

The queen's speech: Callimachus's Pieria, Aphrodite, and the political power of Hellenistic queens

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POWER, ROYAL AGENCY, & ELITE WOMEN
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Power as Shadow?

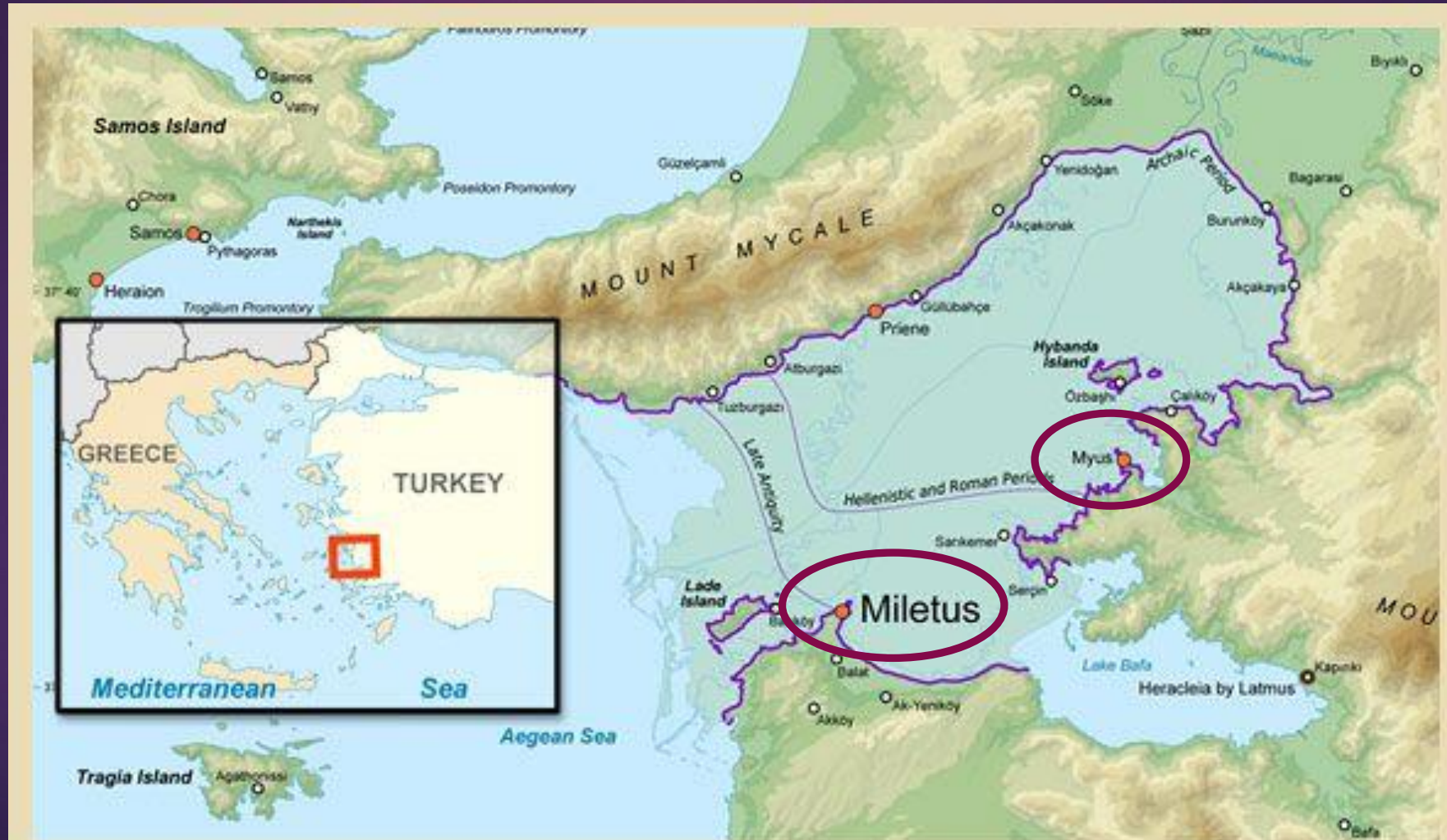
- ▶ “Power resides where men believe it . It’s a trick, a shadow on the wall. And a very small man can cast a very large shadow.” -- Lord Varys



Sources for Pieria's unification of Myus and Miletus

- ▶ **-Callimachus, fr. 80-83 Harder (III B.C.E.):**
- ▶ **-Aristaenetos, *Epistulae* 1.15 (VI C.E.):**
 - ▶ *Summary of Aristaenetos:*
 - ▶ Miletus and Myus long hostile (lit. "unmixed") except for brief truces. Aphrodite takes pity; she and Graces adorn the already-beautiful Pieria of Myus. Pieria attends Artemis festival in Miletus; Phrygius, the king of Miletus sees her, desires her, takes her to bed. After making love Phrygius asks her to tell him what she wishes from him in return. Aristaenetos, like Callimachus, now addresses Pieria directly: Pieria rejects thought of jewelry, clothes, slaves – gifts women want. Pieria blushes purple with shame, looks at ground. Pieria asks to be able to return with her kinsmen without fear. Phrygius understands her intention to ask for peace. The peace they make is stronger than one sworn with sacrifices; Pieria offers proof that Aphrodite makes orators who are more powerful than Nestor. Story is *action* for popular saying of Milesian women: "I wish that my husband would honor me, his wife, as much as Phrygius honored beautiful Pieria."
- ▶ **-Plutarch, *Mulierum Virtutes* 16 = *Mor.* 253f-254b (I/II C.E.)**
- ▶ **-Polyaenus *Strategems* 8.35 (II C.E.)**
 - ▶ (both Plutarch and Polyaenus add a noble parentage for Pieria and omit sex)

Callimachus, fr. 80 Harder: Pieria of Myus and Phrygius of Miletus



“Phrygius and Pieria” (fr. 80 Harder = 80 + 82 Pf.)

“...cloud...For whether.....to say this.....from me...”

(5) So he spoke. But neither a *pyleon* (headband) nor *kalykes* (earrings?), nor Lydian cloth...[nor] Carian slave-women... —the things in which you women especially delight—these did not cast you from your clever plan.

(10) But having blushed in the cheeks with shame—as if with purple dye—you spoke, with eyes turned away...“I would long to return...[with] more...”. ...He perceived your intention...

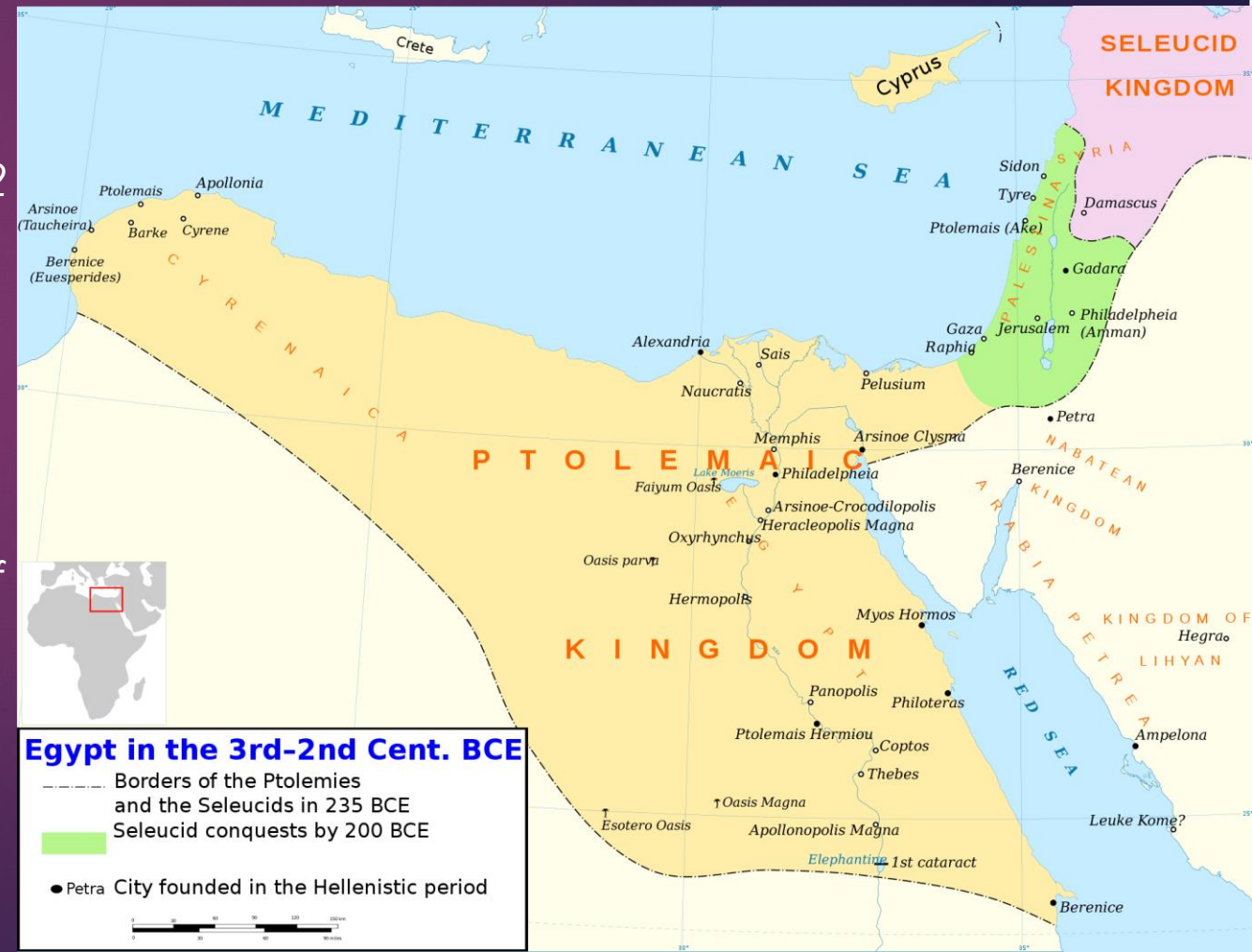
(15)...desiring [peace?] for your fatherland...Myus and those living in Miletus...to [go] to the [temple] only of Neleid Artemis...,

but at that time you made a peace treaty more trustworthy than sacrifices of oxen,
(20) having shown that even Cypris makes speakers far more powerful than the famous Pylia (i.e. Nestor). For many embassies went from each town [and returned] without accomplishment. ...

(All translations mine)

Callimachus, fr. 80 in context

- ▶ The frame of *Aetia* Books 3-4
 - ▶ Start of Book 3: *Victoria Berenices* (fr. 54-60b Harder)
 - ▶ Within book 3: "*Phrygius and Pieria*" (fr. 80-82 Harder)
 - ▶ End of book 4: *Coma Berenices* (fr. 110 Harder)
- ▶ 246 B.C. : royal wedding and unification
 - ▶ Berenice the Second, daughter of Magas of Cyrene +
 - ▶ Ptolemy III Euergetes, son of Ptolemy II Philadelphus



Archaic Aphrodite's powers of persuasion

Iliad 14.214-221

ἦ, καὶ ἀπὸ στήθεσφιν ἐλύσατο κεστὸν ἱμάντα
ποικίλον, ἔνθα δέ οἱ θελκτήρια πάντα τέτυκτο:
ἔνθ' ἔνι μὲν φιλότης, ἐν δ' ἴμερος, ἐν δ' ὀαριστὺς
πάρφασις, ἣ τ' ἔκλεψε νόον πύκα περ φρονεόντων.
τόν ῥά οἱ ἔμβαλε χερσὶν ἔπος τ' ἔφατ' ἔκ τ' ὀνόμαζε:
τῆ νῦν τοῦτον ἱμάντα τεῶ ἐγκάτθεο κόλπῳ
ποικίλον, ὧ ἔνι πάντα τετεύχεται: οὐδέ σέ φημι
ἄπρηκτόν γε νέεσθαι, ὅ τι φρεσὶ σῆσι μενοινᾷς.

So she (Aphrodite) spoke, and she loosed her embroidered, dappled girdle, and there all her charms were fashioned: in it was love, desire, sweet talk, persuasion which cheats the mind even of clever men. She put it in her (Hera's) hands, and spoke and addressed her: 'Place this dappled girdle on your breast, in which everything is fashioned; and I declare that you will not go without accomplishment, in whatever you desire in your mind.'

Apollonis & the “courtesan’s persuasion”

Polybius 22.20.1-2

ὅτι Ἀπολλωνίς, ἡ Ἀττάλου τοῦ πατρὸς Εὐμένους τοῦ βασιλέως γαμετή, Κυζικηνὴ ἦν, γυνὴ διὰ πλείους αἰτίας ἀξία μνήμης καὶ παρασημασίας.

[2] καὶ γὰρ ὅτι δημότις ὑπάρχουσα βασίλισσα ἐγεγόνει καὶ ταύτην διεφύλαξε τὴν ὑπεροχὴν μέχρι τῆς τελευταίας, οὐχ ἔταιρικὴν προσφερομένη πιθανότητα, σωφρονικὴν δὲ καὶ πολιτικὴν σεμνότητα καὶ καλοκαγαθίαν, δικαία τυγχάνειν τῆς ἐπ’ ἀγαθῷ μνήμης ἐστίν,

That Apollonis, the wife of Attalus, the father of Eumenes the king, was a Cyzican, and a woman worthy of memory and commendation for many reasons. For since, although she was a commoner, she had become a *basilissa*, and she preserved this supremacy until her death, not exhibiting a courtesan’s persuasiveness, but a prudent and ordinary dignity and goodness, it is right that she obtain a favorable recollection.

Berenice I, wife of Ptolemy I Soter

Theocritus, *Idyll* 17.34-52

οἷα δ' ἐν πινυταῖσι περικλειτὰ Βερενίκα
ἔπρεπε θηλυτέραις, ὄφελος μέγα γειναμένοισι. 35
τᾶ μὲν Κύπρον ἔχοισα Διώνας πότνια κούρα
κόλπον ἐς εὐώδη ῥαδινὰς ἐσεμάξατο χεῖρας.
τῷ οὕπῳ τινὰ φαντὶ ἀδεῖν τόσον ἀνδρὶ γυναικῶν,
ὅσσόν περ Πτολεμαῖος ἔην ἐφίλησεν ἄκοιτιν.
ἦ μὰν ἀντεφιλεῖτο πολὺ πλέον: ὤδ' ἐκε παῖσι 40
θαρήσας σφετέροισιν ἐπιτρέποι οἶκον ἅπαντα,
ὅππότε κεν φιλέων βαῖνη λέχος ἐς φιλεούσης.
ἀστόργου δὲ γυναικὸς ἐπ' ἀλλοτρίῳ νόος αἰεὶ,
ῥήιδιοι δὲ γοναί, τέκνα δ' οὐ ποτεοικότα πατρί.

...
ἐς ναὸν κατέθηκας, ἑᾶς δ' ἀπεδάσασα τιμᾶς. 50
πᾶσιν δ' ἦπιος ἦδε βροτοῖς μαλακοῦς μὲν ἔρωτας
προσπνεῖει, κούφας δὲ διδοῖ ποθέοντι μερίμνας.

And such a great woman, the well-renowned Berenice, was superior among prudent women and was a great boon to the children she bore. The divine queen who holds Cyprus, daughter of Dione, impressed her slender hands upon Berenice's perfumed breast. For this reason they say that no woman ever pleased a man so much as Ptolemy took pleasure in his wife. **He was loved much more in return! For having rejoiced so in their children he bequeathed his house entire to them, whenever enamored he would step into the bed of a loving wife.** But the mind of a heartless woman is always upon another man, childbirths come easily, and the children are not like the father.

...you (Aphrodite) set her up in your temple and gave her a share of your honors. She (Berenice-Aphrodite) breathes gentle loves upon all mortals, and she gives light cares to the one who is yearning.

Callimachus, fr. 80.1-9: Gift and counter-gift

ἄν νέφος ἀν[
εἴτε γὰρ οὐκατ[
τοῦτ' εἰπεῖν[] []
ἐ]ξ ἐμέθεν τε[]ντα.'
5 ἦ] ῥα · σὲ δ' οὐ πύληων οὐ κάλυκες,
Λύδιον οὐ καίρωμα]ι Κάειρα]ι
λάτριες, οὐκαγ[. .]ικῶ[]ς,
τ]οῖς ἔπι θηλύτ[ερ]αι.[] ἰαίνεσθε
ἔξαιτον, πυκίνοῦ γινώματος ἐξ[έ]βαλογ·

...cloud...
For whether...
...to say this...
...from me..."

(5) So he spoke. But neither a *pyleon* (headband) nor *kalykes* (earrings?), nor Lydian cloth...(nor) Carian slave-women... —the things in which you women especially delight—these did not cast you from your clever plan.

Bride or courtesan?

Aphrodite's seduction "like a virgin"

Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite 80-82, 108-110, 117-120

στῆ δ' αὐτοῦ προπάροιθε Διὸς θυγάτηρ Ἀφροδίτη
παρθένω ἀδμήτη μέγεθος καὶ εἶδος ὁμοίη,
μή μιν ταρβήσειεν ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖσι νοήσας.

....

Ἄγχιση, κύδιστε χαμαιγενέων ἀνθρώπων,
οὔ τις τοι θεὸς εἶμι: τί μ' ἀθανάτησιν εἴσκεις;
ἀλλὰ καταθνητὴ τέ, γυνὴ δέ με γείνατο μήτηρ.

...

νῦν δέ μ' ἀνῆρπαξε χρυσόρραπις Ἀργειφόντης
ἐκ χοροῦ Ἀρτέμιδος χρυσηλακάτου, κελαδαινῆς.

πολλαὶ δὲ νύμφαι καὶ παρθένοι ἀλφεισίβοιαι
παίζομεν, ἀμφὶ δ' ὄμιλος ἀπείριτος ἐστεφάνωτο.

And Aphrodite, the daughter of Zeus,
stood before him, similar in size and
appearance to an unwed virgin, so that he
(Anchises) would not recognize her with his
eyes and grow afraid.

...

"Anchises, most glorious of earth-born
men, I am no goddess, I tell you. Why do
you liken me to the immortals? I am mortal,
and a mother gave me birth.

...

Just now the slayer of Argus of the golden
wand (Hermes) seized me up from the
chorus of loud-voiced Artemis of golden
arrows. And we many nymphs and virgins
who bring in oxen were playing, and a
boundless company encircled us.

Callimachus, fr. 80.1-9: Gift and counter-gift

ἄν νέφος ἀν[
εἴτε γὰρ οὐκατ[
τοῦτ' εἶπεῖν[] []
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5 ἦ] ῥα · σὲ δ' οὐ πυλῆων οὐ κά]λυκες,
Λ]ύδιον οὐ καίρωμα]ι Κάειρ[α]ι
λάτριες, οὐκαγ[. .]ικῶ[]ς,
τ]οῖς ἔπι θηλύτ[ερ]αι.[] ἰαίνεσθε
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Kings, courtesans, and gift-exchange

Machon, *Chreiai* 226-30 Gow = Athen. 13.579a

αἰτουμένην λέγουσι τὴν πυγὴν ποτὲ
ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως Μανίαν Δημητρίου
ἀνταξιῶσαι δωρεὰν καὐτόν τινα,
δόντος δ' ἐπιστρέψασα μετὰ μικρὸν λέγει,
“ Ἀγαμέμνωνος παῖ, νῦν ἐκεῖν' ἔξεστί σοι.”

cf. Sophocles *Electra* 1–4

ὦ τοῦ στρατηγήσαντος ἐν Τροίᾳ ποτὲ
Ἀγαμέμνωνος παῖ, νῦν ἐκεῖν' ἔξεστί σοι
παρόντι λεύσσειν, ὧν πρόθυμος ἦσθ' αἰ.
τὸ γὰρ παλαιὸν Ἴαργος οὐποθεῖς τόδε...

They say that once, when Mania was asked for her ass by king Demetrius, she demanded from him, too, a royal estate in return; and when he gave it, she turned around right away and said, “Son of Agamemnon, now those things are possible for you”.

(Mania quotes Orestes' *paidagogos*):
“Son of Agamemnon, who long ago warred in Troy, now those things are possible for you to see that you are here, those which you were long eager. For you desired this ancient land of Argos...”

Callimachus, fr. 80.10-11: Purple shame, averted eyes

αἰδοῖ δ' ὡς φοῖ[νικι] τεὰς ἐρύθουσα παρειὰς
ἔνν]επες ὄφ[θαλμοῖς ἔμπαλι . [. . .]ομέν[.]ι[

But having blushed in
the cheeks with shame—
as if with purple dye—
you spoke, with eyes
turned away...

Callimachus, fr. 80.10-11

Purple shame

αἰδοῖ δ' ὡς φοῖ[νικι] τεὰς ἐρύθουσα παρειὰς
ἔνν]επες ὄφ[θαλμο]ῖς ἔμπαλι . [. . .]ομέν[.]ι[

Iliad 4.141-147 (Menelaus's wound)

ὡς δ' ὅτε τις τ' ἐλέφαντα γυνὴ φοῖνικι μίηνη
Μηονὶς ἢ Κάειρα παρήϊον ἔμμεναι ἵππων:
κεῖται δ' ἐν θαλάμῳ, πολέες τέ μιν ἠρήσαντο
ἵππηες φορέειν: βασιλῆϊ δὲ κεῖται ἄγαλμα,
ἀμφοτέρων κόσμος θ' ἵππῳ ἐλατῆρί τε κῦδος:
τοῖοι τοι Μενέλαε μίανθην αἵματι μηροῖ
εὐφυέες κνήμαί τε ἰδὲ σφυρὰ κάλ' ὑπένερθε.

But having blushed in the cheeks
with shame—as if with purple dye—
you spoke, with eyes turned away...

As when a Maeonian or Carian
woman dyes ivory with purple to be
a cheekpiece for horses, and it is laid
up in the inner room, and many
horsemen pray to bear it, but it is laid
up as an agalma for a king, both an
adornment for the horse and glory for
the rider: such, Menelaus, were your
muscular thighs stained with blood,
and your legs, and your fine ankles
below.

Callimachus, fr. 80.10-11

Pieria's averted eyes & Odysseus's speech

αἶδοι' δ' ὡς φοῖ[νικί] τεὰς ἐρύθουσα παρειὰς
ἔνν]επες ὄφ[θαλμοῖς ἔμπαλι . [. . .]ομέν[.]ι[

Iliad 3.216-224 (Odysseus's embassy speech before the Trojans)

ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ πολὺμητις ἀναΐξειεν Ὀδυσσεύς
στάσκειν, ὑπαὶ δὲ ἴδεσκε κατὰ χθονὸς ὄμματα πήξας,
σκῆπτρον δ' οὔτ' ὀπίσω οὔτε προπρηγνὲς ἐνώμα,
ἀλλ' ἀστεμφὲς ἔχεσκεν αἶδρεῖ φωτὶ ἐοικῶς:
φαιῆς κε ζάκοτόν τε τιν' ἔμμεναι ἄφρονά τ' αὔτως. 220
ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ ὄπα τε μεγάλην ἐκ στήθεος εἶη
καὶ ἔπεα νιφάδεσσιν ἐοικότα χειμερίησιν,
οὐκ ἂν ἔπειτ' Ὀδυσῆϊ γ' ἐρίσσειε βροτὸς ἄλλος:
οὐ τότε γ' ὦδ' Ὀδυσῆος ἀγασσάμεθ' εἶδος ἰδόντες.

But having blushed in the cheeks with shame—as if with purple dye—you spoke, with eyes turned away...

But whenever cunning Odysseus rose, he would stand and look down with his eyes fixed on the ground, and would move his staff neither backwards nor forwards, but would hold it motionless, very like a fool: you would claim that he was rancorous and merely senseless. But when he would cast his great voice and words alike to wintry snow from his chest, then no other man could vie with Odysseus; not so did we marvel then, having seen Odysseus's aspect.

Callimachus, fr. 80.12-15: Pieria's request, Phrygius's response

]..[]ε χρήσοιμι [νέ]εσθαι
] . [.] μετὰ πλ]εόνων.
15] .ε, νόον δ' ἐφ[ρ]άσσατο σεῖο
]πατρίδι μαιομένης

(Pieria speaks)
“I would long to return...[with]
more...”

He perceived your intention...

(15)...desiring [peace?] for your
fatherland

Callimachus, fr. 80.18-23

Pieria's peace

ἀλλὰ σὺ τῆμος
βουκτ[ασ]ιῶν ἀρ[τὺν πιστο]τέρην ἔταμες,
20 ἔνδειξας καὶ Κύπ[ρι]ν ὅτι ῥη[τ]ήρας ἐκείνου
τ]εῦχει τοῦ Πυλί[ου κρ]έσσονας οὐκ ὀλίγον.
ἐ]ξεσίαι πολέε[ς γὰρ ἀπ'] ἀμφοτέροιο μο]λοῦσαι
ἄστ]ξος ἀπρήκτ[ους οἴκαδ'] ἀνήλθον ὁδοῦς.

But at that time you made a treaty
more trustworthy than sacrifices of
oxen,

(20) having shown that even Cypris makes speakers far more powerful than the famous Pylian (i.e. Nestor). For many embassies went from each town [and returned] without accomplishment. ...

Iliad 9.437-443

Phoenix's educational ideal

πῶς ἂν ἔπειτ' ἀπὸ σεῖο φίλον τέκος αὔθι λιποίμην
οἶος; σοὶ δέ μ' ἔπεμπε γέρων ἵππηλάτα Πηλεὺς
ἥματι τῷ ὅτε σ' ἐκ Φθίης Ἀγαμέμνονι πέμπε
νήπιον οὗ πω εἰδόθ' ὁμοῖου πολέμοιο 440
οὐδ' ἀγορέων, ἵνα τ' ἄνδρες ἀριπρεπέες τελέθουσι.
τοῦνεκά με προέηκε διδασκέμεναι τὰδε πάντα,
μύθων τε ῥητῆρ' ἔμεναι πρηκτῆρὰ τε ἔργων.

How then, dear child, could I be left apart from you, alone? The old man Peleus, driver of horses, sent me to you on that day when he was sending you from Phthia to Agamemnon, a little boy ignorant of grievous war and assemblies, too, where men earn distinction. For this reason he sent me to teach you all these things, to be a speaker of words and a doer of deeds.

Callimachus, fr. 80.18-23

Pieria's peace

ἀλλ]λὰ σὺ τῆμος
βουκ]ασ[ι]ῶν ἀρ[τὺν πιστο]τέρην ἔταμες,
20 ἔνδει]ξας καὶ Κύπ[ρι]ν ὅτι ῥη[τ]ῆρας ἐκείνου
τ]εὺχει τοῦ Πυλί[ου κρ]έσσονας οὐκ ὀλίγον.
ἐ]ξεσίαί πολέε[ς γὰρ ἀπ'] ἀμφοτέρω μο]λοῦσαι
ἄστ]εος ἀπρήκ[τους οἴκαδ'] ἀνήλθον ὁδοῦς.
].σθ[.]θε.[

But at that time you made a treaty
more trustworthy than sacrifices of
oxen,
(20) having shown that even Cypris
makes speakers far more powerful than
the famous Pylvian (i.e. Nestor). For
many embassies went from each town
[and returned] without
accomplishment. ...

Hesiod, *Theogony* 81-90

Muses and kings

ὄν τινα τιμήσωσι Διὸς κοῦραι μέγαλοιο
γινόμενόν τε ἴδωσι διοτρεφῶν βασιλῆων,
τῷ μὲν ἐπὶ γλῶσση γλυκερὴν χεῖουσιν ἔερσην,
τοῦ δ' ἔπε' ἐκ στόματος ῥεῖ μείλιχα: οἱ δέ τε λαοὶ
πάντες ἐς αὐτὸν ὀρῶσι διακρίνοντα θέμιστας 85
ἰθείησι δίκησιν: ὃ δ' ἀσφαλῆως ἀγορεύων
αἶψά κε καὶ μέγα νεῖκος ἐπισταμένως κατέπαυσεν:
τοῦνεκα γὰρ βασιλῆες ἐχέφρονες, οὔνεκα λαοῖς
βλαπτομένοις ἀγορῆφι μετὰτροπα ἔργα τελεῦσι
ῥηιδίως, μαλακοῖσι παραιφάμενοι ἐπέεσσιν. 90

Whomever of the Zeus-nourished kings
the daughters of great Zeus (i.e. the
Muses) honor and look upon as he is
born, upon his tongue they pour sweet
dew, and from his mouth flow gentle
words; and all the peoples watch him
judge lawsuits with straight verdicts. For
this reason he would, by speaking
unerringly, swiftly put an end to even a
great feud knowledgeably. And that's
why kings possess wisdom: because
they easily put a stop to deeds that
are doing people harm when they are
being misled in the assembly, by
persuading them with gentle words.

Pieria and the shadow of the queen

- ▶ “Power resides where men believe it . It’s a trick, a shadow on the wall. And a very small man can cast a very large shadow.” -- Lord Varys

