

## BELLARIA LXXI



*Sappho and Alcaeus* (Lawrence Alma-Tadema: 1881)

## THE GREEK (PALATINE) ANTHOLOGY IV



Paphian Aphrodite once came across the sea to Knidos,  
hoping to see a statue of herself.  
After gazing at it in a spot seen from all sides,  
she said, 'When did Praxiteles see me naked?'  
Praxiteles never saw what it was not right to see—his chisel  
carved out an Aphrodite that Ares would like.

Ἡ Παφίη Κυθέρεια δι' οἴδατος ἐς Κνίδον ἦλθε  
βουλομένη κατιδεῖν εἰκόνα τὴν ἰδίην.  
πάντη δ' ἀθήρσασα περισκέπτω ἐνὶ χώρῳ

φθέγγατο· ‘Ποῦ γυμνήν εἶδέ με Πραξιτέλης;  
Πραξιτέλης οὐκ εἶδεν, ἄ μὴ θέμις, ἀλλ’ ὁ σίδηρος  
ἔξεσεν, οἷά γ’ ἼΑρης ἤθελε, τὴν Παφίην.

**Plato (the epigrammatist)**

### Atomic theory

Of atoms did Epicurus wrote that all the world  
Consisted, thinking, Alcimus, this was the tiniest thing.  
But if Diophantus had existed then, he would have written that it consisted  
[of Diophantus,  
something much tinier than atoms,  
5 Or he would have written that other things were composed from atoms,  
but the atoms themselves, Alcimus, from Diophantus.

ἔξ ἀτόμων Ἐπίκουρος ὅλον τὸν κόσμον ἔγραψεν  
εἶναι, τοῦτο δοκῶν, Ἄλκιμε, λεπτότατον.  
εἰ δὲ τότε ἦν Διοφάντος, ἔγραψεν ἂν ἐκ Διοφάντου,  
τοῦ καὶ τῶν ἀτόμων πούλύ τι λεπτοτέρου,  
5 ἢ τὰ μὲν ἄλλ’ ἔγραψε συνεστάναι ἐξ ἀτόμων ἂν,  
ἐκ τούτου δ’ αὐτάς, Ἄλκιμε, τὰς ἀτόμους.

**Lucillius 11.103**

### Deadly night-singer



The night-raven's song bodes death, but when the singer is  
Demophilus, the night-raven itself dies.

νυκτικόραξ ἄδει θανατηφόρον, ἀλλ’ ὅταν ἄσῃ  
Δημόφιλος, θνήσκει καὺτός ὁ νυκτικόραξ.

**Nicarchus ii 11.186**

### A doctor' (s)kill

Doctor Marcus yesterday laid his hand on a statue of Zeus;  
and statue and Zeus though he was, today he's being buried.

τοῦ λιθίνου Διὸς ἐχθὲς ὁ κλινικὸς ἤψατο Μάρκος·  
καὶ λίθος ὢν καὶ Ζεὺς, σήμερον ἐκφέρεται.

**Lucillius 11.113**

## Old boiler

They say you spend a long time in the bath, Heliodora,  
an old woman of a hundred still on the game.  
Except I know why you do it. Like ancient Pelias,  
You hope to boil yourself young.

λούεσθαί σε λέγουσι πολὺν χρόνον, Ἥλιοδώρα,  
γραῖαν ἐτῶν ἑκατὸν μὴ καταλυομένην.  
πλὴν ἔγνωκα τίνος ποιεῖς χάριν· ὡς ὁ παλαιὸς  
ἐλπίζεις Πελίας ἐψομένη νεάσαι.

**Lucillius 11.256**

## Not a winner



To the Lord of Pisa\* Aulus the boxer dedicates his skull,  
having pieced together the bones one by one.  
And if he escapes from Nemea, Lord Zeus, to you he will probably  
Also dedicate any of the vertebrae he still has left.

\* Zeus at Olympus

τῷ Πίσης μεδέοντι τὸ κρανίον Αὔλος ὁ πύκτης,  
ἐν καθ' ἓν ἀθροίσας ὀστέον, ἀντίθεται.  
σωθεῖς δ' ἐκ Νεμέας, Ζεῦ δέσποτα, σοὶ τάχα θήσει  
καὶ τοὺς ἀστραγάλους τοὺς ἔτι λειπομένους.

**Lucillius 11.258**

## Cold boiler

You bought a brass boiler, Heliodorus,  
colder than Thracian Boreas.  
Don't blow the fire, don't put yourself out; in vain you stir up the smoke.  
What you bought was a brass wine-cooler for summer.

ἠγόρασας χαλκοῦν μιλιάριον, Ἥλιόδωρε,  
τοῦ περὶ τὴν Θράκην ψυχρότερον Βορέου.  
μὴ φύσα, μὴ κάμνε· μάτην τὸν καπνὸν ἐγείρεις·  
εἰς τὸ θέρος χαλκῆν βαύκαλιν ἠγόρασας.

**Anon. 11.244**

## Literary come-on



Happy little roll,\* I do not begrudge you; reading you,  
some boy will rub you, holding you under his chin,  
or press you against his delicate lips, or on his thighs  
so dewy will roll you up, O most blessed of books.  
5 Often you will wander into his bosom, or, on his chair  
thrown down, will you dare to touch without fear,  
and much, all alone, will you say to him first; but on my behalf,  
little book, I beg you, speak rather frequently.

\* The shape is not, shall we say, insignificant

εὐτυχές, οὐ φθονέω, βιβλίδιον· ἢ ρὰ σ' ἀναγνοῦς  
παῖς τις ἀναθλίψει, πρὸς τὰ γένεια τιθεῖς·  
ἢ τρυφεροῖς σφίγξει περὶ χεῖλεσιν, ἢ κατὰ μηρῶν  
εἰλήσει δροσερῶν, ὧ μακαριστότατον·  
5 πολλάκι φοιτήσεις ὑποκόλπιον, ἢ παρὰ δίφρους  
βληθὲν τολμήσεις κεῖνα θιγεῖν ἀφόβως.  
πολλὰ δ' ἐν ἡρεμίῃ προλαλήσεις· ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν,  
χαρτάριον, δέομαι, πυκνότερόν τι λάλει.

**Strato 12.208**

## The mouse and the miser

Asclepiades the miser saw a mouse in his house  
and said: 'My dearest mouse, what business have you here with me?'  
And the mouse said, smiling sweetly: 'Fear nothing, my friend,  
I do not seek board with you, but residence.'

μῦν Ἀσκληπιάδης ὁ φιλάργυρος εἶδεν ἐν οἴκῳ,  
καὶ 'τί ποιεῖς', φησὶν, 'φίλτατε μῦ, παρ' ἐμοὶ;  
ἡδὺ δ' ὁ μῦς γελάσας. 'μηδέν, φίλε,' φησί, 'φοβηθῆς,  
οὐχὶ τροφῆς παρὰ σοὶ χρήζομεν, ἀλλὰ μονῆς.'

**Lucillius 11.391**

## Heraclitus of Ephesus (i)\*



**H.** Sir, I Heraclitus, that I alone [both] discovered wisdom,  
assert, and treatment of my parents better than wisdom.  
For with kicks at my own parents, o stranger, evil-minded folks,  
did I snarl. **B.** A shining return for those who raised you!  
**H.** Get away from me! **B.** Don't be rough. **H.** Because you may soon hear  
something rougher than my parents [did]. **B.** Farewell. **H.** And you, get  
[out of Ephesus!]

\*The famously obscure, and very grumpy, philosopher

**H.** ὄνθρωπ', Ἡράκλειτος ἐγὼ σοφὰ μοῦνος ἀνευρεῖν  
φαμί, τὰ δ' ἐς πάτραν κρέσσονα καὶ σοφίης·  
λάξ γὰρ καὶ τοκεῶνας, ἰὼ ξένε, δύσφρονος ἄνδρας  
ύλάκτευν. **B.** λαμπρὰ θρεψαμένοισι χάρις.  
**H.** οὐκ ἀπ' ἐμεῦ; **B.** μὴ τρηχύς. **H.** ἐπεὶ τάχα καὶ σύ τι πεύση  
τρηχύτερον πάτρας. **B.** χαῖρε. **H.** σὺ δ' ἐξ' Ἐφέσου.

**Meleager 7.79**

## Heraclitus of Ephesus (ii)

Do not rapidly unfold to the end of the roll the book of Heraclitus  
the Ephesian. The path is very difficult.  
All is mist and unilluminated darkness; but if one initiated  
introduces you, it is clearer than the bright sun.

μὴ ταχύς Ἡρακλείτου ἐπ' ὄμφαλὸν εἴλεε βίβλον  
τούφεσίου· μάλα τοι δύσβατος ἀτραπιτός.  
ὄρφνη καὶ σκότος ἐστὶν ἀλάμπητον· ἦν δέ σε μύστης  
εἰσαγάγη, φανεροῦ λαμπρότερ' ἡελίου.

**Anon. 9.540**

## This tool nose, you know



Castor's nose is, when he digs anything, a hoe for him,  
a trumpet when he snores, a grape-sickle at vintage time,  
an anchor on board ship, a plough when he is sowing,  
a fishing-hook for sailors, a flesh-hook for feasters,  
5 a pair of tongs for ship-builders, and for farmers a leek-slicer,  
an axe for carpenters and a handle for his door.  
Such a serviceable implement has Castor the luck to possess,  
wearing a nose adaptable for any work.

ἢ ρὶς Κάστορός ἐστιν, ὅταν σκάπτῃ τι, δίκηλλα·  
σάλπιγξ δ' ἂν ῥέγῃ· τῇ δὲ τρύγῃ, δρέπανον·  
ἐν πλοίοις ἄγκυρα· κατασπεύροντι δ' ἄροτρον·  
ἄγκιστρον ναύταις, ὀψοφάγοις κρεάγγρα·  
5 ναυπηγοῖς σχένδυλα· γεωργοῖς δὲ πρασόκουρον·  
τέκτοσιν ἀξίνη· τοῖς δὲ πυλῶσι κόραξ.  
οὕτως εὐχρήστου σκεύους Κάστωρ τετύχηκε,  
ῥῖνα φέρων πάσης ἄρμενον ἐργασίης.

**Anon. 11.203**

## Win some...

For my father's brother, the astrologers a ripe old age  
all prophesied with one voice.  
Hermocles alone foretold his premature death,  
but he did so when we were lamenting over his corpse in the house.

τῷ πατρί μου τὸν ἀδελφὸν οἱ ἀστρολόγοι μακρόγηρων  
πάντες ἐμαντεύσανθ' ὡς ἀφ' ἑνὸς στόματος·  
ἀλλ' Ἑρμοκλείδης αὐτὸν μόνος εἶπε πρόμοιρον  
εἶπε δ' ὅτ' αὐτὸν ἔσω νεκρὸν ἐκοπτόμεθα.

**Lucillius 11.159**

## Kindly doctor



Agelaus by operating slaughtered Acestorides.

‘He would have been lame’ he said, ‘the poor fellow’

χειρουργῶν ἔσφαξεν Ἀκεστορίδην Ἀγέλαος·  
‘ζῶν γὰρ χωλεύειν,’ φησὶν, ‘ἔμελλε τάλας.’

**Calliater 11.121**

## Not a fan

Demetrius, fanning Artemidora in her sleep—

A slight girl—fanned her off the roof.

ῥιπίζων ἐν ὕπνοις Δημήτριος Ἀρτεμιδώραν  
τὴν λεπτήν, ἐκ τοῦ δώματος ἐξέβαλεν.

**Lucillius 11.101**

## Bad buy

You bought hair, rouge, honey, wax, and teeth.

For the same outlay you might have bought a face.

ἠγόρασας πλοκάμους, φῦκος, μέλι, κηρόν, ὀδόντας·  
τῆς αὐτῆς δαπάνης ὄψιν ἂν ἠγόρασας.

**Lucillius 11.310**

## Sitting it out

Whether Pericles ran, or sat, the stadion race,  
no one knows. Miraculous slowness!

The noise of the barrier’s fall was in our ears, and another  
was being crowned, and Pericles had not advanced an inch.

τὸ στάδιον Περικλῆς εἴτ’ ἔδραμεν, εἴτ’ ἐκάθητο,  
οὐδεὶς οἶδεν ὅλως· δαιμόνιος βραδυτής.  
ὁ ψόφος ἦν ὑσπληγος ἐν οὔασι, καὶ στεφανοῦτο  
ἄλλος, καὶ Περικλῆς δάκτυλον οὐ πρόεβη.

**Anonymous 11.186**

## Last laugh



I who the much-groaning life of men  
Tempered with a laugh, Philistion from Nicaea,  
lie here, the epitomizer of all life;\*  
I often died, but never quite like this.  
\*i.e. he had impersonated all types of men

ὁ τὸν πολυστένακτον ἀνθρώπων βίον  
γέλῳτι κεράσας Νικαεὺς Φιλιστίων  
ἐνταῦθα κεῖμαι, λείψανον παντὸς βίου,\*  
πολλάκις ἀποθανών, ὧδε δ' οὐδεπώποτε.

Anon. 7.155

## Alexis ...



Him walking in the road at noon-tide I saw – Alexis,  
the summer just being shorn of the tresses of her fruits;  
and double rays burnt me, the rays of passion [aroused in me]  
from the boy's eyes and others from the sun.  
5 The sun's [rays] night laid to rest again, but love's [rays] in dreams  
the image of beauty rather kindled.  
So night, who releases others from toil, created it in me,  
expressing in my soul a loveliness which is living fire.



Εἰνόδιον στείχοντα μεσαμβρινὸν εἶδον Ἴαλεξιν,  
ἄρτι κόμαν καρπῶν κειρομένου θέρεος.  
διπλαῖ δ' ἀκτῖνές με κατέφλεγον· αἱ μὲν Ἴερωτος,  
παιδὸς ἀπ' ὀφθαλμῶν, αἱ δὲ παρ' ἡελίου.  
5 ἀλλ' ἄς μὲν νύξ αὔθις ἐκοίμισεν, ἄς δ' ἐν ὀνείροις  
εἶδωλον μορφῆς μᾶλλον ἀνεφλόγισεν.  
λυσίπνοος δ' ἑτέροις ἐπ' ἐμοὶ πόνον ὕπνος ἔτευξεν  
ἔμπνουν πῦρ ψυχῆ κάλλος ἀπεικονίσας.

**Meleager 12.127**

**Final *Greek Anthology* week:** the power of flatulence, the price of old age, gout, Heliodora, a bull's reward.