Poems from the Greek Anthology

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June 3, 2012

This is a collection of poems from the enormous Greek Anthology. It will be updated from time to time when I find a new poem that interests me.

7.553, an epitaph

Ζωσίμη, ἡ πρὶν ἐοῦσα μόνῳ τῷ σώματι δούλη,
καὶ τῷ σώματι νῦν εὗρεν ἐλευθερίην.

Meter: elegiac couplet. 1. Ζωσίμη a woman’s name. ή πρὶν here, formerly. ἐοῦσα Epic f.sg. pres.part. of εἰμί. εὑρίσκω εὑρήσω εὗρον find. 2. ἐλευθερία ἡ Epic acc.sg. freedom; manumission.

9.577, by Ptolemaeus

οἶδ’ ὅτι θνητός ἐγώ καὶ ἐφάμερος ἀλλ’ ὅταν ἄστρων
μαστεύω πυκινάς ἀμφιδρόμους ἔλικας,
οὐκέτ’ ἐπιψάυω γαίης ποσίν, ἀλλὰ παρ’ αὐτῷ
Ζανί θεοτρεφέος πίμπλαμαι ἀμβροσίης.

Meter: elegiac couplet. This poem has mix of Doric coloring (θνητός for θνητός, ἐφάμερος for ἐφήμερος, Ζανί for Ζηνί) with Epic Ionic forms (γαίης, ἀμβροσίης). 1. θνητός ή ὁν mortal, as noun, mortal person. ἐφήμερος ον living only a day, short-lived. ἄστρον τό star. 2. μαστεύω seek, search for. πυκινός ή ὁν compact, firm, solid. ἀμφιδρόμος ον running both ways; subject to ebb and flow. ἔλιξ ικος ή whirl, spiral; orbit. 3. ἐπι-ψαυω touch + gen. ποὺς ποδός ή dat. of means, foot. 4. Ζηνί Epic dat.sg. of Ζευς. θεοτρεφής ή feeding the gods. πιμπλημι fill + gen.; mid. be full of. ἀμβροσία ή immortality; elixir of life.

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7.669

Attributed to Plato.

ἀστέρας εἰσαθρεῖς, Ἀστήρ ἐμός· εἴθε γενοίμην
οὐρανός, ὡς πολλοὶς δήμασιν εἰς σὲ βλέπω.

Meter: elegiac couplet. Here we have a play on the name Aster. 1. ἀστήρ ἐρός ὁ star; falling star, meteor. εἰσ-αθρέω look at. 2. ὄμμα τὸ eye. βλέπω εἰς look at.

12.48, by Meleager

κεῖμαι· λάξ ἐπίβαινε κατ’ αὐχένος, ἄγριε δαῖμον.
οἶδα σέ, ναὶ μὰ θεούς, καὶ βαρὺν ὄντα φέρειν·
oἶδα καὶ ἐμπυρα τόξα. βαλὼν δ’ ἐπ’ ἐμὴν φρένα πυρσοὺς,
oὐ φλέξεις· ἤδη πᾶσα γάρ ἐστι τέφρη.

Meter: elegiac couplet. 1. κεῖμαι lie, remain; here, lie wounded. λάξ adv., with the foot. ἐπι-βαίνω step upon, walk (up)on; with λάξ, trample. κατά here, down onto, down upon. αὐχήν ἐνος ὁ neck, throat. ἄγριος (α) ὁ wild, fierce, savage. 2. οἶδα takes participle in dependent clauses. βαρὺν ὄντα dep. on οἶδα, with φέρειν as an adj. complement, “I know you and that you are hard to bear.” 3. ἐμπυρα in or by the fire; burning, scorching. τόξον τὸ bow; in pl. bow and arrows. φρήν φρενός ἡ diaphragm but usually metaphorical for heart, soul, mind. τυρφός ὁ torch; signal-fire. 4. φλέγω burn, inflame. ἤδη now, already. πᾶσα i.e., 1.3 φρήν. τέφρα ἡ ashes, esp. of a funeral pyre.