

## Alpheus of Mytilene and Some Responses to Rome

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### A1(Alpheus of Mytilene, *AP* 9.526)

Shut, oh Lord, the untiring gates of great **Olympus**; guard, O Zeus, the sacred acropolis of heaven. For already both sea and land are yoked under the spear of Rome, but the **heavenly path** is yet **untrodden**.<sup>1</sup>

Κλεῖε, θεός, μεγάλοιο πύλας ἀκμῆτας Ἰὼλύμπου·  
φρούρει, Ζεῦ, ζαθέαν αἰθέρος ἀκρόπολιν.  
ἤδη γὰρ καὶ πόντος ὑπέξευκται δορὶ Ῥώμης  
καὶ χθών· οὐρανὴ δ' οἶμος ἔτ' ἔστ' ἄβατος.

### A2(Alcaeus of Messene, *AP* 9.518)

Heighten the **Olympian** walls, O Zeus; all is **scalable** by Philip. Shut the bronze gates of the blessed. While land and sea are indeed conquered by Philip's scepters, the **road to heaven** remains.

Μακύνου τείχη, Ζεῦ, Ἰὼλύμπια· πάντα Φιλίππῳ  
ἀμβατά· χαλκείας κλεῖε πύλας μακάρων.  
χθών μὲν δὴ καὶ πόντος ὑπὸ σκήπτροισι Φιλίππου  
δέδμηται, λοιπὰ δ' ἀπὸς Ἰὼλυμπον ὁδός.

### B1 (*Odyssey* 11.305–320, trans. Lattimore)

[Iphimedeia, wife of Aloeus bore] two sons to him, but these in the end had not lived long, Otos like a god, and the far-famed Ephialtes...they made threats against the immortal gods on Olympos, that they would carry the turmoil of battle with all its many sorrows against them, and were minded to pile Ossa on Olympos, and above Ossa Pelion of the trembling leaves, **to climb the sky**. Surely they would have carried it out if they had come to maturity, but the son of Zeus whom Leto with ordered hair had borne him, Apollo, killed them both, before ever the down gathered below their temples, or on their chins the beards had blossomed.

καὶ ῥ' ἔτεκεν δύο παῖδε, μινυνθαδίῳ δ' ἐγενέσθην,  
Ἰώτόν τ' ἀντίθεον τηλεκλειτόν τ' Ἐφιάλτην  
...  
ἀτὰρ μῆκός γε γενέσθην ἐννεόργυιοι.  
οἳ ῥα καὶ ἀθανάτοισιν ἀπειλήτην ἐν Ἰὼλύμπῳ  
φυλόπιδα στήσειν πολυάκοσ πολέμοιο. Ὅσσαν ἐπ'  
Οὐλύμπῳ μέμασαν θέμεν, αὐτὰρ ἐπ'  
Ὅσση

Πήλιον εἰνοσίφυλλον, ἴν' οὐρανὸς ἀμβατὸς εἶη.  
καὶ νῦ κεν ἐξετέλεσσαν, εἰ ἦβης μέτρον ἴκοντο:  
ἀλλ' ὄλεσεν Διὸς υἱός, ὃν ἠύκομος τέκε Λητώ,  
ἀμφοτέρῳ, πρὶν σφωῖν ὑπὸ κροτάφοισιν ἰούλους

### B2 (Pindar, *Pythian* 10.27–29, trans. Svarlien)

Never is he allowed to **scale bronze heaven**; but whatever splendid things we mortals can attain, he reaches the limit of that voyage.

ὁ χάλκεος οὐρανὸς οὐ ποτ' ἀμβατὸς αὐτῷ.  
ὄσαις δὲ βροτὸν ἔθνος ἀγλαΐαις ἀπτόμεσθα, περαίνει  
πρὸς ἔσχατον  
πλόον.

### B3 (Lucian, *Charon* 3, trans. Harmon)

[Quoting the *Odyssey* passage above] [They fancied] to pluck Ossa from its base and set it on **Olympus**, and then to set Pelion on top of it, thinking that this would give them a suitable ladder with **which to scale Heaven**.

ἐθελῆσαι ποτε τὴν Ὅσσαν ἐκ βάθρων ἀνασπᾶσαντας  
ἐπιθεῖναι ἐπιθεῖναι τῷ Ἰὼλύμπῳ, εἶτα τὸ Πήλιον ἐπ'  
αὐτῇ, ἱκανὴν ταύτην κλίμακα ἔξειν οἰομένους καὶ  
πρόσβασιν ἐπὶ τὸν οὐρανόν. [ἀναβὰς is used just a few  
lines below]

<sup>1</sup> All epigrams are my own translation, with some inspiration from Paton, 1917. I have tweaked the translations of others where necessary for consistency.

**C** (Alpheus, AP 9.97)

We still listen to the lament of Andromache, still we see all of Troy ruined from its foundations, and the battle-cry of Ajax, and Hector being dragged below the battlement of the city bound to horses, through the muse of Maionides, the poet whom not one Fatherland but [all] the regions of both continents honor.

Ἀνδρομάχης ἔτι θρήνον ἀκούομεν, εἰσέτι Τροίην  
δερκόμεθ' ἐκ βάθρων πᾶσαν ἐρειπομένην  
καὶ μόθον Αἰάντειον ὑπὸ στεφάνῃ τε πόλης  
ἔκδετον ἐξ ἵππων Ἔκτορα συρόμενον,  
Μαιονίδεω διὰ μοῦσαν, ὄν οὐ μία πατρίς ἀοιδὸν  
κοσμεῖται, γαίης δ' ἀμφοτέρης κλίματα.

**D1** (Alpheus, AP 9.101)

There are few fatherlands of the heroes for the eyes, and those which still remain are not much higher than the plain; and so I, passing by, recognized you, Mycenae, so unhappy, more deserted than any beach, pointed out by goat herds; and a certain old man said, "Here lies the city, rich in gold, of the Cyclopes."

Ἡρώων ὀλίγαι μὲν ἐν ὄμμασιν, αἱ δ' ἔτι λοιπαὶ  
πατρίδες οὐ πολλῶ γ' αἰπύτεραι πεδίων·  
οἶη καὶ σέ, τάλαινα, παρερχόμενός γε Μυκίην  
ἔγνω αἰγιαλοῦ παντὸς ἐρημοτέτην, αἰπολικὸν  
μῆνυμα· γέρων δέ τις· "Ἡ πολύχρυσος,"  
εἶπεν, "Κυκλώπων τῆδ' ἐπέκειτο πόλις."

**D2** (Antipater of Sidon, AP 9.151)

Where is your much-famed beauty, Dorian Corinth? Where are the battlements of your towers, your ancient possessions? Where are the temples of the blessed ones, where are the houses, the wives of the Sisyphian people, once [numbering] thousands? For not even your footprint, you most unhappy city, remains, but war seized everything and chewed you up; alone the Nereids remain unravaged, those daughters of Oceanus, remaining the halcyons of your troubles.

Ποῦ τὸ περίβλεπτον κάλλος σέο, Δωρὶ Κόρινθε;  
ποῦ στεφάναι πύργων, ποῦ τὰ πάλαι κτέανα;  
ποῦ νηοὶ μακάρων, ποῦ δώματα, ποῦ δὲ δάμαρτες  
Σισύφια λαῶν θ' αἶ ποτε μυριάδες;  
οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδ' ἴχνος, πολυκάμμορε, σεῖο λείλειπται,  
πάντα δὲ συμμάρψας ἐξέφαγεν πόλεμος·  
μοῦναι ἀπόρθητοι Νηρηίδες Ἰκεανοῖο  
κοῦραι, σῶν ἀχέων μίμνομεν ἀλκυόνες.

**D3** (Alpheus, AP 9.104)

Argos, legend of Homer and holy soil of Greece and the once golden citadel of Perseus, through you the glory of those heroes are extinguished those who once tore down to the ground the god-built battlement of Troy. Now Troy is a city more powerful, and you are pointed out as fallen, the stalls of lowing cattle.

Ἄργος, Ὀμηρικὴ μῦθε καὶ Ἑλλάδος ἱερὸν οὐδας,  
καὶ χρυσέη τὸ πάλαι Περσέος ἀκρόπολι,  
ἐσβέσαθ' ἠρώων κείνων κλέος, οἳ ποτε Τροίης  
ἤρειψαν κατὰ γῆς θεϊόδομον στέφανον.  
ἀλλ' ἢ μὲν κρείσσω ἐστὶν πόλις· αἱ δὲ πεσοῦσαι  
δείκνυσθ' εὐμύκων αὔλια βουκολίων.

**G1** (Bassius Lollius, *AP* 9.236)

The inviolable oaths of the Fates decreed Priam's last burnt-offering for Phrygia be on the altar. But for you, Aeneas, your holy fleet already is at the Italian harbor, the introduction of your heavenly fatherland. **It was good that the tower of Troy perished, for from this arose in arms a city, queen of the whole world.**

Ἄρρηκτοι Μοιρῶν τυμάτην ἐσφράγισαν ὄρκοι  
τῷ Φρυγί παρ βωμῷ τὴν Πριάμου θυσίην·  
ἀλλὰ σοί, Αἰνεΐα, στόλος ἱερὸς Ἴταλὸν ἦδη  
ὄρμον ἔχεν, πάτρης φροῖμιον οὐρανίης.  
ἐς καλὸν ὤλετο πύργος ὁ Τρώϊος· ἧ γὰρ ἐν ὄπλοις  
ἠγέρθη κόσμου παντὸς ἄνασσα πόλις.

**G2** (Germanicus sive Hadrian, *AP* 9.387)

Hector, blood of Ares, if, somewhere underground you hear me, hail! and breathe a little for your country. Iliion lives, a famous city having men less powerful than you, but still war-loving; but **the Myrmidons have perished. Stand by and say to Achilles that all of Thessaly lies under sons of Aeneas.**

Ἔκτορ, Ἀρήιον αἷμα, κατὰ χθονὸς εἶ που ἀκούεις,  
χαῖρε καὶ ἄμπνευσον βαιὸν ὑπὲρ πατρίδος.  
Ἴλιον οἰκεῖται κλεινὴ πόλις ἄνδρας ἔχουσα  
σοῦ μὲν ἀφαιροτέρους, ἀλλ' ἔτ' ἀρηιφίλους·  
Μυρμιδόνες δ' ἀπόλοντο. παρίστασο καὶ λέγ'  
Ἀχιλλεῖ  
Θεσσαλίην κείσθαι πᾶσαν ὑπ' Αἰνεάδαις.

**H1** (Alcaeus of Messene, *AP* 7.247)

Unwept and unburied, traveler, on this mound in Thessaly, we thirty-thousand lie, <conquered by the War of the Aetolians and the Latins, whom Titus led from broad Italy,> a great bane to Emathia; that bold spirit of Philip fled, running more nimbly than a deer.

Ἄκλαυστοι καὶ ἄθαπτοι, ὀδοιπόρε, τῷ δ' ἐπὶ τύμβῳ  
Θεσσαλίας τρισσαὶ κείμεθα μυριάδες,  
<Αἰτωλῶν δμηθέντες ὑπ' Ἄρεος ἠδὲ Λατίνων,  
οὓς Τίτος εὐρείης ἤγαγ' ἀπ' Ἰταλίας,>  
Ἡμαθίη μέγα πῆμα· τὸ δὲ θρασὺ κείνο Φιλίππου  
πνεῦμα θοῶν ἐλάφων ὄχετ' ἐλαφρότερον

**H2** (Alcaeus of Messene, *API* 5)

Xerxes led the Persian host to the land of Hellas,  
So too did Titus lead [the Roman army] from broad  
Italy,  
But one came to set the slave yoke around Europe's  
Neck, while the other came to stop the enslavement of  
Hellas.

Ἄγαγε καὶ Ξέρξης Πέρσαν στρατὸν Ἑλλάδος ἐς γᾶν,  
καὶ Τίτος εὐρείας ἤγαγ' ἀπ' Ἰταλίας·  
ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν Εὐρώπῃ δοῦλον ζυγὸν αὐχένι θήσων  
ἦλθεν, ὁ δ' ἀμπαύσων Ἑλλάδα δουλοσύνας.

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