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The following Catullus poems have been translated by A. S. Kline, and taken from the Poetry in Translation website:

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Catullus

7. How Many Kisses: to Lesbia

Lesbia, you ask how many kisses of yours
would be enough and more to satisfy me.
As many as the grains of Libyan sand
that lie between hot Jupiter's oracle,
at Ammon, in resin-producing Cyrene,
and old Battiades sacred tomb:
or as many as the stars, when night is still,
gazing down on secret human desires:
as many of your kisses kissed
are enough, and more, for mad Catullus,
as can't be counted by spies
nor an evil tongue bewitch us.

Notes

8. Advice: to himself

Sad Catullus, stop playing the fool,
and let what you know leads you to ruin, end.
Once, bright days shone for you,
when you came often drawn to the girl
loved as no other will be loved by you.
Then there were many pleasures with her,
that you wished, and the girl not unwilling,
truly the bright days shone for you.
And now she no longer wants you: and you
weak man, be unwilling to chase what flees,
or live in misery: be strong-minded, stand firm.
Goodbye girl, now Catullus is firm,
he doesn't search for you, won't ask unwillingly.
But you'll grieve, when nobody asks.
Woe to you, wicked girl, what life's left for you?
Who'll submit to you now? Who'll see your beauty?
Who now will you love? Whose will they say you'll be?
Who will you kiss? Whose lips will you bite?
But you, Catullus, be resolved to be firm.

Notes

83. The Husband: to Lesbia

Lesbia says bad things about me to her husband's face:
it's the greatest delight to that fool.
Mule, don't you see? If she forgot and was silent about me,
that would be right: now since she moans and abuses,
she not only remembers, but something more serious,
she's angry. That is, she's inflamed, so she speaks.

Notes

The following passages from Virgil's Aeneid have been translated by A. S. Kline, and taken from the Poetry in Translation website@

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Virgil, *Aeneid*

Book 8: 671–713 Vulcan's Shield: The Battle of Actium

The likeness of the swollen sea flowed everywhere among these,
in gold, though the flood foamed with white billows,
and dolphins in bright silver swept the waters
round about with arching tails, and cut through the surge.
In the centre bronze ships could be seen, the Battle of Actium,
and you could make out all Leucate in feverish
preparation for war, the waves gleaming with gold.
On one side Augustus Caesar stands on the high stern,
leading the Italians to the conflict, with him the Senate,
the People, the household gods, the great gods, his happy brow
shoots out twin flames, and his father's star is shown on his head.
Elsewhere Agrippa, favoured by the winds and the gods
leads his towering column of ships, his brow shines
with the beaks of the naval crown, his proud battle distinction.
On the other side Antony, with barbarous wealth and strange weapons,
conqueror of eastern peoples and the Indian shores, bringing Egypt,
and the might of the Orient, with him, and furthest Bactria:
and his Egyptian consort follows him (the shame).
All press forward together, and the whole sea foams,
churned by the sweeping oars and the trident rams.
They seek deep water: you'd think the Cycladic islands were uprooted
and afloat on the flood, or high mountains clashed with mountains,

Notes

so huge the mass with which the men attack the towering sterns.
Blazing tow and missiles of winged steel shower from their hands,
Neptune's fields grow red with fresh slaughter.
The queen in the centre signals to her columns with the native
sistrum, not yet turning to look at the twin snakes at her back.
Barking Anubis, and monstrous gods of every kind
brandish weapons against Neptune, Venus,
and Minerva. Mars rages in the centre of the contest,
engraved in steel, and the grim Furies in the sky,
and Discord in a torn robe strides joyously, while
Bellona follows with her blood-drenched whip.
Apollo of Actium sees from above and bends his bow: at this
all Egypt, and India, all the Arabs and Sabaeans turn and flee.
The queen herself is seen to call upon the winds,
set sail, and now, even now, spread the slackened canvas.
The lord with the power of fire has fashioned her pallid
with the coming of death, amidst the slaughter,
carried onwards by the waves and wind of Iapyx,
while before her is Nile, mourning with his vast extent,
opening wide his bays, and, with his whole tapestry, calling
the vanquished to his dark green breast, and sheltering streams.

Book 11.532–835

Book 11: 532–596 Diana's Concern For Camilla

Meanwhile, in heaven's halls, Diana, Latona's daughter,
spoke to swift Opis, one of her sacred band of virgin
followers, and gave voice to these sorrowful words:
'O girl, Camilla, is going to the cruel war, and takes up

Notes

my weapons in vain. She's dearer to me than all others,
and this is no new love that comes to Diana,
or moves my spirit with sudden sweetness.
When Metabus was driven from his throne by hatred
of his tyrannical power, and was leaving Privernum,
his ancient city, fleeing amidst the conflict of war,
he took his child to share his exile, and, slightly altering
her mother's name Casmilla, called her Camilla.
Carrying her in front of him at his breast he sought a long ridge
of lonely forests: fierce weapons threatened him on every side,
and the Volscians hovered round him with their troops.
While they were still in mid-flight, see, the Ausenus overflowed,
foaming to the top of its banks, so great a downpour burst
from the clouds. He, preparing to swim across, was held back
by love of his child, and fear for his dear burden. Quickly,
debating all options with himself, he settled reluctantly
on this idea: the warrior fastened his daughter to the giant spear,
solid with knots and of seasoned oak, he chanced to be carrying
in his strong hand, wrapping her in the bark of a cork-tree
from the woods, and tying her wisely to the middle of the shaft:
then balancing it in his mighty hand he cried out to the heavens:
'Kind virgin daughter of Latona, dweller in the woods, I her father
dedicate this child to your service: fleeing the enemy through the air,
yours is the first weapon she clasps as a suppliant. Goddess I beg you
to accept as your own this that I now commit to the uncertain breeze.'
He spoke, and drawing back his arm hurled the spinning shaft:
the waters roared, and the wretched Camilla flew
over the rushing river on the hissing steel. And Metabus,
with a great crowd of his enemies pressing him closely,
gave himself to the flood, and victoriously snatched his gift

Notes

to Diana from the grassy turf, the spear and the little maid.
No city would accept him within their houses or their walls,
(nor would he in his savagery have given himself up to them)
he passed his life among shepherds on the lonely mountains.
Here, among the thickets of savage lairs, he nourished
his child at the udders of a mare from the herd, and milk
from wild creatures, squeezing the teats into her delicate mouth.
As soon as the infant had taken her first steps,
he placed a sharp lance in her hands, and hung
bow and quiver from the little one's shoulder.
A tiger's pelt hung over head and down her back
instead of a gold clasp for her hair, and a long trailing robe.
Even then she was hurling childish spears with tender hand,
whirling a smooth-thonged sling round her head,
bringing down Strymonian cranes and snowy swans.
Many a mother in Etruscan fortresses wished for her
as a daughter-in-law in vain: she, pure, content with Diana
alone, cherished her love of her weapons and maidenhood.
I wish she had not been swept up into such warfare,
trying to challenge the Trojans: she would be
my darling, and one of my company still.
Come now, nymph, since bitter fate drives her on,
slip from the sky and seek out the Latin borders,
where with evil omen they join in sad battle.
Take these weapons and draw an avenging arrow from the quiver,
and if anyone violates her sacred flesh by wounding her,
Trojan or Italian, pay me with their equal punishment in blood.
Then I'll carry the body and untouched weapons of the poor girl
in a cavernous cloud to a sepulchre, and bury her in her own land.'
She spoke, and Opis slid down with a sound through

Notes

heaven's light air, her body veiled in a dark whirlwind.

Book 11: 597–647 The Armies Engage

In the meantime the Trojan band with the Etruscan
leaders, and all the cavalry, approached the walls,
marshalled in squadrons troop by troop. Warhorses
neighing, cavorted over the whole area, fighting the tight rein,
prancing this way and that: the field bristled far and wide
with the steel of spears, and the plain blazed with lifted weapons.
On the other side, also, Messapus, and the swift Latins,
Coras with his brother, and virgin Camilla's wing appeared,
opposing them on the plain, and drawing their right arms far back
they thrust their lances forward, the spear-points quivered:
the march of men and the neighing of horses increased.
And now both halted their advance within a spear's throw:
they ran forward with a sudden shout and spurred on
their maddened horses, spears showered from all sides at once
as dense as snowflakes, and the sky was veiled in darkness.
Immediately Tyrrhenus and brave Aconteus charged
each other, with levelled spears, and were the first to fall
with a mighty crash, shattering their horses' breastbones
as they collided: Aconteus, hurled like a thunderbolt
or a heavy stone shot from a catapult, was thrown
some distance, and wasted his breath of life on the air.
At once the ranks wavered, and the Latins slung their shields
behind them, and turned their mounts towards the walls.
The Trojans pursued, Asilas their leader heading the squadrons.
Now they were nearing the gates when the Latins again
raised a shout, and turned their horse's responsive necks:
the Trojans now fled, and retreated to a distance with loose reins,

Notes

like the sea running in with alternate waves,
now rushing to shore, dashing over the rocks
in a foaming flood, drenching the furthest sands
with its swell, now retreating quickly, sucking rolling
pebbles in its wash, leaving dry sand as the shallows ebbed:
twice the Tuscans drove the routed Rutulians to the city, twice,
repulsed, they looked behind, defending their backs with their shields.
But when they clashed in a third encounter their lines
locked tight, and man marked man, then truly, the battle
swelled fiercely among the groans of the dying,
with weapons, bodies, and horses in their death-throes,
in pools of blood, entangled with slaughtered riders.
Orsilochus hurled a lance at Remulus's horse, fearing
to attack the man, and left the point embedded beneath its ear:
The rearing charger, maddened by the blow, and unable to bear
the wound, lifted its chest, and thrashed high with its forelegs,
Remulus thrown clear, rolled on the ground. Catillus
felled Iollas and Herminius, a giant in courage, a giant
in torso and limbs, tawny hair on his head, his shoulders bare,
for whom wounds held no terror he spread so wide in his armour.
The driven spear passed quivering through his broad shoulders,
and, piercing him, doubled him up with pain. Dark blood
streamed everywhere: clashing with swords, they dealt death
and sought a glorious ending through their wounds.

Book 11: 648–724 Camilla In Action

But an Amazon exulted in the midst of the slaughter,
with one breast bared for battle: Camilla, armed with her quiver:
now she showered sturdy javelins, scattering them from her hands,
now she lifted a strong battle-axe in her unwearied grasp:

Notes

and Diana's weapon, a golden bow, rattled on her shoulder.
Even when she retreated, attacked from behind,
she reversed her bow and fired arrows while fleeing.
And around her were chosen comrades, virgin Larina,
and Tulla, and Tarpeia wielding her axe of bronze,
the Italides, daughters of Italy, whom noble Camilla
chose herself as her glory, faithful servants in peace or war:
such were the Amazons of Thrace, treading Thermodon's
streams, and fighting with ornate weapons, around
Hippolyte, or when Penthesilea returned, in her chariot,
and the ranks of women with crescent shields exulted.
Whom did you strike, first and last, with your spear, fierce girl?
How many bodies did you spill over the earth?
Euneus, son of Clytius, was the first, whose exposed chest
she pierced with her long shaft of pine, as he faced her.
He fell, spewing streams of blood, and bit
the gory dust, and, dying, writhed on his wound.
Then she killed Liris and Pagasus too, one gathering
the reins of his wounded horse as he rolled from it, the other
nearing to stretch out a defenceless hand to the falling man,
both flung headlong together. She added to them Amastrus,
son of Hippotas, and, leaning forward to throw, sent her spear
after Tereus, Harpalycus, Demophoon and Cromis:
and as many spears as the girl sent spinning from her hand,
so many Trojan warriors fell. The huntsman Ornytus
was riding far off, in unfamiliar armour, on his Iapygian
horse, the hide stripped from a bullock covering his broad
shoulders, his head protected by a wolf's huge gaping mask,
and white-toothed jaws, a rustic's hunting-spear in his hand:
he moved along in the centre of the army, a full head

Notes

above the rest. Catching him she struck him (no effort
in the routed ranks) then with pitiless heart spoke above him:
'Did you think you chased prey in the forest, Tuscan?
The day is here that proves your words wrong, with
a woman's weapons. But you'll carry no small fame
to your father's shades, you fell to Camilla's spear.'
Then she killed Orsilochus and Butes, two of the largest Trojans,
Butes she fixed with a spear in the back, between
breastplate and helmet, where the rider's neck
gleams and the shield hangs from the left arm:
while fleeing from Orsilochus, chased in a wide circle,
she eluded him, wheeling inside, pursuing the pursuer:
then, lifting herself higher, drove her strong axe, again and again,
through armour and bone, as he begged and prayed desperately:
the wounds staining his face with warm brain-matter.
Now the warrior son of Aunus, met her, and suddenly
halted, terrified at the sight, he a man of the Apennines,
not the least of the lying Ligurians while fate allowed it.
When he saw he couldn't escape a fight by a turn of speed,
or divert the queen from her attack, he tried to devise
a stratagem with wit and cunning, as follows:
'What's so great about relying on a strong horse, woman?
Forget flight, and trust yourself to fighting me
on level ground, equip yourself to battle on foot:
you'll soon know whose windy boasting's an illusion.'
He spoke, and she, raging and burning with bitter resentment,
handed her horse to a friend, and faced him with equal weapons.
on foot and unafraid, with naked sword and plain shield.
But the youth, sure he had won by guile, sped off
(instantly), flicking his reins, took to flight,

Notes

pricking his horse to a gallop with spurs of steel.
The girl shouted: 'Stupid Ligurian, uselessly vaunting
your boastful spirit, you've tried your slippery native wiles
in vain, and cunning won't carry you back to Aunus unharmed.'
And like lightening she intercepted the horse's path, on swift feet,
and seizing the reins from in front tackled him, and took vengeance
on the blood she hated: as light as a falcon, Apollo's sacred bird,
swooping from a tall rock, overtaking a dove in flight in the high cloud,
holding her in its talons, and tearing her heart out with its curved talons:
while blood and torn feathers shower from the sky.

Book 11: 725–767 Arruns Follows Her

But the father of gods and men with watchful eyes
sat throned on high Olympus observing it all.
The maker stirred the Etruscan, Tarchon, to fierce battle
and goaded him to anger with no gentle spur.
So Tarchon rode amidst the slaughter and the wavering ranks,
inciting his squadrons with varied shouts, and calling
each man by name, rallying the routed to the fight.
'What fear, what utter cowardice has filled your hearts,
O, you ever-sluggish Tuscans, O you who are never ashamed?
Can a woman drive you in disorder and turn your ranks?
Why do we bear swords and spears idle in our right hands?
But you are not slow to love or for nocturnal battles, nor when
the curved pipe proclaims the Bacchic dance. Wait then for the feast
and wine-cups on the loaded tables, (that is your passion
and your pleasure) while the happy seer reports the sacred
omens, and the rich sacrifice calls you into the deep grove!'
So saying, and ready to die, he spurred his mount into the press,
tore at Venulus like a whirlwind, and snatched him from his horse,

Notes

and, clasping his enemy to his chest with his right arm,
and stirring himself to a mighty effort, carried him off.
A shout rose to the skies and all the Latins turned their gaze
that way. Tarchon flew over the plain like lightning,
carrying weapons and man: then he broke of the iron tip
of his enemy's spear, and searched for an unguarded opening
where he might deal a deadly wound: Venulus, struggling with him,
kept the hand from his throat, meeting force with force.
As when a tawny eagle soaring high carries a snake it has caught,
entwined in its feet, with talons clinging, while the wounded serpent
writhes in sinuous coils, and rears its bristling scales, hissing
with its mouth as it rises up, and none the less attacks
its struggling prey, with curved beak, while its wings beat the air:
so Tarchon carried his prize in triumph from the Tiburtian ranks.
Emulating their leader's example and success, the Etruscans charged.
And now Arruns, a man whose life was owed to the fates,
began to circle swift Camilla, with his javelin,
with skilful cunning, trying for the easiest of chances.
Wherever the girl rode among the ranks, in her fury,
there Arruns shadowed her, and followed her track in silence:
wherever she returned in triumph or withdrew from the foe,
there the youth secretly turned his quick reins.
He tried this approach and that, travelling the whole circuit
on every side, relentlessly brandishing his sure spear.

Book 11: 768–835 The Death of Camilla

It chanced that Chloreus, once a priest, sacred to Cybele,
glittered some distance away splendid in Phrygian armour,
spurring his foam-flecked horse, that a hide, plumed
with bronze scales, and clasped with gold, protected.

Notes

He himself, shining with deep colours and foreign purple,
fired Gortynian arrows from a Lycian bow:
the weapon was golden on his shoulder, and golden
the seer's helm: his saffron cloak and its rustling folds of linen
were gathered into a knot with yellow gold, his tunic
and barbaric leg-coverings embroidered by the needle.
The virgin huntress singling him out from all the press
of battle, either hoping to hang his Trojan weapons
in the temple, or to display herself in captured gold,
pursued him blindly, and raged recklessly through the ranks,
with a feminine desire for prizes and spoil,
when Arruns, finally seizing his chance, raised his spear
from ambush and prayed aloud, like this, to heaven:
'Highest of gods, Apollo, guardian of holy Soracte,
whose chief followers are we for whom the blaze of the pine-wood
fire is fed, and who as worshippers, confident in our faith,
plant our steps on deep embers among the flames,
all-powerful father grant that this shame be effaced
by our weapons. I seek no prize, no trophy of the girl's defeat,
no spoils: some other deed will bring me fame:
only let this dreadful scourge fall wounded under my blow,
and I'll return without glory to the cities of my ancestors.'
Phoebus heard him, and granted the success of half the prayer
in his mind, half he scattered on the passing breeze: he agreed
to the prayer that Arruns might bring Camilla to sudden death's ruin:
but did not grant that his noble country should see him return,
and the gusts carried his words away on the southerly winds.
So as the spear whistled through the air, speeding from his hand,
all the Volscians turned their eager eyes and minds
towards the queen. She herself noticed neither breeze

Notes

nor sound, nor the weapon falling from the sky,
till the spear went home, fixing itself under her naked
breast, and driven deep, drank of her virgin blood.
Her friends rushed to her anxiously and caught
their falling queen. Arruns, more fearful than the rest,
fled in joy and terror, not daring to trust
his spear further, or meet the virgin's weapons.
And as a wolf that has killed a shepherd, or a great bullock,
immediately hides itself deep in the pathless mountains
before the hostile spears can reach it, conscious
of its audacious actions, and holds its lowered tail
quivering between its legs, as it heads for the woods:
so Arruns, in turmoil, stole away from sight,
and, content to escape, plunged into the midst of the army.
Camilla tugged at the weapon with dying hands,
but the iron point was fixed between the bones,
near the ribs, deep in the wound. She sank back
bloodless, her eyes sank, chill with death,
the once radiant colour had left her cheeks.
Then, expiring, she spoke to Acca, one of her peers, faithful
to Camilla beyond all others, sole sharer of her sorrows,
and uttered these words to her: 'Acca, my sister,
my strength lasted this far: now the bitter wound
exhausts me, and all around me darkens with shadows.
Fly, and carry my final commands to Turnus: he must take
my place in the battle, and keep the Trojans from the city.
Now farewell.' With these words she let go the reins, slipping
helplessly to earth. Then, little by little, growing cold she loosed
herself from her body completely, dipping the unresponsive neck
and that head death had seized, letting go her weapons,

Notes

and with a sob her life fled angrily to the shades below.
Then indeed an immense shout rose, reaching
the golden stars: with Camilla fallen, the battle swelled:
the Trojan host, the Etruscan leaders, and Evander's
Arcadian squadrons rushed on in a mass together.

Notes

Homer, *Iliad*

Book 3: 121–180 Iris visits Helen

Meanwhile Iris, disguised as Helen's sister-in-law, Laodice, loveliest of Priam's daughters and wife of Antenor's son, Helicaon, brought news to white-armed Helen. She found her in the palace, weaving a great double-width purple cloth, showing the many battles on her behalf between the horse-taming Trojans and the bronze-greaved Achaeans. Swift-footed Iris nearing her, said: 'Dear sister, come see how strangely Greeks and Trojans act. From threatening each other on the plain, hearts fixed on deadly warfare, they descend to sitting in silence, leaning on their shields, spears grounded, and no sign of conflict. But Paris it seems and Menelaus, beloved of Ares, plan to fight for you with their long spears, and the winner will claim you as his wife.'

Her words filled Helen's heart with tender longing for her former husband, her parents and her homeland. She veiled herself in white linen, and, weeping large tears, she left her room accompanied by her handmaids, Aethra daughter of Pittheus, and ox-eyed Clymene. Swiftly they reached the Scaean Gate.

There Priam sat with the city Elders, Panthous, Thymoetes, Lampus, Clytius, Hicetaon, scion of Ares, and the wise men Antenor and Ucalegon. Too old to fight, they were nevertheless fine speakers, perched on the wall like cicadas on a tree that pour out sound. Seeing Helen ascend the ramparts, they spoke soft winged words to each other: 'Small wonder that Trojans and bronze-greaved Greeks have suffered for such a woman, she is so like an immortal goddess. Yet lovely as she is, let her sail home, not stay to be a bane to us and our children.'

But Priam called Helen to his side: 'Come, dear child, and sit with me. See there, your former husband, your kin and your dear friends. You are not guilty in my eyes. Surely the gods must be to blame, who brought these fateful Greeks against me. Tell me who that great warrior is, that tall and powerful Achaean.

Notes

There are others taller, true, but I have never seen so handsome or so regal a man, every inch a king.'

'I respect and reverence you, dear father-in-law,' the lovely Helen replied: 'I wish I had chosen death rather than following your son, leaving behind my bridal chamber, my beloved daughter, my dear childhood friends and my kin. But I did not, and I pine away in sorrow. But let me answer what you ask. That is imperial Agamemnon, Atreus' son, a great king and mighty spearman. He was brother-in-law to this shameless creature here, unless it was all a dream.'

Notes

Euripides, *Helen*

1–67

HELEN:

These are the streams of the Nile with their beautiful nymphs;
it waters the plain and the lands of Egypt
with white melting snow instead of heavenly rain showers.
Proteus, when he was alive, was king of this land;
the lord of Egypt who lived on the island of Pharos.
He married one of the daughters of the billowing sea,
Psamathe, after she had left the bed of Aeacus.
She bore two children here in his palace:
a son, Theoclymenus (because he passed his life revering the gods),
and Eido, a noble daughter and pride of her mother when she was an infant.
But, when she reached adolescence and the due time for marriage,
they called her Theonoe; for she had been given by her grandfather, Nereus,
the honour of knowing everything which the gods were both doing and intending to do.

My own fatherland is not unknown:
It is Sparta, and my father is Tyndareus; although there is a story
that Zeus changed into the form of a bird, a swan, flew to my mother
Leda, and (if this story is true), brought about a deceitful marriage
whilst fleeing the pursuit of an eagle.
I am called Helen, and I shall speak of the evil things which I have suffered.
Three goddesses came to Paris in the hollows of Mount Ida for the sake of beauty;
Hera, Aphrodite, and the virgin daughter of Zeus;

Notes

who wanted a judgement of their appearances to be decided upon.
Aphrodite promised my beauty, if misfortune is beautiful, for Paris to marry:
she won. And so Paris left the ox-stalls of Ida
and came to Sparta to take my hand in marriage.

But Hera, because she had not won against the other goddess, grew puffed up with conceit,
and my marriage to Paris was censured.
Instead she gave to king Priam's son not me, but
a living, breathing image which she made in my likeness out of the sky.
He thinks he has me; an empty belief, since he does not.
But Zeus' designs have added yet more woes to these ones:
for he brought war upon the land of the Greeks and
the wretched Phrygians, so he might lighten Mother Earth of her huge crowd of mortals,
and establish the greatest kinsman of Greece.
So, for the battle against the Phrygians, I was set out as a spear-prize for the Greeks,
or rather, not me, but my name.
Hermes took me up in the folds of the air,
hid me in a cloud (for Zeus did not overlook me),
and settled me here in Proteus' house.
He chose the most temperate man of all humanity,
so I might keep my bed undefiled for Menelaus.
And whilst I myself am here, my miserable husband has gathered an army
and has marched upon the towers of Ilium in pursuit of my recapture.
Many souls have perished for my sake beside
the streams of the Scamander, and I, the one who has suffered all this,
am an abomination, and appear to have betrayed my husband and
joined great war to the Greeks.
So why am I still alive? I heard a prophecy from the god
Hermes that I will live on the famous plain of

Notes

Sparta with my husband yet, (since he knew I did not go to Ilium)
so long as I do not share my bed with any other man.
For as long as Proteus looked upon the light of the sun,
I was safe from marriage; but since he has been hidden
in the dark earth, the dead man's son
is pursuing me for my hand. So I, in honour of the husband I had once, long ago,
fall before this, Proteus' tomb
as a suppliant, so that he might preserve my bed for my husband;
and, as for myself, even if I bear a disgraceful name across Hellas,
my body at least may not bring shame upon itself here.

Notes

Euripides, *Medea*

1–38

NURSE:

If only the hull of the Argo had never flown
through the deep blue Sympleglades to the land of Colchis!
If only the pine trees in the glens of Mount Pelion
had never been cut down, nor furnished the heroes' hands
with oars; those who were sent by Pelias to find the golden fleece!
For then my mistress Medea would not have sailed
to the towers of the land of Iolcus,
her heart struck by love for Jason;
nor would she have persuaded the daughters of Pelias
to kill their father, and now be living in this Corinthian land
without her loved ones and her fatherland.
At first, even here, she did not have a bad life
with her husband and her children;
an exile who brought delight to the citizens of the land to which she had come,
and a helpful boon to Jason himself.
When a woman does not disagree with her husband
it is the greatest salvation.

But now everything is hateful, and the closest relationships are suffering from disease.
For Jason has betrayed his own children and my mistress,
and is going to bed in a royal marriage;

Notes

a marriage to the daughter of Creon, who rules over this land.
Wretched Medea in her dishonour
calls him out on his oaths; appeals to his right hand
and its mighty pledge. She also calls the gods to witness
the supposed recompense which she receives from Jason.
She lies fasting and gives her body to pain:
she has been pining away, constantly in tears ever since
she realised she had been wronged by her husband.
She neither lifts up her gaze, nor raises her face from the ground.
She hears the advice of her friends like a rock or a wave of the sea;
like them unless she happens to turn her white neck
and weep to herself for her dear father,
and her country, and her home. She gave them all up when she came here
with a man who has now dishonoured her.
The ill-starred woman has learned at the hand of misfortune
what a benefit it is not to be separated from one's fatherland.

She hates her children, and it brings her no pleasure to look at them.
I am afraid that she will plan some awful deed,
for her temper is heavy with anger and will not endure poor
treatment, (I know her!) and I fear
she might thrust a sharpened sword through her heart,
as, in silence, she enters the house where the bed is spread;
or kill the royal family and the groom,
and then take on some even greater disaster.
She is terrible, and no man who takes her as his enemy
will be able to sing of a glorious victory with ease.

But look: her children have finished their games and are
coming home, and they have no notion of their mother's
difficulties, for the young mind does not embrace grief.

Notes

1293–1389

JASON:
Women, you who stand close by this house,
is she inside –
Medea, doer of these dreadful deeds? Or has she turned in flight?
She must either hide herself beneath the earth
or lift her body on wings into the heights of sky
if she will not give atonement to the royal house.
Does she think, since she has killed this land's sovereign family,
that she will escape from this land unpunished?
But I am not as worried about her as I am for the children.
Those she has wronged will punish her,
but I have come to save my children's lives,
so that my relations may do them no harm,
nor may they be punished for their mother's impious slaughter.

CHORUS:
Oh wretched man, you do not know how far you have already gone into misfortune,
Jason; you would not have spoken these words otherwise.

JASON:
What? Do you mean she wants to kill me as well?

CHORUS:
Your children have been killed by their mother's hand.

JASON:
Alas, what are you saying? You have destroyed me, woman!

CHORUS:
You must understand that your children are no longer.

Notes

JASON:
Where did she kill them? Inside or outside the house?

CHORUS:
Open the gates so you might see your murdered sons.

JASON:
Undo the bolt this instant, servants,
and free the fastenings of the door, so I might see a double catastrophe:
the dead bodies, and she who did the deed, so
I may avenge the murder of these children.

MEDEA:
Why are you rattling the gates and trying to force them open
in your search for the corpses and me, the one who did the deed?
Halt your struggle. If there is anything you need from me
then speak, if you wish, but you will never touch me;
such is the chariot which my grandfather Helios
has given me, a protection against hostile hands.

JASON:
O loathsome thing, o woman most hated by the gods
and by me and by the whole human race,
it was you who dared to take a sword to your own children
and destroy me with childlessness!
Since you have done these things, can you even look upon the sun
and the earth, when you have dared to do this most ungodly deed?
Go! Die! Now I am of sound mind, although I was not before,
when I brought you from your home in the land of the barbarians
to a Greek house: a great curse,
betrayer of your father and the country which nourished you.
But the gods have imposed upon me the avenging spirit which was meant for you!
For you killed your brother beside the hearth

Notes

and then boarded the Argo, that fair-prowed ship:
you began in such a way. But, when you were married to me
and had given birth to my children,
for the sake of marriage and the marriage bed, you killed them.
There is no Greek woman who would have ever
dared to do this, yet I married you ahead of them,
and what a wretched, destructive union it has been for me!
You are a lioness, not a woman, and have
a nature more savage than Tuscan Scylla.
But, since I would be unable to sting you with a thousand insults,
such is your intrinsic audacity,
go, evil-doer and child-murderer!
My fate is a lamentable one:
I will never enjoy the bed of my new wife,
nor will I be able to speak to my children, whom I begot and raised,
whilst they are living, but have lost them.

MEDEA:
I would have stretched out a long speech in reply to yours,
if Father Zeus did not understand
the nature of what you have suffered at my hand, and how you have repaid it.
You were not going to dishonour my bed
and spend a blessed life laughing at me;
nor was the princess, nor Creon who offered you his daughter's hand in marriage
going to exile me from this land without punishment.
So call me a lioness if you want, and Scylla who lives on the Tuscan cliff:
for I have laid hold of your heart and wounded it.

JASON:
Yes, but grief is also yours, and you share in my misfortune.

Notes

MEDEA:
Yes, of course; but the pain lessens if you cannot laugh at me.

JASON:
O my children, what an evil mother you had!

MEDEA:
O children, how you have perished by your father's sickness.

JASON:
It was hardly my hand which killed them!

MEDEA
No, but the insult of your new marriage did.

JASON:
Does it justify the deed, that you killed them for the sake of a marriage?

MEDEA:
Do you think that situation is an trivial grief for a woman?

JASON:
Yes, for a sound-minded woman. But to you, everything is evil.

MEDEA:
The children are no longer. This will wound you...

JASON:
Alas, they live on as avenging spirits for you and your wrongdoings.

MEDEA:
The gods know whose blow came first.

JASON:
Yes: they know your vile mind.

MEDEA
Keep on with your hatred! I loathe the nasty sound of your voice.

Notes

JASON:
And I yours: it will be easy to leave one another.

MEDEA:
How, then? What should I do? For that is also very much what I want.

JASON:
Let me bury these bodies, and mourn them.

MEDEA:
Absolutely not. I shall take them to the sanctuary of Hera Akraia,
and bury them with my own hands.
That way, none of my enemies may insult them
by digging up their graves. Here in this land of Sisyphus
I will establish a sacred festival and rites
for all eternity in return for this unholy murder.
I myself shall go to the land of Erechtheus
to live with Aegeus, son of Pandion.
But you, as is fitting, will die evilly, an evil man,
struck on the head by a remnant of the Argo,
after you have seen the bitter result of your marriage to me.

JASON:
May both Fury, avenging your children's death,
and murderous Justice destroy you!

Notes

Aristophanes, *Assemblywomen*

1–240

PRAXAGORA:

O shining eye of the wheel-driven lamp,
finest discovery of the skilled craftsmen,
I shall reveal your heritage and your fortune:
you were shaped on the wheel by the potter's force,
and you carry the radiance of the sun in your nostrils.
Now quick, send out the fiery signal as we agreed.
We confide in you alone, as is fitting, since
you stand close beside us when we attempt the manoeuvres of Aphrodite;
and when our bodies flex and stretch,
nobody sends your watchful eye out of the room.
You alone shine upon the unspeakable nooks of our thighs
and singe off the hair which blooms there;
you stand beside us as an assistant when
we open up pantries filled with fruit and the streams of Bacchus,
and you are an accomplice who never lets slip to the neighbours.
So, now you will know all about the plot
which I drew up with my girl-friends at the Scirophoria.
But I don't see anyone who was supposed to be here,
and it's almost daybreak. The assembly
is to begin shortly – we should grab our seats,
as Phyromachus once said, if you remember,
and sit down without attracting anyone's attention.
What could be going on? Don't they have

Notes

those fake beards which they were told to get?
Was it tricky for them to nick their husbands'
clothes and not get caught?
But wait, I see a lamp over there,
coming this way! I'll retreat again,
just in case it happens to be a man approaching.

WOMAN A:
Let's go, it's right on time – the herald
was crying "cock-a-doodle-doo!" for the second time when we left.

PRAXAGORA:
And I have been up all night waiting for you ...
But come, let me call my neighbour by tapping gently on her door,
so it escapes the notice of her husband.

WOMAN B:
I was tying up my shoes when I heard your scratching,
because I wasn't asleep! Oh my dear, my husband –
he's a Salaminian – he was seeing to me between the sheets,
and kept at me all night long,
so I've only just managed to grab his cloak.

PRAXAGORA:
A-ha! I see Cleinarete and Sostrate
coming, and Philainete too.

WOMAN A:
Hurry up, you lot! Glyce swore
that the last one to turn up would lose three measures of wine
and a bag of chickpeas!

Notes

PRAXAGORA:
Do you see Smicythion's wife, Melistiche,
hurrying along in her big shoes?
I think she is the only one who
got rid of her husband easily.

WOMAN A:
And can you see Geusistrate, the tavern-keeper's wife,
holding a lamp in her hand?

PRAXAGORA:
And Philodoretus and Chaeretades' wives,
and I see many others –
indeed, anyone useful who's in town!

WOMAN B:
Oh, my dear, I had such a bother sneaking out
so I could dash here! My husband stuffed himself with far too many
anchovies and was up all night coughing!

PRAXAGORA:
Please take your seats, so I can put a question
to you since I see you're all actually gathered:
have you done everything that was agreed at the Scira?

WOMAN A:
I have. Firstly, I've let my armpits get
hairier than a bush, as we decided,
and also, when my husband had gone to the assembly,
I smeared oil all over my body
and stood in the sun getting a tan all day.

Notes

WOMAN B:
And me! I threw out my razor first,
so I'd get completely hairy
and not even look like a woman anymore!

PRAXAGORA:
And do you have the beards which you were told
to bring with you to our next meeting?

WOMAN A:
Yes by Hecate, isn't this one lovely!

WOMAN B:
And this one is prettier than Epicrates' by no short measure!

PRAXAGORA:
What say the rest of you?

WOMAN A:
They say yes – look, they're nodding.

PRAXAGORA:
And I see you've taken care of the rest;
you have Spartan boots, canes,
and men's cloaks, just as we said.

WOMAN A:
I've brought Lamius' cudgel,
I took it whilst he slept ...

WOMAN B:
What, the club that makes him fart with its weight?

Notes

PRAXAGORA:
By Zeus the saviour, if he was fitted with the leather skin of
all-eyes Argus, he would direct the public executioner better than anyone.
But let's move on to the next items
whilst there are still stars in the sky.
The assembly which we have prepared
to go to begins at dawn.

WOMAN A:
Yes, we must grab some seats
right under the rock in front of the prytanes.

WOMAN B:
That's why I brought this along,
so I could do some knitting whilst the assembly is filling up.

PRAXAGORA:
When the assembly is filling up, you wretch?

WOMAN B:
Why, by Artemis, yes!
Will I be any less able to listen whilst I knit?
My little children are naked!

PRAXAGORA:
Would you believe her – knitting! – when we should not
be displaying any part of our bodies to the men who are sat here.
Wouldn't we end up in a fine situation if all the people were here
and one of us had to climb over them,
threw her cloak over her shoulder and flashed her ... Phormisius!
But if we are first to sit down, then we won't be noticed
when we're wrapped up in our cloaks.
When we let these beards down we will tie them on over there,

Notes

then what onlooker won't believe we're men?
Agyrrhius tricked everyone by wearing Pronomus' beard,
although he was no better than a woman;
now, you see, he holds the greatest position in the city.
So, by this approaching day, because of him
let us dare to do this daring deed,
and may we be able somehow to take over the matters of the state,
in order to do something good for the city;
right now, it can neither sail nor row.

WOMAN A:
But how would a feminine assembly of women
address the people?

PRAXAGORA:
Better than anyone!
They say that the young men who are the most impressive speakers
are those who are bonked most often.
By some stroke of luck, that's exactly what we are suited for!

WOMAN A:
I don't know ... inexperience is dangerous.

PRAXAGORA:
Isn't that exactly why we've gathered here,
so we can practice what we have to say over there?
Get your beard on quickly;
you and all the others who have been rehearsing their chatter.

WOMAN A:
Is there anyone here who doesn't know how to chatter, honey?

Notes

PRAXAGORA:
Come on, chop chop, put on your beard and become a man.
I will put these garlands down and put on my own,
just in case I decide to speak as well.

WOMAN A:
Oh! Praxagora, sweetie, come here – look;
how ridiculous this is!

PRAXAGORA:
How is it ridiculous?

WOMAN B:
It's as if someone put a beard on a fried squid!

PRAXAGORA:
Priest, please bring in the cat.
Please step forward. Stop jabbering, Ariphrades!
Go and sit down. Now, who wishes to speak?

WOMAN A:
I do.

PRAXAGORA:
Put on this garland, and may your speech be successful.

WOMAN A:
There you go!

PRAXAGORA:
You may begin.

WOMAN A:
Don't I get a drink before I speak?

PRAXAGORA:
A drink?

Notes

WOMAN A:
Why else did I put on the garland, my friend?

PRAXAGORA:
Clear off! You would've played this same trick on us in the real assembly.

WOMAN A:
Don't they drink in the real assembly, then?

PRAXAGORA:
Now you say they drink!

WOMAN A:
By Artemis, yes they do,
and unmixed wine at that. That's why, when you consider what they do,
their decrees resemble the deranged babble of drunkards.
And they certainly make libations as well: why would they
make such long prayers if they didn't have any wine to hand?
They insult each other like drunks,
and the archers drag off the ones who are particularly wild.

PRAXAGORA:
Go and sit back down, you're being silly.

WOMAN A:
By God, I would've been better off without this beard.
I'm so thirsty I might just wither away ...

PRAXAGORA:
Does anyone else wish to speak?

WOMAN B:
I do.

Notes

PRAXAGORA:
Come on then, take the garland.
Do try and make your speech worthwhile:
speak like a man, speak well,
and lean on your staff in this fashion.

WOMAN B:
I would have preferred if one of the usual speakers
had given the best advice, so I could've sat in peace.
But since that is not to be, my vote is that
tavern-keepers should be banned from filling their wine-pits with water.
By the Two Goddesses, it is a bad policy.

PRAXAGORA:
By the Two Goddesses, you stupid woman? Where is your mind?

WOMAN B:
What? I didn't ask you for a drink!

PRAXAGORA:
Well, no, but you did swear by the Two Goddesses when you were meant to be a man.
And everything else you said was so good ...

WOMAN B:
Oh, by Apollo –

PRAXAGORA:
No, stop. I will not take another step towards assembly membership
unless everything is made just right.

WOMAN B:
Give me back the garland; I want to try my speech again.
I think I have it well-rehearsed now.
In my opinion, assembled women ...

Notes

PRAXAGORA:
Again, you fool, you're calling men women!

WOMAN B:
It's the fault of that Epigonus over there. When I saw him,
I thought I was addressing some ladies!

PRAXAGORA:
Oh, get away! You go back over there to your seat as well.
I think, because of what I've seen of your abilities,
it would be best for me to take this garland and make a speech myself.
I pray that these plans are made successful by the gods.
My part in this country is equal to yours,
and I am distressed and depressed at the business of the city,
for I see that it is always making criminals its leaders!
Even if one becomes good for a single day,
he will become bad for ten more.
And if you turn to another one, he will do even worse!
It is difficult to talk sense to such irritable men,
who are afraid of those who want to be your friends,
and keep sucking up to those who don't.
Once upon a time we had no assemblies at all,
and back then we considered Agyrrhius a wicked man.
Now, however, assemblies have been established,
and the man who gets paid praises him beyond measure,
but the man who doesn't says that those who come
to the assembly for a wage are worthy of the death penalty.

WOMAN A:
By Aphrodite, well said!

Notes

PRAXAGORA:

You wretch, did you seriously just swear by Aphrodite? What a clever thing you would have done, had you said that in the assembly ...

WOMAN A:

But I wouldn't have said it then…

PRAXAGORA:

Well, don't get used to it!
When we were discussing this alliance,
the people said that the city would fall if we did not agree to it.
But when it was passed, they were unhappy, and the politician
who had supported it had to escape, and left immediately.
"We should launch a fleet": the poor labourer votes yes,
but the wealthy and the farmers vote no.
You were angry with the Corinthians, and they with you,
but now they are pleasant to you, so you should be likewise towards them.
The Argives are, typically, stupid, but Hieronymus is wise.
So, in him is some little spark of hope,
but Thrasybulus is angry that you have not recalled him.

WOMAN A:

What an intelligent man!

PRAXAGORA:

That's more like it, that's fine applause!
Citizens, you are responsible for all these troubles.
You take your pay from public funds,
and each one of you scopes out personal gain,
whilst the common good limps along like Aesimus.
Listen to me and you might save yourselves yet:
I say we should give the city over to the women,
since we employ them as stewards and treasurers in our own homes.

Notes

WOMAN B:

Hear hear! Well said! Hear hear!

WOMAN A:

Do continue, my good man.

PRAXAGORA:

And, as I will show you, these women's natures are better than ours:
firstly, they dye their wool in warm water according to ancient custom,
every single one of them, and you won't see them
trying any other way. But the city of Athens –
if only it kept hold of useful practices,
and did not waste its time on new schemes, then surely it would be saved?
The women also sit down to cook, just as they always have;
and they carry things on their heads, just as they always have;
they observe the Thesmophoria, just as they always have;
they bake cakes, just as they always have;
they distress their husbands, just as they always have;
they take lovers inside their homes, just as they always have;
they buy themselves little treats, just as they always have;
they love neat wine, just as they always have;
and they enjoy sex, just as they always have.
So, gentlemen, let us give the city over to the women;
and let's not jabber on about it or ask
what they intend to do. Let us simply
allow them to rule. Consider these things alone:
firstly, they are mothers, so will be
eager to protect our soldiers; secondly,
who would send your rations quicker than the woman who gave birth to you?
Nobody is more resourceful at getting money than a woman,
and she will never be deceived whilst she is in power,

Notes

since they are accustomed to deception themselves.
I'll leave out all the other reasons: agree with my proposal
and you will live a blessedly happy life.

Notes

Hesiod, *Works and Days*

54–105

"Son of Iapetus, you are glad at having stolen fire and outwitted me, but this will be a major blow – both for yourself and for men who are yet to exist. In exchange for fire, I shall give them a curse; one about which every single man will delight in his heart, embracing his own destruction."

Thus spoke Zeus, and the father of both men and gods laughed aloud. He ordered the famed Hephaestus to mix earth with water at top speed, and to put human speech and strength in it and make the pretty form of a maiden, alike in looks to the immortal goddesses. He ordered Athena to teach her crafts, and the weaving of the richly wrought loom. Golden Aphrodite he ordered to sprinkle charm about her face, as well as desire that would cause trouble, and sufferings that would gnaw at one's limbs. He ordered Hermes, the messenger and giant slayer, to put in her a bitch's mind and a thievish nature. Thus he spoke, and they followed the instructions of Lord Zeus, the son of Cronus. Without delay, the famous god lame in both legs made out of earth the semblance of a modest maiden, in accordance with the plans of the son of Cronus. The bright-eyed goddess Athena clothed her and styled her; both the godly Graces and lady Persuasion put golden trinkets upon her skin; and the lovely-haired Seasons put a garland around her, made from the flowers of springtime. With all kinds of decoration Pallas Athena adorned her body. It was then that the messenger, the giant slayer, put lies and crafty words and a thievish nature into her heart, by the plan of deep-thundering Zeus; and it was then that the herald of the gods put a voice in her, and he named the woman Pandora,

Notes

because all those who have dwellings on mount Olympus had given her a gift, a bane for men who live on bread.

When he had finished the grand, irresistible trick, the father sent the famed giant-slayer and quick messenger of the gods to Epimetheus, to bring him the gift. Epimetheus did not give a thought to the fact that Prometheus had warned him never to accept a gift from Zeus the Olympian, but to refuse it, in case some curse should befall mortals. But he received the gift and then afterwards realised that he had accepted a curse. For up to this point, the races of men lived on earth quite apart from miseries and difficult labour and the painful diseases which bring death to men; for in misery, mortals grow old quickly. But she, lifting the giant lid of her jar scattered its contents. She wrought miserable cares on humankind. Hope alone stayed in its unbreakable home, below the rim of the jar, and it did not fly out through the gap; for before it could, she slammed the lid back onto the jar, in accordance with the plan of aegis-bearing Zeus, the gatherer of the clouds. But thousands of miseries roamed among humans; the earth was full of them, and full too was the sea. And some sicknesses come upon people by day, others by night, bringing evils upon mortals in silence; since Zeus the counsellor had taken their voices away.

Notes

Laudatio 'Turiae'

Square brackets indicate where the inscription is damaged and the original words are not legible.

Left hand column

(3) You were bereaved [suddenly and before] the day [of your marriage] when each of your parents were killed together on their own [at home.] It was very much down to you that, when I was absent in Macedonia and your sister's husband [Caius Cluvius] had gone to Africa, your parents' death did not remain unavenged. (7) You performed your [duty] so diligently though your insistence, your investigations and your assertiveness, that we could not have done better if we had been there. [Yet] this you have in common with your most impeccable [sister].

(10) While you were pursuing these things, once the punishment of your wrongdoers had been secured, you left your own house out of concern for your modesty and went to my mother's house, where you awaited my arrival. Then your patience was tried, when [your father's] will (in which we were heirs) [was said to have been] invalidated on the pretext of a phony purchase made with his wife. Through this, it would have been necessary for you, together with all of [your father's] goods, to be under the authority of those who brought this claim. Your sister would have had no part at all in the [inheritance], because she would have been legally transferred to Cluvius' authority. The wits by which you endured this, the presence of mind with which you stood your ground, I know full well, although I was absent.

(18) You protected our shared interest by stating the truth: that the will had not been invalidated; that [instead, each of us] should take the inheritance, rather

Notes

than you taking the whole property on your own. That you would defend your father's deeds by your unerring determination, and in any case, you declared, would share the inheritance with your sister even if you were unable to uphold the will's validity. You asserted that you were not bound to come under legal guardianship, that there was no such [law against you]; for it could not be proven that the family was associated with any clan that could [force] you to do this. For even if your father's will had been invalidated, those who brought the claim [had no such right] because they were not from the same clan.

(25) They gave in to your persistence, and pursued the matter no further. With this, you single-handedly accomplished this undertaking out of [reverence for your father], duty to your sister, and faithfulness towards me.

(27) Long lasting marriages like ours are rare, those that are ended by death, not divorce [...] for ours continued to its 41st year without discord. If only our [long marriage] had come to its end due to something befalling me instead of you, as it would have been more proper for the elder to succumb to fate.

(30) Why should I mention your domestic good qualities, your loyalty, your companionship, your good nature, your wool-working, [your religiosity] without being superstitious, your admirable dress-sense, your devotion to moderation? Why mention your kindness, your duty to your family, that cared for my mother just as much as your parents and that have taken [equal care] for her as for your own family, and that you have countless other virtues in common with [all other] mothers committed to their good name? It is your own virtues that I proclaim, and few have been put in similar difficulties to endure and overcome. Fortune sees to it that such things are unusual for women.

We have preserved all the property inherited from your parents by shared ownership: for you had no concerns about making yours all of what you had given to me freely. [Thus] we shared duties; my role would be guardian of your property, and you would undertake the care of mine. I am leaving many things out in this part, in case I take a share in what is rightfully yours. May it be

Notes

sufficient that I have [shown] your powers of insight.

(42) You have shown your generosity to many in need, especially in your duty to those at home. It is possible someone could name other virtuous women; but as far as this is concerned, only your sister [is] your equal. For you brought up your female relatives [who deserved such kindness] in your own home with us. You also provided dowries for them so they could achieve marriages worthy of your family. Cluvius and I, in common agreement, took responsibility for those dowries which were arranged by you – though we approved of your generosity – in case you diminished your inheritance, and substituted our own property and provided our own money for them. [I mention] this not [for the sake of] congratulating us, but to make it clear that it was an honour for us to [carry out] ourselves the plan that you conceived out of pious generosity.

(52) Several of your other virtues have been left out... [lines missing]

Right hand column

(2a) You provided for me in my flight, and sold off all the gold and pearls on your body. Having taken your jewellery off you sent it to me, and frequently too you sent servants, money and provisions; deceiving our enemies' guards, you enriched my absence. [You tested the strength of a soldier]; [...]

(6a) You begged for my life – as your courage urged you to do – and because of your entreaties I was protected by the clemency of those against whom you marshalled your words. In all, you put forth your voice with strength of mind. [...]

(9a) You defended our house, acquired through purchase from Milo when he was in exile, from men sent by him, who intended – taking the opportunity provided by the civil wars – to break in [...]

[lines missing]

(0) [...] I was brought back to my country by him (Caesar), for if you had not, by taking care for my safety, provided what he could save, he would have promised

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his support pointlessly. I owe my life no less [to your piety than his clemency].

(4) Why then should I air our intimate exchanges and private matters; how I was saved by your advice when I was [roused to meet] near and imminent dangers when word came from messengers out of the blue? How you would not allow me to act rashly through over confidence, but readied a hiding place for me, having faith that I would decide on more modest plans, and [provided] your sister and her husband Cluvius as allies in your plan to save me, all of you united in the danger? If I tried to go into all this I would never finish. May it be sufficient for me and you to say that I was hidden and my life saved.

(11) I shall however confess that the bitterest thing that happened in my life happened to me through what happened to you. When by the kindness and judgment of the absent Caesar Augustus I had been restored as a citizen of my fatherland, his colleague Marcus Lepidus, who was present, was confronted by you lying prostrate at his feet. You were not only yanked up but dragged off and snatched away as if into slavery; but though your body was covered in bruises, you kept reproaching him with the most constant spirit [...] the edict of Caesar and his delight at my being reinstated, and even though you had to listen to spiteful and cruel words while taking a beating, you pronounced these words so that he may know he was the cause of my perils. This matter was soon to prove harmful to him.

(19) What could have been more effective than this bravery? You provided Caesar an opportunity to show clemency and, by guarding my life, show up the needless cruelty of Marcus Lepidus through your extraordinary endurance.

(22) But why say more? Let me cut my eulogy short. My words could and should [end], in case by going on about your great deeds, I fail to do them justice. Instead, as an example of your merits, I shall put an acknowledgement before everyone's eyes that you [saved my life].

(25) After peace was made on earth and government was restored, restful and

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fortunate times came to us. There were of course the children we longed to have, which fate jealously denied us. If it had pleased Fortune to continue to be as favourable to us as we were used to, what would either of us have lacked? The advancing of your years put an end to your hope. The courses of action you pursued [because of this] and attempted to embark upon would perhaps be remarkable and admirable in some women, but in you, compared to your other virtues, are no surprise [...]

(31) Doubting your fertility, and mourning my childlessness in case by keeping you in marriage I would be abandoning hope of having children and be miserable [...] You spoke about [divorce], saying that our home, which you would vacate, should be given over to the fertility of another woman, with the intention that you would personally seek out and provide a match worthy of our well-known harmony. That you would consider the children shared and in place of your own, and that you would make no separation of our inheritance, which had so far been shared, but that it would still be under my judgment, and if I wanted, under your management: you would keep nothing apart, nothing separated, and from then on you would take on the duties and devotion of a sister and a mother-in-law for me.

(40) I must confess that I was so incensed I took leave of my senses, was so horrified [by your suggestion] I could scarcely compose myself. That a separation between us could be proposed [before] fate's decree was something you could conceive in your mind, that you could cease to be my wife though I was still alive, even though you remained utterly faithful when I was exiled and almost dead...!

(44) What longing, what need for having [children] could I have had that would be so great as to [lead me to] rid myself of your loyalty, and to exchange certainty for uncertainty? But why say more: [you stayed] with me, for I could not have given in to you without disgrace for me and unhappiness for us both.

(48) What indeed could be more remarkable than your devotion [having

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dedicated yourself] to my interests: so that when I could not have children with you, then because of you [I might have had] them nonetheless as you would have provided fertility through marriage to another woman [since you despaired] of your own ability to bear children?

(51) If only our marriage [could have] continued while each of us suffered the advance of old-age, until I, the elder, could have been taken away – which would have been more proper – and you could have stood before me at the end. Indeed I could have died [first] with you as my attendant, and in my childlessness you could be my surrogate daughter.

(54) Due to fate, you hastened my grief and left me longing for you, you left me [alone] without children. I for my part shall bend my feelings towards your outlook, adopting your [determination].

(56) May all of your thoughts and instructions give way to your praises, so that [however much] I long for you, they are in this record, which [I have entrusted] as a sacred memory for all eternity.

(58) The delights of your life are not lost to me. When I think of your fame I am strengthened [in mind and I] have learned from your deeds, so that I shall resist fortune, which has not snatched everything from me since she allows me to build a monument [to your praises]. But [along with you] I have lost what was a state of calm; I break down [thinking about my misfortune] at what a visionary and a champion you were when I was in danger, and I am unable to keep my promise.

(63) Grief naturally wrests away my powers of self-control. I am submerged in sadness and fear, and can hold up against neither. Thinking about my past misfortunes and envisaging what the future may have in store for me, I am confounded; bereft of such great and such extraordinary protection; reflecting on your glory; suffering these things not so much with bravery as with longing; I seem destined for grief.

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(67) The end of this eulogy is that you deserved everything, but everything did not fall to me [so that I could offer it] to you. Your last wishes I regard as law; beyond this, I shall offer whatever I am able.

(69) I pray that the spirits of the departed grant you rest and duly protect you.

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Cicero, *Pro Caelio*

49–51

49

Consider some unmarried woman, who has opened her house to the passions of all, and openly established herself in the lifestyle of a harlot. She has made a habit of attending the banquets of men she does not know, and does so in the city, at country houses, and at Baiae, that most bustling place. If, in short, she conducts herself in such a way, not only in the way she walks, but the way she dresses and the entourage which surrounds her; not only by the passionate glow of her eyes or the lack of restraint in her speech, but by embracing men and kissing them on beaches, at sailing parties and banquets; then she does not only appear to be a tart, but a particularly shameful and promiscuous one. So then, Lucius Herennius, if a young man might happen to have been with her, would you call him an adulterer, or merely a lover? Would he seem to be making an assault on virtue, or just wanting to satisfy his lust?

50

For now I will forget all of the wrongs which you have done me, Clodia, and I lay aside all memory of my own anguish. I am disregarding the cruel deeds which you did to my relatives in my absence; consider that none of the things which I have just said were about you. But I will question you yourself, since the prosecution claims to have evidence from you and is using you as a witness. If there was any woman like the one I have just described, a woman unlike you, who had the life and the habits of a prostitute, would it seem to you to be something very shameful or very wicked if a young man had something to do with her? If you are not such a woman – and I would rather this was the case

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– then why would they accuse Caelius? But if they want to make you seem like such a woman, then why should we fear such a judgement for ourselves, if you confess that it applies to you, and despise it? Give us a route to and a plan for the defence. For either your modesty will attest that Marcus Caelius did nothing especially wanton, or your impudence will give him and everyone else a great way of defending themselves.

51

Since my speech already seems to have raised itself up from the shallows and passed by the rocks, the rest of my voyage is made easy for me. There are two main charges for serious crimes, both involving the same woman. One concerns the sum of gold which Caelius is said to have received from Clodia, and the other the poison, which he is alleged to have prepared for the murder of the very same woman. He took the gold, as you say, to give to Lucius Lucceius' servants, by whom Dio of Alexandria was assassinated when he was living in Lucceius' house. It is a very serious crime to plot against ambassadors, or to encourage a servant to murder his master's guest. How utterly wicked is this plot, how full of audacity!

Notes

Livy, *The History of Rome*

1.9–1.10

1.9

By this stage, Rome was powerful enough to pit itself against any of its neighbours in war. Its lack of women, however, meant that its greatness was set to last only as long as a single generation, as there was neither the prospect of home-grown offspring or marriage between neighbouring states. So, on the advice of the senate, Romulus sent envoys to all the nearby nations to ask for an alliance and for intermarriage with his new state. They argued that cities – amongst other things – grow from the smallest beginnings, then eventually, those which are assisted by their own virtue and the blessings of the gods reach great power and great renown. They were confident that the origins of Rome were supported by the gods and would not lack virtue, so their neighbours should not be unwilling to mix their blood with that of the Roman race. The embassies were not heard favourably anywhere. In fact, the neighbouring states rejected them, and were afraid of the great power which was springing up amongst them, both for themselves and their descendants. As they were sent away, the envoys were asked many times whether they had opened a sanctuary for runaway women, since that was the only way they had a chance of finding suitable wives.

The young Romans took this very badly, and the situation seemed likely to spark violence. Romulus – specifically so he could create an appropriate time and place for this – disguised the resentment in his soul and prepared solemn games in honour of Neptune the horseman, whom he called Consualia. Romulus ordered that his spectacle be proclaimed to the people of the neighbouring states, and

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each and every one of his subjects prepared to celebrate it as much as they knew how and were able to, so they might earn fame abroad. Many people attended the festival, as they were keen to see the new city, particularly those who lived closest: from Caenina, Crustumium, and Antemnae. The Sabines also came with all their people, including their wives and children. They were received hospitably in every household, and when they had viewed the city's site, its walls and its many buildings, they were amazed at how fast Rome had grown great.

When the time came for the stage-show, and the audience's minds and eyes were preoccupied, the pre-planned attack began. When the signal was given, the young Romans rushed in to carry off the maidens. For the most part, the men snatched those who happened to be in their paths. Some, who were especially beautiful, were ear-marked for the most important senators, and were carried off to their houses by plebeians to whom the task had been entrusted. One, who far surpassed the others with her beauty and demeanour, was taken, so the story goes, by a band working for a certain Thalassius. Many people interrogated them about whom they had captured her for, and again and again they cried that nobody should touch her, for they were taking her to Thalassius; it was from this, that the wedding cry originated. The games broke down into fear and disorder, and the parents of the maidens fled, weeping. They accused the Romans of the crime of violating hospitality, and invoked the gods, to whose solemn games they had come, since they had been deceived in both faith and fortune.

The abducted maidens were no less hopeful, nor more indignant, about their circumstances. But Romulus himself went amongst them and explained that their predicament was caused by their parents' arrogance, when they had refused to allow intermarriage with their neighbours. These women should, however, be married and take a share in all the possessions of the Roman people: in their citizenship and in the dearest pleasure of the human race, their

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children. They should soften their anger, and give their hearts to the men whom fortune had given their bodies. So, injustice gave way to affection, and consequently the women would often find their husbands gentler, for they would not only try hard to be a good husband, but also to console their wife for the parents and fatherland which she had lost. This was supported by the men's efforts to charm the maidens; they justified their deed with love and longing, which is the most effective way of appealing to a woman's heart.

1.10

The hearts of the kidnapped women had already been placated by the time their parents, in mourning clothes, were rallying their states to action with tears and lamentation. They did not confine their unhappiness to their homes, but gathered from all around to the house of Titus Tatius, the king of the Sabines. Embassies came too, for Tatius' name was the most powerful and famous in the region. Those from Caenina, Crustumium, and Antemnae all had a share in the injustice. They thought that Tatius and the Sabines were deliberating at excessive length, so they prepared for war amongst the three nations themselves. But even the Crustuminians and Antemnates were nowhere near fast enough for the burning rage of the Caeninenses, so Caenina alone launched an offensive into the fields of Rome.

But, whilst they were deployed and laying waste to the city, Romulus and his army appeared, and demonstrated with an easy victory that anger is useless without force to back it up. He split up their army and routed them, and chased them as they fled. He killed their king in battle and stripped his corpse, and now that their leader was dead captured their city on his first attempt. Then he lead back his victorious troops, and – as he was as proud in his actions as he was willing to display them – he hung the spoils from the enemy's fallen king on a bier, made especially for the occasion, and carried it himself up to the top of the Capitol. He laid it down there, by an oak tree which was considered sacred by the shepherds. As he made his offering, he traced the boundaries of what

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would be a temple of Jupiter, and bestowed a name upon the god: "Jupiter Feretrius," he said, "I, victorious Romulus, a king, bring to you the arms of a king, and dedicate a temple in this area which I have just measured out in my mind; a seat for the spoils of honour which men shall bring here for years to come, when they have killed enemy kings and generals after my example." This was the origin of the first temple consecrated in Rome. It later pleased the gods that although the founder's claim that men would bring their spoils there in the future would not be in vain, the honour of that gift should not be diminished by a huge number of recipients. Only twice since then, across so many years and so many wars, have the spoils of honour been awarded; it is so rare for fortune to grant that honour.

1.12–1.13

1.12

And so the Sabines held the citadel. The next day, the Roman army was drawn up, and filled the plain between the Palatine and Capitoline hills, but the Sabines would not come down to face them until, spurred on by rage and eagerness to recapture the citadel, the Romans decided to march up the hill themselves. Two eminent warriors led the charge on each side: Mettius Curtius on the Sabine side, and Hostius Hostilius for the Romans. Hostilius made the Romans hold their ground in the disadvantageous position on the slope, due to the reckless boldness of being the first to join battle. But when Hostilius fell, the Romans immediately broke rank and fled to the old gates of the Palatine. Romulus himself was swept up in the crowd of runaways, until he brandished his sword at the heavens and cried:

"Jupiter, I was led here by your birds, when I laid the first foundations of my city on the Palatine! The citadel has already been bought by crime and is in the hands of the Sabines, and they have come from there, armed, across the valley to meet us here. But, o father of gods and men, hold them back from here at least;

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remove the Romans' fear and stop their cowardly escape! I vow to you, Jupiter the Stayer of Flight, there will be a temple here in your honour, a monument for future generations which shows how the city was saved by the help you offered on this day."

Having spoken this prayer, he cried out, as if he perceived that the request had been heard: "Romans, here Jupiter Optimus Maximus orders us to remain and continue the battle!" So, as if ordered by a heavenly voice, the Romans held their ground, and Romulus himself rushed to the front line.

Mettius Curtius had led the Sabine force down from the citadel, and sent the Romans into disarray all over the ground between the two hills. By this time, he was drawing close to the Palatine gate, and shouted: "We have vanquished our dishonest hosts, our cowardly enemies! Now they know the huge difference between abducting maidenss and fighting men!" Whilst he boasted, a gang of warlike young men, led by Romulus, launched an attack upon him. As it happened, Mettius was fighting on horseback, so was easier to scare away. As he bolted, the Romans followed him; and the rest of the army were spurred on by their king's wild audacity, and drove off the other Sabines. Mettius threw himself into a swamp, as his horse had become too frightened to ride in the chaos of the chase, and the other Sabines turned away from the attack because of the risk to such an important man. Mettius himself escaped, his spirit bolstered by the support and cheers of his followers, and the encouragement of the crowd. The Romans and the Sabines re-joined battle in the hollow of the valley between the two hills, but it was the Romans who won the advantage.

1.13

Then the Sabine women, whose grievance had caused the war, dared to take themselves amongst the flying missiles with torn clothes and streaming hair; their feminine fear overcome by their misfortune. They ran in from the side to separate the hostile forces and break off their anger. They begged their fathers on one side and their husbands on the other, not to allow their sons-in-law or

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fathers-in-law to be splattered with impious bloodshed; nor should they defile the women's children with parricide, as they were the sons of one side and grandsons of the other.

"If you regret," they said, "the alliance between you; if you regret the marriages, then turn your anger against us. We are the cause of war, of wounds, and of the deaths of our husbands and fathers. It would be better for us to die than to live as widows or orphans without you." Their plea moved both the ranks of soldiers and their leaders; they immediately fell silent and still, before the generals came forth to make a truce. They did not only declare peace, but united the two nations and made them into one. They shared the throne, but all power was bestowed upon Rome. Thus, the population doubled, and so the Sabines could be given something, their people were called the Quirites, from Cures. In memory of the battle, they named the swamp, from which Curtius' horse had first emerged and carried his rider to safety, the 'Curtian Lake.'

Such an unexpected change from unhappy war to joyful peace made the Sabine women even dearer to their parents and their husbands, and to Romulus above all. So, when he divided the people into thirty curiae, he named each one after the women. Of course, there were far more than thirty women, but it is not known whether it was decided by age, husband's rank or the women's own, or the drawing of lots, whose names were given to the curiae. At the same time, three centuries of knights were enlisted: the Ramnenses were named after Romulus; the Titienses after Titus Tatius; and the name and origins of the Luceres remains uncertain. From that time on, the two kings ruled not merely together, but in harmony.

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1.57–1.59

1.57

The Rutuli ruled Ardea. Given their location and era, they were an incredibly rich and powerful people. This was in itself the cause of a war, since the Roman king was not only keen to make himself rich, (he had bankrupted himself with the grandeur of his public works) but also wished to soften the discontent of the people with plunder. Besides the public's dislike of the king for his arrogance, they were especially indignant that he had employed them for so long in the roles of workmen and servants.

A quick capture of Ardea was attempted. When this failed, the Romans fortified their camp with barricades and began frequent assaults on the enemy. In this permanent camp leave was granted rather freely – as befits a war which is more long and drawn-out than short and sharp – although more freely to the generals than the ordinary soldiers. The young princes spent their leisure time together at banquets and Bacchic parties. It happened that they were drinking at Sextus Tarquinius' house, where Tarquinius Collatinus, the son of Egerius, was also dining. The conversation brought up the subject of wives, and each man extolled their wife, and how wonderful she was. As their rivalry was kindled, Collatinus said it was pointless to discuss, as in a few short hours they would be able to see how far his wife Lucretia surpassed the others.

"Come," he said, "if the vigour of youth is ours, let us mount our horses and view our wives' dispositions for ourselves. Let each man take what meets his eyes when he turns up out of the blue, uninvited, as the most accurate measure." They were all fired up with wine, and cried: "Yes! Good idea!" before kicking on their horses and speeding off to Rome.

They arrived when the sun was just beginning to set, and went on to Collatia, where Lucretia was found rather differently from the king's daughters-in-law, who they had spotted at a sumptuous banquet, passing the time with their

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peers. Lucretia, on the other hand, was completely occupied by her spinning, even though it was late at night, and her maids toiled by lamplight around her as she sat in the hallway of her house. And so, the prize in the contest of feminine virtue was awarded to Lucretia. As the Tarquinii approached, they were received hospitably, and the victorious husband graciously invited the young princes to dine with him. There, Sextus Tarquinius was seized by a terrible longing to defile Lucretia by force; provoked not only by her beauty, but the chastity they had observed. But on that occasion, they finished their youthful, good-humoured get-together and headed back to the camp.

1.58

A few days later, unknown to Collatinus, Sextus Tarquinius travelled to Collatia with a single attendant. He received a friendly welcome, since nobody was aware of his plans, and was brought to a guest room after dinner. He was burning with passion, and waited until it seemed that everyone was asleep, and everything around him was suitably secure, before he drew his sword and went to the sleeping Lucretia. He held the woman down with his left hand on her breast, and said: "Keep silent, Lucretia. I am Sextus Tarquinius, and my sword is in my hand. If you say a single word, you will die. She awoke with a start, and saw nothing which could help; only imminent death. Then Tarquinius began to declare his love, to beg, to mix prayers with threats, to attempt to turn her womanly heart by every means he had. When he found she was unmoved, and not even touched by the fear of death, he added disgrace to his threats, and said that when she was dead he would slaughter his servant and lay him, naked, beside her; so it could be said that she was put to death on a count of adultery with a lowly slave. Her steadfast chastity was overcome at this terrible prospect, as if by force, but in fact by his victorious lust. Tarquinius left, revelling in his successful conquest of a woman's honour.

Lucretia was devastated by such a terrible deed, and dispatched the same message to her father in Rome, and her husband in Ardea. It said that they

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should come to her with a trusted companion, and come quickly: something terrible had happened. Spurius Lucretius came with Publius Valerius, the son of Volesus, and Collatinus came with Lucius Junius Brutus, with whom he had been travelling to Rome when he received his wife's message. They found Lucretia sitting in sorrow in her chamber. The arrival of her loved ones made tears spring from her eyes, and when her husband asked her "Is everything alright?" She replied: "Not in the slightest. How can it be, for a woman who has lost her virtue? Collatinus, there is the mark of a strange man in your bed, but only my body has been violated; my heart is innocent, as death will be my witness! But swear with your right hands that the adulterer will not go without punishment. It was Sextus Tarquinius who last night exchanged hospitality for hostility, and, armed with force, brought ruin upon me and (if you are men) himself, as he claimed his disgusting pleasure."

Each man in turn swore his oath and tried to comfort her, as she was sick to the very soul, by turning the blame from the coerced to the coercer. They explained to her that the mind sins, not the body, and that if there is no premeditation then there is no blame. "It is your job," she said, "to decide what he deserves; as for me, although I absolve myself of the sin, I do not relieve myself of punishment. No shameless woman will ever live by the example of Lucretia." She took out a knife which was hidden beneath her clothes, she thrust it into her heart and died as she fell forward, sinking into the wound. Her husband and father raised the mourning cry.

1.59

Whilst the others were occupied by their grief, Brutus pulled the knife from Lucretia's wound, and proclaimed as he held it up, dripping with blood: "By this blood, most chaste before its defilement at the hands of a prince, I swear, with the gods as my witnesses, that I shall follow Lucius Tarquinius Superbus to the grave; him, and his wicked wife, and all his children, with sword, with fire, with any means I can. I will not allow him or anyone else to be king of Rome."

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Then he passed the knife to Collatinus, and he passed it on to Lucretius and Valerius. They were gobsmacked at this marvel: from where did this new spirit come to Brutus' breast? They swore, as he had ordered, and grief was exchanged completely for anger: at that moment, when Brutus invoked the power of the kings to make war, they followed his lead.

They took Lucretia's corpse out of the house and carried it to the forum, where men crowded around the spectacle, enthralled, as one might expect, by the strangeness and shamefulness of the sight. Each one lamented the prince's crime and violence. They were moved not only by her father's grief, but how Brutus chastised their tears and useless lamentations, and instead urged them to take up arms, as befitted men and Romans, against those who had dared to treat them as enemies. The bravest young men took up their swords and offered themselves, and the others followed the youths' examples. They left Lucretia's father in charge of Collatia, and employed watchmen so that nobody would report their movements to the royal family. Then the others left for Rome, armed and with Brutus as their commander.

When they arrived, their armed crowd stirred up fear and chaos wherever it went. When people saw, however, that the group was full of the most eminent statesmen, they realised that this was no random occurrence. And indeed, there was no less unrest at Rome when they heard the awful story than there had been at Collatia: men came running to the forum from every corner of the city. Just as they arrived, a herald summoned the people to the Tribune of Celeres, an office which Brutus happened to hold at that time. There he gave a speech that he had strung together that day, which was not at all what might have been previously expected of either his heart or mind: of the lust and force of Sextus Tarquinius; Lucretia's shameful defilement and terrible death; and the mourning of Tricipitinus, for whom his daughter's death was less dishonourable and sad than what had caused it. He also spoke about the king's own pride, and the lamentable circumstances of the common people, who had been thrown into

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ditches and sewers to clear them out. He proclaimed that the men of Rome, warriors, and the conquerors of every people around them, had been made into workmen and stonemasons. He reminded them of the undignified murder of Servius Tullius, the king, and how his daughter had driven her heinous chariot over his body, and invoked the gods concerned with punishing misdeeds against parents.

With these, and, I believe, even nastier accusations – the kind which occur to a person in the heat of an immoral moment, but are difficult for a historian to capture – he lit a flame beneath the people. As a result, they rejected the king's rule, and exiled Tarquinius with his wife and children. Then Brutus himself appointed and armed the young men who offered their support voluntarily, and set off for the Ardean camp to set in motion a force against the king. He left control of Rome with Lucretius, who had been, some time previously, appointed prefect of the city by the king. Tullia escaped from the palace during the chaos and was cursed by all wherever she went; by men and women who invoked the Furies who punish wrongs wrought against family members.

Notes

34.1

Between the great troubles of the wars, whether they had barely finished, or were just about to begin, something happened. It is insignificant to speak of, but grew through passion into a huge dispute. Two tribunes, Marcus Fundanius and Lucius Valerius, proposed the abolition of the Oppian Law to the assembly. The law had been passed by the tribune Gaius Oppius, during the consulship of Quintus Fabius and Tiberius Sempronius, in the midst of the fire of the Punic War. It decreed that no woman should either possess more than half an ounce of gold; wear multi-coloured clothes; or travel in a carriage in the city or in a neighbourhood within a mile of it, unless celebrating a religious festival. The tribunes, Marcus and Publius Iunius Brutus, supported the Oppian Law, and would not allow its repeal to be passed. Many noble men came forward to speak for or against it, and a crowd of the law's assenters and dissenters filled the Capitoline. But the women could not be kept in their homes; not by persuasion or prudence, nor the orders of their husbands. Instead, they blockaded all the streets and routes to the Forum, and pleaded with the men as they came down, saying that the state was flourishing and men's personal wealth was growing every day, so they should also allow women to have their former fineries returned. The crowd of women grew bigger each day, as they were coming from the towns and neighbouring provinces. Before long, they dared to approach the consuls, the praetors, and the other officials, and make an appeal to them. At the very least, they found one consul who was adamant: Marcus Porcius Cato, who spoke in favour of the law whose repeal was being urged.

Notes

Sallust, *Conspiracy of Catiline*

24.5–25

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... At this time, [Catiline] is said to have won over to his cause very many men of every type, and even some women. These women had at first enjoyed huge luxury by prostituting their bodies, but later, when age began to limit their earning power but not their expensive lifestyle, they ran heavily into debt. Catiline believed that he could stir up the city slaves through these women, as well as burn the city, and then either ally these women's husbands to him, or kill them.

25

Amongst these women was Sempronia, who had frequently committed many crimes of manly audacity. This woman was fortunate enough when viewed in light of her birth and her beauty, as well as in comparison to her husband and children. She was well versed in Greek and Latin literature, in music and in dancing she was more elegant than an honest woman should be, and many other things which are associated with a life of luxury. As far as she was concerned, however, pretty much everything was of more worth than honour and modesty. Whether she was more careless of her money or her reputation, you could not easily tell; her lustful nature burned so much that she pursued men more often than she was pursued. What is more, she had previously – and often – betrayed someone's trust, not paid her debts and even known about a murder. She had fallen headlong into both luxury, and poverty. In truth, her mind was not lacking in intelligence; she was able to write poetry, to tell a joke, to speak both modestly or seductively or boldly. In short, she had considerable humour and much charm.

Notes

Plutarch, *Life of Pericles*

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At this point, with the truce made by the Athenians and the Spartans now in its 30th year, the naval expedition to Samos was voted for, and the accusation made against them that they were not doing what they had been told to do; namely to break off the war against the Milesians. Since he [Pericles] seems to have acted like this against the Samians in order to please Aspasia, now would be a particularly good moment to discuss this woman: the skill or power she had that was so great that she could master both the most important of citizens, but offer the philosophers neither a brief nor simple story about herself. It is agreed that she was born in Milesia and was the daughter of Axiochos: they say that she, in order to out-do a certain Thargalia of ancient Ionia, targeted the most powerful men. For Thargalia, having both exceptional beauty and grace, lived with an astonishing number of Greek men, whilst attaching all her associates to the King of Persia, and in the cities implanted bias towards the Persians through these men, the greatest and most powerful leaders. They say that Aspasia, as someone wise and statesmanlike, was pursued by Pericles. Even Socrates came with his acquaintances, and the wives they lived with, to listen to her, even though she ran a business that was neither decent nor respectful, for she managed youthful prostitutes. Aischines says that Lysicles the sheep-dealer, from low-born and humble birth, became the first man of Athens after Pericles' death due to living with Aspasia. In the 'Menexenus' of Plato, even if the first part of it is written in jest, is present a certain degree of historical accuracy; namely that this lady had a reputation for discussing rhetoric with many Athenians. However, it seems more likely that the love of Pericles for Aspasia was erotic. He had a wife, related by birth, who first had married Hipponicus, by whom she

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gave birth to Callias, surnamed 'the rich'. She also had Xanthippus and Paralus by Pericles. Then, when married life became unhappy for them both, he gave her, with her agreement, to another. He himself, took Aspasia and loved her desperately. And they say that twice a day, when he went out and when he came back in from the Agora, he greeted her with tender kissing.

However, in the comedies she is called the new Omphale and Deianeira and even Hera. Cratinus stated outright that she was a prostitute in these lines:

'Aspasia was born a Hera for him, a shameless prostitute for lust.'

It also seems that he fathered the illegitimate boy from her, about whom Eupolis in the 'Demes' said that he asked the following: 'Is my illegitimate son alive?'

Myronides, replying to him, said: 'And long ago would have been a man, if he hadn't dreaded the wickedness of the prostitute.'

So famous and illustrious did Aspasia become that they say that Cyrus, who fought the King of the Persians for the leadership of the Persians, gave the name Aspasia to the particular one of his prostitutes that was most loved by him, who previously had been called Milto. She was born in Phocia, daughter of Hermotimus. When Cyrus fell in battle she was carried off to the King and became very powerful. As these things come to my memory as I write, to push them away or let them pass by surely would be illogical.

Notes

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