

CAG1001: INTRODUCTION TO GREEK IN ACTION: WEEKS 5–6 (I)
FINDING YOUR WAY AROUND A PASSAGE: ESTABLISHING ‘NAVIGATION POINTS’
‘ANACREONTA’: *THE CICADA*

[Note: ‘Anacreonta’: poems passed down through the manuscript tradition as having been composed by the famous 6th C BC poet Anacreon, but which are actually poems by other writers of many different ages, which became associated with this particularly popular poet.]

A

Μακαρίζομέν σε, τέττιξ,
 ὅτε δενδρέων ἐπ’ ἄκρων
 δλίγην δρόσον πεπωκὼς
 βασιλεὺς ὅπως αἰεῖδεις·
 5 σὰ γάρ ἐστι κείνα πάντα,
 ὅποσα βλέπεις ἐν ἀγροῖς,
 ὅποσα τρέφουσιν ὕλαι.
 σὺ δὲ τίμιος βροτοῖσιν,
 θέρεος γλυκὺς προφήτης.
 10 φιλέουσι μὲν σε Μοῦσαι,
 φιλέει δὲ Φοῖβος αὐτός,
 λιγυρὴν δ’ ἔδωκεν οἴμην·
 τὸ δὲ γήρας οὐ σε τείρει,
 σοφὴ, γηγενής, φίλυμνε·
 15 ἀπαθὴς δ’, ἀναιμόσαρκε,
 σχεδὸν εἴ θεοῖς ὅμοιος.

WE bless you, cicada,
 When out of the tree-tops
 Having sipped of the dew
 Like a king you are singing:
 And indeed you are king of
 These meadows around us,
 And the woodland’s all yours.
 Man’s dear little neighbour,
 And midsummer’s envoy,
 The Muses all love you,
 And Apollo himself does—
 He gave you your music.
 Age cannot wither you,
 Tiny philosopher,
 Earth-child, musician;
 The world, flesh and devil
 Accost you so little,
 That you might be a god.

N.B.: The Greek here does *not* contract
forms of -έω verbs

trans. Edmund Blunden, 1931
Oxford Book of Greek Verse in Translation

B

We may well pronounce thee happy,
 Oh, Cicada ! that on tree-tops,
 Having drunk thy little dew-draught,
 Like a king enthron'd thou singest.
 Thine own are all things round thee ;
 In the fields whate'er thou viewest,
 And whate'er the wood produces.
 [Thou a friend art to the tiller,
 Doing harm to nought and no one ;]

see on trans. C, below

And esteem'd thou art of mortals,
 The sweet harbinger of summer.
 And the muses truly love thee :
 And thou art loved of Phoebus,
 For thy clear-toned voice he gave thee.
 And with age thou dost not wither,
 Loving song, earth-born and prudent,
 With nor flesh, nor blood, nor sorrow,
 To the Gods thou'rt nearly equal.

trans. Thomas J. Arnold

Sweet Cricket, here's a health to you,
 While on the high tree-top you sing,
 Made merry with a drop of dew,
 As happy as a king.

For all the landscape hath is yours
 Whate'er in farm or field you see ;
 And all the gifts of all the Hours
 You hold in simple fee.

[You're friends with them that plant and sow
 Because you take nor prize nor prey ;
 You're dear to all men, for we know
 From you that it is May.

: alt. version of Greek : reading
 φέρουσιν ἔρα

] → lines given in an alternative
 reading of Greek

The Muses love you, pretty thing,
 And great Apollo loves you too ;
 For they that make all musicking
 Gave your sweet voice to you.

Time flies, but age can wear you not,
 Deft minstrel-offspring of the sod ;
 Sans blood and passions blood-begot
 You're more than half a God.

trans. J. M. Edmonds, 1963

Loeb Classical Library

Anacreonta, *The Cicada*

Questions

1) Considering the list of all the endings you have learnt, find all the -ω / -έω verb forms in this poem (there are 7). Say what form each is.

Give the dictionary form of each verb and look them up.

Where possible, find the equivalent words/phrases in the English translations A, B & C. Some of the verbs aren't directly represented in the translations (or only in one): which ones and how do A and/or B and/or C translate the whole sentence/phrase in these cases?

How good/effective do you think the translations given for each verb form are?

2) Say what form (case, number, gender) each of the following nouns from the text is, and give the dictionary form (nominative singular). Note that your final decision about the form may be affected by what you discover the noun's dictionary form to be! Look the words up, and give a suitable meaning for each word in its context here.

(a) δενδρέων (2)

(b) δρόσον (3)

(c) ἄγροϊς (6)

(d) ὕλαι (7)

(e) Μοῦσαι (10)

(f) Φοῖβος (11)

(g) οἶμην (12)

(h) θεοῖς (16)

Find the equivalents of these words in the translations. Comment on any differences, or any ways in which, looking at the range of ideas the dictionary suggests these words involve, you think the Greek words convey more than the translations do.

3) Using the correspondences established in q.'s 1 and 2 to help guide you, find the equivalents in the Greek of:

(a) "And midsummer's envoy" Compare the three translations with the Greek.

(b) "Tiny philosopher, earth-child, musician" [note: the 'vocative' case — used in Greek for addressing things/people — ends in -ε for 2nd declension -ος nouns]

Compare the three translations with the Greek.

4) What would a close translation of the second-last Greek line be? Find the equivalent in the translations and compare.