κένανδρον μεγ’ ἄστεν: Waging War Abroad in Aeschylus’ Persians

1) Persians 1-2

Περσῶν τῶν οἰχομένων
'Ελλάδ' ἐς αἶαν τιστά καλεῖται

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

2) Persians 268-77

Χορός: οὕτωτοι, μάταν
τὰ πολλὰ βέλεα παμμιγή
γὰς ἀπ’ Ασίδος ἠλθεν, αἰαί, (270)
dὰν Ἔλλαδα χώραν.

Ἀγγέλους νεκρὸν δυσπότως ἐφθάνειν
Σαλαμίνος ἀκταί πάς τε πρόσχορος τόπος.

Χορός: οὕτωτοι, φίλων
πολύδονα σώμαθ᾽ ἀλιβαφῆ
κατθανόντα λέγεις φέρεσθαι
πλαγκτοῖς ἐν διπλάκεσσι.

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

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

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 δὲ
ἐπὶ ὁδὸν, θάλασσα δ’ οὐκετ’ ἦν ἱδεῖν,
ναυαγίων πλῆθους καὶ ἱφών δροτῶν· (420)
ἀκται δὲ νεκρὸν χοιράδες τύχου ἐπιλήθουν:
φυγεῖ δ’ ἀκόσιμος πάσα ναῦς ἤρέσετο,
ὅσαπερ ἦσαν βαρβάρου στρατεύματος.
τοῦ δ’ ὀστεὸν θύννοις ἢ τιν’ ἵχθων βόλον
ἀγαίοι κωπῶν θραύμασιν τύχου ἐρεπίσιον
ἐπαινοῦν ἔρραξιζον: οἰμώγη δ’ ὀμοί
κωκύμασιν κατεξέ πελαγίαν ἅλα,
ἐὼς κελαινὸν νυκτὸς ὀμοί’ ἀφεῖλετο.
κακῶν δὲ πλῆθος, εἰ δέκ’ ἡμιτά
ςτοιχηγοριην, οὐκ ἐν ἐπιλήσισι μου
ἐν γὰρ τὸ ἱνταγνα, μηδάμ’ ἡμέρα μιὰ
πλῆθος τοιούτῳ τῷ ἄνθρωπῳ 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.
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 Axius 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

οίτε τὸ Σούσσων ἡδ’ Ἀγαθάτανον
καὶ τὸ παλαιὸν Κίσσων ἔρχοσ
προλιπόντες ἔβαν, τοι μέν ἐφ’ ἱππον,
tοι δ’ ἐπὶ ναῦν, πεσὸν τε βαδήν
πολέμου στίφος παρέχοντες.

οἰος Ἀμίστηρς ἡδ’ Ἀρταφρένης
καὶ Μηγαβάτης ἡδ’ Ἀστάσσης,
tαγοὶ Περσῶν,
βασιλῆς βασιλέως ὑποχοι μεγάλου,
σοῦντα, στρατιάς πολλῆς ἑφοροι,
tοξοδόμαντές τ’ ἡδ’ ἱπποβάτα,
φοβεροὶ μὲν ἰδεῖν, δεινοὶ δὲ μάχην
ψυχῆς εὐτλίμονες δόξη.

Ἀρτεμιβάρης θ’ ἵπποικάρης
καὶ Μασίστηρς, ὁ τε τοξοδάμας
ἐσθόλος Ἰμαῖος Φαραιάνδκης θ’

ἵππων τ’ ἐλατήρ Σοσθάνης,

ἀλλοις δ’ ὁ μέγας καὶ πολυθρέμμοιν

Νείλος Ἐπεμψεν—Σουσισκάνης,
Πηγασταγὸν Αἰγυπτικῆς,

ὁ τῇ τῆς ἱερᾶς Μεσμύδου ἄρχον
μέγας Ἀράσμης, τὰς τ’ ἀγάθιον
Θῆβας ἐφέσον Αἰρίμαρδος,
καὶ ἔλεοσβάτα ναὸν ἑρέται

δεινοὶ πληθοί τ’ ἀναρήμμουν.

ἀβροδιαίτον δ’ ἐπεται Λιῳδὸν
ὀχλός, οἱ τ’ ἐπισαν ἦπειρογινῆς
κατέχουσιν θένος, τοὺς Μιτραγάθης
Ἀρκέτες τ’ ἀγαθοῖς, βασιλῆς δίοποι,
χαὶ πολύχρυσοι Σάρδεικες ἐπόχους

πολλοὶς ἐρμασιν ἐξορμῶσιν,
δίρρυμα τε καὶ τρίφρυμα τέλη,

φοβερὰν ὄντα προσιδεσθαι

στευνταὶ δ’ ἵπποι Τιμόλου πελάται

ζυγον ἀμβαβελὼν δυύλιον Εἴλλαδι,
Μάρδων, Θάρυβης, λόγης ἀκμονες,
καὶ ἀκοντιστᾳ Μυσιαν Βαβυλὸν

δ’ ἢ πολύχρυσος πάμμικτος ὄχλον

πέμπτε κυρὴν, ναὸν τ’ ἐπόχους
καὶ τοξολκῶν λήματι πιστοῖς—

τὸ μαχασιρφόν τ’ ἔθνος ἐκ πάσης

Ἀσίας ἔπεται

δεινοῖς βασιλέως ὑπὸ ποιμαῖς.

τοιοῦτοι ἄνθοι Περσίδος αἰῶν

οίμεται ἀνάφευ,

οὺς πέρι πᾶσα χθὸν Ἀσιήτας

θρέγασα πόθῳ στένεται μαλερόδι,
tοκεῖς τ’ ἀλοχοὶ θ’ ἡμερολεγόν
tείνοντα χρόνον τρομοῦνται.
7) *Persians* 115-25

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

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.

**Works Cited**


