰς τ' ὠγυγίους
Θήβας ἐφέπων Ἀριόμαρδος,
καὶ ἔλειοβάται ναῶν ἐρέται
δεινοὶ πληθὸς τ' ἀνάριθμοι· (40)
ἀβροδιαίτων δ' ἔπεται Λυδῶν
ὄχλος, οἷτ' ἐπίπαν ἠπειρογενὲς
κατέχουσιν ἔθνος, τοὺς Μιτραγάθης
Ἄρκτηύς τ' ἀγαθός, βασιλῆς δίοποι,
χαὶ πολύχρυσοι **Σάρδεις** ἐπόχους (45)
πολλοῖς ἄρμασιν **ἔξορμῶσιν**,
δίρρυμά τε καὶ τρίρρυμα τέλη,
φοβερὰν ὄψιν προσιδέσθαι·
στεῦνται δ' ἱεροῦ Τμώλου πελάται
ζυγὸν ἀμφιβαλεῖν δούλιον Ἑλλάδι, (50)
Μάρδων, Θάρυβις, λόγχης ἄκμονες,
καὶ ἀκοντισταὶ Μυσοί· Βαβυλῶν δ'
ἢ πολύχρυσος πάμμικτον ὄχλον
πέμπει σύρδην, ναῶν τ' ἐπόχους
καὶ τοξουλκῶ λήματι πιστούς· (55)
τὸ μαχαιροφόρον τ' ἔθνος ἐκ πάσης
Ἀσίας ἔπεται
δειναῖς βασιλέως ὑπὸ πομπαῖς.
τοιόνδ' ἄνθος Περσίδος αἴας
οἷχεται ἀνδρῶν, (60)
οὗς πέρι πᾶσα χθὼν Ἀσιῆτις
θρέψασα πόθῳ στένεται μαλερῶ,
τοκέες τ' ἄλοχοί θ' ἡμερολεγδὸν
τείνοντα χρόνον τρομέονται.

6) *Persians* 302-30

Ἄρτεμβάρης δὲ μυρίας ἵππου βραβεύς
στύφλους παρ' ἀκτὰς θείνεται Σιληνιῶν·
χῶ χιλίαρχος Δαδάκης πληγῆ δορός
πήδημα κοῦφον ἐκ νεῶς ἀφήλατο· (305)
Τενάγων τ' ἄριστος Βακτρίων ἰθαγενῆς
θαλασσόπληκτον νῆσον Αἴαντος σποδεῖ.
Λίλαιος, Ἀρσάμης τε κ' Ἀργήστης τρίτος,
οἷδ' ἀμφὶ νῆσον τὴν πελειοθρέμμονα
κυκώμενοι κύρισσον ἰσχυρὰν χθόνα, (310)
πηγαῖς τε Νεῖλου γειτονῶν Αἰγυπτίου
Ἄρκτηύς, Ἀδεύης, καὶ φερεσσάκης τρίτος
Φαρνοῦχος, οἷ τε ναὸς ἐκ μιᾶς πέσον
Χρυσεὺς Μάταλλος μυριόνταρχος θανάων
ἵππου μελαίνης ἠγεμῶν τρισμυρίας, (315)
πυρσὴν ζαπληθῆ δάσκιον γενειάδα
ἔτεγγ', ἀμείβων χρῶτα πορφυρᾷ βαφῇ·
καὶ Μᾶγος Ἄραβος, Ἀρτάβης τε Βάκτριος,
σκληρᾶς μέτοικος γῆς ἐκεῖ κατέφθιτο.
Ἄμιστρις Ἀμφιστρεύς τε πολύπονον δόρυ (320)
νωμῶν, ὃ τ' ἐσθλὸς Ἀριόμαρδος, Σάρδεσιν
πένθος παρασχών, Σεισάμης θ' ὁ Μύσιος,
Θάρυβις τε πεντήκοντα πεντάκις νεῶν
ταγός, γένος Λυρναῖος, εὐειδῆς ἀνήρ,
κεῖται θανάων δεῖλαιος οὐ μάλ' εὐτυχῶς· (325)
Συέννεσις τε πρῶτος εἰς εὐψυχίαν,
Κιλικῶν ἄπαρχος, εἷς ἀνὴρ πλεῖστον πόνον
ἐχθροῖς παρασχών εὐκλεῶς ἀπώλετο.
ῥτοιῶνδ' ἀρχόντων νῦν ἔπεμνήσθην πέρι,
πολλῶν παρόντων δ' ὀλίγ' ἀπαγγέλλω κακά. (330)

7) *Persians* 115-25

ταῦτά μοι μελαγχίτων φρήν ἀμύσσειται φοβῶ,
 “ὦᾶ” (117)
 Περσικοῦ στρατεύματος”, τοῦδε μὴ πόλις πύθη-
 ται, κένανδρον μέγ’ ἄστου Σουσίδος·

καὶ τὸ Κισσίων πόλισμ’ ἀντίδουπον ἄσεται,
 “ὦᾶ”, (122)
 τοῦτ’ ἔπος γυναικοπληθῆς ὄμιλος ἀπύων,
 βυσσίνους δ’ ἐν πέπλοις πέση λακίς. (125)

Therefore my heart, clothed in black, is torn by fear—“Ah, the Persian army!”—that the city will hear this, the great city of Susa, empty of men.

And the city of the Kissians will sing in response—“Ah!”—the crowd full of women calling out this word, and they will tear their linen garments.

8) *Persians* 922-30

γᾶ δ’ αἰάζει τὰν ἐγγαίαν
 ἦβαν Ξέρξα κταμέναν, Ἰδίου
 σάκτορι Περσῶν· ἴαγδαβάται· γὰρ
 πολλοὶ φῶτες, χώρας ἄνθος, (925)
 τοξοδάμαντες, πάνυ ταρφύς τις
 μυριάς ἀνδρῶν, ἐξέφθινται.
 αἰαῖ αἰαῖ κεδνᾶς ἀλκᾶς·
 Ἀσία δὲ χθών, βασιλεῦ γαίας,
 αἰνῶς ἐπὶ γόνυ κέκλιται. (930)

The land bewails her native youth killed by Xerxes, the packer of Hades with Persians. For many men, the blossom of the land, archers, an extremely dense and countless number of men, have died. Ah, ah, dear strength. The land of Asia, you king of the land, has terribly, terribly been brought to her knees.

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