

Simonides 29

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This poem comes to us by way of Stobaeus' collection (4.34) of moralizing verse (Campbell 1967, West *IEG* 19, 20). The second line is a quote from the *Iliad*, 6.146-149:

οἷη περ φύλλων γενεή, τοίη δὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν.
φύλλα τὰ μὲν τ' ἄνεμος χαμάδις χέει, ἄλλα δέ θ' ὕλη
τηλεθώσα φύει, ἔαρος δ' ἐπιγίγνεται ὥρη·
ὥς ἀνδρῶν γενεὴ ἢ μὲν φύει ἢ δ' ἀπολήγει.

Just as the generation of leaves is, so is it also of men.
Some leaves the wind scatters to the ground, but others the
flourishing forest nourishes when spring arrives.
So for the generations of men: some grow, others pass away.

The “Chian man” mentioned on the first line is the Chian Bard, Homer.

ἐν δὲ τὸ κάλλιστον Χῖος ἔειπεν ἀνὴρ·
“οἷη περ φύλλων γενεή, τοίη δὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν.”

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¹εἷς μία ἔν one. κάλλιστος η on superlative of καλός, most/very beautiful, best. ἔειπεν Epic aorist εἶπεν, (he) said. Χῖος Chian, of or from Chios.

²οἷος η on such, such a; of what sort/kind; correlative with τοῖος η on later in the line, “just as... so...” φύλλον τό leaf. γενεή ἢ birth, offspring; lineage, race. καί here also.

παῦροι μὴν θνητῶν οὐασι δεξάμενοι
στέρνοις³ ἐγκατέθεντο· πάρεστι γὰρ ἐλπίς ἐκάστω
5 ἀνδρῶν, ἧ τε νέων στήθεσιν ἐμφύεται.
θνητῶν δ' ὄφρα τις ἄνθος ἔχη πολυήρατον ἥβης,
κοῦφον ἔχων θυμὸν πόλλ' ἀτέλεστα νοεῖ·
οὔτε γὰρ ἐλπίδ' ἔχει γηρασέμεν οὔτε θανεῖσθαι
οὐδ', ὑγιῆς ὅταν ᾖ, φροντίδ' ἔχει καμάτου.
10 νήπιοι, οἷς ταύτη κεῖται νόος, οὐδὲ ἴσασιν,
ὡς χρόνος ἔσθ' ἥβης καὶ βίοτοι' ὀλίγος
θνητοῖς⁴· ἀλλὰ σὺ ταῦτα μαθῶν βίοτου ποτὶ τέρμα
ψυχῇ τῶν ἀγαθῶν τλήθι χαριζόμενος.

³ μὴν μιν in manuscript.

³ παῦρος η on few. μὴν evidential particle with which the author emphasizes that the statement comes from his own experience. θνητός ἢ ὄν mortal, as noun, mortal person. Both this word and forms of θνήσκω will be repeated several times in the course of the poem. οὔας, -ατος, τό (Epic) ear, dat.pl. δέχομαι, δέξομαι, ἐδεξάμην accept, receive, aor. part.; “to receive by means of ears” is “listen to, hear”.

⁴ στέρνον τό chest. ἐγ-κατα-τίθημι middle put, lay in with dat. πάρ-εμι (εἰμί) be present, be near; with dat. be present in, with, at. ἐλπίς ἰδος ἢ expectation, hope. ἕκαστος η on each.

⁷ ἧ relative prn., = ἐλπίς. νέος η on young, new, youthful, here substantive, “of the young.” στήθος εος τό breast; understanding often in pl. ἐμ-φύω implant; middle grow in, on; cling to.

⁶ ὄφρα here while, as long as with subjunctive. τις anyone, with partitive θνητῶν, “any (of) person(s)” ἄνθος τό flower. πολυήρατος ον very lovely, very loved. ἥβη ἢ (prime of) youth.

⁷ κοῦφος η on light, nimble. ἀτέλεστος ον without end or effect. νοέω perceive, observe, notice; consider; understand. “considers many things eternal”

⁸ ἐλπίδα ἔχω = ἐλπίζω, to expect, hope, with fut.inf. γηράω grow old; γηρᾶσέμεν Epic future infinitive. θνήσκω, θανέομαι, ἔθανον die.

⁹ ὑγιῆς ἐς healthy, sound. ὅταν (ὄτ' ἄν) when(ever), often nearly ἐάν if; with subjunctive. ᾗ 3.sg. pres. subj. εἰμί. φροντίς ἰδος ἢ care, attention, thought. κάματος ὁ toil; exhaustion, illness; the product of work.

¹⁰ νήπιος η on young, childish; foolish, thoughtless, often used as noun. ταύτη = οὕτως thus, so. κείμαι lie, remain; be. νόος ὁ mind, sense, judgement. νήπιοι, οἷς ταύτη κείται νόος “thoughtless ones, for whom judgement is like this, ...” ἴσασιν 3.pl. pres. οἶδα know.

¹¹ ὡς that. χρόνος ὁ time; duration, period. ἔσθ' = ἐστί. βίοτος ὁ life; duration of one's life; means of living; βίοτοι' = βιότοιο gen.sg. ὀλίγος η on little, small.

¹² θνητοῖσι dat. of interest. μανθάνω, μάθήσομαι, ἐμάθον learn; know. ποτί = πρὸς towards, near. τέρμα ατος τό end, boundary.

¹³ ψυχῇ ἢ spirit, soul; dat. of location, probably with τλήθι, but perhaps χαριζόμενος. ἀγαθός ἢ ὄν good, noble, brave; τῶν ἀγαθῶν “good/noble things.” (-), τλήσομαι, ἔτλην endure, suffer; be patient; dare; τλήθι athematic aorist 2.sg. imperative. χαρίζομαι usu. middle be pleasant, agreeable; oblige; with genitive give freely, cheerfully.