

Selected Classical Greek Verse of Politian

William S. Annis
Aidoi.org*

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Politian (Angelo Poliziano, 1454-94), a key figure in the history of Classical scholarship, was considered one of the first post-classical western Europeans to understand the Greek classics at least as well as native Greek scholars. In addition to his vast body of Latin prose and verse, he wrote poems in Greek in the classical style.

In selecting these the poems I have tried to steer a course between showing the range of work Politian produced on the one hand and interest to modern readers on the other. I have omitted the larger works and the panegyrics on figures of his time which are of more historical than literary interest.

The source text is the 1867 *Opera Omnia* from Florence, which has 57 Greek poems. Since it is not my aim to give a history of Greek orthography but to show the practice of Greek verse composition when Greek was first reintroduced to western Europe I have modernized the presentation somewhat. Substantial changes have footnotes with the originals, but without comment I have fixed obvious spelling and accenting errors.¹ In a few places words are written out fully where the meter makes clear the final vowel is elided, probably following the usual Latin practice. These I have also fixed silently.

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¹Since I do not have access to P.'s originals, I am assuming — without, I admit, any evidence — that the most egregious errors are not his but his editor's. The source text gives Latin translations of the verses which let me verify that I wasn't about to edit away obscure rather than misspelled words.

1. εἰς φθονερόν

ὦ φίλε, χαίρε' λέγεις, ὅτε σὸν ποτὶ δῶμα καθήκω,
 αὐτὰρ ἔμ' οὐκ ἔλαθεν ῥήμα χαριζόμενον.
 οὐδ' ἐθέλεις φθονερός χαίρειν ἐμέ, οὔτε φιλεῖς με·
 καὶ γὰρ σημαίνει τοῦτο τὸ ΧΑΙΡΕ δύο·
 ἔστιν σώζεσθαι χαίρειν, ἔστιν δ' ἀπολέσθαι.
 τοὶ γὰρ ἔγωγε λέγω σοί· φίλε, χαίρε μάλα.

2. εἰς Κορύδωνα

εἰμί, λέγεις, παῖς, ὦ Κορύδων· δεῖ τοῦτο λέγειν με,
 ἄνηρ δ' εἶ' κατὰ σοῦ σὸν τὸ γέννειον ἔφα.

4. εἰς Πάμφυλον

οἶνόν μοι πέμπεις, τοῦ δ' ἔσθ' ἄλις· εἰ δ' ἔτι μᾶλλον
 λῆς γε χαρίζεσθαι, πέμφ' ἅμα δίψαν ἐμοί.

6. εἰς τὸν αὐτόν. εἰς Σοφίαν παράκλησις

νῦν γε Νότος πτύει μελανόπτερος ἄσπετον ὄμβρον,
 ἦδη καὶ νιφάδας θρήξ Βορέας συνάγει.
 φηγῶν καὶ πετελεῶν ἐμαράνθη φύλλ' ἐπὶ γαίῃ,
 χεῖμα δὲ κερτομέον οὔρεσι κείρε κόμας.
 πεῦκαι ἄκαρποι ἔασσιν, ἀειθηλεῖς περ ἐοῦσαι,
 ὑψίκομοί τ' ἐλάται, καὶ θανάτοιο φυτόν.
 ἀλλὰ καὶ ὡς δάφνη τε καὶ ποικίλον ἔρνος ἐλαίας
 φύλλων καὶ καρπῶν χαίρουσι βριθοσύνη,
 πάντα γὰρ ἄλλα χρόνου κρατεροὶ κατέδουσιν ὀδόντες,
 ἄφθαρτος δ' ἡμῖν ἐστὶ μόνον Σοφίη.

17. εἰς Δημήτριον (μέτρον φαλαίκειον)

ἐξ οὗ δὴ Θεόδωρος οὐρανόνδε
βῆ, καὶ ὧς γε χελιδόνος νεοσσούς,
ματρὸς χερσὶ βρεφιλλίου θανούσας,
ἀπτήνας λίπεν ᾧδ' ὑπὲρ καλιᾶς
μάψ δὴν μάστακα τοῦδε προσδοκῶντας,
ὦ Δημήτριε, πάντες ἄθλιοί γε
νῦν γουνούμεθα. σὺ δὲ πρᾶος ἐλθῶν
πεινώσιν, σοφίης ἐδητὴν ἡμῖν
δός. σὺ νῦν μόνος εἶ γλυκὺς τιθηνός.

Demetrio Calcondila: a Byzantine living in Italy. He taught Greek in Padua, Florence and Milan. Produced the *editio princeps* of Homer. Widely considered an excellent teacher by his contemporaries.

23. ἐρωτικόν (Δωριστί)

διττὸς ἔρος ἀνιᾶ με· δυοῖν ὑποτάκομαι παίδοιν,
ἴσον τοι χαροποῖν, ἴσον ἐπαφροδίτοιν.
δριμύς ὁ μὲν γ' ἰταμός θ', ὁ δὲ παρθένω ὄψιν·
ἄμφω ἔρωτας ὁμῶς εἰσπνέετον μαλακῶς.
τῷδε κόμαι ἰοειδέες ἐκ καράνοιο τέτανται,
τῷ δ', ἐτέρω ξανθὰ σείεται ἀπλοκαμῖς.
τὰ πλεῖστ' οὐδὲν ὁμοίω, ἀμειλιχίην δέ θ' ὁμοίω,
νικᾶ δ' οὔτ' ἄλλος κάλλει καὶ χάρισιν.
ἄμφω δ' οὐχ' οἶόν θ' ὑποτλεῖν, Κύπρι· τὸ δ' ἄρα σὺν μοι ¹
βούλουσον ποτέρον ταῖνδε φέρομμι φλόγα.

31. εἰς τὴν αὐτήν

τίπτε μοι ὠχρὸν ἶον πέμπεις; ἦ οὐχ' ἄλις ὠχρός,
Ξάνδρα, τοῦ καὶ ἅπαν αἶμα πέπωκεν ἔρωτος;

¹οἶόν θ': οἶονθ'. σὺν μοι: σύμμοι.

32. εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν

καρπὸν ἐμοὶ ποθέοντι σὺ δ' ἄνθεα φύλλα τε μόνον
 δωρῆ· σημαίνουσ' ὅτι μάτην πονέω.

33. εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν

φύλλα διδοῦσ' ἐράοντι καὶ ἄνθεα, ἦρος ἀπαρχάς,
 αὐτὸ ἐπαγγέλλη σῆς ἔαρ ἡλικίης.

55. εἰς Ἀφροδίτην ὀπλισμένην (Δωριστί)

ἐς τί σάκος κρατέεις, Παφία, λόγχαν τε τινάσσεις,
 καὶ θώρακ' ἐνέδυσ καὶ κόρυν ἀμφίφαλον;
 μέμνασ' ὅττ' οὐ σοὶ δέδοται πολεμήϊα ἔργα
 τᾶ τρυφερᾶ διέπεις δ' ἡμερόεντα γάμον. —
 ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐς δᾶριν θωρήσσομαι· ὅπλα δ' Ἄρης
 ἐνδύομ', ὡς κ' Ἄρης ἐκλελάθοιτο μάχας.
 ἐν γὰρ ἐμοὶ μώνη καὶ τεύχεα καὶ Κύπριν εὐρών,
 οὐ ποκ' ἐμῶν θαλάμων ἔσσειτ' ἀπαυλόσυνος.