

1. drunken wisdom from Alcaeus

a. fr. 332

νῦν χρῆ μεθύσθην καὶ τινα πὲρ βίαν
πώνην, ἐπεὶ δὴ κάτθανε Μύρσιλος.

Now we must get drunk and drink with all our might, since
Myrsilos is dead.

b. fr. 342

μηδὲν ἄλλο φυτεύσης πρότερον δένδριον ἀμπέλω

Plant no tree before the vine.

c. fr. 366

οἶνος, ὦ φίλε παῖ, καὶ ἀλάθεια

wine, dear boy, and truth

d. fr. 333

οἶνος γὰρ ἀνθρώπῳ δίοπτρον

wine is the (window/mirror/measuring-stick?) of a man

e. fr. 335

οὐ χρῆ κάκοισι θῦμον ἐπιτρέπην,
προκόψομεν γὰρ οὐδὲν ἀσάμενοι,
ὦ Βύκχι, φαρμάκων δ' ἄριστον
οἶνον ἐνεικαμένους μεθύσθην.

It is not right to surrender our spirit to troubles, for we shall
not benefit from grieving, Oh Bycchis; the best of remedies is
to bring wine and get drunk.

2. other assorted pithy *gnōmai*

a. fr. 341

[cf. *Iliad* 20.250]

αἶ κ' εἴπης τὰ θέλῃς, καὶ κεν ἀκούσῃς τὰ κεν οὐ θέλεις.

If you say what you want you may hear what you don't want.

b. test. 427 (Σ Aesch. *Septem* 398)

ταῦτα παρὰ Ἀλκαίου· οὐ τιτρώσκει τὰ ἐπίσημα ὄπλα οὐδὲ
αὐτὰ καθ' ἑαυτὰ δύναμιν ἔχει, εἰ μὴ ἄρα ὁ φέρων αὐτὰ, ἐὰν ᾗ
γενναῖος.

This from Alcaeus: "Weapons with insignias do not wound,
nor do they have power of their own, unless the one carrying
them is noble."

c. test. 442 (Σ Soph. *OC* 954)

ὁ θυμὸς ἔσχατον γηράσκει

The mind/soul grows old last.

d. fr. 364

ἀργάλεον Πενία κάκον ἄσχετον, ἃ μέγαν
δάμνα λαὸν Ἀμαχανία σὺν ἀδελφέα

Poverty, wretched and unmanageable, who overpowers
a great people with her sister Helplessness.

e. fr. 344 (Σ *Iliad* 21.319)

οἶδ' ἢ μὰν χέροδος μὴ βεβῶως ἐργάσιμον λίθον
κίνεις καὶ κεν ἴσως τὰν κεφάλαν ἀργαλέαν ἔχοι

I know that if a man moves gravel, stone not easily worked, he
will probably get a headache.

f. fr. 435

[cf. Pindar, fr. 106.4]

αἰῶ Σκυρία

"the Nanny-goat of Scyros" (!)

g. fr. 433

μετέωρον τὸν λάβρακα νήχουσαι

the bass (the fish) swims at the surface

3. Alcaeus, fr. 360

ὡς γὰρ δὴ ποτ' Ἀριστόδα-
μον φαῖσ' οὐκ ἀπάλαμνον ἐν Σπάρτῃ λόγον
εἶπην· χρήματ' ἄνηρ, πένη-
χρος δ' οὐδ' εἰς πέλετ' ἔσλος οὐδὲ τίμιος.

For they say that once Aristodemus said this λόγος not
unwisely in Sparta: "Money is the man, and not one poor man
is good or honorable."

4. a few sayings of Pittacus

- a. "It is difficult to be truly good."
- b. "Even the gods do not fight against necessity."
- c. "Rule (ἄρχη) manifests the man."
- d. "The rule of the 'painted wood' is strongest."
- e. "Give back what has been entrusted to you for safekeeping."
- f. "Make your victories bloodless ones."
- g. "Never berate a friend, or even an enemy."
- h. "Forgiveness is preferable to vengeance."

5. Alcaeus, fr. 129

The Lesbians established this great conspicuous precinct to be held in common, and put in it altars of the blessed immortals, and they entitled Zeus God of Suppliants and you, the Aeolian, Glorious Goddess, Mother of all, and this third they named Kemelios [Semelēios?], Dionysus, eater of raw flesh. Come, with gracious spirit hear our prayer, and rescue us from these hardships and from grievous exile; and let their Avenger pursue the son of Hyrrhas, since once we swore, cutting . . . never (to abandon?) any of our comrades, but either to die at the hands of men who at that time came against us and to lie clothed in earth, or else to kill them and rescue the people from their woes. But Pot-belly did not talk to their hearts; he recklessly trampled the oaths underfoot and devours our city . . . not lawfully . . . grey . . . written(?) . . . Myrsilus . . .

6. Alcaeus, fr. 148 (P.Oxy. 2295, fr.9)

] . ακα . [. . . prosperous/happy . . .
] . ιον ὄλβιος ὀ[. . . now wretched . . .
]νδε δυστάν[. . . lonely . . .
]σδομ' ἔρημ[ο	. . . far from friends . . .
πῆλ]ε τῶν φίλω[ν	. . . alone; but since . . .
οἶ]ος· ἀλλ' ὡς οἰκ[. . . to live . . .
] . υρον ζώην [. . . immortals . . .
ἄθα]νάτοισι [

7. Alcaeus, fr. 400

τὸ γὰρ Ἄρεσι κατθάνην κάλον

It is noble to die in war.

8. Alcaeus, fr. 428

Ἄλκαος σάος † ἄροι ἐνθαδ' οὐκυτὸν ἀληκτορὶν †
ἐς Γλαυκώπιον ἱρον ὀνεκρέμασσαν Ἄττικοι

Alcaeus is safe, but the Athenians hung up his (protection-shield?) in the temple of Glaukopis Athena.

9. Alcaeus, fr. 335

οὐ χρῆ κάκοισι θῦμον ἐπιτρέπειν,
προκόψομεν γὰρ οὐδὲν ἀσάμενοι,
ὦ Βύκχι, φαρμάκων δ' ἄριστον
οἶνον ἐνεικαμένους μεθύσθην.

It is not right to surrender our spirit to troubles, for we shall not benefit from grieving. Oh Bycchis; the best of remedies is to bring wine and get drunk.

10. Alcaeus, fr. 348

τὸν κακοπατρίδαν
Φίττακον πόλιος τὰς ἀχόλω καὶ βαρυδαίμονος
ἐστάντο τύραννον, μέγ' ἐπαινεντες ἀόλλεες

They established base-born Pittacus as tyrant of that gutless, ill-starred city, all of them loud in his praise.

11. Alcaeus, fr. 426 LP

τὸν λόγον...ὄν πάλαι μὲν Ἀλκαῖος ὁ ποιητὴς εἶπεν, ὕστερον δὲ
οἱ πολλοὶ παραλαβόντες ἐχρήσαντο, ὡς ἄρα οὐ λίθοι οὐδὲ
ξύλα οὐδὲ τέχνη τεκτόνων αἱ πόλεις εἶεν, ἀλλ' ὅπου ποτ' ἂν
ᾧσιν ἄνδρες αὐτοὺς σώζειν εἰδότες, ἐνταῦθα καὶ τείχη καὶ
πόλεις.

...the words which the poet Alcaeus said long ago and which many have since borrowed from him, that cities are not stones or wood or the craft of builders; but wherever there are men who know how to defend themselves, there are walls and cities.

12. Alcaeus, fr. 112

]δυ . αι δ[ι'] άνοια [ν
]σαι χρόνον ὦ πα[
]ρ αὐτος Κρονίδα[ις
ὄπ]παι κε θέλη τρ . [.
]ουτ' οὐ μάλαπη . [.
] . τανδη[.]θεκατ . [.
ἄε]θλον π[ο]λυδά[κρουν
ἀρ]ίστηας ἀπυκρ[.
] . ς μάκρον ἀπι[
ἄνδρες γάρ πόλιος πύργος ἀρεύιοι
]ως κῆνος ἐβόλ[λετο
]μοῖρα κατέσκ[εθε
]οις ἤμενεπε . [.
]ων Ζεῦσυπε . . [.
]αὐτῷ· τά τ[ι]ς εἰ . [.
]ς ἐσφερέτω . [.
]τοδ' εἰς εἰαν[.
]ς γάρ τάδεσαμ[.
] . φος μακα [.
π]άροιθεν βαρυ . [. .]νωί
τό]σσουτον ἐπεύ[χο]μαι
]ησθ' ἀελίῳ φ[ά]ος
]ιγε Κλεανακτίδαν
] ἢ Ἀρχεανακτίδαν·
]τον μελιάδεα
] . κιδος ὠλεσαν

... through foolishness . . .
... time . . .
... the son of Cronus himself . . .
... however he wishes . . .
... not greatly . . .
... tearful contest/struggle . . .
... the best men . . .
... long . . .
for warlike men are the city's tower/stronghold
... that man wanted . . .
... fate held off . . .
... Zeus . . .
... let him bring in . . .
... before heavy . . .
... so much I pray . . .
... light of the sun . . .
... Cleanactidas . . .
... or Archeanactidas . . .
... honey-sweet . . .
... they lost . . .

13. Pindar, Paean 2.37-38

] ἀλκαὶ δὲ τεῖχος ἀνδρῶν
ὑψιστον ἴσταται

the valors of men stand as the highest wall

Thucydides 7.77

Nicias: “τό τε ξύμπαν γνῶτε, ὧ ἄνδρες στρατιῶται, ἀναγκαῖόν τε ὄν ὑμῖν ἀνδράσιμ ἀγαθοῖς γίγνεσθαι ὡς μὴ ὄντος χωρίου ἐγγὺς ὅποι ἂν μαλακισθέντες σωθείητε καί, ἦν νῦν διαφύγητε τοὺς πολεμίους, οἱ τε ἄλλοι τευξόμενοι ὧν ἐπιθυμεῖτε ποῦ ἐπιδεῖν καὶ οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι τὴν μεγάλην δύναμιν τῆς πόλεως καίπερ πεπτωκυῖαν ἐπανορθώσοντες· ἄνδρες γὰρ πόλις, καὶ οὐ τεῖχη οὐδὲ νῆες ἀνδρῶν κενάί.”

“To sum up, be convinced, soldiers, that you must be brave, as there is no place near for your cowardice to take refuge in, and that if you now escape from the enemy, you may all see again what your hearts desire, while those of you who are Athenians will raise up again the great power of the state, fallen though it be. Men make the city and not walls or ships without men in them.”

Herodotus 8.61

8.61.1 ταῦτα λέγοντος Θεμιστοκλέος αὐτίς ὁ Κορίνθιος Ἀδεϊμαντος ἐπέφερετο, σιγᾶν τε κελεύων τῷ μὴ ἐστὶ πατρις καὶ Εὐρυβιάδην οὐκ ἔῶν ἐπιψηφίζεῖν ἀπόλι ἀνδρὶ· πόλιν γὰρ τὸν Θεμιστοκλέα παρεχόμενον οὕτω ἐκέλευε γνῶμας συμβάλλεσθαι. ταῦτα δὲ οἱ προέφερε ὅτι ἠλώκεσάν τε καὶ κατεῖχοντο αἱ Ἀθῆναι.

8.61.2 τότε δὴ ὁ Θεμιστοκλέης κείνον τε καὶ τοὺς Κορινθίους πολλὰ τε καὶ κακὰ ἔλεγε, ἐωυτοῖσι τε ἐδήλου λόγῳ ὡς εἶη καὶ πόλις καὶ γῆ μέζων ἢ περ ἐκείνοισι, ἔστ' ἂν διηκόσῃαι νέες σφι ἔωσι πεπληρωμένα· οὐδαμοὺς γὰρ Ἑλλήνων αὐτοὺς ἐπιόντας ἀποκρούσεσθαι.

8.61.1 As Themistocles said this, Adeimantus the Corinthian attacked him again, advising that a man without a city should keep quiet and that Eurybiades should not ask the vote of a man without a city. He advised Themistocles to contribute his opinion when he provided a city—attacking him in this way because Athens was captured and occupied.

8.61.2 This time Themistocles said many things against him and the Corinthians, declaring that so long as they had two hundred manned ships, the Athenians had both a city and a land greater than theirs, and that none of the Hellenes could repel them if they attacked.

11. Alcaeus, fr. 117(b).21-40

] . [. .]ς νᾶα ποιήμενοι
] . υ . ασδ', οὐ γὰρ ἔγω . ἔχω
ἐ]πόνησας κατα[.]αμένα·
] . . ς καὶ πόλλα χαρισ[
]δοις· τοῖς δ' ὑπίσω[.] . [
]ται· πόρνοι δ' ὃ κέ τις δίδ[ωι
ἴ]σα κά[ς] πολίας κῦμ' ἄλ[ο]ς ἐσβ[ά]λην.
.]πε[. .]ε . ις τοῦτ' οὐκ οἶδεν, ἐ . οι π[.]θην
ὀ]ς π[όρν]αισιν ὁμίλλει, τάδε γίνε[τ]α[ι·
δεύε[ι] μά[λ'] αὐτῶ τῷ χρήματος [ἄψερο]ν
α]ἶσχος κα[ι] κα[κό]τα[τ] ὠλομέν[αν
πόλλαν . [. . . .]' [.]των, ψεύδη δε[.]σαι
.]αι[.]λέ . . [. . . .] κάκων ἐσχατ[.] . []
]νδεμ[. .] η ψύχαν ἄκατ[.] .
. .]αίει δάκ[ρυσι]ν· ἄ δ' οὐ[.]εσο . [. . . .] .
.] . [. .] . αι[]η[. . . .] . δ' ἄλλος[.] . . [. . . .]
ὄ]ττις δεπ[. . . .]εραι, γ . . [. . . .]
.] . ρει κυμ[.] ψῦχρ[ο]ν [.]
.] . ωρέοντ[. . . .]μμε . . [. . . .]
.]περ Σίσυφο[. . . .]ατον[]ά . [. . . .]
]φεν ἀλλ[. .] κλίνο[.]
]ππα[. .] . οἰς· ω . [. . . .]
]φίω, . [. .] . ε . [. . . .]

. . . making themselves a ship . . . for I do not have
. . . you toiled . . . (gave) many favors . . . to those
coming after . . . ; what someone gives to a prostitute
one might as well throw into the waves of the grey
sea. (if someone) does not know this, I could
persuade; whoever keeps company with prostitutes,
these things happen: in the time after shame and
much destructive misery . . . deceives . . . furthest
border of ills . . . soul . . . with tears; but she . . .
another man . . . whoever . . . cold wave . . . Sisyphus
. . . bend . . .