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APULEIUS

METAMORPHOSES

II

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APULEIUS
METAMORPHOSES

EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY
J. ARTHUR HANSON

IN TWO VOLUMES
II
BOOKS VII–XI



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THE METAMORPHOSES
OF APULEIUS
BOOKS VII–XI

APVLEI MADAVRENSIS
METAMORPHOSEON

LIBER VII

1 Ut primum tenebris abiectis dies inalbebat et candidum solis curriculum cuncta collustrabat, quidam de numero latronum pervenit—sic enim mutuae salutationis officium indicabat. Is in primo speluncae aditu residens et ex anhelitu recepto spiritu tale collegio suo nuntium fecit:

“Quod ad domum Milonis Hypatini, quam proxime diripuimus, pertinet, discussa sollicitudine iam possumus esse securi. Postquam vos enim fortissimis viribus cunctis ablatis castra nostra remeastis, immixtus ego turbelis popularium, dolentique atque indignanti similis, arbitrabar super investigatione facti cuius modi consilium caperetur,¹ et an et quatenus latrones placeret

¹ *F caperet.*

APULEIUS OF MADAUROS
METAMORPHOSES

BOOK VII

1 When darkness had been cast away at day's first whitening, and the sun's bright chariot illumined all the world, a member of the robber band arrived—his identity was revealed by their exchange of mutual greetings. He sat down just at the entrance to the cave, and when he had stopped panting and recovered his breath, he made the following announcement to his guild:

“As for the house of Milo of Hypata, which we recently plundered, our worry has been dispelled and we can now rest easy. After your valiant might had carried everything off and gone back to our camp, I mixed in with the crowds of people. Pretending to be pained and indignant, I tried to find out what sort of plan was being formed to investigate the crime, whether they had decided to

inquiri, renuntiaturus vobis, uti mandaveratis, omnia. Nec argumentis dubiis sed rationibus probabilibus congruo cunctae multitudinis consensu nescio qui Lucius auctor manifestus facinoris postulabatur, qui proximis diebus fictis commendaticiiis litteris Miloni sese virum commentitus bonum artius conciliaverat, ut etiam hospitio susceptus inter familiares intimos haberetur. Plusculisque ibidem diebus demoratus, falsis amoribus ancillae Milonis animum irrepens, ianuae claustra sedulo exploraverat et ipsa membra in quis omne patrimonium condi solebat curiose perspexerat. Nec exiguum scelerati monstrabatur indicium, quippe cum eadem nocte sub ipso flagitii momento idem profugisset, nec exinde usquam compareret. Nam et praesidium fugae, quo velocius frustratis insecutoribus procul ac procul abderet sese, eidem facile suppeditasse; equum namque illum suum candidum vectorem futurum duxisse secum. Plane servum eius ibidem in hospitio repertum scelerum consiliorumque erilium futurum indicem, per magistratus in publicam custodiam receptum et altera die tormentis vexatum pluribus ac paene ad ultimam mortem excarnificatum, nil quicquam rerum talium

search for the robbers, and how extensive the search would be. My intention was to report all this back to you, as you had ordered. They had decided, not on the basis of dubious evidence, but on very likely grounds and by unanimous agreement of the whole crowd, to prosecute somebody named Lucius as the obvious perpetrator of the crime. He had recently made use of counterfeit letters of introduction representing him as a gentleman to insinuate himself so closely into Milo's favour that he had been taken in as a guest and treated as a close intimate. While staying there for a few days, having wormed his way into the affections of Milo's maid with false protestations of love, he had thoroughly investigated the locks on the doors and carefully explored that very part of the house in which all the family wealth was stored. They pointed out, as no mean proof of his guilt, that the fellow had run away on the same night at the very moment of the crime, and never reappeared. He had ready assistance available for his escape, enabling him to outdistance his frustrated pursuers and conceal himself miles and miles away, because he had brought his own white horse with him to serve as a conveyance. Of course they thought that his slave, whom they discovered lodging there in the house, would give information about his master's crimes and plots. By order of the magistrates he was taken into public custody and on the next day was tortured in various ways and racked almost to death; but he confessed

esse confessum. Missos tamen in patriam Lucii illius multos numero, qui reum poenas daturum sceleris inquirerent.”

Haec eo narrante, veteris Fortunae et illius beati Lucii praesentisque aerumnae et infelicis asini facta comparatione, medullitus ingemebam, subibatque me non de nihilo veteris priscaequae doctrinae viros finxisse ac pronuntiasset caecam et prorsus exoculatam esse Fortunam, quae semper suas opes ad malos et indignos conferat, nec umquam iudicio quemquam mortalium eligat, immo vero cum is potissimum deversetur quos procul, si videret, fugere deberet; quodque cunctis est extremius, varias opiniones, immo contrarias nobis attribuat, ut et malus boni viri fama glorietur et innocentissimus
3 contra noxio rumore¹ plectatur. Ego denique, quem saevissimus eius impetus in bestiam et extremae sortis quadripedem deduxerat, cuiusque casus etiam quovis iniquissimo dolendus atque miserandus merito videretur, crimine latrocinii in hospitem mihi carissimum postulabar. Quod crimen non modo latrocinium verum etiam parricidium quisque rectius nominarit. Nec mihi tamen licebat causam meam defendere vel unico verbo saltem denegare. Denique ne mala conscientia tam scelesto crimini praesens viderer silentio consentire, hoc tantum

¹ F *noxiorum ore. noxiorum more* “like criminals” is also possible.

nothing of the sort. Numerous agents, however, have been sent to this Lucius’ homeland to search out the accused so that he may pay for his crime.”

While he told this tale, I compared my old fortune and that happy Lucius with my present tribulation as a luckless ass. I groaned in the depths of my heart, and it occurred to me that it was not for nothing that men of the old school had imagined and proclaimed that Fortune was blind and had lost her eyes completely. She always confers her favours on the wicked and undeserving, and never uses sound judgement in selecting human beings. Instead she chooses to live precisely with those from whom, if she could see, she ought to flee far away. And what is worse than all, she bestows on us differing—or rather contradictory—reputations, so that the evil man exults in his reputation as a good man and, contrariwise, the most innocent of men is tormented
3 by a dreadful reputation. In my case, she had attacked me with the utmost savagery and reduced me to an animal, a quadruped of the lowest rank. My misfortune would strike even the most unsympathetic as deserving of grief and pity. Now I was being sought on a charge of robbing my very dear friend and host—a charge you might more properly call parricide, not just robbery. And I could not defend my own case, or even utter a single word of denial. I was afraid they would think I had a bad conscience and was giving silent consent to this criminal accusation made in my own presence, and I

impatientia productus volui dicere: "Non feci." Et verbum quidem praecedens semel ac saepius immodice clamitavi, sequens vero nullo pacto disserere potui, sed in prima remansi voce et identidem boavi "Non non," quamquam nimia rotunditate pendulas vibrassem labias. Sed quid ego pluribus de Fortunae scaevitate conqueror, quam¹ nec istud pudit me cum meo famulo meoque vectore illo equo factum conservum atque coniugem?

- 4 Talibus cogitationibus fluctuantem subit me illa cura potior, qua statuto consilio latronum manibus virginis decretam me victimam recordabar, ventremque crebro suspiciens meum iam misellam puellam parturibam. Sed ille qui commodum falsam de me notoriam pertulerat, expromptis mille aureum, quos insutu laciniae contexerat, quosque variis viatoribus detractos, ut aiebat, pro sua frugalitate communi conferebat arcae, infit etiam de salute commilitonum sollicite sciscitari. Cognitoque quosdam, immo vero fortissimum quemque variis quidem sed impigris casibus oppetisse, suadet, tantisper pacatis itineribus omniumque proeliorum servatis indutiis, inquisitioni commilitonum potius

¹ *F* *quanquam*.

¹ The Latin word normally means "spouse".

could bear it no longer. I wanted at least to say "Not guilty." The first word I shouted over and over again, without restraint, but I simply could not pronounce the second word. I stayed on that first word and brayed again and again, "Naw . . . naw . . .," although I vibrated my pendulous lips as roundly as I could. But what need to say more in my complaints against Fortune's perversity? She was not even ashamed to make me the fellow-slave and yoke-mate¹ of my own servant and carrier, my horse.

- 4 As I was swept along on this tide of speculation, I recalled that more important concern of mine, namely that I had been decreed by firm resolution of the robbers to become an offering to the maiden's ghost; and I kept looking down at my belly and seeing myself already giving birth to that poor little girl. But the man who had just brought that false information about me pulled out a thousand gold-pieces, which he had concealed by sewing them into his garment, and which, as he said, he had lifted from various travellers and was now, as an honest man, contributing to the common treasury. Then he began to enquire anxiously about the welfare of his comrades-in-arms. When he learned that some of them—in fact all the bravest—had perished in various daring encounters, he suggested that the roads be left at peace for a time and that they observe a truce from all hostilities, devoting their energy instead to a search for fellow-soldiers. They

insisteretur et tirocinio novae iuventutis ad pristinae manus numerum Martiae cohortis facies integraretur. Nam et invitos terrore compelli et volentes praemio provocari posse, nec paucos humili servilique vitae renuntiantes ad instar tyrannicae potestatis sectam suam conferre malle. Se quoque iam dudum pro sua parte quendam convenisse hominem et statu procerum et aetate iuvenem et corpore vastum et manu strenuum, eique suasisse ac denique persuasisse, ut manus hebetatas diutina pigritia tandem referret ad frugem meliorem, bonoque secundae, dum posset, frueretur valetudinibus, nec manum validam erogandae stipi porrigeret, sed hauriendo potius exerceret auro.

5 Talibus dictis universi omnes assensi,¹ et illum, qui iam comprobatus videretur, ascisci et alios ad supplendum numerum vestigari statuunt. Tunc profectus et paululum commoratus ille perducit immanem quendam iuvenem, uti fuerat pollicitus, nescio an ulli praesentium comparandum—nam praeter ceteram corporis molem toto vertice cunctos antepollebat et ei commodum lanugo malis inserpebat—sed plane centunculis disparibus et male consarcinatis semiamictum, inter quos pectus et venter crustata crassitie relucitabant.²

¹ Or *assensere*, for *F*'s *adsensiere*.

² *F* *crassitiam relucebant*.

should recruit fresh young men to restore the appearance of their cohort of Mars to the muster of their original band. He said that the reluctant could be compelled by fear and the willing invited by reward, and that many would renounce a lowly and servile life and prefer to change their profession for the equivalent of a tyrant's power. For his part, he had recently met a fellow who was tall in stature, young in age, huge in build, and strong in arm; he had urged him, and then persuaded him, finally to turn his hands, which were dulled by long idleness, to better profit, and to enjoy some benefit from his good health while he could, and, instead of stretching out his strong hand to beg for pennies, to exercise it scooping up gold.

5 The robbers assented one and all to his speech, and decided to induct the young man, who seemed already to have proved himself, and to track down others to fill their ranks. Their comrade then went out, and after a short time returned with an enormous youth, as he had promised, hardly to be compared with any of those present.¹ In addition to the general massiveness of his build, he stood a whole head higher than all of them, and a beard was just beginning to overspread his cheeks. But he was half-clothed in a veritable patchwork, ill-fitting and badly stitched together. Among those rags his chest and belly glistened, packed with muscle.

¹ This may also be understood as "any man of the present generation," a stock expression from epic.

APULEIUS

Sic introgressus “Havete,” inquit “fortissimi¹ deo Marti clientes mihi que iam fidi commilitones, et virum magnanimae vivacitatis volentem volentes accipite, libentius vulnera corpore excipientem quam aurum manu susipientem, ipsaque morte, quam formidant alii, meliorem. Nec me putetis egenum vel abiectum, neve de pannulis istis virtutes meas aestimetis. Nam praefui validissimae manui totamque prorsus devastavi Macedoniam. Ego sum praedo famosus Haemus ille Thracius, cuius totae provinciae nomen horrescunt, patre Therone aequae² latrone incluto prognatus, humano sanguine nutritus interque ipsos manipulos factionis
6 educatus heres et aemulus virtutis paternae. Sed omnem pristinam sociorum fortium multitudinem magnasque illas opes exiguo temporis amisi spatio. Nam procuratorem principis ducenaria perfunctum, dehinc Fortuna tristiore decussum, praetereuntem meo fato³ fueram aggressus. Sed rei noscendae carpo ordinem.

“Fuit quidam multis officiis in aula Caesaris clarus atque conspicuus, ipsi etiam probe spectatus. Hunc insimulatum quorundam astu proiecit

¹ F *fortissimo*. ² F *atque*. ³ F *me orato*.

¹ His name is that of a mountain range in Thrace.

² His name comes from the Greek word for “hunting.”

³ High officials in government service were divided into four ranks according to salary: 60,000, 100,000, 200,000,

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Having made his entrance he spoke: “Hail, brave servants of Mars and now my trusty fellow-soldiers! Receive a willing recruit willingly. You see before you a man of heroic vigour, who more gladly accepts wounds on his body than gold in his hand, and who is superior to death itself, which others fear. And do not think me destitute or an outcast; do not judge my virtues from these rags. I was in command of a strong and mighty band and laid waste the whole of Macedonia. I am the famous brigand, Haemus the Thracian,¹ at whose name every province trembles. My father was Theron,² also a renowned robber; I was nursed on human blood and raised among the squadrons of our troop as heir and rival to my
6 father’s valour. But I lost the whole host of brave comrades and all the wealth I once commanded in one brief span of time. One of the emperor’s procurators with a two hundred thousand salary³ had been driven from his position by a harsh turn of Fortune. To my misfortune I had attacked him as he was passing by. But I will tell the story from start to finish so that you will understand what happened.

“There was once a man, famous and distinguished for his numerous services in Caesar’s⁴ court and well regarded even by the emperor himself. Falsely accused through the duplicity of certain individuals, he was cast forth into exile by and 300,000 sesterces.

⁴ The name was taken by all Roman emperors.

extorrem saeviens Invidia. Sed uxor eius Plotina, quaedam, rarae fidei atque singularis pudicitiae femina, quae decimo partus stipendio viri familiam fundaverat, spretis atque contemptis urbanae luxuriae deliciis fugientis comes et infortunii socia, tonso capillo, in masculinam faciem reformato habitu, pretiosissimis monilium et auro monetali zonis refertis incincta, inter ipsas custodientium militum manus et gladios nudos intrepida, cunctorum periculorum particeps et pro mariti salute pervigilem curam suscipiens,¹ aerumnas assiduas ingenio masculo sustinebat. Iamque plurimis itineris difficultatibus marisque terroribus exanclatis Zacynthus petebat, quam sors ei fatalis decreverat temporariam sedem.

7 “Sed cum primum litus Actiacum, quo tunc Macedonia delapsi grassabamur,² appulisset, nocte promota tabernulam quam³ litori navique proximam vitatis maris fluctibus incubabant invadimus

¹ F *sustinens*.

² F *grassabamus*.

³ F *quandam*. Several other emendations have been suggested.

¹ The only famous bearer of this name was the wife of the emperor Trajan. She was childless.

² Cf. Tacitus, *Histories* I 3 (of the period A.D. 69–96): “Yet this age was not so barren of virtue that it did not display

savage Envy. His wife, a certain Plotina,¹ a woman of rare loyalty and unmatched chastity who had firmly founded her husband’s family by ten terms of child-bearing, spurned and disdained the pleasures of urban refinement and became her husband’s comrade in exile and companion in calamity.² She cut her hair short, transformed her appearance to look like a man, and wrapped the most costly of her jewels and gold coin round her, packed into her girdle. Fearless amid the bands of military guards and their bared swords, she shared all his dangers and took upon herself a sleepless concern for his welfare, bearing constant tribulations with manly spirit. Having endured the countless difficulties of the voyage and terrors of the sea, he was now on his way to Zacynthus,³ which fateful destiny had decreed as his temporary residence.

7 But as soon as he put into shore near Actium, where we were then operating after coming down from Macedonia, late at night we broke into a little inn by the shore near their ship, where they were sleeping to avoid the sea’s waves. We made off with noble examples. Mothers accompanied their children in flight; wives followed their husbands into exile; relatives displayed courage, sons-in-law firmness, slaves a fidelity which defied even torture.” Valerius Maximus (VI 5) describes Hysicratea, the wife of King Mithridates, in terms strikingly similar to Apuleius’ about Plotina.

³ Modern Zante, an island off the western coast of Greece.

et diripimus omnia. Nec tamen periculo levi temptati discessimus. Simul namque primum sonum ianuae matrona percepit, procurrens in cubiculum clamoribus inquietis cuncta miscuit, milites suosque famulos nominatim, sed et omnem viciniam suppetiatum convocans, nisi quod pavore cunctorum, qui sibi quisque metuentes delitiscabant, effectum est ut impune discederemus. Sed protinus sanctissima — vera enim dicenda sunt — et unicae fidei femina, bonis artibus gratiosa, precibus ad Caesaris numen porrectis, et marito reditum celerem et aggressurae plenam vindictam impetravit. Denique noluit esse Caesar Haemi latronis collegium, et confestim interivit: tantum potest nutus etiam magni principis. Tota denique factione militarium vexillationum indagatu confecta atque concisa, ipse me furatus aegre solus mediis Orci faucibus ad hunc evasi modum.

8 “Sumpta veste muliebri florida, in sinus flaccidos abundante, mitellaque textili contecto capite, calcis femininis albis illis et tenuibus indutus et in sequiorem sexum incertatus¹ atque absconditus, asello spicas hordeacias gerenti residens per medias acies infesti militis transabivi. Nam mulierem

¹ F *incertus*.

everything, but we ran into serious danger before we got away. The moment she heard the sound of the door, his wife ran into the room and stirred up the whole place with repeated shouts, calling the soldiers and her servants by name and even trying to rouse the entire neighbourhood to help. Only because everyone was terrified and stayed hidden out of fear for themselves did it come about that we got away scot-free. But immediately that saintly lady — I can give her no other name — that wife of matchless virtue, winning favour because of her good qualities, directed appeals to Caesar’s divinity and gained both swift recall for her husband and full revenge for the attack. Caesar banned the guild¹ of Haemus the robber, and it disappeared forthwith: such is the power of even a nod from a great prince. Then, when my entire band had been hunted out, cornered, and cut down by regiments of soldiers, I alone got away and barely managed to escape from the jaws of Orcus. This is how I did it.

8 “I put on a woman’s flowery robe with loose billowy folds, covered my head with a woven turban, and wore a pair of those thin white shoes that ladies wear. Then, disguised and under cover of the weaker sex, and riding on the back of a donkey loaded with ears of barley, I passed right through the lines of hostile soldiers. Thinking I was a

¹ Emperors frequently issued edicts restricting or forbidding associations known as *collegia*, which I have translated somewhat anachronistically as “guilds.”

putantes asinariam concedebant liberos abitus,¹ quippe cum mihi etiam tunc depiles genae levi pueritia splendicarent. Nec ab illa tamen paterna gloria vel mea virtute descivi, quamquam semitrepidus iuxta mucrones Martios constitutus, sed habitus alieni fallacia tectus, villas² seu castella solus aggrediens, viaticulum mihi corrasi.” Et diloricatis statim pannulis in medium duo milia profudit aureorum, et “En” inquit “istam sportulam, immo vero dotem collegio vestro libens meque vobis ducem fidissimum, si tamen non recusatis, offero, brevi temporis spatio lapideam istam domum vestram facturus auream.”

9 Nec mora nec cunctatio, sed calculis omnibus ducatum latrones unianimes ei deferunt, vestemque lautiusculam proferunt sumeret, abiecto centunculo divite. Sic reformatus, singulos exosculatus et in summo pulvinari locatus cena poculisque³ magnis inauguratur. Tunc sermonibus mutuis de virginis fuga deque mea vectura et utriusque destinata monstruosa morte cognoscit; et ubi locorum esset illa percontatus deductusque, visa ea ut erat vinculis onusta, contorta et vituperanti nare discessit.

¹ F *aditus*.

² F *villa*.

³ F *cenae poculisque*.

¹ Cf. V 8 and note.

donkey-woman, they allowed me free passage, for even then my beardless cheeks glistened with the smoothness of boyhood. I did not, however, fall short of my father's reputation or my own bravery, although I was half afraid, being so close to those swords of Mars. Under the deceptive cover of my alien garb, I advanced alone on farms or hamlets, and scraped together a little travelling-money for myself.” At this he ripped open his corselet of rags and poured out before their eyes two thousand gold-pieces. “Here!” he said. “I gladly offer this to your guild as my guest-contribution—or rather my dowry. And I offer myself to you as the trustiest of generals, unless of course you have any objections. In a short space of time I will make this stone house of yours a golden one.”¹

9 Without a moment's delay or hesitation the robbers with all their votes unanimously conferred on him their generalship, and brought out a nice elegant robe for him to wear after he had cast off his rich patchwork cloak. Thus transformed, he kissed them one by one, took his place on the highest couch, and was inaugurated with a dinner and heavy drinking. As they exchanged conversation, he learned about the maiden's attempted escape, my act of conveyance, and the grotesque death planned for the two of us. He inquired where she was, and when he had been taken to her and seen her all loaded down with chains he returned wrinkling his nose in disapproval.

Et “Non sum quidem tam brutus vel certe temerarius” inquit “ut scitum vestrum inhibeam, sed malae conscientiae reatum intra me sustinebo, si quod bonum mihi videtur dissimulavero. Sed prius fiduciam vestri causa sollicito mihi tribuite, cum praesertim vobis, si sententia haec mea displicuerit, liceat rursus ad asinum redire. Nam ego arbitror latrones, quique¹ eorum recte sapiunt, nihil anteferre lucro suo debere, ac ne ipsam quidem saepe et ultis² damnosam ultionem. Ergo igitur si perderitis in asino virginem, nihil amplius quam sine ullo compendio indignationem vestram exercueritis. Quin ego censeo deducendam eam ad quampiam civitatem ibique venundandam. Nec enim levi pretio distrahi poterit talis aetatula. Nam et ipse quosdam lenones pridem cognitos habeo, quorum poterit unus magnis equidem talentis, ut arbitror, puellam istam praestinare condigne natalibus suis, in³ fornicem processuram, nec in similem fugam discursuram, non nihil etiam, cum lupanari servierit, vindictae vobis depensuram. Hanc ex animo quidem meo sententiam conducibilem protuli; sed vos vestrorum estis consiliorum rerumque domini.”

10 Sic ille latronum fisci advocatus nostram causam pertulerat, virginis et asini sospitator egregius. Sed

¹ Should perhaps be emended to *quiqui* or *qui quidem*.

² *F alii*.

³ *in* is an editorial addition.

“I am not so stupid,” he said, “nor certainly so rash as to try to repress your ordinance. But I will suffer internally from the guilt of a bad conscience if I conceal my considered opinion. First of all, put your confidence in me: it is on your account that I am concerned. And at any rate if you do not approve my proposal you can always return to the ass. Now I believe that bandits, those at least who think straight, should put nothing ahead of their own profit, not even revenge, which often recoils upon the avenger. Therefore, if you destroy the maiden in the ass, you will have accomplished nothing other than exercising your resentment at no gain. My recommendation is rather that she should be taken off to some city and sold there. A girl of her tender age can be retailed at no small price. I myself have some old friends who are pimps, and I am sure one of them will be able to purchase your girl for big money,¹ as befits her background. She will go into a brothel, and will not run away and escape again; furthermore, by her enslavement to a whorehouse she will be paying off your revenge. I have laid this advantageous proposal before you in all sincerity, but you yourselves are the masters of your own decisions and property.”

10 Thus the advocate for the robber’s treasury had conducted our defence, becoming an outstanding saviour of maiden and ass. But the others spent a

¹ Literally “large talents,” which refers to money minted on the Attic standard of weight.

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in diutina deliberatione ceteri cruciantes mora consilii mea praecordia, immo miserum spiritum, elidentes¹ tandem novicii latronis accedunt sententiae, et protinus vinculis exsolvunt virginem. Quae quidem simul viderat illum iuvenem fornicisque et lenonis audierat mentionem, coepit risu laetissimo gestire, ut mihi merito subiret vituperatio totius sexus, cum viderem puellam, proci iuvenis amore nuptiarumque castarum desiderio simulato, lupanaris spurci sordidique subito delectari nomine. Et tunc quidem totarum mulierum secta moresque de asini pendebant iudicio.

Sed ille iuvenis sermone repetito, "Quin igitur" inquit "supplicatum Marti Comiti pergimus, et puellam simul vendituri et socios indagaturi? Sed, ut video, nullum uspiam pecus sacrificatui ac ne vinum quidem potatui affatim vel sufficiens habemus. Decem mihi itaque legate comites, quis contentus proximum castellum petam, inde vobis epulas saliares comparaturus."

Sic eo profecto ceteri copiosum instruunt ignem aramque caespite virenti Marti deo faciunt.

11 Nec multo post adveniunt illi vinarios utres ferentes et gregatim pecua comminantes. Unde praelectum grandem hircum annosum et horri-

¹ *F libentes.*

¹ See IV 22 and note.

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long time in deliberation, and were torturing my heart—indeed, choking my wretched breath—with their slow council-meeting. Finally they agreed to the novice bandit's proposal, and instantly freed the maiden from her bonds. The moment she saw the young man and heard him mention the words "brothel" and "pimp", she became jubilant and broke out into joyous laughter. This caused me, as was only natural, to vilify the entire sex, when I saw a girl who had pretended love for her young suitor and desire for a faithful marriage suddenly show delight at the mention of a filthy, sordid whorehouse. Indeed, at that moment the character and principles of all womankind depended on an ass's verdict.

In the meantime the young man spoke up again. "Well then," he said, "why don't we make an offering to Mars the Comrade, as we prepare to sell the girl and track down some new associates? But, as far as I can see, we have no animal anywhere for sacrificing, and not even adequate and sufficient wine for drinking. Assign me ten comrades, then. That will be enough for me to attack the nearest hamlet and acquire a Salian banquet¹ for you."

Then he departed, and the rest of them laid a large fire and built an altar of green sod to the god Mars.

11 A little later the others returned carrying skins of wine and driving whole flocks of sheep and goats, from which they selected a great shaggy-haired old

comem Marti Secutori Comitique victimant. Et ilico prandium fabricatur opipare. Tunc hospes ille “Non modo” inquit “expeditionum¹ praedarumque, verum etiam voluptatum vestrarum ducem me strenuum sentire debetis.” Et aggressus insigni facilitate naviter cuncta praeministrat. Verrit, sternit, coquit, tucceta concinnat, apponit scitule, sed praecipue poculis crebris grandibusque singulos ingurgitat. Interdum tamen, simulatione² promendi quae poscebat usus, ad puellam commeabat assidue, partesque surreptas clanculo et praegustatas a se potiones offerebat hilaris. At illa sumebat appetenter et nonnunquam basiare volenti promptis saviolis allubescebat. Quae res oppido mihi displicebat.

“Hem oblita es nuptiarum tuique mutui cupitoris, puella virgo, et illi nescio cui recenti marito, quem tibi parentes iunxerunt, hunc advenam cruentumque percussorem praeponis? Nec te conscientia stimulat, sed affectione calcata inter lanceas et gladios istos scortari tibi libet? Quid si quo modo latrones ceteri persenserint? Non rursus recurras ad asinum et rursus exitium mihi parabis? Re vera ludis de alieno corio.”

12 Dum ista sycophanta ego mecum maxima cum indignatione disputo, de verbis eorum quibusdam

¹ *F expositionum.* ² *F insimulatione.*

¹ This is otherwise unattested as a cult-title. It may refer to a particular kind of gladiator who specialised in pursuit.

billy and offered him up to Mars the Follower¹ and Comrade. At once they set to work to produce a luxurious supper. Their host said to them, “You will find me an enterprising leader not only in your campaigns and raids, but in your pleasures as well.” Tackling the task with extraordinary skill, he attended energetically to all their needs. He swept, he set the table, he cooked, he fixed the meat, he served smartly, and above all he drowned each and every one of them in cups both frequent and large. Meanwhile, on the pretext of getting what they needed, he was constantly visiting the girl. He would cheerfully offer her bits of food he had stolen on the sly, and sips from a cup he had tasted. She accepted eagerly, and at times, when he wanted to kiss her, she shared his passion with ready and open lips. I thoroughly disapproved of this behaviour.

“What! Have you forgotten your wedding and the man who shares your desires, young lady? Do you prefer this stranger, this bloody assassin, to that new husband of yours, whoever he is, to whom your parents wed you? Doesn’t your conscience prick you? Or do you like to trample on affections and play the whore amid these spears and swords? What if the other robbers somehow find out? Will you not go right back to the ass again? And procure my destruction again? Truly you are playing games with someone else’s hide.”

12 While I was making this slanderous speech to myself with the greatest indignation, I made a dis-

dubiis, sed non obscuris prudenti asino, cognosco non Haemum illum praedonem famosum, sed Tlepolemum sponsum puellae ipsius. nam procedente sermone paulo iam clarius¹ contempta mea praesentia quasi vere mortui, “Bono animo es,” inquit “Charite dulcissima; nam totos istos hostes tuos statim captivos habebis.” Et instantia validiore vinum iam immixtum, sed modico tepefactum vapore, sauciis illis et crapula vinolentiaque madidis ipse abstemius non cessat impingere. Et hercules suspicionem mihi fecit, quasi soporiferum quoddam venenum cantharis immisceret illis. Cuncti denique, sed prorsus omnes vino sepulti iacebant, omnes pariter² mortui. Tunc nullo negotio artissimis vinculis impeditis ac pro arbitrio suo constrictis illis, imposita dorso meo puella, dirigit gressum ad suam patriam.

- 13 Quam simul accessimus, tota civitas ad votivum conspectum effunditur. Procurrunt parentes, affines, clientes, alumni, famuli, laeti faciem, gaudio delibuti. Pompam cerneret omnis sexus et omnis aetatis, novumque et hercules memorandum spectamen, virginem asino triumphantem. Denique ipse etiam hilarior pro virili parte, ne praesenti negotio

¹ *F carius.*

² *F partim.*

¹ His name means “the enduring warrior.”

² Her name suggests “grace” and the Graces, goddesses of charm and beauty.

covery from some remarks of theirs which, though ambiguous, were not unintelligible to a thoughtful ass: namely, that he was not Haemus the famous robber, but Tlepolemus,¹ the girl's own bridegroom. In the course of their conversation he raised his voice a little, thinking no more of my presence than if I were truly dead. “Cheer up, Charite² my sweetheart,” he said, “for you will soon have all those enemies of yours in bonds.” And he kept thrusting wine on them with even stronger insistence, wine that was now unwatered but warmed a little by heating. They were already muddled and sodden with drunken intoxication, while he himself abstained. By Hercules, he even made me suspect that he was mixing some soporific drug in their mugs. In fact every single solitary one of them lay buried in wine, and the whole group was as good as dead. Then with no trouble at all he bound them in tight shackles and tied them up at leisure. After that he put the girl on my back and guided our course toward his home town.

- 13 As soon as we reached it, the whole city poured out to behold the sight they had prayed for. Their parents, relatives, clients, wards, and servants came running to meet us, their happy faces suffused with joy. You could see a parade of each sex and age, and, by Hercules, a novel and memorable spectacle: a virgin riding in triumph on an ass. Even I was as happy as a man could be, and had no desire to be out of tune with the present proceedings like

ut alienus discreparem, porrectis auribus proflatisque naribus rudivi fortiter, immo tonanti clamore personui. Et illam thalamo receptam commode parentes sui fovebant. Me vero cum ingenti iumentorum civiumque multitudine confestim retro Tlepolemus agebat non invitum. Nam et alias curiosus et tunc latronum captivitatis spectator optabam fieri. Quos quidem colligatos adhuc vino magis quam vinculis deprehendimus. Totis ergo prolatis erutisque rebus et nobis auro argentoque et ceteris onustis, ipsos partim constrictos uti fuerant provolutosque in proximas rupinas praecipites dedere, alios vero suis sibi gladiis obruncatos reliquere.

Tali vindicta laeti et gaudentes civitatem revenimus. Et illas quidem divitias publicae custodelae¹ commisere, Tlepolemo puellam repetitam lege tradidere.

- 14 Exin me suum² sospitatorem nuncupatum matrona proluxe curitabat,³ ipsoque nuptiarum die praesepium meum hordeo passim repleti iubet faenumque camelo Bactrinae sufficiens apponi. Sed quas ego condignas Photidi diras devotiones imprecer, quae me formavit non canem sed asinum, quippe cum viderem largissimae cenae reliquiis rapinisque canes omnes inescatos atque distentos.

¹ F *publica custodela*.

² F *meum* for *me suum*.

³ F *quiritatabat*, with the second *ta* struck out and *curuta* in margin.

an outsider; and so I stretched out my ears, flared out my nostrils and brayed my best—I should say trumpeted with thunderous din. The girl's parents took her to her room and tended her as she needed. But Tlepolemus immediately turned back with me and a mighty multitude of pack-animals and townspeople. I went quite willingly, for in addition to my general curiosity I especially desired to be in the audience for the bandits' capture. We found them still tightly tied up, more by the wine than by their ropes. So the men unearthed and brought out all their booty and loaded us with the gold and silver and all the rest. As for the robbers, they rolled some of them, still bound, to the nearby cliff and threw them over, and others they decapitated with their own swords and left them there.

We returned to town happy and exultant over this fine revenge. They turned the treasures over to public custody and legally reunited Tlepolemus to the girl he had reclaimed.

- 14 From that moment the lady,¹ who called me her saviour, took lavish care of me. On the day of her wedding feast she had my manger completely filled with barley, and enough hay put out to suit a Bactrian camel. But how justly would I damn Photis with dreadful curses for shaping me into an ass instead of a dog, when I saw the dogs all gorged and swollen from the leftovers and stolen bits of that splendid feast.

¹ Charite has changed from *puella* to *matrona*.

Post noctem unicam et rudimenta Veneris recens nupta gratias summas apud suos parentes ac maritum mihi meminisse non destitit, quoad summos illi promitterent honores habituri mihi. Convocatis denique gravioribus amicis consilium datur, quo potissimum pacto¹ digne remunerarer. Placuerat uni domi me conclusum et otiosum hordeo lecto fabaque et vicia saginari. Sed optinuit alius, qui meae libertati prospexerat, suadens ut rurestribus potius campis in greges equinos lasciviens discurrerem daturus dominis equarum inscensu generoso multas mulas alumnas.

15 Ergo igitur evocato statim armentario equisone magna cum praefatione deducendus assignor. Et sane gaudens laetusque praecurrebam sarcinis et ceteris oneribus iam nunc renuntiaturus, nantaque libertate veris initio pratis herbantibus rosas utique reperiturus aliquas. Subibat me tamen illa etiam sequens cogitatio, quod tantis actis gratiis honoribusque plurimis asino meo tributis, humana facie recepta multo tanta pluribus beneficiis honestarer.

Sed ubi me procul a civitate gregarius ille perduxerat, nullae deliciae ac ne ulla quidem libertas excipit. Nam protinus uxor eius, avara equidem nequissimaque illa mulier, molae machinariae

¹ *F factō.*

¹ Literally, "my ass."

After the matchless first night and her initiation into the ways of love, the new bride began to tell her parents and her husband how grateful she was to me, not stopping until they promised they would show me the highest possible honour. Thereupon they convoked a council of their wisest friends to determine how I might most worthily be rewarded. One proposed that I be penned up at the house with nothing to do but feed on select barley, beans, and vetch. But another, who advocated my freedom, won the debate. He advised them to let me loose on the herds of horses, to run free in the country fields and produce many foster-mules for the owners of mares from my high-breed stud service.

15 They therefore immediately summoned their head horse-keeper, and after a long speech of recommendation I was assigned to him to be taken away. I was really happy and joyful as I trotted ahead of him: I was now about to give up sacks and loads altogether, I had gained my freedom, and at the beginning of spring on the grassy meadows I would surely find some roses. Another thought occurred to me too: if in my capacity as an ass¹ I had received so much gratitude and been awarded so many honours, I would be honoured with much more bountiful favours when I recovered my human appearance.

But when the herdsman arrived home with me, far from the city, there were no pleasures to welcome me, not even freedom. His wife, a greedy, utterly vile woman, yoked me there and then to a

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subiugum me dedit, frondosoque baculo subinde castigans, panem sibi suisque de meo parabat corio. Nec tantum sui cibi gratia me fatigare contenta, vicinorum etiam frumenta mercenariis discursibus meis conterebat. Nec mihi misero statuta saltem cibaria pro tantis praestabantur laboribus. Namque hordeum meum frictum et sub eadem mola meis quassatum ambagibus colonis proximis venditabat, mihi vero per diem laboriosae machinae attento sub ipsa vespera furfures apponebat incretos ac sordidos multoque lapide salebrosos.

16 Talibus aerumnis edomitum novis Fortuna saeva tradidit cruciatibus, scilicet ut, quod aiunt, domi forisque fortibus factis adoriae plenae gloriarer. Equinis armentis namque me congregem pastor egregius mandati dominici serus¹ auscultator aliquando permisit. At ego tandem liber asinus, laetus et tripudians graduque molli gestiens, equas opportunissimas iam mihi concubinas futuras deligebam. Sed haec etiam spes hilarior in capitale processit exitium. Mares enim ob admissuram veterem² pasti satianter ac diu saginati, terribiles alioquin³ et utique quovis asino fortiores, de me metuentes sibi et adulterio degeneri praecaventis, nec hospitalis

¹ F *serius*.

² Often emended or questioned.

³ F *alios alioquin*.

¹ The Latin is archaic and formulaic, but the specific reference has not been identified.

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grinding-mill, whipping me frequently with a leafy stick, in order to make bread for herself and her family out of my hide. Not content merely to wear me out producing her own food, she even hired out my treading to grind her neighbours' grain. In my misery I was not even given my assigned food-allowance in exchange for my hard labours, but she took my barley, crushed and ground it under the same millstone by means of my own circling steps, and sold it to the farmers nearby; as for me, who was attached all day to that wearisome wheel, she waited until dusk and then set some bran in front of me, unsifted, dirty, and very rough and gravelly.

16 When I was completely broken by such suffering, cruel Fortune consigned me to new tortures, no doubt so that I could—as they say—“boast of high distinction from brave deeds done at home and abroad.”¹ For the excellent herdsman, obedient (though late in the day) to his master's orders, eventually let me share the pasture with the herds of horses. At last I was a free ass, happy and dancing as I cavorted around with a delicate step, selecting the mares that I thought would make the fittest concubines for me. But even this joyous expectation ended in deadly disaster. There were some stallions there, fully fed and long fattened for their regular breeding services, frightening at best and certainly stronger than any ass. They were apprehensive about me and on guard against any adulterous miscegenation; so they broke the laws of the guest-god

Iovis servato foedere, rivalem summo furentes persequuntur odio. Hic elatis in altum vastis pectoribus arduus capite et sublimis vertice primoribus in me pugillatur unguis; ille terga pulposis torulis obesa convertens postremis velitatur calcibus; alius hinnitu maligno comminatus remulsis auribus dentiumque candentium renudatis asceis totum me commorsicat. Sic apud historiam de rege Thracio legeram, qui miseros hospites ferinis equis suis lacerandos devorandosque porrigebat. Adeo ille praeptens tyrannus sic parcus hordei fuit, ut edacium iumentorum famem corporum humanorum largitione sedaret.

17 Ad eundem modum distractus et ipse variis equorum incursibus, rursus molares illos circuitus requirebam. Verum Fortuna meis cruciatibus insatiabilis aliam mihi denuo pestem instruxit. Delegor enim ligno monte devehundo, puerque mihi praefectus imponitur, omnibus¹ ille quidem puer deterimus. Nec me montis excelsi tantum arduum fatigabat iugum, nec saxeas tantum sudes incursando contribam unguulas, verum fustium quoque crebris ictibus per proclive² dedolabar, ut usque plagarum mihi medullaris insideret dolor. Coxaeque dexterae

¹ The syntax should perhaps be regularised by emendation: *ex omnibus* or *omnium unus*.

² Armini's convincing conjecture for F's *perclive*.

¹ Cf. III 26, and note.

² The practice of Diomedes, a legendary king of the

Jupiter and attacked their rival in furious hatred.¹ One raised his huge chest skyward with head held high and crown aloft, and boxed me with his front hoofs. Another turned round his rump all stout with meaty muscles, and skirmished with his hind feet. Still another threatened me with a malicious neigh, laid back his ears, bared the axe-blades of his shining teeth, and bit me all over. It was just as I had read in history about the king of Thrace who used to give his unfortunate guests to his wild horses to rip apart and devour²: yes, that powerful tyrant was so stingy with his barley that he assuaged the starvation of his voracious herds with generous servings of human bodies.

17 Now that I too had been similarly tormented by the various attacks of those stallions, I longed to return to those mill-circuits of mine. Fortune, however, could not get her fill of torturing me, and devised a fresh, new plague for me. I was assigned to carry wood down from the mountain, and a boy was put in charge of me who was absolutely the meanest boy in the world. In addition to being exhausted by the steep slope of the high mountain, and in addition to wearing down my hoofs by stubbing them on spiky rocks, I was so hacked apart by constant beating with sticks, even on the down-slope, that the pain from the blows settled right down to my marrow. By always delivering his blows to my right hip Bistones, who was eventually subdued by Hercules and fed to his own horses.

semper ictus incutiens et unum feriendo locum dis-
 sipato corio et ulceris latissimi facto foramine, immo
 fovea vel etiam fenestra, nullus tamen desinebat
 identidem vulnus sanguine delibutum obtundere.
 Lignorum vero tanto me premebat pondere ut fas-
 cium molem elephanto non asino paratam putares.
 Ille vero etiam quotiens in alterum latus praepon-
 derans declinarat sarcina, cum deberet potius gra-
 vantis ruinae fustes demere et levata paulisper
 pressura sanare me, vel certe in alterum latus
 translatis peraequare, contra lapidibus additis in-
 18 super sic iniquitati ponderis medebatur. Nec tamen
 post tantas meas clades immodico sarcinae pondere
 contentus, cum fluvium transcenderemus qui forte
 praeter viam defluebat, peronibus suis ab aquae
 madore consulens ipse quoque insuper lumbos meos
 insiliens residebat, exiguum scilicet et illud tantae
 molis superpondium. Ac si quo casu limo caenoso
 ripae ^{supercilia}¹ lubricante oneris impatientia
 prolapsus deruissem, cum deberet egregius agaso
 manum porrigere, capistro suspendere, cauda sub-
 levare, certe partem tanti oneris, quoad resurgerem
 saltem, detrahere, nullum quidem defesso mihi
 ferebat auxilium; sed occipiens a capite, immo

¹ F *supercilio*.

and striking the same area, he wore away the skin
 and produced a veritable great hole of a wound—I
 should say a pit or even a window; and he still kept
 right on hammering at that same wound, which was
 bathed in blood. He burdened me with such a
 weight of wood that you would think the heap of
 sticks had been collected for an elephant, not an ass.
 Furthermore, every time the weight became un-
 balanced and the load shifted to one side, although
 he should have taken some sticks off the heavy col-
 lapsing side and helped my health by lightening
 the pressure a little, or at least evened the load by
 transferring some sticks from one side to the other,
 instead he cured the discrepancy in weight by
 18 adding stones on top. Even after all my afflictions
 he was still not content with the excessive weight of
 my load, and whenever we crossed the stream which
 happened to flow down alongside the road, he would
 look out for his boots and avoid getting them wet
 from the water by jumping up and sitting on my
 haunches too—a small addition, of course, to such a
 heavy load. If by some mischance, where the brow
 of the bank was slippery with muddy slime, I col-
 lapsed under the intolerable load and slid down, my
 inimitable groom, when he ought to have reached
 out a hand, raised me up by my halter, lifted me out
 by my tail, or certainly at least removed a part of
 that great load until I could stand up by myself, in
 fact offered me no help whatsoever in my weariness.
 Instead, beginning at my head—or rather my

vero et ipsis auribus, totum me compilabat¹ fusti grandissimo, donec fomenti fice ipsae me plagae suscitarent.

Idem mihi talem etiam excogitavit perniciem: spinas acerrimas et punctu venenato viriosas in fascem tortili nodo constrictas caudae meae pensilem deligavit cruciatum, ut inessu meo commotae incitataeque funestis aculeis infeste me convul-
19 nerarent. Ergo igitur ancipiti malo laborabam. Nam cum me cursu proripueram fugiens acerbissimos incursus, vehementiore nisu spinarum feriebar. Si dolori parcens paululum restitsem, plagis compellebar ad cursum. Nec quicquam videbatur aliud excogitare puer ille nequissimus quam ut me quoquo modo perditum iret, idque iurans etiam nonnunquam comminabatur.

Et plane fuit quod eius detestabilem malitiam ad peiores conatus stimularet. Nam quadam die, nimia eius insolentia expugnata patientia mea, calces in eum validas extuleram. Denique tale facinus in me comminiscitur. Stuppae sarcina me satis onustum probeque² funiculis constrictum producit in viam, deque proxima villula spirantem carbunculum furatus oneris in ipso meditullio reponit. Iamque fomento tenui calescens et enutritus ignis surgebat in flammam et totum me funestus ardor

¹ F has *cidit* after *compilabat*, at the beginning of a new page, possibly from a gloss *concidit*.

² F *propeque*.

ears—he battered me all over with an enormous club until, like a mustard plaster, the blows themselves roused me up.

In addition he devised for me the following deadly scheme: he took some very sharp thorns, effective on account of their poisonous sting, tied them into a bundle with a twisted knot, and then fastened them to my tail as a hanging instrument of torture, so arranged that they shook and bounced as I walked, cruelly wounding me with their lethal
19 needles. So I was beset with a double-headed evil. Whenever I rushed forward at a gallop to escape the boy's pitiless assaults, I was lashed all the more violently by the thorns; but if I slowed down for a bit to spare the pain, I was forced back into a run by his blows. That vilest of boys seemed to have nothing else on his mind but to plan to kill me somehow, and from time to time he swore and threatened to do just that.

And in fact something happened which goaded his abominable malice to still more vicious designs. One day, my patience overcome by his boundless insolence, I had raised my powerful hoofs to him. Thereupon he contrived the following outrage against me: he loaded me with a good-sized bundle of tow, tied it tightly round me with ropes, and took me out on the road. Then he stole a live coal from the first farmhouse we passed and put it right in the middle of my load. The fire grew warmer, nourished by the light kindling, and rose up in flames. Now

invaserat, nec ullum pestis extremae suffugium, nec salutis aliquod apparet solacium, et ustrina talis moras non sustinet et meliora consilia praeventitur.

20 Sed in rebus scaevis affulsit Fortunae nutus hilarior, nescio an futuris periculis me reservans, certe praesente statutaque morte liberans. Nam forte pluviae pridianae recens conceptaculum aquae lutulentae proximum conspicatus ibi memet improvido saltu totum abicio, flammaque prorsus exstincta tandem et pondere levatus et exitio liberatus evado. Sed ille deterrimus ac temerarius puer hoc quoque suum nequissimum factum in me retorsit, gregariisque omnibus affirmavit me sponte vicinorum foculos transeuntem, titubanti gradu prolapsus, ignem ultroneum accersisse¹ mihi; et aridens addidit, “Quo usque ergo frustra pascemus inigninum² istum?”

Nec multis interiectis diebus longe peioribus me dolis petivit. Ligno enim quod gerebam in proximam casulam vendito, vacuum me ducens, iam se nequitiae meae proclamans imparem miserumque istud magisterium renuens, querelas huius modi concinnat:

21 “Videtis istum pigrum tardissimumque et nimis

¹ *F accessisse*, followed by a full stop.

² Although the word is otherwise unknown, it is better to retain it than emend it away, as most editors do.

the deadly heat had engulfed me from head to toe. I saw no escape from this final disaster, no solace of salvation; my crematorium brooked no delay and 20 allowed no time for helpful deliberation. But in these dire circumstances a more cheerful nod from Fortune flashed upon me. Perhaps she was only saving me up for dangers to come, but at least she freed me from my present sentence of death. It happened to have rained the day before, and I spotted a new puddle of muddy water nearby. Without stopping to think I leaped and threw myself right into it. When the fire was completely extinguished I emerged at last, lightened of my burden and liberated from death. But the depraved and audacious boy even twisted the blame for this atrocious act of his back to me, telling all the herdsmen that I had willfully walked through a neighbour's open fireplace, tottered and slipped, and deliberately set myself on fire. He added with a grin, “How long, then, shall we profitlessly feed this firebug?”

Only a few days passed before he attacked me with a far worse plot. He sold the wood I was carrying at a cottage in the neighbourhood, brought me back empty, and announced that he could no longer cope with my good-for-nothing behaviour, and that he was quitting his wretched, miserable job as my driver. And he invented the following tale of complaint:

21 “You see that lazy, slow-footed, all-too-asinine

asinum? Me praeter¹ cetera flagitia nunc novis periculis etiam angit. Ut quemque enim viatorem prospexerit, sive illa scitula mulier seu virgo nubilis seu tener puellus est² ilico disturbato gestamine, nonnunquam etiam ipsis stramentis abiectis, furens incurrit et homines amator talis appetit, et humi prostratis illis inhians illicitas atque incognitas temptat libidines, et ferinas voluptates aversa Venere invitat ad nuptias. Nam imaginem etiam savii mentiendo ore improbo compulsat ac morsicat. Quae res nobis non mediocres lites atque iurgia, immo forsitan et crimina pariet. Nunc etiam visa quadam honesta iuvene, ligno quod devehebat abiecto dispersoque, in eam furiosos direxit impetus. Et festivus hic amasio humo sordida prostratam mulierem ibidem incoram omnium gestiebat inscendere. Quod nisi ploratu questuque femineo conclamatum viatorum praesidium accurrisset ac de mediis unguis ipsius esset erepta liberataque, misera illa compavita atque dirupta ipsa quidem cruciabilem cladem sustinuisset, nobis vero poenale reliquisset exitium.”

22 Talibus mendaciis admiscendo sermones alios qui meum verecundum silentium vehementius

¹ Or *post*, for F's *prae*.

² F *puella sese*.

¹ The Latin means both “without Venus’ blessing” and “in a reversed sexual position.”

creature? Besides all his other disgraceful behaviour he is now torturing me with new dangers. Every time he gets a glimpse of some traveller ahead—whether it is a cute woman or a marriageable young girl or a pretty little boy—he immediately upsets his load and sometimes even throws off his pack-saddle and rushes madly at them. Then the great lover assaults these humans and knocks them to the ground; then, breathing hard, he attempts illicit and unheard-of lusts, and urges upon the victims of his bestial desire a union to which Venus is averse.¹ He even counterfeits kissing by nudging and biting them with his nasty mouth. This business is going to cause us substantial lawsuits and quarrels—yes, and perhaps even criminal charges. Why, just now he saw a fine young girl, threw off and scattered the wood he was carrying and made a furious assault on her. Our gay lover-boy here had her laid out on the dirty ground and was making as if to mount her right there in front of everybody. If it had not been for some travellers who heard a woman’s pleas and cries and came running up to help and snatched her from between his hoofs and freed her, the poor girl would have been trampled down and split apart. She herself would have suffered an excruciating end, and she would have bequeathed to us the death penalty for it.”

22 By such lies, combined with other remarks of a sort to weigh heavily against my modest silence, he

premerent, animos pastorum in meam perniciem atrociter suscitavit. Denique unus ex illis “Quin igitur publicum istum maritum,” inquit “immo communem omnium adulterum illis suis monstruosis nuptiis condignam victimamus hostiam.” Et “Heus tu, puer,” ait “obtruncato protinus eo intestina quidem canibus nostris iacta, ceteram vero carnem omnem operariorum cenae reserva. Nam corium affirmatum cineris inspersu dominis referemus eiusque mortem de lupo facile mentiemur.”

Sublata cunctatione accusator ille meus noxius, ipse etiam pastoralis executor sententiae, laetus et meis insultans malis, calcisque illius admonitus, quam inefficacem fuisse mehercules doleo, protinus gladium cotis attritu parabat.

23 Sed quidam de coetu illo rusticorum “Nefas” ait “tam bellum asinum sic enecare et propter luxuriam lascivamque amatoriam criminatos¹ opera servitioque tam necessario carere, cum alioquin exsectis genitalibus possit neque in venerem nullo modo surgere vosque omni metu periculi liberare, insuper etiam longe crassior atque corpulentior effici. Multos ego scio non modo asinos inertes, verum etiam ferocissimos equos, nimio libidinis laborantes atque ob id truces vesanosque, adhibita tali detestatione mansuetos ac mansues² exinde factos et oneri

¹ F is unreadable here, and the text follows Helm, who understands the participle in the active sense, modifying an unexpressed subject of *carere*.

² Usually emended to *mites*.

roused to a high pitch the herdsmen’s murderous anger against me.

“Well then,” said one of them, “why don’t we take that public husband there—I should say community-wide adulterer—and make him a fitting sacrificial victim for those monstrous marriages of his. You, my lad,” he added, “slaughter him right now and toss his guts to our dogs, but keep all the rest of the meat for the workers’ supper. We will stiffen his hide by sprinkling ashes on it and take it back to our masters; we can easily pretend that he was killed by a wolf.”

Without a moment’s hesitation my baneful accuser, now also the executor of the herdsmen’s sentence, gleefully jumping for joy at my troubles and remembering that kick—by Hercules, I am sorry it was ineffective—quickly started preparing a sword by sharpening it on a whetstone.

23 But one of that assembly of rustics spoke out. “It is wrong,” he said, “to kill such a fine ass like that, and by charging him with wantonness and debauchery lose his work and services. If you cut off his genitals instead, he will be completely unable to rise to the occasion but will relieve you of any fear of danger. And besides he will become much stouter and heavier. I have seen it happen with lots of animals: not just lazy asses, but even the wildest horses who suffered from such an excessive sexual drive that they turned savage and mad. After this detesticulation they became tame and gentle, not

ferundo non inhabiles et cetero ministerio patientes. Denique, nisi vobis suadeo nolentibus, possum spatium modicum interiecto, quo mercatum proximum obire statui, petitis e domo ferramentis huic curae praeparatis, ad vos actutum redire trucemque amatorem istum atque insuavem dissitis femoribus emasculare et quovis vervece mitiorem efficere.”

24 Tali sententia mediis Orca manibus extractus, sed extremae poenae reservatus, maerebam, et in novissima parte corporis totum me peritulum deflebam. Inedia denique continua vel praecipiti ruina memet ipse quaerebam extinguere, moriturus quidem nihilo minus, sed moriturus integer. Dumque in ista necis meae decunctor electione, matutino me rursum puer ille peremptor meus contra montis suetum ducit vestigium. Iamque me de cuiusdam vastissimae ilicis ramo pendulo destinato, paululum viam supergressus ipse securi lignum quod deveheret recidebat. Et ecce de proximo specus vastum attollens caput funesta proserpuit ursa. Quam simul conspexi, pavidus et repentina facie conterritus totum corporis pondus in postremos poplites recello, arduaque cervice sublimiter elevata lorum quo tenebar rumpo, meque protinus pernici fugae committo. Perque prona non tantum pedibus,

unmanageable for carrying packs and submissive in every other sort of service. So, if you are not unwilling to follow my advice, just give me a bit of time to go to the nearest market, as I planned, and I can fetch from home the hardware I have ready to take care of this job. I can come back to you right away and take that savage and disagreeable lover-boy of yours, spread his thighs apart, castrate him, and make him gentler than any wether.”

24 By this proposal I was pulled out of the hands of Orcus, but reserved for the ultimate punishment. I grieved and mourned that I was going to be utterly ruined by the loss of the hindmost part of my body. I then looked for a way to kill myself, either by an unbroken fast or by a suicide leap: since I was going to die anyway, I would at least die in one piece. While I hesitated over this choice of means for my death, that boy, my murderer, took me out again in the morning on our usual path up the mountain. After tying me to a branch hanging from an enormous oak, he walked on up the path a little way and with an axe began chopping wood to bring back down. Suddenly from a cave close by emerged the huge raised head of a deadly she-bear. The moment I caught sight of her I was frightened and terrified by this sudden apparition. I threw the whole weight of my body back on to my back legs, stretched my neck and raised it high in the air, breaking the rein that was holding me, and at once beat a speedy retreat. Rolling rapidly downhill, hurling not only

verum etiam toto proiecto corpore propere devolutus immitto me campis suppatentibus, ex summo studio fugiens immanem ursam ursaque peiorem illum puerum.

25 Tunc quidam viator solitarium vagumque me respiciens invadit, et properiter inscensum baculo quod gerebat obverberans per obliquam ignaramque me ducebat viam. Nec invitus ego cursui me commodabam, relinquens atrocissimam virilitatis lanienam. Ceterum plagis non magnopere commovebar, quippe consuetus ex forma concidi fustibus.

Sed illa Fortuna meis casibus pervicax tam opportunum latibulum mira¹ celeritate praeversa novas instruxit insidias. Pastores enim mei perditam sibi requirentes vacculam variasque regiones peragrantes occurrunt nobis fortuito, statimque me cognitum capistro prehensum attrahere gestiunt. Sed audacia valida resistens ille fidem hominum deumque testabatur: “Quid me raptatis violenter? Quid invaditis?” “Ain, te nos tractamus incivilliter, qui nostrum asinum furatus abducis? Quin potius effaris ubi puerum, eiusdem agasonem, necatum scilicet occultaris?” Et ilico detractus ad terram pugnisque pulsatus et calcibus contusus infit

¹ F *misera*.

my feet but my whole body forward, I threw myself on to the open fields below, fleeing as hard as I could from that monstrous bear and, worse than the bear, the boy.

25 At this point a passerby, seeing that I was unaccompanied and wandering loose, seized me and climbed quickly on to my back. Beating me with the stick he was carrying, he guided me along an unfamiliar side-road. I adjusted myself quite willingly to his course, since I was leaving behind the dreadful butchery of my manhood. And besides I was not greatly disturbed by his blows, since I was used to being battered in good and proper form with clubs.

But Fortune was stubbornly determined to ruin me. With amazing speed she thwarted my hopes of a suitable hiding-place and laid a fresh ambush for me. My herdsmen were looking for a lost heifer, and in wandering round various places they ran into us by mere chance. They recognised me at once, grabbed my halter, and started to drag me away. But the stranger resisted boldly and strongly. “By the honour of men and gods,” he swore, “why are you violently robbing me and attacking me?” “What! We are treating *you* unjustly, when you stole our ass and are taking him away? Instead you had better tell us where you are hiding the boy who was driving him. No doubt you have murdered him.” They immediately pulled him down to the ground, pummelled him with their fists, and bruised

deierans nullum semet vidisse ductorem, sed plane continatum solutum et solitarium ob indicivae praemium occupasse, domino tamen suo restitutum. “Atque utinam ipse asinus,” inquit “quem numquam profecto vidissem, vocem quiret humanam dare meaeque testimonium innocentiae perhibere posset: profecto vos huius iniuriae pigeret.”

Sic asseverans nihil quicquam promovebat. Nam collo constrictum reducent eum pastores molesti contra montis illius silvosa nemora unde lignum
26 puer solebat egerere. Nec uspiam ruris reperitur¹ ille, sed plane corpus eius membratim laceratum multisque dispersum locis conspicitur. Quam rem procul dubio sentiebam ego illius ursae dentibus esse perfectam, et hercules dicerem quod sciebam si loquendi copia suppeditaret. Sed, quod solum poteram, tacitus licet serae vindictae gratularar. Et cadaver quidem disiectis partibus tandem totum repertum aegreque concinnatum ibidem terrae dedere. Meum vero Bellerophonem, abactorem indubitatum cruentumque percussorem criminantes, ad casas interim suas vinctum perducunt, quoad renascenti die sequenti deductus ad magistratus, ut aiebant, poenae redderetur.

Interim dum puerum illum parentes sui plangoribus fletibusque querebantur, et adveniens ecce

¹ F *aperitur*.

¹ The rider of the winged horse Pegasus.

him with kicks. He swore that he had seen no driver, but had just come across the ass running loose by himself and had taken possession of him to collect the finder's reward, and that he had every intention of returning him to his owner. “And if only the ass himself,” he said, “whom I certainly wish I had never laid eyes on, could utter human speech and bear witness to my innocence, then you would certainly be sorry for this unjust treatment.”

He accomplished nothing by these protestations, for the aggrieved herdsmen roped him by the neck and led him toward the forested tracts on the mountain where the boy customarily went to fetch wood.
26 He was nowhere to be found in the district, but his body was clearly visible, torn limb from limb and scattered over a wide area. I was sure beyond a doubt that bear's teeth had perpetrated this, and, by Hercules, I would have told what I knew if I had had the ability to speak. I did the only thing I could: rejoice silently in my revenge, overdue as it was. When they had finally found all the scattered pieces and painfully fitted the entire corpse together, they consigned it to the earth. Accusing my Bellerophon¹ of being an undoubted horse-thief and a bloody assassin, they brought him temporarily to their huts in chains until at the dawning of the following day they could take him off to the magistrates, as they said, and turn him over for punishment.

Meanwhile the boy's parents were mourning him, beating their breasts and weeping, when sud-

rusticus nequaquam promissum suum frustratus destinatam sectionem meam flagitat. "Non est" in his inquit unus "indidem praesens iactura nostra, sed plane crastino libet non tantum naturam, verum etiam caput quoque ipsum pessimo isto asino demere. Nec tibi ministerium deerit istorum."

27 Sic effectum est ut in alterum diem clades differretur mea. At ego gratias agebam bono puero, quod saltem mortuus unam carnificinae meae dieculam donasset. Nec tamen tantillum saltem gratulationi meae quietive spatium datum. Nam mater pueri, mortem deplorans acerbam filii, fleta et lacrimosa fuscaque veste contacta, ambabus manibus trahens cinerosam canitiem, eiulans et exinde proclamans stabulum irrumpit meum, tunsisque ac diverberatis vehementer uberibus incipit:

"Et nunc iste securus incumbens praesepio voracitati suae deservit et insatiabilem profundumque ventrem semper esitando distendit, nec aerumnae meae miseretur¹ vel detestabilem casum defuncti magistri recordatur. Sed scilicet senectam infirmitatemque meam contemnit ac despicit, et impune se laturum tantum scelus credit. At utcumque se praesumit innocentem; est enim congruens pessimis conatibus contra noxiam conscientiam sperare securitatem. Nam pro deum fidem, quadrupes nequissime, licet precariam vocis usuram sumeres, cui tandem vel ineptissimo

¹ -tur is a later correction in F.

denly that country fellow appeared, by no means untrue to his promise, and demanded my scheduled operation. One of the group said to him, "He is not the source of our present loss. But definitely tomorrow you may gladly remove that despicable ass's genitals, and his head too. And you will have no lack of assistance from these people here."

27 So it came about that my calamity was postponed until the next day. For my part I was grateful to that fine boy, because in death he had at least granted my execution one short day's postponement. Not even that brief period, however, was allowed me for thanksgiving and rest, for the boy's mother broke into my stable, bemoaning her son's bitter death, weeping and wailing, and dressed in dark clothes. She tore her ash-covered grey hair with both hands, screamed and shouted incessantly, and violently beat and battered her breasts.

"And there he is now," she began, "without a care in the world, leaning over his manger, a slave to his gluttony. He just keeps on eating and swelling his bottomless belly without pity for my suffering and without a thought for the frightful death of his late master. Doubtless he disdainfully despises my old age and thinks he can get away scot-free with such a terrible crime. But I suppose he assumes he is innocent; it is typical in the most evil endeavours to count on security despite a guilty conscience. For heaven's sake, you four-footed scoundrel, even if you could borrow a voice to plead with, whom could you

persuadere possis atrocitatem istam¹ culpa carere, cum propugnare pedibus et arcere morsibus misello puero potueris? An ipsum quidem saepius incursare calcibus potuisti, moriturum vero defendere alacritate simili nequisti? Certe dorso receptum auferres protinus, et infesti latronis cruentis manibus eriperes, postremum deserto derelictoque² illo conseruo magistro comite pastore non solus aufugeres. An ignoras eos etiam, qui morituris auxilium salutare denegarint, quod contra bonos mores id ipsum fecerint, solere puniri? Sed non diutius meis cladibus laetaberis, homicida. Senties, efficiam, misero dolori naturales vires adesse.”

28 Et cum dicto subsertis manibus exsolvit suam sibi fasceam, pedesque meos singillatim illigans indidem constringit artissime, scilicet ne quod vindictae meae superesset praesidium, et pertica qua stabuli fores offirmari solebant abrepta non prius me desiit obtundere quam victis fessisque viribus suoapte pondere degravatus manibus eius fustis esset elapsus. Tunc de brachiorum suorum cita fatigatione conquesta, procurrit ad focum arden-

¹ *F atrocitate ista.*

² A marginal variant in F, which has *deiectoque.*

ever persuade? Even the stupidest fool cannot believe you are not to blame for this heinous crime, seeing that you could have defended that poor little boy with your feet and protected him with your teeth. You could certainly attack him often enough with your kicks. Couldn't you defend him with equal alacrity when he was in danger of dying? At least you could have taken him on your back and carried him quickly away and snatched him out of the bloody hands of that dangerous robber. You should never have deserted and abandoned your fellow-slave, your keeper, your comrade, your shepherd, and run away alone. Or are you unaware that those who deny life-saving assistance to people in danger of death are customarily punished also, because that action is, in and of itself, wrong behaviour? But you will not rejoice any longer in my misfortunes, you murderer! I will make you learn that bitter grief has inborn strength.”

28 With these words she put her hand under her robe, unfastened her breast-band, tied it to each of my feet separately, and pulled them together as tightly as she could, evidently to prevent me from having any means to avenge myself. Next she took out the pole which was used to bar the stable doors and beat me without stopping, until her strength gave out from exhaustion and her club sank of its own weight and slipped from her hands. Then, complaining about how quickly her arms grew tired, she ran over to the fireplace and picked out a red-hot

APULEIUS

temque titionem gerens mediis inguinibus obtrudit usque¹ donec, solo quod restabat nisus praesidio, liquida fimo strictim egesta faciem atque oculos eius confoedassem. Qua caecitate atque foetore tandem fugata est a me perniciēs²; ceterum titione delirantis Althaeae Meleager asinus interisset.

¹ F *obtruditurque* apparently.

² F *pernicie*.

METAMORPHOSES VII

firebrand, which she shoved right between my loins, until, depending on the only defence I had left, I squeezed out a stream of liquid dung and befouled her face and eyes. With the blindness and stench I finally drove this bane away from me; otherwise an ass playing Meleager would have perished from the firebrand of a raving Althaea.¹

¹ Meleager's life was destined to last as long as a certain log of wood; angered by his killing of his brothers, his mother Althaea threw the log into the fire, and he died forthwith. Cf. Ovid, *Met.* VIII 260 ff.

LIBER VIII

1 Noctis gallicinio venit quidam iuvenis proxima¹ civitate, ut quidem mihi videbatur, unus ex famulis Charites, puellae illius quae mecum apud latrones pares aerumnas exanclaverat. Is de eius exitio et domus totius infortunio mira ac nefanda, ignem propter assidens inter conservorum frequentiam, sic annuntiabat:

“Equisones opilionesque, etiam busequae, fuit Charite nobis, quae² misella et quidem casu gravissimo nec vero incommitata manes adivit. Sed ut cuncta noritis, referam vobis a capite quae gesta sunt quaeque possint merito doctiores, quibus stilos Fortuna sumministrat, in historiae specimen chartis involvere.

“Erat in proxima civitate iuvenis natalibus praenobilis; quo clarus eo³ pecuniae fuit satis locuples,

¹ Most editors add *e* or *de* before *proxima*.

² Various emendations have been proposed for F's *nobis qui*. Robertson's *nobis, fuit* is attractive, keeping the epic tone established by the three nouns with which the servant begins.

BOOK VIII

1 That night just at cockcrow a young man arrived from the next town. He seemed to be one of the servants of Charite, that girl who had endured equal sufferings with me among the robbers. Sitting near the fire amid a crowd of his fellow-slaves, he reported the strange and unspeakable tale of her death and the whole house's fall from fortune.

“Grooms and shepherds,” he began, “and neatherds too, our Charite is no more. The poor little thing, by the most grievous disaster and not alone, has gone to join the shades. But as I want you to know the whole story, I shall tell you what happened from the beginning—such events as could justly be written down on paper in the form of a history by persons better educated than I, whom Fortune provides with the gift of the pen.

“There lived in the next town a young man of distinguished birth, whose wealth fully matched his

³ I print F's reading, which is just barely defensible. None of the proposed changes gives real satisfaction: *qui, quidem* or *loco* for *quo*, and *et* for *eo*.

sed luxuriae popinalis scortisque et diurnis potationibus exercitatus atque ob id factionibus latro-
num male sociatus, nec non etiam manus infectus
humano cruore, Thrasyllus nomine. Idque sic erat
et Fama dicebat.

- 2 “Hic, cum primum Charite nubendo maturuisset,
inter praecipuos procos summo studio petitionis
eius munus obierat et, quamquam ceteris omnibus
id genus viris antistaret eximiisque muneribus
parentum invitaret iudicium, morum tamen impro-
batus repulsae contumelia fuerat aspersus. Ac dum
erilis puella in boni Tlepolemi manum venerat,
firmiter deorsus delapsum nutriens amorem et
denegati thalami permiscens indignationem,
cruento facinori quaerebat accessum. Nactus
denique praesentiae suae tempestivam occasionem,
sceleri quod diu cogitarat accingitur. Ac die quo
praedonum infestis mucronibus puella fuerat astu
virtutibusque sponsi sui liberata, turbae gratulan-
tium exsultans insigniter permiscuit sese, salutique
praesenti ac¹ futurae suboli novorum maritorum
gaudibundus, ad honorem splendidae prosapiae
inter praecipuos hospites domum nostram receptus,
occultato consilio sceleris, amici fidelissimi per-

¹ F *praesentia*.

¹ His name means “bold”.

nobility. But he was given to the pleasures of the
tavern, and spent his time in whoring and daytime
drinking. Through this he had fallen into the evil
company of bands of thieves and even stained
his hands with human blood. His name was
Thrasyllus.¹ Such were the facts, and such Rumour
reported them to be.

- 2 “As soon as Charite had come of age to marry, he
had been among her principal suitors and had
engaged in the task of courting her with the greatest
eagerness. Although he was superior to all others of
his class and attempted to win her parents’ verdict
with the most lavish gifts, nevertheless, because
they disapproved of his character, he had been
stained with the insult of a rejection. After our
young mistress was married to the virtuous
Tlepolemus, the other continued to harbour his
thwarted love, increasing it with resentment at hav-
ing been refused the bridal couch. He began to seek
access for some murderous act. Then, when he
found a suitable moment to come forward, he armed
himself for the crime which he had long been schem-
ing. The day the girl had been freed from the
robbers’ hostile daggers by her bridegroom’s cun-
ning and bravery, Thrasyllus mingled with the
crowd of well-wishers, rejoicing demonstratively.
He congratulated the newly-weds on their present
deliverance and their future offspring; out of respect
for his splendid ancestry he was invited into our
house among the special guests. Concealing his
criminal plans, he counterfeited the role of truest of

sonam mentiebatur. Iamque sermonibus assiduis et conversatione frequenti, nonnunquam etiam cena poculoque communi cariorque factus, in profundam ruinam¹ cupidinis sese paulatim nescius praecipitaverat. Quidni, cum flamma saevi Amoris parva quidem primo vapore delectet, sed fomentis² consuetudinis exaestuans immodicis ardoribus totos amburat homines?

3 “Diu denique deliberaverat secum Thrasyllus, quod³ nec clandestinis colloquiis opportunum repperiret locum, et adulterinae Veneris magis magisque praeclusos aditus copia custodientium cerneret, novaeque atque gliscentis affectionis firmissimum vinculum non posse dissociari perspiceret, et puellae, si vellet, quamquam velle non posset, furatrinae coniugalis incommodaret rudimentum. Et tamen ad hoc ipsum quod non potest contentiosa pernicie, quasi posset, impellitur. Quod nunc arduum factu putatur, amore per dies roborato facile videtur effectum. Spectate denique, sed oro sollicitis animis intendite, quorsum furiosae libidinis proruperint impetus.

4 “Die quadam venatum Tlepolemus assumpto Thrasyllō petebat indagaturus feras, quod tamen in capreis feritatis est; nec enim Charite maritum suum quaerere patiebatur bestias armatas dente

¹ *F roinam.*

² *F fomenti.*

³ *F quo.*

¹ Or “Cupid’s”, if the noun is a personification.

friends. Soon, by persistent conversation and frequent companionship and sometimes even the sharing of food and drink, he became more and more intimate, until gradually, unwittingly, he had hurled himself down into passion’s¹ deep abyss—inevitably, since when savage Love’s flame is small it gives pleasure with its first warmth, but with the kindling of familiarity it flares up and totally consumes us with uncontrolled heat.

3 “Thrasyllus had spent a long time thinking about what to do. He could discover no suitable place to talk with her in secret; he saw that the approaches to adulterous love were increasingly barred by the number of guards; he became aware that the very strong bond of her new and growing affection could not be dissolved; and even if the girl were willing—and it was impossible that she should be—her inexperience in conjugal cheating would prove a difficulty. And yet he was impelled by a destructive obsession toward that very thing which was not possible, as though it were. When love has gained strength with the passage of time, the deed you once thought difficult seems easy to accomplish. So watch—and please pay careful attention—and you will see the result of the violent attacks of insane passion.

4 “One day Tlepolemus went out to hunt, taking Thrasyllus along. He intended to track down wild game—in so far, that is, as mountain goats are wild, for Charite could not bear her husband to seek

vel cornu. Iamque apud frondosum tumulum ramorumque densis tegminibus umbrosum, prospectu vestigatorum obsaepitis capreis, canes venationis indagini generosae mandato cubili residentes invaderent bestias immittuntur, statimque sollertis disciplinae memores partitae totos praecingunt aditus, tacitaque prius servata mussitatione, signo sibi repentino reddito latratibus fervidis dissonisque miscent omnia. Nec ulla caprea nec pavens dammula nec prae ceteris feris mitior cerva, sed aper immanis atque invisitatus exsurgit, toris callosae cutis obesus, pilis inhorrentibus corio squalidus, setis insurgentibus spinae hispidus, dentibus attritu sonaci spumeus, oculis aspectu minaci flammeus, impetu saevo frementis oris totus fulmineus. Et primum quidem canum procaciores, quae comminus contulerant vestigium, genis hac illac iactatis consectas interficit; dein calcata retiola, qua primos impetus reducerat, transabiit.

5 Et nos quidem cuncti pavore deterriti et alioquin innoxii venationibus consueti, tunc etiam inermes atque immuniti, tegumentis frondis vel arboribus latenter abscondimus; Thrasyllus vero nactus fraudium opportunum decipulum sic Tlepoleum

out animals armed with tooth or horn. They came to a leafy hillock shaded with a dense covering of branches, where the goats were hedged off from the trackers' view. Dogs bred for tracking and hunting were sent on command to attack the animals lying in their lairs. Immediately, in obedience to their clever training, they divided up and surrounded all the approaches. At first they restrained themselves with quiet growls, but suddenly, on a signal, they threw everything into uproar with frenzied, dissonant barking. No wild goat, no trembling little deer, no hind, that gentlest of all wild creatures, but an immense boar rose up into view, the likes of which had never been seen. He was thick with muscles under his coarse skin, shaggy with hairs bristling on his hide, hispid with bristles rising on his spine, loudly grinding his foaming tusks, his eyes flaming with a menacing glare—he was one great lightning-bolt with the savage attack of his roaring mouth. And first, as the boldest dogs ran up within close range, lunging this way and that with his tusks he slashed them to pieces and killed them. Then he trampled down the net where he had halted his first onset and escaped right through it.

5 As for us, we were all terrified with fright, accustomed as we usually were to harmless hunting expeditions, and besides we had no weapons or means of defence. So we ran off and hid under cover of foliage or behind trees. Thrasyllus, however, having hit on a perfect cover for his treacherous designs,

captiose compellat:

“Quid¹ stupore confusi vel etiam cassa formidine similes humilitati servorum istorum, vel in modum pavoris feminei deiecti, tam opimam praedam mediis manibus amittimus? Quin equos inscendimus? Quin ocios indipiscimur? En² cape venabulum et ego sumo lanceam.’

“Nec tantillum morati protinus insiliunt equos ex summo studio bestiam insequentes. Nec tamen illa genuini vigoris oblita retorquet impetum, et incendio feritatis ardescens, dente compulso³ quem primum insiliat cunctabunda rimatur. Sed prior Tlepolemus iaculum quod gerebat insuper dorsum bestiae contorsit. At Thrasyllus ferae quidem pepercit, sed equi quo vehebatur Tlepolemus postremos poplites lancea feriens amputat. Quadrupes recidens qua sanguis effluserat, toto tergo supinatus invitus dominum suum devolvit ad terram. Nec diu sed eum furens aper invadit iacentem, ac primo lacinias eius, mox ipsum resurgentem multo dente laniavit.⁴ Nec coepti nefarii bonum piguit amicum vel suae saevitiae litatum saltem tanto periculo cernens potuit expleri, sed percito atque plagosa crura [vulnera]⁵ contegenti suumque auxilium miseriter roganti per femus dexterum dimisit

¹ F *qui*. ² F *et*.

³ Perhaps *dentium compulso* should be read, with some of the later manuscripts.

⁴ F *laniatum*.

⁵ Robertson emends to *plagoso ac frustra vulnera*.

slyly taunted Tlepolemus.

“Why are we standing here confused and dumbfounded, needlessly afraid like our lowborn slaves there, or cowed like frightened women? Why are we letting such a rich prize slip through our hands? Why not mount our horses and quickly catch up with him? You take a hunting spear, and I will get a lance.’

Immediately, without a moment’s hesitation, they jumped on their horses hot-foot in pursuit of the animal, which, relying on its natural strength, stopped and wheeled round. Ablaze with the fire of its savagery, it whetted its tusks and glared, hesitating whom to attack first. But Tlepolemus began the action by hurling his spear down on to the animal’s back from above. Thrasyllus, however, spared the beast, but struck with his lance and hamstringed the hind legs of Tlepolemus’ horse. The steed fell where the blood had spurting and, sprawling full on his back, involuntarily threw his master to the ground. It did not take the maddened boar long to attack him where he lay. Again and again with its tusks it slashed first his clothes, then Tlepolemus himself as he tried to get up. His good friend not only felt no sorrow for his wicked enterprise, but he could not even be satisfied by merely watching the victim of his cruelty in terrible danger; as the stricken Tlepolemus was trying to protect his mangled legs and pitifully begging for his help, Thrasyllus drove his lance through his right

lanceam, tanto ille quidem fidentius, quanto crederet ferri vulnera similia futura prosectu dentium. Nec non tamen ipsam quoque bestiam facili manu transadigit.

6 “Ad hunc modum definito iuvene, exciti latibulo suo quisque familia maesta concurrimus. At ille quamquam perfecto voto prostrato inimico laetus ageret, vultu tamen gaudium tegit et frontem asseverat et dolorem simulat, et cadaver, quod ipse fecerat, avide circumplexus omnia quidem lugentium officia sollerter affinxit, sed solae lacrimae procedere noluerunt. Sic ad nostri similitudinem, qui vere lamentabamur, conformatus,¹ manus suae culpam bestiae dabat.

“Necdum satis scelere transacto Fama dilabitur et cursus primos ad domum Tlepolemi detorquet et aures infelicis nuptae percutit. Quae quidem simul percepit tale nuntium quale non audiet aliud, amens et vecordia percita cursuque bacchata furibundo per plateas populosas et arva rurestria fertur, insana voce casum mariti quiritans. Confluent civium maestae catervae, sequuntur obvii dolore sociato, civitas cuncta vacuatur studio visionis. Et ecce mariti cadaver accurrit labantique spiritu

¹ F *confirmatus*.

¹ The personification of Rumour is reminiscent of *Aeneid* IV 173 ff.

² Like Dido, after hearing from Rumour that Aeneas means to leave Carthage (*Aeneid* IV 298 ff.).

thigh—acting all the more resolutely because he was confident that the wounds from his weapon would resemble the gashes from the tusks. And he also ran the boar through, too, with an easy stroke.

6 “When the young man had been finished off in this manner, all of us were summoned from our various hiding places and came running up, a mournful troop of servants. Although Thrasyllus was happy that his wish was fulfilled and his enemy felled, he concealed his joy with a feigned expression, furrowed his brow, and pretended to grieve. Passionately embracing the corpse he himself had created, he cleverly simulated all the observances of mourners except the tears, which alone refused to come. So adapting himself to our emotions, who were really mourning, he laid on the animal the blame of his own hands.

“The crime had scarcely been done before Rumour¹ slipped away and came first in her tortuous course to Tlepolemus’ home and smote the ears of his unhappy bride. When she heard the news—the like of which she will never hear again—she went out of her mind. Goaded by madness, she ran raving deliriously through the crowded streets² and country fields, bewailing her husband’s tragedy in a demented voice. Mournful bands of citizens streamed to the scene; the people she met followed, sharing her grief; the whole city was emptied by their desire to see. And now she ran to her husband’s corpse and with fainting breath utterly

totam se super corpus effudit ac paenissime ibidem, quam devoverat, ei reddidit animam. Sed aegre manibus erepta suorum invita remansit in vita; funus vero toto feralem pompam prosequente populo deducitur ad sepulturam.

7 “Sed Thrasyllus nimium nimius clamare, plangere, et quas in primo maerore lacrimas non habebat iam scilicet crescente gaudio reddere, et multis caritatis nominibus Veritatem ipsam fallere. Illum amicum, coaetaneum, contubernalem, fratrem denique addito nomine lugubri¹ ciere; nec non interdum manus Charites a pulsandis uberibus amovere, luctum sedare, eiulatum coercere, verbis palpantibus stimulum doloris obtundere, variis exemplis multivagi casus solacia nectere, cunctis tamen mentitae pietatis officii studium contrectandae mulieris adhibere, odiosumque amorem suum perperam delectando nutrire.

“Sed officii inferialibus statim exactis² puella protinus festinat ad maritum suum demeare, cunctasque prorsus pertemptat vias, certe illam lenem otiosamque nec telis ullis indigentem, sed placidae quieti consimilem: inedia denique misera et incuria squalida tenebris imis abscondita, iam cum luce transegerat. Sed Thrasyllus instantia pervicaci

¹ F *lugere*, but corrected by the first hand.

² F *eractis*.

¹ The *Tle-* of Tlepolemus also means “suffering” (cf. note at VII 12).

collapsed over his body. At that moment she very nearly paid him that life which she had pledged, but her relatives managed to drag her away bodily and she remained reluctantly alive. The corpse, however, was escorted to the tomb, with the entire populace following the funeral train.

7 “Thrasyllus immoderately and excessively wailed and beat his breast, and now produced — no doubt because of his increasing joy — those tears which were missing in his earlier lamentation. He deceived Truth herself with the many terms of affection he used, invoking him as friend, boyhood comrade, companion, even brother, and last of all his ill-starred name.¹ Meanwhile, he kept pulling Charite’s hands away from beating her breasts, and tried to calm her mourning, restrain her wailing, and dull the sting of her sorrow with coaxing words, weaving consolations from various examples of diverse misfortunes. But in all these acts of counterfeit devotion he was indulging his desire to touch the woman, nourishing his hateful love with perverted pleasure.

“The moment the funeral rites had been duly completed, the girl was in haste to join her husband in the grave at once. She tried all possible routes, and especially that gentle and leisurely road which needs no weapons and resembles peaceful sleep: pitifully starving and squalidly neglecting herself, she hid away in the depths of darkness — she had already finished with the light. But Thrasyllus

partim per semet ipsum, partim per ceteros familiares ac necessarios, ipsos denique puellae parentes extorquet tandem, iam lurore et illuvie paene collapsa membra lavacro, cibo denique confoveret. At illa, parentum suorum alioquin reverens, invita quidem verum religiosae necessitati succumbens, vultu non quidem hilaro verum paulo sereniore obiens ut iubebatur viventium munia, prorsus in pectore, immo vero penitus in medullis, luctu ac maerore carpebat animum diesque totos totasque noctes insumebat luctuoso desiderio, et imagines defuncti, quas ad habitum dei Liberi formaverat, affixo servitio divinis percolens honoribus, ipso se solacio cruciabat.

8 “Sed Thrasyllus, praeceps alioquin et de ipso nomine temerarius, priusquam dolorem lacrimae satiarent et percitae mentis resideret furor et in sese nimietatis senio lassesceret luctus, adhuc flentem maritum, adhuc vestes lacerantem, adhuc capillos distrahentem non dubitavit de nuptiis convenire et imprudentiae labe tacita pectoris sui secreta fraudesque ineffabiles detegere. Sed Charite vocem nefandam et horruit et detestata est, et,

¹ Latin Liber, eternally young god of the vintage and symbol of reborn life. Dionysiac scenes appear frequently on Greco-Roman sarcophagi. It was not uncommon to commemorate humans through statues in which their

applied obstinate pressure, partly on his own, partly through other members of the family and friends, and then through the girl’s parents themselves; and finally he compelled her to take care of her body, which by now had nearly collapsed from pallor and filth, by bathing and then by eating. Dutiful as she always was to her parents, she succumbed reluctantly to the force of moral obligation and fulfilled the duties of the living as she was bidden, not indeed with a cheerful countenance, but with a somewhat calmer one. Actually in her heart, or rather deep in her marrow, she kept tormenting her soul with mourning and grief. She spent all her time, day and night, in mournful longing. She had statues of the deceased moulded with the attributes of the god Dionysus,¹ and forcing slavery on herself she worshipped them with religious rites, torturing herself with the very thing that consoled her.

8 “But Thrasyllus, hasty and headstrong to match his name,² could not wait until her grief had been sated by tears and the fury of her agitated mind had subsided and her mourning had feebly collapsed in exhaustion from its own excess. While she still wept for her husband, still ripped her clothing, still tore her hair, he proposed marriage to her, and in careless thoughtlessness revealed the unspoken secrets of his heart and his ineffable guile. Charite shuddered in abomination at his unspeakable words; as facial features were attached to sculptural types of certain gods.

² See note at VIII 1.

velut gravi tonitru procellaque sideris vel etiam ipso diali fulmine percussa, corrui corpus et obnubilavit animam. Sed intervallo revalescente paulatim spiritu, ferinos mugitus iterans et iam scaenam pessimi Thrasylli perspicens, ad limam consilii desiderium petitoris distulit. Tunc inter moras umbra illa misere trucidati Tlepolemi, sanie cruentam et pallore deformem attollens faciem, quietem pudicam interpellat uxor:

“Mi coniunx, quod tibi prorsus ab alio dici non licebit, etsi pectori tuo iam permaneat¹ nostri memoria vel acerbae mortis meae casus foedus caritatis intercidit, quovis alio felicius maritare, modo ne in Thrasylli manum sacrilegam convenias, neve sermonem conferas, nec² mensam accumbas, nec toro acquiescas. Fuge mei percussoris cruentam dexteram. Noli parricidio nuptias auspicari. Vulnera illa, quorum sanguinem tuae lacrimae perluerunt,³ non sunt tota dentium vulnera: lancea mali Thrasylli me tibi fecit alienum.’ Et addidit cetera omnemque scaenam sceleris illuminavit.⁴

9 “At illa, ut primum maesta quieverat, toro faciem impressa, etiam nunc dormiens, lacrimis emanantibus genas cohumidat, et velut quodam tormento inquieta quieti excussa luctu redintegrato prolixum

¹ F *permanat*.

² F *ne*.

³ Or *proluerunt*.

⁴ Or perhaps the present tense, *illuminat*.

if she had been struck by a massive thunderclap or sun-stroke or Jove’s own lightning bolt, her body collapsed and her mind clouded over. After a time she gradually recovered her breath and began to utter animal-like moans. Now that she clearly saw through the evil Thrasyllus’ act, in order to sharpen her plans she asked her suitor to postpone his desire. During this delay the ghost of the pitifully slaughtered Tlepolemus broke in upon his wife’s chaste sleep, revealing itself in a form all covered with blood and gore, misshapen and pale.

“My wife,’ he began ‘for no one else can ever call you by that name: even though the memory of me still abides in your heart, nevertheless the misfortune of my bitter death has cut through the bonds of love; marry someone else and be happy, only do not accept the impious hand of Thrasyllus. Do not speak with him, nor share his table, nor sleep in his bed. Flee the blood-stained hand of my killer. Do not enter into a marriage polluted by murder. Those wounds whose blood your tears washed away are not all the marks of tusks. It was the spear of evil Thrasyllus that separated me from you.’ And he added all the other details, illuminating the whole stage on which the crime had been enacted.

9 “Charite was still lying with her face pressed against the couch, just as she was when she had dropped off to sleep in her grief. Now her cheeks were drenched with flowing tears, and she was shaken from her restless sleep as if by some torture.

eiulat, discissaque interula decora bracchia saevientibus palmulis converberat. Nec tamen cum ququam participatis nocturnis imaginibus, sed indicio facinoris prorsus dissimulato et nequissimum percussorem punire et aerumnabili vitae sese subtrahere tacita decernit.

“Ecce rursus improvida¹ voluptatis detestabilis petitor aures obseratas de nuptiis obtundens aderat. Sed illa, clementer aspernata sermonem Thrasylli astuque miro personata, instanter garrienti summissequae deprecanti ‘Adhuc’ inquit ‘tui fratris meique carissimi mariti facies pulchra illa in meis deversatur oculis, adhuc odor cinnameneus ambrosei corporis per nares meas percurrit,² adhuc formosus Tlepolemus in meo vivit pectore. Boni ergo et optimi consules, si luctui legitimo miserrimae feminae necessarium concesseris tempus, quoad residuis mensibus spatium reliquum compleatur anni, quae res cum meum pudorem, tum etiam tuum salutarem commodum respicit, ne forte immaturitate nuptiarum indignatione iusta manes acerbos mariti ad exitium salutis tuae suscitemus.’

10 “Nec isto sermone Thrasyllus sobriefactus vel saltem tempestiva pollicitatione recreatus, identidem pergit linguae satiantis³ susurros improbos inurguere, quoad simulanter revicta Charite suscipit: ‘Istud equidem certe magnopere deprecanti

¹ *F imperor vide.*

² *Or recurrit.* ³ *F linguae satiati.*

She renewed her mourning with long wails, tore open her gown, and beat her lovely arms with savage hands. Yet she shared that night's vision with no one, and completely concealed the disclosure of the crime. In secret she determined both to punish the vile assassin and to remove herself from a life of suffering.

“Suddenly that despicable seeker of blind pleasure was back again, hammering at her tight-shut ears with talk of marriage. But she was gentle in rejecting Thrasyllus' proposal and played her part with marvellous skill as she answered his insistent haranguing and humble begging. ‘The beautiful face of your brother and my husband,’ she said, ‘still dwells in my eyes; the cinnamon scent of his heavenly body still runs through my nostrils; handsome Tlepolemus still lives in my heart. You will be acting, therefore, in your own best interest if you allow a poor unhappy woman the legally required period of mourning, until the remaining months fill out the balance of a year's time. This is a matter not only of my honour, but also of your own safety and advantage, since with a premature marriage we might incite my husband's bitter ghost to rise up in just indignation and put an end to your life.’

10 “Thrasyllus was neither sobered by her speech nor cured even by her promise of due payment. Again and again he pressed her with the wicked whispers of his cloying tongue, until finally Charite pretended to have been won over. ‘But you must at

concedas necesse est mihi, Thrasylle, ut interdum taciti clandestinos coitus obeamus, nec quisquam persentiscat familiarium, quoad dies reliquos metiatur annus.'

"Promissioni fallaciosae mulieris oppressus succubuit Thrasyllus et prolixè consentit de furtivo concubitu, noctemque et opertas exoptat ultro tenebras, uno potiundi studio postponens omnia.

"Sed heus tu' inquit Charite 'quam probe veste contactus omnique comite viduatus prima vigilia tacitus fores meas accedas, unoque sibilo contentus nutricem istam meam opperiare, quae claustris adhaerens excubabit adventui tuo. Nec setius patefactis aedibus acceptum te nullo lumine conscio ad meum perducet cubiculum.'

- 11 "Placuit Thrasyllo scaena feralium nuptiarum. Nec sequius aliquid suspicatus, de exspectatione turbidus de diei tantum spatio et vesperae mora querebatur. Sed ubi sol tandem nocti decessit, ex imperio Charites adornatus et nutricis captiosa vigilia deceptus irrepit cubiculum pronus spei. Tunc anus de iussu dominae blandiens ei furtim depromptis calicibus et oenophoro, quod immixtum vino soporiferum gerebat venenum, crebris potioni-

least,' she said, 'grant me one thing; I beg you with all my heart, Thrasyllus. For a while we must keep our union secret and hidden, and no one in our families must know until the year measures out its remaining days.'

"Overwhelmed by the woman's deceitful promise, Thrasyllus succumbed. He agreed wholeheartedly to furtive lovemaking, and yearned for night and hidden darkness, disregarding all else in his eagerness to possess her.

"But be sure now,' urged Charite, 'that you come well covered by your cloak, and alone without a single companion. At the first watch come to my door in silence, give just one whistle, and wait for my nurse. She will be close by the locked door watching for your arrival, and as soon as she lets you in she will bring you to my bedroom, with no lamp to give us away.'

- 11 "Thrasyllus approved this staging of the fatal marriage. He suspected nothing untoward, but only complained, in the vehemence of his anticipation, about the length of the day and the slowness of dusk. When the sun finally yielded to night, he appeared dressed according to Charite's commands, was taken in by the feigned vigilance of her nurse, and crept into her bedroom in headlong eagerness. Then the old lady, following her mistress's orders, began to speak flatteringly to him and stealthily took out some cups and a jug containing a soporific drug mixed with wine. He greedily and confidently

bus avidè ac secure haurientem, mentita dominae tarditatem quasi parentem assideret aegrotum, facile sepelivit ad somnum. Iamque eo ad omnes iniurias exposito ac supinato, introvocata Charite masculis impetuque diro fremens invadit ac supersistit sicarium.

- 12 “En’ inquit ‘fidus coniugis mei comes, en venator egregius, en carus maritus. Haec est illa dextera quae meum sanguinem fudit, hoc pectus quod fraudulentas ambages in meum concinnavit exitium, oculi isti quibus male placui, qui quodam modo tamen iam futuras tenebras auspicantes venientes poenas antecedunt. Quiesce securus, beate somnare. Non ego gladio, non ferro petam; absit ut simili mortis genere cum marito meo coaequeris. Vivo tibi morientur oculi, nec quicquam videbis nisi dormiens. Faxo felicior necem inimici tui quam vitam tuam sentias. Lumen certe non videbis, manu comitis indigebis; Chariten non tenebis, nuptias non frueris; nec mortis quiete recreaberis, nec vitae voluptate laetaberis, sed incertum simulacrum errabis inter Orcum et solem; et diu quaeres dexteram quae tuas expugnavit pupulas, quodque est in aerumna miserrimum, nescies de quo

gulped down several cups in quick succession, while she covered her mistress’s delay with the lie that she was tending her sick father. She soon had him buried in sleep, and when he was laid out on his back completely defenseless against injury, she summoned Charite. With manly spirit and furious force the girl came raging to the attack and stood over the assassin.

- 12 “Behold,’ she said, ‘my husband’s faithful friend! Behold the mighty hunter! Behold my dear mate! Here is the hand that shed my blood; here is the heart that plotted the deceitful ambush to destroy me; here are the eyes that unluckily found me fair: now foreshadowing somehow their future darkness they anticipate the punishment in store for them. Sleep peacefully! Sweet dreams! I shall not attack you with a sword or spear: god forbid that you should become my husband’s equal by a death like his. You will live, but your eyes will die, and you will see nothing except when you are asleep. I will make you feel that your enemy’s death is more fortunate than your own life. Assuredly you will not see the light and you will need some companion’s hand; you will not possess Charite and you will enjoy no marriage; you will neither be refreshed by the sleep of death nor delighted by the pleasure of life, but you will wander as an uneasy phantom between Orcus and the sun; and you will search long for the hand that ravaged your pupils, but — what is most wretched of all in suffering — you will not even

queraris. At ego sepulcrum mei Tlepolemi tuo luminum cruore libabo et sanctis manibus eius istis oculis parentabo. Sed quid mora temporis dignum cruciatum lucraris et meos forsitan tibi pestiferos imaginariis amplexus? Relictis somnolentis tenebris ad aliam poenalem evigila caliginem. Attolle vacuum faciem, vindictam recognosce, infortunium intellege, aerumnas computa. Sic pudicae mulieri tui placuerunt oculi, sic faces nuptiales tuos illuminarunt thalamos. Ultrices habebis pronubas et orbitatem comitem et perpetuae conscientiae stimulum.'

13 "Ad hunc modum vaticinata mulier acu crinali capite deprompta Thrasylli convulnerat tota lumina, eumque prorsus exoculatum relinquens, dum dolore nescio crapulam cum somno discutit, arrepto nudo gladio, quo se Tlepolemus solebat incingere, per mediam civitatem cursu furioso proripit se¹; procul dubio nescio quod scelus gestiens, recta monumentum mariti contendit. At nos et omnis populus, nudatis totis aedibus, studiose consequimur, hortati mutuo ferrum vesanis extorquere manibus. Sed Charite capulum Tlepolemi propter

¹ Some editors add *et*, either here or after *gestiens*.

¹ The Furies (the Greek Erinyes), goddesses of vengeance who pursued the guilty both in this world and after death. Cf. I 19 and note.

know whom to accuse. I shall pour a libation on my Tlepolemus' tomb with the gore from your eyes, and I shall dedicate those eyes as a funeral offering to his sacred ghost. But why should you profit by a delay in the torture you deserve and perhaps dream of my caresses which are going to be your ruin? Leave slumber's darkness and wake up to another, avenging blackness. Lift up your empty face, recognise my vengeance, understand your misfortune, count your sufferings. This is how your eyes gave pleasure to a virtuous woman. This is how the marriage torches lighted your wedding chamber. The Avengers¹ will be your bridal attendants and Bereavement² your groomsman, and the goad of an everlasting conscience.'

13 "Having prophesied in this fashion the woman took a pin from her hair and gouged out both Thrasyllus' eyes. She left him there totally eyeless, and while he shook off drunkenness and sleep because of his inexplicable pain, she snatched up the naked sword with which Tlepolemus used to arm himself, and rushed off on a mad course through the town. Obviously bent on committing some act of violence, she made straight for her husband's tomb. Along with the entire populace, we emptied every house as we pursued her vigorously, urging one another to wrest the weapon from her frantic hands. But Charite stood beside Tlepolemus'

² *Orbitas* here means bereavement both of sight and of wife.

assistens gladioque fulgenti singulos abigens, ubi fletus uberes et lamentationes varias cunctorum intuetur, ‘Abicite’ inquit ‘importunas lacrimas, abicite luctum meis virtutibus alienum. Vindicavi in mei mariti cruentum peremptorem, punita sum funestum mearum nuptiarum praedonem. Iam tempus est ut isto gladio deorsus ad meum Tlepolemum viam quaeram.’

- 14 “Et enarratis ordine singulis quae sibi per somnium nuntiaverat maritus quoque astu Thrasyllum inductum petisset, ferro sub papillam dexteram transadacto corruit, et in suo sibi pervolutata sanguine postremo balbutiens incerto sermone perefflavit¹ animam virilem. Tunc propere familiares miserae Charites accuratissime corpus ablutum unita² sepultura ibidem marito perpetuam coniugem reddidere.

“Thrasyllus vero cognitis omnibus, nequiens idoneum exitum praesenti cladi³ reddere certusque tanto facinori nec gladium sufficere, sponte delatus ibidem ad sepulcrum, ‘Ultronea vobis, infesti manes, en adest victima’ saepe clamitans, valvis super sese diligenter obseratis inedia statuit elidere sua sententia damnatum spiritum.”

¹ Or *proflavit* or *efflavit*.

² F *munita*.

³ F *exitium* . . . *clade*.

sarcophagus and kept everyone at bay with her flashing sword. When she saw us all weeping profusely and lamenting in various ways, she said to us, ‘Stop your tears: they are untimely! Stop your mourning: it is ill suited to my courageous deeds! I have taken vengeance on my husband’s bloody killer; I have punished the deadly plunderer of my marriage. It is now time for me to seek with this sword a path down to my Tlepolemus.’

- 14 “After she had told us in detail everything her husband had reported to her in her dream, and the trick she had used to trap and attack Thrasyllus, she plunged the sword under her right breast and collapsed. Rolling over in her own blood and murmuring incoherently at the end, she breathed forth her manly spirit. Then poor Charite’s friends quickly washed her corpse with tender care and reunited her there in a common tomb with her husband as his everlasting mate.

“But when Thrasyllus discovered all that had happened, he realised he could not pay a penalty to compensate for the tragedy he had caused. Convinced that a sword would be insufficient punishment for a crime of such enormity, he had himself brought to that same tomb. He cried out several times, ‘Here is a voluntary offering, hostile ghosts!’ Then he carefully bolted the tomb doors over his head, having determined to crush out his life’s breath by starvation, self-condemned and self-sentenced.”

15 Haec ille longos trahens suspiritus¹ et nonnunquam illacrimans graviter affectis rusticis adnuntiabat. Tunc illi mutati domini novitatem metuentes et infortunium domus erilis altius miserentes fugere comparant. Sed equorum magister, qui me curandum magna ille quidem commendatione susceperat, quidquid in casula pretiosum conditumque servabat meo atque aliorum iumentorum dorso repositum asportans, sedes pristinas deserit. Gerebamus infantulos et mulieres, gerebamus pullos, passeres, haedos, catellos, et quidquid infirmo gradu fugam morabatur, nostris quoque² pedibus ambulabat. Nec me pondus sarcinae, quamquam enormis, urgebat, quippe gaudiali fuga detestabilem illum exsectorem virilitatis meae relinquenterem.

Silvosi montis asperum permensi iugum rursusque reposita camporum spatia pervecti, iam vespera semitam tenebrante pervenimus ad quoddam castellum frequens et opulens, unde nos incolae nocturna, immo vero matutina etiam prohibebant egressione: lupos enim numerosos grandes et vastis corporibus sarcinosos ac nimia ferocitate saevientes passim rapinis assuetos infestare cunctam illam regionem, iamque ipsas vias obsidere et in modum latronum praetereuntes aggredi, immo etiam vesana fame rabidos finitimas expugnare villas,

¹ F *spiritus*.

² F *nostrisque*.

15 As he told this tale, drawing deep sighs and occasionally bursting into tears, the country people were deeply disturbed. Fearing the change to a new master and deeply pitying the misfortunes of their old master's house, they planned to run away. The overseer of the horses—the one who had undertaken my supervision on Charite's strong recommendation—took everything of value stored in his hut and put it on my back and the backs of the other pack-animals to carry away, and abandoned his old home. We carried children and women, we carried chicks, sparrows, kids, puppies; and anything whose weak legs were likely to delay our escape travelled also on our feet. But the weight of my load, though enormous, was no burden to me: it was a joyous escape, after all, to leave behind that detestable amputator of my manhood.

We crossed the rough ridge of a wooded mountain and traversed the length of the low-lying plain beyond. Just as dusk was darkening the road, we came to a well-populated and prosperous hamlet. The inhabitants tried to prevent us from going out again that night, or even early in the morning. They told us that the whole countryside was infested with bands of large wolves with heavy-laden, enormous bodies, accustomed to plunder at will with extremely fierce savagery. These wolves, they said, lay in wait right along the roads, like robbers, and attacked passersby. In the madness of their insane hunger they even stormed farmhouses

exitiumque inertissimorum pecudum ipsis iam humanis capitibus imminere. Denique ob iter illud qua nobis erat commeandum iacere semesa hominum corpora suisque visceribus nudatis ossibus cuncta candere, ac per hoc nos quoque summa cautione viae reddi¹ debere, idque vel in primis observitare, ut luce clara et die iam provecto et sole florido vitantes undique latentes insidias, cum et ipso lumine dirarum bestiarum repigratur impetus, non laciniatim disperso, sed cuneatim stipato commeatu difficultates illas transabiremus.

16 “Sed nequissimi fugitivi ductores illi nostri caecae festinationis temeritate ac metu incertae insecutionis, spreta salubri monitione nec exspectata luce proxima, circa tertiam ferme vigiliam noctis onustos nos ad viam propellunt. Tunc ego metu praedicti periculi, quantum pote² turbae medius et inter conferta iumenta latenter absconditus clunibus meis ab aggressionibus³ ferinis consulebam; iamque me cursu celeri ceteros equos antecellentem mirabantur omnes. Sed illa pernicitas non erat alacritatis meae, sed formidinis indicium. Denique mecum ipse reputabam Pegasus inclutum illum metu magis volaticum fuisse ac per hoc merito

¹ F *via reddi*; *viam aggredi* or *ingredi* are attractive, but farther from F's text.

² Some mss. have *poteram*, from which Robertson conjectures *pote iam*, parallelling the following *iamque*.

³ F *meis adgessionibus*.

in the vicinity, and the fate of weak, defenseless sheep was now threatening even human beings. Next they told us that along the route that we had to follow lay half-eaten human bodies, and the whole area glistened with white bones stripped of their flesh. They advised us, therefore, that we too should resume our journey only with the utmost caution, and especially to be careful to travel in broad daylight well after dawn in flourishing sunshine, avoiding the hidden ambushes on every side, since the dreadful beasts' aggression was diminished by the presence of light. If we then marched, not strung out like a ribbon, but in a tight wedge-shaped convoy, we might pass through those difficulties.

16 Our worthless runaway commanders, however, in their reckless and blind haste and in fear of possible pursuit, ignored this salutary advice. Without waiting until the next day they loaded us up and drove us out on to the road after midnight. In my fright at the aforementioned danger, I guarded my haunches as much as possible against the beasts' attacks by hiding concealed in the middle of the crowd of closely packed animals; and now everyone was amazed at how I surpassed all the other horses with my swift gait. That velocity, however, was not a sign of eagerness on my part, but of cowardice. Then it was that the thought occurred to me that the famed Pegasus¹ had taken flight more because of fear, and that this was the reason why he was

¹ See note at VI 30.

APULEIUS

pinnatum proditum, dum in altum et adusque caelum sussilit ac resultat, formidans scilicet igniferae morsum Chimaerae. Nam et illi pastores qui nos agebant in speciem proelii manus obarmaverant: hic lanceam, ille venabulum, alius gerebat spicula, fustem alius, sed et saxa, quae salebrosa semita largiter sumministrabat. Erant qui sudes praeacutas attollerent; plerique tamen ardentibus facibus proterrebant feras; nec quicquam praeter unicam tubam deerat quin acies esset proeliiaris.

Sed nequicquam frustra¹ timorem illum satis inane perfuncti, longe peiores inhaesimus laqueos. Nam lupi, forsitan confertae iuventutis strepitu vel certe nimia luce flammaram deterriti, vel etiam aliorum grassantes, nulli contra nos aditum tulerunt ac ne procul saltem ulli comparuerant.

17 Villae vero quam tunc forte praeteribamus coloni, multitudinem nostram latrones rati, satis agentes rerum suarum eximieque trepidi, canes rabidos et immanes et quibusvis lupis et ursis saeviores, quos ad tutelae praesidia curiose fuerant alummati, iubilationibus solitis et cuiusce modi vocibus nobis inhortantur; qui praeter genuinam ferocitatem tumultu suorum exasperati contra nos ruunt, et undique laterum circumfusi passim insiliunt, ac

¹ *nequicquam* should perhaps be omitted, as a gloss on *frustra*.

METAMORPHOSES VIII

traditionally described as winged when he jumped up and leaped into the air and right up to heaven — no doubt he was terrified of being bitten by the fire-breathing Chimaera. Furthermore, the herdsmen driving us had armed themselves as if for battle: one had a lance, another a hunting-spear, another darts, another a club, and even the stones generously supplied by our rugged path. Some carried sharpened stakes, but most held flaming torches to frighten off the wild beasts. Only a trumpet was missing to make us an army on the march.

That fear, however, turned out to be utterly imaginary, and we suffered it all in vain; we fell into a much worse trap. Perhaps the wolves were frightened off by the noise from the crowded pack of young men, or at least by the intense light of the flames; or maybe they were simply on the prowl somewhere else. In any case none approached us, and we never even saw one in the distance.

17 But the workers on an estate which we happened to pass assumed from our numbers that we were a band of robbers, and being worried about their possessions and extremely frightened, they set dogs on us. These were mad, enormous creatures, fiercer than any wolf or bear, and they had been carefully trained for guard duty. They were set on us with the usual commands and cries of all sorts, so that their native savagery was exacerbated by their owners' hullabaloo as they rushed toward us, swarmed round us on all sides, and leaped on us from every

sine ullo dilectu iumenta simul et homines lacerant, diuque grassati plerosque prosternunt. Cerneret non tam hercules memorandum quam miserandum etiam spectaculum: canes copiosos ardentibus animis alios fugientes arripere, alios stantibus inhaerere, quosdam iacentes inscendere, et per omnem nostrum commeatum morsibus ambulare.

Ecce tanto periculo malum maius insequitur. De summis enim tectis ac de proximo colle rusticani illi saxa super nos raptim devolvunt, ut discernere prorsus nequiremus qua potissimum caveremus clade, cominus canum an eminus lapidum. Quorum quidem unus caput mulieris quae meum dorsum residebat repente percussit. Quo dolore commota statim fetu cum clamore sublato maritum
18 suum pastorem illum suppetiatum ciet. At ille deum fidem clamitans et cruorem uxoris abstergens altius quiritabat: “Quid miseros homines et laboriosos viatores tam crudelibus animis invaditis atque obteritis? Quas praedas inhiatis¹? Quae damna vindicatis? At non speluncas ferarum vel cautes incolitis barbarorum, ut humano sanguine profuso gaudeatis.”

Vix haec dicta et statim lapidum congestus cessavit imber et infestorum canum revocata conquivit procella. Unus illinc denique de summo cupressus cacumine, “At nos” inquit “non ves-

¹ *F munitis.*

¹ Lucius' supervisor, the overseer of the horses.

direction, tearing indiscriminately at animals and men alike, and continuing their attack until they had felled most of us. What a show you would have seen, worthier by Hercules of tears than of telling: a mass of hotly excited dogs, some catching those who fled, others clinging to those who stood still, some climbing over those who had fallen, and making the rounds of our entire convoy with snapping jaws.

Suddenly this great danger was followed by even worse trouble. From the rooftops and the hill nearby the farmers furiously began to hurl rocks down on us, so that we were now quite unable to decide which disaster to guard against the most, the dogs at close range or the stones from long range. One of the latter, in fact, suddenly smashed the head of the woman seated on my back. When she felt the pain she immediately wept and screamed, crying out for help to her husband, the herdsman.¹
18 He called on the protection of heaven, and as he wiped the blood from his wife's wounds he cried out in a loud voice: “We are poor men and toiling travellers. Why are you attacking and crushing us so cruel-heartedly? What booty are you hoping for? What losses are you revenging? Surely you are not beasts that live in caves or savages that dwell in cliffs, to get your pleasure in spilling human blood.”
Scarcely had he spoken when suddenly the heavy shower of rocks ceased, the vicious dogs were called off, and the storm subsided. Then one of them shouted down from the top of a cypress tree: “We

trorum spoliolum cupidine latrocinamur, sed hanc ipsam cladem de vestris protelamus manibus. Iam denique pace tranquilla securi potestis incedere.”

Sic ille, sed nos plurifariam vulnerati reliquam viam capessimus, alius lapidis, alius morsus vulnera referentes, universi tamen saucii. Aliquanto denique viae permenso spatio, pervenimus ad nemus quoddam proceris arboribus consitum et pratentibus¹ virectis amoenum, ubi placuit illis ductoribus nostris refectui paululum conquiescere corporaque sua diverse laniata sedulo recurrere. Ergo passim prostrati solo primum fatigatos animos recuperare ac dehinc vulneribus medelas varias adhibere festinant, hic cruorem praeterfluentis aquae rore deluere, ille spongis inacidatis tumores comprimere, alius fasciis hiantes vincire plagas. Ad istum modum saluti suae quisque consulebat.

- 19 Interea quidam senex de summo colle prospectat, quem circum capellae pascentes opilionem esse profecto clamabant. Eum rogavit unus e nostris haberetne veni lactem vel adhuc liquidum vel in caseum recentem incohatum. At ille diu capite quassanti, “Vos autem” inquit “de cibo vel poculo vel omnino ulla refectioe nunc cogitatis? An nulli scitis quo loco consederitis?” Et cum dicto conductis

¹ Or perhaps *pratensibus*.

have no desire to rob you. We are not thieves; we are just trying to protect ourselves against a like disaster at your hands. So now you may go your way in peace and quiet, with no more trouble.”

So he spoke, but we continued our journey with all sorts of wounds. Some bore gashes from rocks and others from fangs, but everyone was hurt. When we had travelled some distance along the road, we came to a grove ringed with tall trees and pleasantly carpeted with meadow grass. Our leaders decided to rest there for a little while to refresh themselves and give proper attention to their variously wounded bodies. First they lay scattered about on the ground to recover their exhausted strength. Then they began hastily applying different remedies to their wounds, washing off clotted blood with the water that flowed beside the grove, or applying to their bruises sponges soaked in vinegar, or binding up gaping cuts with bandages. In this manner everyone looked after his own welfare.

- 19 Meanwhile an old man appeared, looking down at us from the top of the hill. The she-goats grazing round him clearly proclaimed him to be a shepherd, and one of our company asked him if he had any milk to sell, either fresh or starting to turn to fresh cheese. He shook his head several times before answering: “Are you really considering food or drink or any refreshment at all at this time? Don’t any of you know what sort of place you have stopped in?”

oviculis conversus longe recessit. Quae vox eius et fuga pastoribus nostris non mediocrem pavorem incussit. Ac dum perterriti de loci qualitate sciscitari gestiunt, nec est qui doceat, senex alius, magnus ille quidem, gravatus annis, totus in baculum pronus et lassum trahens vestigium, ubertim lacrimans per viam proximat, visisque nobis cum fletu maximo singulorum iuvenum genua contingens sic adorabat:

20 “Per Fortunas vestrosque Genios, sic ad meae senectutis spatia validi laetique veniatis, decepto seni subsistite meumque parvulum ab inferis ereptum canis meis reddite. Nepos namque meus et itineris huius suavis comes, dum forte passerem incantantem saepiculae consecatur arripere, delapsus in proximam foveam quae fruticibus imis suppatet, in extremo iam vitae consistit periculo, quippe cum de fletu ac voce ipsius avum sibi saepiculae clamitantis vivere illum quidem sentiam, sed per corporis, ut videtis, mei defectam valetudinem opitulari nequeam. At vobis aetatis et roboris beneficio facile est suppetiari miserrimo seni, puerumque illum novissimum successionis meae atque unicam stirpem sospitem mihi facere.”

21 Sic deprecantis suamque canitiem distrahentis

And immediately he rounded up his sheep, turned away, and disappeared into the distance. His words and his flight struck no little terror into our herdsmen. While, in their deep fright, they sought to inquire into the nature of the place but could find no one to inform them, another old man approached along the road, this one large and weighed down with years, bent low over his walking stick, wearily dragging his feet, and weeping profusely. When he saw us, with a great outburst of tears he touched the knees of all the young men in turn, pleading with them.

20 “By all the good fates and guardian spirits that watch over you,” he sobbed, “may you arrive healthy and happy at my own advanced old age, if you will only help an unfortunate old man and save my little one from death and give him back to this grey head of mine. My grandson, my sweet comrade on this journey, was trying to catch a sparrow singing in a hedge, when he fell into a nearby pit that lies open at the base of the shrubs. He is now in the utmost danger of dying. Although I can hear he is alive from his weeping and his own voice calling over and over to his grandfather, I cannot help him because of my physical weakness, as you can see. But with the benefit of your youth and strength you could easily come to the aid of a poor old man and save the youngest of my line and my only surviving heir.”

21 We all felt sorry for him as he made this appeal

totos quidem miseruit. Sed unus prae ceteris et animo fortior et aetate iuvenior et corpore validior, quique solus praeter alios incolumis proelium superius evaserat, exurgit alacer et, percontatus quonam loci puer ille decidisset, monstrantem digito non longe frutices horridos senem illum impigre comitatur. Ac dum pabulo nostro suaque cura refecti sarcinulis quisque sumptis suis viam capessunt, clamore primum nominatim cientes illum iuvenem frequenter inclamant, mox mora¹ diutina commoti mittunt e suis accessitorem unum, qui requisitum comitem tempestivae viae commonefactum reduceret. At ille modicum commoratum² refert sese, buxanti pallore trepidus³; mira super conservo suo renuntiat: conspicatum se quippe supinato illi et iam ex maxima parte consumpto immanem draconem mandentem insistere, nec ullum usquam miserinum⁴ senem comparere illum. Qua re cognita et cum pastoris sermone collata, qui saevum prorsus hunc illum nec alium locorum inquilinum praeminabatur,⁵ pestilenti deserta regione velociori se fuga proripiunt nosque pellunt
22 crebris tudentes fustibus. Celerrime denique longo itinere confecto pagum quendam accedimus

¹ F *hora*.

² Usually emended to *commoratus*.

³ Various editors punctuate differently and add one or more conjunctions.

⁴ Sometimes emended to *miserrimum*.

⁵ F has *evum, cocorum, and praeminebatur*.

and tore at his grey hair. One fellow, stouter in heart, younger in age and stronger in physique than the others, who was the only one to have escaped the previous battle uninjured, jumped up eagerly and asked where the boy had fallen in. The old man pointed with his finger to some prickly bushes not far off, and the youth set out briskly in his company. When we animals had pastured, and the humans had tended their wounds and refreshed themselves, everyone picked up his own little bundle and started for the road. At first they raised a shout and called the young fellow's name several times. Soon they grew upset at the long delay and sent one of their men to look for their missing comrade, to remind him that it was time to travel, and to bring him back. It was not long before the messenger returned, pale as boxwood and trembling, with a strange tale about his fellow-slave. He had actually seen him lying on his back, he said, almost totally devoured by an enormous snake, which was leaning over him and eating him, but the wretched old man was nowhere to be seen. When they heard this and compared it with the earlier remarks of the shepherd, who must have been warning them against none other than this same cruel tenant of the area, they abandoned that plague-ridden region in a rush, fleeing even faster than before and driving us with rapid blows of their sticks. When we had covered a long day's march at breakneck speed, we came to a village where we rested all night. A

ibique totam perquiescimus noctem. Inibi coeptum facinus oppido memorabile narrare cupio.

Servus quidam, cui cunctam familiae tutelam dominus permiserat suus, quique possessionem maximam illam in quam deverteramus villicabat, habens ex eodem famulatio conservam coniugam, liberae cuiusdam extrariaeque mulieris flagrabat cupidine. Quo dolore paelicatus uxor eius instricta cunctas mariti rationes et quicquid horreo reconditum continebatur admoto combussit igne. Nec tali damno tori sui contumeliam vindicasse contenta, iam contra sua saeviens viscera laqueum sibi nectit, infantulumque quem de eodem marito iam dudum susceperat eodem funiculo nectit, seque per altissimum puteum appendicem parvulum trahens praecipitat. Quam mortem dominus eorum aegerrime sustinens arreptum servulum qui causam tanti sceleris luxurie sua¹ praestiterat nudum ac totum melle perlitum firmiter alligavit arbori ficulneae, cuius in ipso carioso stipite inhabitantium formicarum nidificia bulliebant² et ultro citro commeabant multiuga scaturrigine. Quae simul dulcem ac mellitum corporis nidorem persentiscunt, parvis quidem sed numerosis et continuis morsiuiculis penitus inhaerentes, per longi temporis cruciatum³ ita, carnibus atque ipsis visceribus adesis,

¹ F *uxori sue*.

² F *borriebant*.

³ F *perlongi . . . cruciatu*.

most remarkable crime had been committed there, which I should like to report.

There was a servant whose master had entrusted him with the stewardship of his entire household and who acted as overseer of that extensive holding where we had stopped for the night. He was married to another servant in the same household, but was passionately in love with a free woman who lived outside the estate. Smarting at her husband's infidelity, the wife set fire to all his records and everything kept in the storehouse and completely destroyed them. Not content with this damage as satisfaction for the dishonour done her marriage, she next turned her rage against her own flesh. Knotting a noose round her neck, she tied the baby she had just borne her husband to the same rope and hurled herself into a deep well, dragging down with her the little one attached. Their master was extremely upset at their deaths, and arrested the servant whose wanton behaviour had provoked this terrible tragedy. He had him stripped and smeared all over with honey and then tied him securely to a fig-tree, inside whose rotten trunk lived a multitude of nesting ants who marched back and forth in rippling streams. As soon as they noticed the sweet honeyed smell of his body, they began to fasten themselves deep in his skin with their tiny bites, small to be sure, but numerous and ceaseless. After an interminable period of torture the man died, his flesh and even his innards eaten away, his body so

homine consumpto membra nudarunt ut ossa tantum viduata pulpis nitore nimio candentia funestae cohaerent arbori.

23 Hac quoque detestabili deserta mansione, paganos in summo luctu relinquentes, rursum pergitur dieque tota campestres emensi vias civitatem quandam populosam et nobilem iam fessi pervenimus. Inibi larem sedesque perpetuas pastores illi statuere decernunt, quod et longe quaesituris firmae latebrae viderentur et annonae copiosae beata celebritas invitabat. Triduo denique iumentorum reffectis corporibus, quo vendibiliores videremur, ad mercatum producimur magna voce praeconis pretia singulis nuntiantis equi atque alii asini opulentis emptoribus praestinantur. At me relictum solum ac subsicivum cum fastidio plerique praeteribant. Iamque taedio contrectationis eorum qui de dentibus meis aetatem¹ computabant, manum cuiusdam foetore sordentem, qui gingivas identidem meas putidis scalpebat digitis, mordicus arreptam plenissime conterui. Quae res circumstantium ab emptione mea utpote ferocissimi deterruit animos. Tunc praeco dirruptis faucibus et rauca voce saucius in meas fortunas ridiculos construebat iocos: “Quem ad finem cantherium istum veni frustra subiciemus, et vetulum extritis

¹ *F aetates.*

denuded that only the bones remained, bereft of flesh and gleaming brilliant white, still clinging to that funeral tree.

23 We fled from this abominable stopping-place too, leaving the villagers in the depths of mourning, and travelled on again. Having walked all day across the plain, we now arrived exhausted at a large and famous city. The herdsmen decided to establish their home and permanent residence there, both because it seemed to offer a secure hiding place far away from anyone who might be sent out to look for them, and because they were attracted by a rich abundance of plentiful food. After three days to rest and restore the animals, to make us look more saleable, we were taken to market. As the auctioneer announced each of our prices in a loud voice, the horses and other asses were sold off to wealthy purchasers. As for me, I was left alone and remaindered, and generally passed over in disgust. By now I was annoyed at being pawed by people trying to calculate my age from my teeth; so when a man with filthy, smelly hands kept scraping my gums over and over with his stinking fingers, I grabbed his hand in my teeth and crushed it to a pulp. This frightened the bystanders out of any desire to buy me, as being too ferocious. So the auctioneer, who was suffering from a cracked throat and a hoarse voice, began to make up funny jokes at my expense. “How long,” he said, “are we going to keep this nag here on the block with no results? Poor old thing, he

ungulis debilem, et dolore deformem, et in hebeti pigritia ferocem, nec quicquam amplius quam ruderarium cribrum? Atque adeo vel¹ donemus eum cuiquam, si qui tamen faenum suum perdere non gravatur.”

24 Ad istum modum praeco ille cachinnos circumstantibus commovebat. Sed illa Fortuna mea saevissima, quam per tot regiones iam fugiens effugere vel praecedentibus malis placare non potui, rursum in me caecos detorsit oculos et emptorem aptissimum duris meis casibus mire repertum obiecit. Scitote qualem: cinaedum et senem cinaedum, calvum quidem, sed cincinnis semicanis et pendulis capillatum, unum de triviali popularium faece, qui per plateas et oppida cymbalis et crotalis personantes deamque Syriam circumferentes mendicare compellunt. Is nimio praestinandi studio praeconem rogat cuiatis essem. At ille Cappadocum me et satis forticulum denuntiat. Rursum requirit annos aetatis meae.

Sed praeco lasciviens: “Mathematicus quidem, qui stellas eius disposuit, quantum ei numeravit annum, sed ipse scilicet melius istud de suis novit

¹ The reading of the first three words of the sentence is uncertain.

¹ Atargatis. For another parodic, but less cruel, account of her orgiastic cult, see Lucian, *De Syria Dea* (in vol. IV of Loeb Lucian).

² The auctioneer jestingly talks about Lucius the ass as

is crippled with worn-down hoofs, deformed from pain, and ferocious in his sluggish laziness. He is nothing more than a garbage sieve. Well then, let's give him away to anyone who does not mind wasting his hay.”

24 With such remarks the auctioneer provoked roars of laughter among the crowd. But my cruel and savage Fortune, which I had not been able to escape by fleeing through all those lands, nor placate by my earlier sufferings, turned those blind eyes of hers once more in my direction. Amazingly she discovered and placed in my path a purchaser perfectly suited to my harsh misfortunes. Listen and learn what sort of buyer he was: a pervert, and an old one at that; bald on top but with grey ringlets of hair hanging round his head; one of those common people from the dregs of society who walk through the city streets and towns banging their cymbals and rattles, carrying the Syrian goddess¹ round with them and forcing her to beg. He was extremely eager to buy me and asked the auctioneer my nationality. The latter declared that I was a Cappadocian² and quite a strong little fellow. Then he wanted to know how many years old I was.

“Well,” the auctioneer replied, “an astrologer who cast his horoscope counted the year as his fifth; but no doubt he himself knows the answer better if he were human (which, of course, he is). Cappadocian slaves were noted for their strength and much in demand as litter-bearers.

professionibus. Quamquam enim prudens crimen Corneliae legis incurram, si civem Romanum pro servo tibi vendidero, quin emis bonum et frugi mancipium, quod te et foris et domi poterit iuvare?"

Sed exinde odiosus emptor aliud de alio non desinit quaerere, denique de mansuetudine etiam mea percontatur anxie.

25 At praeco "Vervecem" inquit "non asinum vides, ad usus omnes quietum, non mordacem nec calitronem quidem, sed prorsus ut in asini corio modestum hominem inhabitare credas. Quae res cognitu non ardua. Nam si faciem tuam mediis eius feminibus immiseris, facile periclitaberis quam grandem tibi demonstret patientiam."

Sic praeco lurchonem tractabat dicacule. Sed ille cognito cavillatu similis indignanti "At te," inquit "cadaver surdum et mutum delirumque praeconem, omnipotens et omniparens dea Syria et sanctus Sabadius et Bellona et mater Idaea cum suo Attide et¹ cum suo Adone Venus domina caecum reddant,

¹ The words *cum suo Attide et* have been added by conjecture. Some editors add only *et*.

from making his census-declarations.¹ Now, though I know full well that I am risking a charge under the Cornelian law if I sell you a Roman citizen as a slave,² why not buy yourself a good and useful piece of property here, which can give you satisfaction both at home and away?"

The offensive customer kept on asking one question after another, and finally inquired anxiously how docile I was.

25 "You see before you," replied the auctioneer, "a wether, not an ass: gentle for any job, not a biter, not even a kicker. You would really think that inside this ass's hide dwelt a mild-mannered human being. You can prove this for yourself with no difficulty: just shove your face between his thighs and you can easily test by demonstration the dimensions of his passivity."

The auctioneer was poking fun at the glutton, but he got the point of the joke and swore with pretended indignation. "You deaf and dumb corpse!" he cried. "You crazy auctioneer! I call upon the all-powerful all-mother Syrian goddess and holy Sabadius and Bellona and the Idaean Mother with her Attis and mistress Venus with her Adonis³—

though a specific Cornelian law to that effect is unattested.

³ Sabadius, or Sabazius, was a Phrygian god sometimes identified with Dionysus or Yahwe. Bellona is an Italic name for the goddess Ma of Commagene in Asia Minor. Cybele, the mother-goddess worshipped on Mount Ida and in Pessinuntum in Asia Minor, was served by priests who castrated themselves in imitation of her consort Attis. Venus here is the Phoenician Astarte. With this syncretism compare Isis' speech at XI 5.

¹ Required only of Roman citizens.

² It was of course illegal to buy or sell Roman citizens,

qui scurrilibus iam dudum contra me velitaris iocis. An me putas, inepte, iumento fero posse deam committere, ut turbatum repente divinum deiciat simulacrum, egoque misera¹ cogar crinibus solutis discurrere et deae meae humi iacenti aliquem medicum quaerere?”

Accepto tali sermone cogitabam subito velut lymphaticus exsilire, ut me ferocitate cernens exasperatum emptionem desineret. Sed praevenit cogitatum meum emptor anxius pretio depenso statim, quod quidem gaudens dominus scilicet taedio mei facile suscepit, septemdecim denarium, et ilico me stomida spartea deligatum tradidit Philebo—hoc enim nomine censebatur iam meus dominus.

26 At ille susceptum novicium famulum trahebat ad domum, statimque illinc de primo limine proclamat, “Puellae, servum vobis pulchellum en ecce mercata perduxi.” Sed illae puellae chorus erat cinaedorum, quae statim exsultantes in gaudium fracta et rauca

¹ This is very likely F's original reading (corrected in the ms. to *miser*), making the eunuch priest speak of himself in the feminine gender.

may they all strike you blind for harrying me all this while with your scurrilous jests. You fool, do you suppose I could entrust the goddess to an animal who was wild? He might suddenly upset her divine image and throw it off his back, and I would be forced to run around like a poor girl¹ with her hair all over the place and hunt for a doctor for my goddess lying on the ground.”

When I heard that, I thought of leaping around suddenly like a lunatic, so that when he saw how fierce I was when roused he would give up the idea of purchase. But the eager buyer prevented my scheme by paying out a sum at once, which of course my owner, being doubtless sick and tired of me, joyfully and readily accepted: seventeen denarii. He immediately fastened a broom-rope bridle on me and handed me over to Philebus²: that was the name of the man who was now my owner.

26 He took possession of his novice servant and pulled me home with him. As soon as we got to the doorway he yelled: “Girls! Look what a pretty little slave-boy I've bought you.” These “girls” were a chorus of catamites, who immediately danced for joy and raised a discordant shout with their cracked,

¹ The priest uses the feminine form of the adjective when referring to himself, as again at the beginning of the next chapter.

² His name means “youth-lover” in Greek. The titular character in Plato's dialogue *Philebus* maintains a hedonistic ethical position.

et effeminata voce clamores absonos intollunt, rati scilicet vere quempiam hominem servulum ministerio suo paratum. Sed postquam non cervam pro virgine, sed asinum pro homine succidaneum videre, nare detorta magistrum suum varie cavillantur: non enim servum, sed maritum illum scilicet sibi perduxisse. Et "Heus," aiunt "cave ne solus exedas tam bellum scilicet pullulum, sed nobis quoque tuis palumbulis nonnunquam impertias."

Haec et huius modi mutuo blaterantes praesepio me proximum deligant. Erat quidam iuvenis satis corpulentus, choraula doctissimus, collaticia stipe de mensa paratus, qui foris quidem circumgestantibus deam cornu canens adambulabat, domi vero promiscuis operis partiarius agebat concubinus. Hic me simul domi conspexit, libenter appositis largiter cibariis gaudens alloquitur: "Venisti tandem miserrimi laboris vicarius. Sed diu vivas et dominis placeas et meis defectis iam lateribus consulas." Haec audiens iam meas futuras novas cogitabam aerumnas.

27 Die sequenti variis coloribus indusiati et deformati quisque formati, facie caenoso pigmento delita et oculis obunctis graphice prodeunt, mitellis et

¹ This refers to the story that a doe was substituted for Iphigenia when she was about to be sacrificed by her father Agamemnon at Aulis.

shrill, effeminate voices. No doubt they thought there really was a human slave-boy ready for their service. But when they saw me — not a doe as surrogate victim for a virgin,¹ but an ass as surrogate for a man — they turned up their noses and made mocking remarks to their leader. "You haven't brought us a slave," they teased, "but a husband for yourself. Hey! Don't eat up this pretty little chick all by yourself, but give your little doves a piece sometimes."

During all this bantering they took me and tied me up close to the manger. They had in the house a rather stocky young man, a very talented piper, whom they had bought off the slave-block with their common funds from the collection plate. On the road, when they were carting the goddess around, he walked along playing his pipes, but at home he played the role of communal concubine, distributing his services to one and all alike. The moment he saw me in the house, he cheerfully put a generous serving of fodder in front of me and said to me joyfully, "At last you have come, somebody to take turns with me in this wretchedly hard work. May you live long, please our masters, and do a good turn for my exhausted loins." Hearing this I now began to ponder the new afflictions in store for me.

27 Next day they put on varicoloured garments and beautified themselves hideously by daubing clay pigment on their faces and outlining their eyes with greasepaint. Then they set out, wearing turbans

crocotis et carbasinis et bombycinis iniecti, quidam tunicas albas, in modum lanciolarum quoquoversum fluente purpura depictas, cingulo subligati, pedes luteis induti calceis. Deamque serico contectam amiculo mihi gerendam imponunt, bracchiisque suis umero tenus renudatis, attollentes immanes gladios ac secures, euantes exsiliunt, incitante tibiae cantu lymphaticum tripudium.

Nec paucis pererratis casulis ad quandam villam possessoris beati perveniunt, et ab ingressu primo statim absonis ululatus constrepentes fanaticè provolant,¹ diuque capite demisso cervices lubricis intorquentes motibus crinesque pendulos in circum rotantes et nonnunquam morsibus suos incurstantes musculos, ad postremum ancipiti ferro quod gerebant sua quisque brachia dissicant. Inter haec unus ex illis bacchatur effusius ac de imis praecordiis anhelitus crebros referens, velut numinis² divino spiritu repletus, simulabat sauciam vecordiam, prorsus quasi deum praesentia soleant homines non sui fieri meliores, sed debiles effici vel aegroti. Specta denique quale caelesti providentia meritum reportaverit. Infit vaticinatione clamosa conficto mendacio semet ipsum incessere atque

¹ F *pervolant*.

² F *numini*.

and saffron-colored robes and vestments of linen and silk. Some had white tunics decorated with purple lance-shaped designs flowing in every direction, gathered up into a girdle, and on their feet they wore yellow shoes. They wrapped the goddess in a silken mantle and put her on my back to carry, while they, with arms bared to the shoulders and brandishing frightful swords and axes, chanted and danced, excited by the frenzied beat of the flute music.

After passing a number of small cottages in their wandering course, they came to the country house of a rich land-owner. As soon as they reached the entrance-way they frantically flung themselves forward, filling the place with the sound of their discordant shrieks. For a long time they dropped their heads and rotated their necks in writhing motions, swinging their hanging locks in a circle. Sometimes they bit their own flesh with their teeth, and finally they all began slashing their arms with the two-edged blades they were carrying. In the midst of all this one of them started to rave more wildly than the rest, and producing rapid gasps from deep down in his chest, as though he had been filled with the heavenly inspiration of some deity, he simulated a fit of madness — as if, indeed, the gods' presence was not supposed to make men better than themselves, 28 but rather weak or sick. Now see what sort of reward he earned from divine providence. Shouting like a prophet, he began to attack and accuse him-

criminari, quasi contra fas sanctae religionis dissignasset aliquid, et insuper iustas poenas noxii facinoris ipse de se suis manibus exposcere. Arrepto denique flagro quod semiviris illis proprium gestamen est, contortis taenis lanosi velleris prolixae fimbriatum et multiugis talis ovium tesseratum, indidem sese multinodis commulcat ictibus, mire contra plagarum dolores praesumptione munitus. Cerneret prosectu gladiatorum ictuque flagrorum solum spurcicia sanguinis effeminati madescere. Quae res incutiebat mihi non parvam sollicitudinem, videnti tot vulneribus largiter profusum cruorem, ne quo casu deae peregrinae stomachus, ut quorundam hominum lactem, sic illa sanguinem concupisceret¹ asininum.

Sed ubi tandem fatigati vel certe suo laniatu satiati pausam carnificinae dedere, stipes aereas, immo vero et argenteas multis certatim offerentibus, sinu recepere patulo, nec non et vini cadum et lactem et caseos et farris et siliginis aliquid, et nonnullis hordeum deae gerulo donantibus, avidis animis corradentes omnia et in sacculos huic questui de industria praeeparatos farcientes, dorso meo congerunt, ut duplici scilicet sarcinae pondere

¹ *F conspiceret.*

self with a fabricated lie about how he had perpetrated some sin against the laws of holy religion; and he went on to demand just punishment for his guilty deed from his own hands. He snatched up the utensil which is the distinctive attribute of these half-men, a whip with long tassels made of twisted strips of woolly hide studded with numerous sheep's knuckle-bones, and he scourged himself hard with strokes of its many knots, fortifying himself with miraculous obstinacy against the pain from the gashes. You could see the ground growing wet with the filthy, effeminate blood from all this slashing of swords and lashing of whips. I was struck with considerable alarm when I saw this generous profusion of gore from so many wounds. I was afraid that by some chance the foreign goddess's stomach might get a yearning for ass's blood, as some humans' stomachs yearn for ass's milk.

At last, however, when they had grown tired, or at least sated with self-laceration, they ceased their butchery and took up a collection. People vied in offering them copper coins—yes, and even silver ones—which they collected in the ample folds of their robes; and they gave them a large jar of wine, milk and cheeses, and some spelt and wheat. Some even donated barley for the goddess's carrier. They greedily raked it all in, stuffed it into the sacks which they had had the foresight to acquire to carry their profits, and piled it on my back. Now, indeed, burdened with the weight of a double load, I was a

gravatus et horreum simul et templum incederem.

29 Ad istum modum palantes omnem illam depraedabantur regionem. Sed in quodam castello copia laetati largioris quaesticuli gaudiales instrunt dapes. A quodam colono fictae vaticinationis mendacio pinguissimum deposcunt arietem, qui deam Syriam esurientem suo satiaret sacrificio, probeque disposita cenula balneas obeunt, ac dehinc lauti quandam fortissimum rusticanum, industria laterum atque imis ventris bene praeparatum, comitem cenae secum adducunt. Paucisque admodum praegustatis holusculis ante ipsam mensam, spurcissima illa propudia ad illicitae libidinis extrema flagitia infandis uriginibus efferantur, passimque circumfusi nudatum supinatumque iuvenem execrandis oribus flagitabant. Nec diu tale facinus meis oculis tolerantibus, “Porro Quirites” proclamare¹ gestivi, sed viduatum ceteris syllabis ac litteris processit² “O” tantum, sane clarum ac validum et asino proprium, sed inopportuno plane tempore. Namque de pago proximo complures iuvenes abactum sibi noctu perquirentes asellum nimioque studio cuncta deversoria scrutantes, intus aedium audito ruditu meo, praedam absconditam latibulis aedium³ rati, coram rem invasuri suam improvisi

¹ F *perclamare*. ² F *praecessit*.

³ Either this or the preceding *aedium* should perhaps be deleted.

travelling storehouse and temple in one.

29 Thus they roamed about plundering the entire territory. One day in a hill-town, overjoyed at the size of a larger than usual take, they prepared themselves a festal banquet. By constructing a false prophecy they demanded from one of the farmers his fattest ram for a sacrifice, to satisfy the hungry Syrian goddess, they said. When they had their little supper all nicely laid out, they went to the bath-house, from which they returned after their bath with a dinner-guest, a sturdy country fellow well equipped with sturdy limbs and loins. After tasting only a few salad greens for hors-d'oeuvre before the main meal, those dirty, shameful creatures were driven wild with horrible passion to commit the vilest acts of unnatural lust. They had the young man stripped and lying on his back, and they pressed all around him, forcing their abominable kisses upon him. My eyes could not tolerate such an outrage for very long. I tried to shout out “Help, citizens!”, but all that came out was “He . . .,” missing all the other syllables and letters.¹ This was loud and strong and ass-like, but very ill-timed. Several young men from a neighbouring village happened to be looking for a donkey which had been stolen from them during the night, and they were carefully searching all the lodging-houses. When they heard me braying inside the house, they assumed that their stolen property was concealed in some hiding-place in the house. Intend-

¹ Cf. III 29 and VII 3.

conferto gradu se penetrant, palamque illos
exsecrandas foeditates obeuntesprehendunt.
Iamiamque vicinos undique percientes turpissimam
scaenam patefaciunt, insuper ridicule sacerdotum
purissimam laudantes castimoniam.

- 30 Hac infamia consternati, quae per ora populi
facile dilapsa merito invisos ac detestabiles eos
cunctis effecerat, noctem ferme circa mediam col-
lectis omnibus furtim castello facessunt. Bonaque
itineris parte ante iubaris exortum transacta iam
die claro solitudines avias nancti, multa secum
prius collocuti, accingunt se meo funeri; deaque
vehiculo meo sublata et humi reposita, cunctis
stramentis me renudatum ac de quadam quercu
destinatum flagro illo pecuinis ossibus catenato ver-
berantes paene ad extremam confecerant mortem.
Fuit unus qui poplites meos enervare secure sua
comminaretur, quod de pudore illo candido sci-
licet suo tam deformiter triumphassem. Sed ceteri,
non meae salutis, sed simulacri iacentis¹ contempla-
tione in vita me retinendum censuere. Rursum
itaque me refertum sarcinis planis gladiis minantes
perveniant ad quandam nobilem civitatem. Inibi

¹ *F tacentis.*

ing to recover the goods on the spot, they burst in
unexpectedly in a body and caught my masters
red-handed performing their filthy abominations.
They immediately roused and summoned all the
neighbours to witness this disgraceful scene,
adding a chorus of sarcastic praise for the priests'
pure chastity.

- 30 Thrown into consternation by this scandal, which
spread quickly from mouth to mouth and deservedly
made them odious and detestable in everyone's eyes,
about midnight they gathered up all their belong-
ings and stealthily made their way out of the town.
They finished a good part of a day's journey before
sunrise, and by the time it was fully light they were
in a remote and deserted area. There they first held
a long discussion among themselves, and then
girded themselves for my slaughter. They took the
goddess down from her riding-place on my back and
set her on the ground, stripped me of all my tackle,
and tied me to an oak tree. Then they flogged me
with that whip of theirs interlaced with sheepbones
until I was well-nigh dead. One of them threatened
to hamstring me with his axe, because I had tri-
umphed so offensively over his supposedly snow-
white virtue. But the others thought that I ought to
be kept alive out of consideration, not for my own
welfare, but for the statue lying on the ground. So
they loaded me up again with my baggage, menac-
ing me with the flats of their swords until they came
to an important town. One of the leading men there,

vir principalis, et alias religiosus et eximie deam¹ reverens, tinnitu cymbalorum et sonu tympanorum cantusque Phrygii mulcentibus modulis excitus, procurrit obviam, deamque votivo suscipiens hospitio nos omnes intra consaeptum domus amplissimae constituit, numenque summa veneratione atque hostiis opimis placare contendit.

31 Hic ego me potissimum capitis periclitatum memini. Nam quidam colonus partem venationis, immanis cervi pinguissimum femus, domino illi suo muneri miserat, quod incuriose pone culinae fores non altiuscule suspensum canis adaeque venaticus latenter invaserat, laetusque praeda prope custodientes oculos evaserat. Quo damno cognito suaque reprehensa neglegentia, cocus diu lamentatus lacrimis inefficacibus, iamiamque domino cenam flagitante, maerens et utcumque metuens altius, filio parvulo suo consalutato arreptoque funiculo, mortem sibi nexu laquei comparabat. Nec tamen latuit fidam uxorem eius casus extremus mariti, sed funestum nodum violenter invadens manibus ambabus, "Adeone" inquit "praesenti malo perterritus mente excidisti tua, nec fortuitum istud remedium quod deum providentia sumministrat intueris? Nam si quid in ultimo Fortunae turbine respiscis, expergite mi auscultate et advenam istum

¹ F *deum*.

who besides a general religious disposition showed a special reverence for the Goddess, was excited by the clanging cymbals and beating drums and seductive melodies of the Phrygian flute-song, and came running out to meet us. Receiving the goddess with devout hospitality, he lodged us all within the walls of his extensive house while striving to win the goddess's favour with the utmost veneration and sumptuous sacrifices.

31 Here, I recall, occurred an especially grave risk to my life. One of the tenants had been hunting, and had sent as a gift to his master, our host, a rich, fat thigh from an enormous stag. This had been carelessly hung near the kitchen door not very high off the ground, and a dog—likewise a hunter—had stealthily snatched it and, delighted with his catch, had quickly evaded all guardian eyes. When the cook discovered the loss, he blamed his own negligence and shed many a useless tear. As his master was already demanding his dinner, the cook was plunged into dejection and total terror. He bade farewell to his little son, and took a rope and tied it into a noose in preparation for suicide. His faithful wife, however, aware of her husband's fatal plight, violently seized the deadly noose in both hands. "Are you so frightened," she said, "by your present trouble that you have lost your mind? Don't you see the fortuitous remedy which divine Providence has provided? If you can see reason at all in the midst of this terrible tempest of Fortune, wake up and listen

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asinum remoto quodam loco deductum iugula, femusque eius ad similitudinem perditum detractum et accuratius in protrimentis sapidissime percoctum appone domino cervini vicem.”

Nequissimo verberoni sua placuit salus de mea morte, et multum conservae laudata sagacitate destinatae iam¹ lanienae cultros acuebat.

¹ F *destinata etiam*.

METAMORPHOSES VIII

to me. Do you see that ass who just arrived? Take him to some out-of-the-way spot and slit his throat, cut off his thigh to look like the one you lost, cook it up elaborately with a highly seasoned sauce, and serve it to the master in place of the venison.”

The worthless scoundrel liked the idea of saving his life by my death. With much praise of his fellow-slave’s intelligence, he began to sharpen his knives for the proposed butchery.

LIBER IX

1 Sic ille nequissimus carnifex contra me manus impias obarmabat. At ego praecipitante consilium periculi tanti praesentia nec expectata diutina cogitatione lanienam imminentem fuga vitare statui, protinusque, vinculo quo fueram deligatus abrupto, cursu me proripio totis pedibus ad tutelam salutis crebris calcibus velitatus, ilicoque me, raptim transcursum proxima porticu, triclinio in quo dominus aedium sacrificales epulas cum sacerdotibus deae cenabat incunctanter immitto, nec pauca rerum apparatus cibarii, mensas etiam et ignes,¹ impetu meo collido atque disturbo. Qua rerum deformi strage paterfamilias commotus, ut importunum atque lascivum me cuidam famulo curiose traditum certo aliquo loco clausum cohiberi iussit,² ne rursus convivium placidum simili petulantia dissiparem. Hoc astutulo³ commento scitule

¹ *et ignes* is Robertson's very convincing emendation for F's *genus*, based on the parallel narrative in *Lucius or the Ass*, 40.

² The verb is a later addition in the margin of F; its position is uncertain.

³ F *astulo*.

BOOK IX

1 Thus was that vile executioner arming his ungodly hands against me. The imminence of this extreme peril, however, accelerated my thinking, and without waiting for lengthy deliberations I decided to escape the impending butchery by flight. Forthwith breaking the rope by which I had been tied I set off at full speed to save my skin, pounding the ground with my hoofs. I quickly crossed the adjacent courtyard and burst without hesitating into the dining room, where the master of the house was holding a sacrificial banquet with the goddess's priests. In my charge I collided with not a few of the dinner furnishings, including tables and lamps, and upset them. The master was angry at the ugly mess I had made, called me ill-mannered and undisciplined, and handed me over to a servant with strict orders to lock me up in some safe place to prevent me from disturbing their peaceful dinner party again with the same sort of impudent behaviour. Having neatly protected myself by this clever trick

munitus et mediis lanii manibus ereptus, custodela salutaris mihi gaudebam carceris.

Sed nimirum nihil Fortuna renuente licet homini nato dexterum provenire, nec consilio prudenti vel remedio sagaci divinae providentiae fatalis dispositio subverti vel reformari potest. Mihi denique id ipsum commentum, quod momentariam salutem repperisse videbatur, periculum grande, immo praesens exitium, conflavit aliud.

- 2 Nam quidam subito puer mobili ac trepida facie percitus, ut familiares inter se susurrabant, irrupit triclinium, suoque annuntiat domino de proximo angiportu canem rabidam paulo ante per posticam impetu miro sese direxisse ardentique prorsus furore venaticos canes invasisse, ac dehinc proximum petisse stabulum atque ibi pleraque iumenta incurrisse pari saevitia, nec postremum saltem hominibus pepercisse; nam Myrtilum mulionem et Hephaestionem cocum et Hypnophilum¹ cubicularium et Apollonium medicum, immo vero et plures alios ex familia abigere temptantes, variis morsibus

¹ This is only a guess at the appropriate name, which F gives as *hypatafium*.

¹ Myrtilus has the same name as Oenomaus' charioteer who betrayed his master, allowing Pelops to win a horse-

and snatched myself out of the very hands of the butcher, I was happy in the custody of my life-saving prison.

But truly, if Fortune disapproves, nothing can turn out right for any mortal, and neither wise planning nor shrewd remedies can overturn or reshape the pre-ordained arrangements of divine Providence. In my case, the very same trick which seemed to have provided instantaneous salvation stirred up another great danger, or rather imminent destruction.

- 2 As the guests were quietly talking among themselves, a slave suddenly burst excitedly into the dining room, his face twitching and trembling. He told his master that a rabid bitch had just rushed in through the back gate from the next alley with extraordinary violence. In a veritable blaze of fury she had attacked the hunting dogs and then gone for the stable nearby and assaulted most of the pack-animals with equal savagery. Finally not even the humans had been spared: Myrtilus the mule-driver and Hephaestio the cook and Hypnophilus the chamberlain and Apollonius the doctor¹ had all been bitten and wounded in various places—yes, and several others of the staff too—as they were trying to drive her off. Indeed many of the pack-animals, race for the hand of Oenomaus' daughter, Hippodameia. Hephaestio and Apollonius are named for the Greek gods of fire (Hephaestus) and medicine (Apollo). Hypnophilus means "sleep-lover" in Greek.

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quemque lacerasse, certe venenatis morsibus contacta¹ non nulla iumenta efferari² simili rabie. Quae res omnium statim percussit animos, rati que me etiam eadem peste infectum ferocire, arreptis cuiusce modi telis, mutuoque ut exitium commune protelarent cohortati, ipsi potius eodem vesaniae morbo laborantes persequuntur. Nec dubio me lanceis illis vel venabulis, immo vero et bipennibus, quae facile famuli sumministraverant, membratim compilassent, ni, respecto subiti periculi turbine, cubiculum in quo mei domini devertebant protinus irrupissem. Tunc clausis obseratisque super me foribus obsidebant locum, quoad sine ullo congressionis³ suae periculo pestilentiae letalis pervicaci rabie possessus ac peresus absumerer.⁴ Quo facto tandem libertatem nactus, solitariae fortunae munus amplexus, super constratum lectum abiectus, post multum equidem temporis somnum humanum quievi.

- 3 Iamque clara die mollitiae cubilis⁵ refota lassitudine vegetus exsurgo, atque illos qui meae tutelae pervigiles excubias agitaverant ausculto de meis sic altercare fortunis: “Adhucine miserum istum asinum iugi furore iactari credimus?” “Immo vero iam virus increscente saevitia prorsus extinctum.”

¹ F *contracta*.

² F *efferatria*.

³ F *concessionis*.

⁴ F *adsumerer*.

⁵ F *cubiculis*.

METAMORPHOSES IX

he said, had also turned wild and rabid, contaminated by the poisonous bites. This news immediately shocked everyone, and since they thought my wild behaviour was due to infection with the same disease, they snatched up all sorts of weapons and went after me, exhorting each other to fight off their common danger of death. It was they instead who suffered from that disease of madness, and no doubt they would have hacked me limb from limb with the lances and spears and even double-axes which the servants had readily supplied, had I not perceived this suddenly approaching tornado of peril and broken right into the bedroom my masters were using. Then they locked and bolted the doors behind me and laid siege to the place, to wait without any danger of contact for me to be possessed and consumed by the unrelenting rabidity of this lethal plague and die. As a result I finally gained freedom, and I embraced Fortune's gift, the chance to be alone! I threw myself on to a made-up bed and slept the sleep of a human being for the first time in a long while.

- 3 I got up briskly when it was broad daylight, refreshed from my weariness by the softness of the bed. The men who had been keeping guard all night on sentry duty outside my door were discussing my condition, and I listened. “What do you think?” asked one. “Is that poor donkey still tossing about in a fit?” “No, the poison must by now have passed its intensity and completely worn itself out.” To put

Sic opinionis variae terminum ad explorationem conferunt, ac de rima quadam prospiciunt sanum me atque sobrium otiose consistere. Iamque, ultro foribus patefactis plenius, an iam sim mansuetus periclitantur. Sed unus ex his, de caelo scilicet missus mihi sospitator, argumentum explorandae sanitatis meae tale commonstrat ceteris, ut aquae recentis completam pelvem offerrent potui meo, ac si intrepidus et more solito sumens aquis allibescerem, sanum me atque omni morbo scirent expeditum. Contra vero si visum contactumque laticis vitarem ac perhorrescerem, pro comperto noxiam rabiem pertinaciter durare. Hoc enim libris etiam pristinis proditum observari solere.

4 Isto placito vas immane confestim aquae perlucidae de proximo petita fonte cunctantes adhuc offerunt mihi. At ego sine ulla mora progressus etiam obvio gradu satis sitienter pronus et totum caput immergens¹ salutare vere equidem illas aquas hauriebam. Iamque et plausus manum et aurium flexus et ductum capistri et quidvis aliud periclitantium placide patiebar, quoad contra vesanam eorum praesumptionem modestiam meam liquido cunctis approbarem.

Ad istum modum vitato duplici periculo, die

¹ F's original reading is uncertain; other editors read e.g. *inferens*, *inserens*, *inurgens*.

an end to this difference of opinion they turned to investigation. They looked in through a crack and saw me peacefully standing there, healthy and sober. Then they proceeded to open the door in order to make a more thorough test of my gentleness. One of them, surely a saviour sent to me from heaven, proposed to the others an experiment for determining the condition of my health: they should offer me a basin full of fresh water to drink, and if I willingly and fearlessly drank the water in my normal way they would know that I was well and entirely rid of the disease. On the other hand, if I avoided contact with the liquid and shuddered at the sight of it, they would be sure that the dangerous rabies still stubbornly persisted. This was the usual diagnostic technique, he said, already recorded in old books.

4 They agreed to try this and quickly fetched an enormous basin of crystal-clear water from a fountain nearby and rather hesitantly brought it toward me. I did not delay at all, but started forward to meet them, leaned down quite thirstily, immersed my entire head, and gulped down those truly life-giving waters. And then I calmly put up with them clapping me with their hands, twisting my ears, tugging at my halter, and any other test they wanted to make, until I had clearly proved my gentleness to them all, in contrast to their own presumption that I was mad.

Having thus escaped a twofold peril, I was loaded

sequenti rursus divinis exuviis onustus, cum crotalis et cymbalis circumforaneum mendicabulum producitur ad viam. Nec paucis casulis atque castellis oberratis, devertimus ad quempiam pagum, urbis opulentae quondam, ut memorabant incolae, inter semiruta vestigia conditum, et hospitio proximi stabuli recepti, cognoscimus lepidam de adulterio cuiusdam pauperis fabulam, quam vos etiam cognoscatis volo.

5 Is gracili pauperie laborans fabriles operas praebendo parvis illis mercedibus vitam tenebat. Erat ei tamen uxorcula etiam satis quidem tenuis et ipsa, verum tamen postrema lascivia famigerabilis. Sed die quadam, dum matutino ille ad opus susceptum proficiscitur, statim latenter irrepit eius hospitium temerarius adulter. Ac dum Veneris colluctationibus securius operantur, maritus, ignarus rerum ac nihil etiam tum tale suspicans, improvisus hospitium repetit. Iamque clausis et obseratis foribus, uxoris laudata continentia ianuam pulsat, sibilo etiam praesentiam suam denuntiante. Tunc mulier callida et ad huiusmodi flagitia perastutula tenacissimis amplexibus expeditum hominem dolio, quod erat in angulo semiobrutum, sed alias vacuum, dissimulanter abscondit, et patefactis aedibus adhuc introeuntem maritum aspero sermone accipit.

“Sicine vacuus et otiosus insinuatis manibus

next day with the divine spoils and led out with castanets and cymbals on to the road again, a travelling beggars' show. After making stops at several small houses and walled estates, we halted at a village built among the half-ruined remains of a once wealthy city, as the inhabitants informed us. We obtained lodgings at the nearest inn, and there we heard an amusing story about the cuckolding of a certain poor workman, which I want you to hear too.

5 Toiling in lean poverty, this man kept alive by doing construction work for small pay. He had a wife, thin and hungry like himself, but notorious as the last word in lasciviousness. One day he left early in the morning for his current job, and immediately an impudent lover slipped secretly into his lodgings. While the two were happily working away at Venus' wrestling match, her husband unexpectedly returned home. He was not very smart, and at that time he did not even suspect anything of the sort. When he found the doors closed and bolted, he mentally commended his wife's virtue and knocked at the door, simultaneously announcing his presence with a whistle. The woman, who was bright and experienced in misconduct of this kind, loosened the man from her tight embrace and hid him out of sight in an empty storage-jar half-buried in the ground in the corner of the room. Then she opened the door, and as her husband walked in she greeted him with a bitter tirade.

“What do you mean,” she shouted, “ambling

ambulabis mihi, nec obito consueto labore vitae nostrae prospicies et aliquid cibatum parabis? At ego misera pernox et perdia¹ lanificio nervos meos contorqueo, ut intra cellulam nostram saltem lucerna luceat. Quanto me felicior Daphne vicina, quae mero et prandio matutino saucia cum suis adulteris volutatur!”

6 Sic confutatus maritus, “Et quid istic est?” ait. “Nam licet forensi negotio officinator noster attentus ferias nobis fecerit, tamen hodiernae cenulae nostrae prospexi. Vide sis ut dolium, quod semper vacuum, frustra locum detinet tantum et re vera praeter impedimentum conversationis nostrae nihil praestat amplius. Istud ego sex² denariis cuidam venditavi, et adest ut dato pretio secum rem suam ferat. Quin itaque praecingeris mihi que manum tantisper accommodas, ut exobrutum protinus tradatur emptori?”

E re nata fallaciosa³ mulier, temerarium tollens cachinnum, “Magnum” inquit “istum virum ac strenuum negotiatorem nacta sum, qui rem, quam ego mulier et intra hospitium contenta iam dudum septem denariis vendidi, minoris distraxit.”

Additamento pretii laetus, maritus “Et quis est ille” ait “qui tanto praestitavit?”

¹ F *perdie*.

² This may have been F's original reading, but a later corrector wrote *septem*, wrongly. Other manuscripts have *quinque* “five”.

³ F *fallacia*.

around idle with your hands in your pockets like a man on vacation? Is this the way you look after our welfare and get us something to eat, by not going to your regular job? And here I am all night and all day wearing my fingers to the bone spinning wool, so that we can at least light a lamp inside our tiny hut. How much luckier my neighbour Daphne is! She spends her mornings surfeited with wine and food, wallowing with her lovers.”

6 The husband was quite taken aback. “What are you talking about?” he said. “Even though our boss is involved in a lawsuit and has given us a holiday, I have taken care of our supper today. Just look how much space that useless storage-jar takes up. It is always empty and really serves no other function than to obstruct our living-space. Well, I sold it to someone for six denarii and he is on his way to pay me and take away his property. So while we are waiting why don't you tuck up your tunic and lend me a hand, so that we can dig it out of the ground and hand it right over to the purchaser.”

The tricky wench was equal to the occasion. She raised a loud, reckless laugh and said, “What a great husband, what a lively businessman I've got! I, a mere woman, without setting foot outside the house, have just sold for seven denarii the object that he let go for less.”

Delighted at the increase in the price, the husband asked, “And who is it that paid so much for it?”

At illa "Olim, inepte," inquit "descendit in dolium, sedulo soliditatem eius probaturus."

7 Nec ille sermoni mulieris defuit, sed exsurgens alacriter "Vis" inquit "verum scire, mater familias? Hoc tibi dolium nimis vetustum est et multifariam rimis hiantibus quassum." Ad maritumque eius dissimulanter conversus, "Quin tu, quicumque es, homuncio, lucernam" ait "actutum mihi expedis, ut erasis intrinsecus sordibus diligenter aptumne¹ usui possim dinoscere, nisi nos putas aes de malo habere?"

Nec quicquam moratus ac suspicatus acer et egregius ille maritus, accensa lucerna, "Discede," inquit "frater, et otiosus assiste, donec probe percuratum istud tibi repraesentem." Et cum dicto nudatus ipse delato lumine scabiem vetustam cariosae testae occipit exsculpere.

At vero adulter, bellissimus ille pusio, inclinatam dolio pronam uxorem fabri superincurvatus secure dedolabat. Ast² illa capite in dolium demisso maritum suum astu meretricio tractabat ludicre. Hoc et illud et aliud et rursus aliud purgandum demonstrat digito suo, donec utroque opere perfecto, acceptis septem denariis, calamitosus faber collo suo gerens dolium coactus est ad hospitium adulteri perferre.

¹ *F aptum*.

² Probably should be emended to *at*, since Apuleius elsewhere never uses *ast*.

"You fool," she answered, "he has just climbed down into the storage-jar to make sure it really is solid."

7 The latter took his cue from the woman's remarks and briskly emerged. "Do you want to know the truth, lady?" he asked. "This jar of yours is very old and badly cracked all over." Then he turned to the husband, pretending not to know who he was. "Hey, fellow, whoever you are," he said, "be quick and hand me a lamp, so that I can scrape off the dirt inside and make quite sure if it is fit for use—unless you think I get money from apple-trees."

Without hesitation or suspicion that fine sharp-witted husband lit the lamp and said, "Step aside, brother. Just stand there and rest until I get it all fixed up to show you." And with this he stripped, took the lamp down inside, and began to hack away the old scurf from the rotten jar.

The pretty lover boy then leaned the construction worker's wife down on top of the jar, bent over her back, and tinkered with her at his ease, while she stuck her head down into the jar and made sport of her husband like a clever prostitute. She pointed with her finger to places that needed cleaning—this spot, and that one, then another, and still another—until finally both jobs had been finished, the seven denarii had been pocketed, and the miserable workman had been forced to hoist the jar on his back and carry it to the lover's lodgings.

8 Pauculis ibi diebus commorati et munificentia publica saginati vaticinationisque crebris mercedibus suffarcinati, purissimi illi sacerdotes novum quaestus genus sibi¹ comminiscuntur. Sorte unica pro casibus² pluribus enotata consulentes de rebus variis plurimos ad hunc modum cavillantur. Sors haec erat:

Ideo coniuncti terram proscindunt boves,
ut in futurum laeta germinent sata.

Tum si qui matrimonium forte³ coaptantes interrogarent, rem ipsam responderi aiebant: iungendos conubio et satis liberum procreandis. Si possessiones praestinatorum quaereret, merito “boves” [ut]⁴ et iugum et arva sementis florentia pronuntiari. Si qui de profectioe sollicitus divinum caperet⁵ auspiciam, iunctos iam paratosque quadripedum cunctorum mansuetissimos et lucrum promitti de glebae germine. Si proelium capessiturus vel latronum factionem persecuturus utiles necne processus sciscitaretur, addictam⁶ victoriam forti praesagio contendebant, quippe cervices hostium iugo subactum iri et praedam de rapinis uberrimam fructuosamque captum iri.⁷

¹ F *cibi*. ² F *percasulis*. ³ F *sorte*.

⁴ Many editors delete *ut*, and some more serious corruption may be indicated.

⁵ F *caperetur*. ⁶ F *additam*.

⁷ F *subacturi . . . capturi*.

8 After they had stayed there just a few days, fattened at public expense and stuffed with the many profits of their soothsaying, those chaste and holy priests devised for themselves a new sort of business venture. They wrote out a single prophecy that would fit many circumstances and used it to fool the many people who came to consult them about various matters. The prophecy read as follows:

Together yoked do cattle cleave the earth,
To bring the fertile seeds to future birth.

If, for example, people who were planning a marriage alliance consulted them, they would say that this event was clearly recommended by the oracle: they ought to be “yoked” in marriage with “seeds” of children to be begotten. If someone enquired about buying property, the oracle logically prophesied “cattle,” as well as a “yoke” of land and flourishing fields of “seedlings.” If anyone sought divine auspices when he was worried about starting out on a trip, they said that the tamest of all quadrupeds were now “yoked” and ready, and that profit was foretold by the “fertility” of the sod. If someone were about to undertake a battle or pursue a band of robbers and wanted to know whether or not the results would be worthwhile, they would argue that victory was guaranteed by this encouraging prophecy: the enemies’ necks would be driven under the “yoke,” and a very rich and fruitful booty would be taken from their plunderings.

Ad istum modum divinationis astu captioso cor-
 9 raserant non parvas pecunias. Sed assiduis inter-
 rogationibus argumenti satietate iam defecti, rur-
 sum ad viam prodeunt, via tota¹ quam nocte²
 confeceramus longe peiorem—quidni?³—lacunosis
 incilibus voraginosam, partim stagnanti palude
 fluidam et alibi subluvie caenosa³ lubricam. Crebris
 denique offensaculis et assiduis lapsibus iam con-
 tuis cruribus meis, vix tandem ad campestres semi-
 tas fessus evadere potui. Et ecce nobis repente
 de tergo manipulus armati supercurrit equitis,⁴
 aegreque cohibita equorum curruli rabie, Philebum
 ceterosque comites eius involant avidi, colloque con-
 stricto et sacrilegos impurosque compellantes inter-
 dum pugnis obverberant, nec non manicis etiam
 cunctos coartant, et identidem urgenti sermone
 comprimunt promerent ocius⁵ aureum cantharum,
 promerent auctoramentum illud sui sceleris, quod
 simulatione sollemnium quae in operto factita-
 verant ab ipsis pulvinaribus matris deum clanculo
 furati, prorsus quasi possent tanti facinoris evadere
 supplicium tacita profectioe, adhuc luce dubia

¹ *F viam totam.*

² The sentence is hard to understand, and some editors have emended *nocte*. Possibly it refers to the earlier nocturnal journey of the priests in VIII 30. Alternatively, some larger portion of the text may have been lost earlier in this sentence, describing the priests' departure by night, and then, after a brief rest, their continuing journey the next day.

³ *F tenosa.*

⁴ *F manipulis armati supercurrunt equites.*

In this manner they had raked together no little
 9 cash with the cunning sophistry of their prognosti-
 cation. But with the constant requests for oracles,
 they soon grew sick and tired of explaining the
 response, and started out on the road again. The
 journey was worse by far than any of the one we had
 made by night, since the road was engulfed by pool-
 filled ditches, soaked in some places with stagnant
 swamp-water and slippery in others with muddy
 filth. My legs were battered from the constant
 bumping and incessant slipping, and when we
 finally came out on to a level path I was so tired that
 I could just barely make it. Suddenly we were over-
 taken by a group of armed riders. When they had
 with difficulty curbed their horses' headlong speed,
 they savagely turned on Philebus and all his com-
 rades, seized them by the throat, and, calling them
 filthy temple-robbers, began to beat them with their
 fists. Furthermore they put handcuffs on them all
 and insistently demanded in menacing language
 that they produce at once the golden goblet—
 produce the wages of their crime, which they had
 surreptitiously abstracted from the very shrine of
 the Mother of the Gods, under the pretence of
 practising secret ceremonies; then, as if they really
 thought they could escape punishment for such an
 outrage by leaving without a word, they had crossed

⁵ *F potius.*

10 pomerium pervaserint. Nec defuit qui, manu super dorsum meum iniecta, in ipso deae quam gerebam gremio scrutatus reperiret atque incoram omnium aureum depromeret cantharum. Nec isto saltem tam nefario scelere impuratissima illa capita confutari terrerive potuere, sed mendoso risu cavillantes, “En” inquam “indignae rei scaevitatem! Quam¹ plerumque insontes periclitantur homines! Propter unicum caliculum, quem deum mater sorori suae deae Syriae hospitale munus obtulit, ut² noxios religionis antistites ad discrimen vocari captis.”

Haec et alias similes afannas frustra blaterantes,³ eos retrorsus abducunt pagani statimque vinctos in Tullianum compingunt; cantharoque et ipso simulacro quod gerebam apud fani donarium redditis ac consecratis, altera die productum me rursum voce praeconis venui subiciunt, septemque nummis carius quam prius me comparaverat Philebus, quidam pistor de proximo castello praestitavit; protinusque frumento etiam coempto affatim onustum per iter arduum scrupis et cuiusce⁴ modi stirpibus infestum ad pistrinum quod exercebat perducit.

¹ Some manuscripts and editors read *qua*, connecting the two exclamations into one sentence.

² F omits *ut*.

³ F *ablaterantis*.

⁴ F *huiusce*.

10 the city limits in the grey light of dawn. One of them even went so far as to reach up over my back and feel around in the bosom of the goddess I was carrying. He found the gold goblet and pulled it out for everyone to see. Yet even in the face of such a sacrilegious crime those horribly vile creatures could not be dismayed or frightened but pretended to laugh and made jokes: “The perversity and injustice of it all! How often innocent men are accused of crime! Just because of one little cup, which the Mother of the Gods offered her sister the Syrian Goddess as a token of hospitality, high priests of holiness are being charged as if they were criminals, and put in jeopardy of life and limb.”

They kept on blabbering this sort of nonsense to no avail, while the villagers led them back to town and immediately put them in chains and locked them in jail; then they returned the goblet, along with the very statue I was carrying, to the temple treasury and consecrated them. Next day they took me out and put me up once more for sale by the auctioneer. A baker¹ from the next hill-town bought me for seven sesterces more than Philebus had paid earlier. Immediately he loaded me to capacity with grain that he purchased as well, and took me, by way of a steep path dangerously full of sharp stones and all sorts of underbrush, to the mill which he operated.

¹ The baker is also a miller, which was normal in Roman times.

11 Ibi complurium iumentorum multivii circuitus intorquebant molas ambage varia, nec die tantum, verum perpeti etiam nocte prorsus instabili machinarum vertigine lucubrabant pervigilem farinam. Sed mihi, ne rudimentum servitii perhorrescerem scilicet, novus dominus loca lautia prolixae praebuit. Nam et diem primum illum feriatum dedit et cibariis abundanter instruxit praeseptum. Nec tamen illa otii saginaeque beatitudo duravit ulterius, sed die sequenti molae quae maxima videbatur matutinus astituor, et ilico velata facie propektor ad incurva spatia flexuosi canalis, ut in orbe termini circumfluentis reciproco gressu mea recalcans vestigia vagarer errore certo. Nec tamen sagacitatis ac prudentiae meae prorsus oblitus facilem me tirocinio disciplinae praebui; sed quamquam frequenter, cum inter homines agerem, machinas similiter circumrotari vidissem, tamen ut expertus et ignarus operis stupore mentito defixus haerebam, quod enim rebar ut minus aptum et huius modi ministerio satis inutilem me ad alium quempiam utique leviozem laborem legatum iri vel otiosum certe cibatum iri. Sed frustra sollertiam damnosam

11 There the multiple circuits performed by numerous beasts kept turning millstones of varying circumference, and not merely by day but throughout the night they would sleeplessly produce flour with the non-stop rotation of the machines. But as for me, no doubt to keep me from being terrified by my introduction to slavery, my new master furnished me with a lavish reception: he gave me a holiday that first day and spread my manger generously with fodder. But that happy life of leisure and feasting did not last long, for the next day I was attached early in the morning to what appeared to be the largest of the mill-wheels. My head was covered and I was immediately given a push along the curved track of a circular channel. Within an orbit circumscribed all round, ever going back over my own path, I retraced my very footsteps and blindly wandered on an invariable course. I had not, however, completely forgotten my shrewdness and intelligence, and so I did not give the impression of being an easy learner in my apprenticeship to the profession. Although, when I was living in the world of humans, I had often seen mill-wheels being driven round in a similar way, I pretended to be inexperienced and ignorant of the process, and I stood rooted to the spot in feigned stupidity. I reckoned, you see, that I would be judged unfit and quite useless for this sort of service and delegated to some other sort of work, in some way easier, or perhaps even left to feed at leisure. But I exercised

exercui. Complures enim protinus baculis armati me circumsteterunt atque, ut eram luminibus obiectis securus etiam nunc, repente signo dato et clamore conserto,¹ plagas ingerentes acervatim, adeo me strepitu turbulentant ut cunctis consiliis abiectis ilico scitissime taeniae sparteae totus 12 innixus discursus alacres obirem. At subita sectae commutatione risum toto coetu commoveram.

Iamque maxima diei parte transacta defectum alioquin me, helcio sparteo dimoto, nexu machinae liberatum applicant praesepio. At ego, quamquam eximie fatigatus et refectione virium vehementer indignus et prorsus fame perditus, tamen familiari curiositate attonitus et satis anxius, postposito cibo, qui copiosus aderat, inoptabilis officinae disciplinam cum delectatione quadam arbitrabar.

Dii boni, quales illic homunculi vibicibus lividis² totam cutem depicti, dorsumque plagosum scissili centunculo magis inumbrati quam obiecti, nonnulli exiguo tegili tantum modo pubem iniecti, cuncti tamen sic tunicati ut essent per pannulos manifesti, frontes litterati et capillum semirasi et pedes anulati, tum lurore deformes et fumosis tenebris vaporosae caliginis palpebras adesi atque adeo male

¹ *F conferto.*

² *F vi vicibus libidinis.*

that pernicious cleverness of mine to no avail. Several men armed with sticks surrounded me at once. As I stood there, still unsuspecting because my eyes were covered, they suddenly gave a signal and shouted all together, laid into me with a heap of blows, and so upset me with the uproar that I immediately abandoned all my schemes, tugged skilfully at my rope-halter with all my might, and 12 briskly performed my laps. I excited the whole company to laughter by my sudden shift in philosophy.

After most of the day was past and I was worn out, they took off my rope-collar, disconnected me from the machine, and fastened me to the manger. Although I was exceedingly exhausted, desperately in need of repairing my strength, and really dead from hunger, yet my habitual curiosity held me spellbound and made me quite anxious. So I postponed the plentiful dinner at hand and took a certain pleasure in carefully observing the routine of this undesirable workshop.

Good gods, what stunted little men they were! The whole surface of their skin was painted with livid welts. Their striped backs were merely shaded, not covered, by the tattered patchwork they wore: some had thrown on a tiny cloth that just covered their loins, but all were clad in such a way that you could discern them clearly through their rags. Their foreheads were branded, their heads half-shaved, and their feet chained. They were hideously sallow too, and their eyelids were eaten

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luminati, et in modum pugilum qui pulvisculo perspersi dimicant farinulenta cinere sordide candidati.

- 13 Iam de meo iumentario contubernio quid vel ad quem modum memorem? Quales illi muli senes vel cantherii debiles! Circa praesepium capita demersi contruncabant moles palearum, cervices¹ cariosa vulnerum putredine follicantes, nares languidas assiduo pulsu tussedinis hiulci, pectora copulae sparteae tritura continua exulcerati, costas perpetua castigatione ossium tenuis renudati, ungulas multivia circumcursione in enorme vestigium porrecti, totumque corium veterno atque scabiosa macie exasperati.

Talis familiae funestum mihi etiam metuens exemplum, veterisque Lucii fortunam recordatus et ad ultimam salutis metam detrusus, summisso² capite maerebam. Nec ullum uspiam cruciabilis vitae solacium aderat, nisi quod ingenua mihi curiositate recreabar, dum praesentiam meam parvi facientes libere quae volunt omnes et agunt et loquuntur. Nec immerito priscae poeticae divinus auctor apud Graios summae prudentiae virum monstrare cupiens, multarum civitatum obitu et variorum populorum cognitu summas adeptum

¹ F *cervice*.

² F *me tandem tru summisso*.

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away by the smoky darkness of scorching murk until they were quite weak-sighted; like boxers who fight sprinkled with dust, they were dirtily white-washed with a floury ash.

- 13 As for my comrades, the animals, what can I say? How can I describe their condition? What a sight! Those old mules and feeble geldings stood round the manger with their heads sunk down, munching through piles of chaff; their necks sagged from the rotting decay of sores; their flabby nostrils were distended from constant coughing; their chests were ulcerated from the continual rubbing of the rope harnesses; their flanks were bare to the bone from everlasting whipping, their hoofs stretched out to abnormal dimensions from their multiple circling, and their entire hide rough with decay and mangy starvation.

The funereal example of my fellow-slaves made me fear for myself. Recalling the happy Lucius I once was, now driven to the utmost degradation, I lowered my head and grieved. Nowhere was there any consolation for my tortured existence, except one: I was revived by my innate curiosity, since everyone now took little account of my presence and freely did and said whatever they wished. That divine inventor of ancient poetry among the Greeks, desiring to portray a hero of the highest intelligence, was quite right to sing of a man who acquired the highest excellence by visiting many cities and

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virtutes cecinit. Nam et ipse gratas gratias asino meo memini, quod me suo celatum tegmine variisque fortunis exercitatum, etsi minus prudentem, multiscium reddidit. Fabulam denique bonam prae ceteris, suave comptam ad aures vestras afferre decrevi. Et en occipio.

Pistor ille qui me pretio suum fecerat, bonus alioquin vir et apprime modestus, pessimam et ante cunctas mulieres longe deterrimam sortitus coniugam, poenas extremas tori larisque sustinebat, ut hercules eius vicem ego quoque tacitus frequenter ingemescerem. Nec enim vel unum vitium nequissimae illi feminae deerat, sed omnia prorsus ut in quandam caenosam latrinam in eius animum flagitia confluxerant: saeva scaeva, virosa ebriosa, pervicax pertinax, in rapinis turpibus avara, in sumptibus foedis profusa, inimica fidei, hostis pudicitiae. Tunc spretis atque calcatis divinis numinibus in vicem certae religionis mentita sacrilega praesumptione dei, quem praedicaret unicum, confictis observationibus vacuis fallens omnes

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learning to know various peoples.¹ In fact, I now remember the ass that I was with thankful gratitude because, while I was concealed under his cover and schooled in a variety of fortunes, he made me better-informed, if less intelligent. And so here is a story, better than all the others and delightfully elegant, which I have decided to bring to your ears. So here goes.

The baker who bought me was a good man in general and extremely temperate, but he had drawn as mate the worst and by far the most depraved woman in the world, who brought such dishonour to his bed and hearth that even I, by Hercules, often groaned silently for his sake. That vile woman lacked not a single fault. Her soul was like some muddy latrine into which absolutely every vice had flowed. She was cruel and perverse, crazy for men and wine, headstrong and obstinate, grasping in her mean thefts and a spendthrift in her loathsome extravagances, an enemy of fidelity and a foe to chastity. Furthermore she scorned and spurned all the gods in heaven, and, instead of holding a definite faith, she used the false sacrilegious presumption of a god, whom she would call “one and only”,² to invent meaningless rites to cheat everyone and

¹ Apuleius paraphrases Homer's words about Odysseus at the beginning of the *Odyssey* (I 3): πολλῶν δ' ἀνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄστεα καὶ νόον ἕγνω, “He saw the cities and came to know the minds of many men.”

² This may be an allusion to Christianity or Judaism.

homines et miserum maritum decipiens matutino mero et continuo stupro corpus manciparat.

15 Talis illa mulier miro me persequebatur odio. Nam et antelucio, recubans adhuc, subiungi machinae novicium clamabat asinum, et statim ut cubiculo primum processerat insistens iubebat incoram sui plagas mihi quam plurimas irrogari, et cum tempestivo prandio laxarentur iumenta cetera, longe tardius applicari praesepio iubebat. Quae saevitia multo mihi magis genuinam curiositatem in suos mores ampliaverat. Nam et assiduo plane commentem in eius cubiculum quendam sentiebam iuvenem, cuius et faciem videre cupiebam ex summo studio, si tamen velamentum capitis libertatem tribuisset meis aliquando luminibus. Nec enim mihi sollertia defuisset ad detegenda quoquo modo pessimae feminae flagitia. Sed anus quaedam stuprorum¹ sequestra et adulterorum internuntia de die cotidie inseparabilis aderat. Cum qua protinus ientaculo ac dehinc vino mero mutuis vicibus velitata, scaenas fraudulentas in exitium miserrimi mariti subdolis ambagibus construebat. At ego, quamquam graviter suscensens errori Photidis, quae me dum avem fabricat perfecit asinum, isto tamen vel unico solacio aerumnabilis deformitatis

¹ *F stuprum.*

deceive her wretched husband, having sold her body to drink from dawn and to debauchery the whole day.

15 Such being the kind of woman she was, she persecuted me with extraordinary hatred. Even before dawn, while she was still in bed, she would shout out for the apprentice-ass to be yoked to the mill-wheel. Then the very moment she came out of her room she would insistently order me to be whipped over and over again while she watched. And although all the other animals were released for dinner on time, she had me put to the manger much later. This cruelty very greatly increased my natural curiosity about her behaviour. You see, I had heard a young man regularly visiting her bedroom, and I longed with all my heart to see his face, if only the covering over my head had allowed my eyes any freedom. My ingenuity would not have failed, one way or another, to expose that terrible woman's scandalous affairs. But an old woman who was a confidante of her debaucheries, and acted as a go-between in her affairs, was her inseparable companion all day every day. With her, first thing in the morning after breakfast and then some preliminary exchanges of strong wine, she would construct deceptive charades with cunning twists for the downfall of her poor, wretched husband. As for me, although I was deeply angry at Photis' mistake in making me an ass when she was trying to produce a bird, nevertheless I was at least heartened by this

meae recreabar, quod auribus grandissimis praeditus cuncta longule etiam dissita facillime sentiebam.

16 Denique die quadam timidae illius aniculae sermo talis meas affertur aures.

“De isto quidem, mi erilis, tecum ipsa videris, quem sine meo consilio pigrum et formidulosum familiarem istum sortita es, qui insuavis et odiosi mariti tui caperratum supercilium ignaviter perhorrescit ac per hoc amoris languidi desidia tuos volentes amplexus discruciat. Quanto melior Philesitherus adulescens et formosus et liberalis et strenuus et contra maritorum inefficaces diligentias constantissimus! Dignus hercules solus omnium matronarum deliciis perfrui, dignus solus coronam auream capite gestare vel ob unicum istud, quod nunc nuper in quendam zelotypum maritum eximio studio commentus est. Audi denique et amatorum

17 diversum ingenium compara. Nosti quendam Barbarum nostrae civitatis decurionem, quem Scorpionem prae morum acritudine vulgus appellat? Hic uxorem generosam et eximia formositate praeditam mira custodela munitam¹ domi suae quam cautissime cohibebat.”

Ad haec ultima pistoris illa uxor subiciens “Quidni?” inquit. “Novi diligenter. Areten meam

¹ *F munita.*

¹ The name means “fond of woman-chasing.”

² His name means “barbarian.”

one consolation in my painful deformity: namely, with my enormous ears I could hear everything very easily, even at a considerable distance.

16 One day, for example, there came drifting to my ears the following remarks from that bashful old hag.

“You must decide yourself, mistress, what is to be done with this feeble craven lover you acquired without my advice, who shudders like a coward at the wrinkle of an eyebrow from your unpleasant, disagreeable husband, and who as a result tortures your willing arms by the slothfulness of his languid loving. How much better Philesitherus¹ would be! He is young, handsome, engaging, vigorous, and fearlessly persistent in the face of the futile precautions of husbands. By Hercules, he alone deserves to enjoy the favours of married women; he alone deserves to wear on his head the golden crown, if for no other reason than the extraordinarily skilful way he recently tricked a certain jealous husband. Listen now and compare the different talents of the 17 lovers. Do you know the man called Barbarus,² the town councillor, the one the people call the Scorpion because of his poisonous personality? He married a well-bred and exceptionally beautiful wife, whom he keeps carefully locked up at home in the strictest custody.”

At this last remark the baker’s wife interrupted. “Of course,” she said, “I know her well. You are

condiscipulam memoras.” “Ergo” inquit anus “nosti totam Philesitheri et ipsius fabulam?” “Minime gentium,” inquit “sed nosse valde cupio et oro, mater, ordine mihi singula retexe.”

Nec commorata illa sermocinatrix immodica sic anus¹ incipit. “Barbarus iste cum necessariam perfectionem pararet pudicitiamque carae coniugis conservare summa diligentia cuperet, servulum suum Myrmecem, fidelitate praecipua cognitum, secreto commonet, suaeque dominae custodelam omnem permittit, carcerem et perpetua vincula, mortem denique violentam defamem² comminatus, si quisquam hominum vel in transitu digito tenus eam contigisset, idque deierans etiam confirmat per omnia divina numina. Ergo igitur summo pavore perculsum Myrmecem acerrimum relinquens uxori secutorem, securam dirigit profectionem.

“Tunc obstinato animo vehementer anxius Myrmex nec usquam dominam suam progredi sinebat, et lanificio domestico districtam³ inseparabilis assidebat, ac tantum necessario vespertini lavacri progressu affixus atque conglutinator, extremas

¹ *anus* should perhaps be deleted.

² The two adjectives are frequently emended: e.g. Robertson’s *illam lentam de fame* “the slow sort of death from starvation.”

³ F *districtam*.

¹ Her name, if representing ἀρετή, means “virtue”; if ἀρήτη (like the queen of Phaeacia), “prayed to” or “prayed

talking about my classmate, Arete.”¹ “So then,” said the old lady, “you must know the whole story of Philesitherus too?” “Not at all,” she replied. “But I would really love to hear it. So, mother, please unravel the whole story from the very beginning.”

The unrestrained old gossip began without delay. “Our friend Barbarus had to take a business trip, and since he was extremely anxious to ensure his beloved wife’s fidelity, he gave private instructions to his slave Myrmex,² whom he knew to be especially reliable. He assigned to him all responsibility for guarding the lady of the house, and threatened him with imprisonment and everlasting chains and even violent and ignominious death, if any man so much as touched her with his fingertips, even in passing; and he confirmed his threat with an oath by all the powers of heaven. Therefore, leaving the terror-stricken Myrmex as a sharp-eyed attendant on his wife, he set out on his journey in peace of mind.

“In his terrible anxiety, Myrmex obstinately refused to let his mistress go out of the house. While she was occupied with her household chores of wool-making he sat continuously by her side, and even when she had to walk out for her evening bath he stuck to her like glue, holding the hem of her robe for” (cf. Désirée).

² His name means “ant” in Greek.

manu prendens lacinias, mira sagacitate commissae provinciae fidem tuebatur.

18 “Sed ardentem Philesitheri vigilantiam matronae nobilis pulchritudo latere non potuit. Atque hac ipsa potissimum famosa castitate et insignis tutelae nimietate instinctus atque inflammatus, quidvis facere, quidvis pati paratus, ad expugnandam tenacem domus disciplinam totis accingitur viribus. Certusque fragilitatis humanae fidei, et quod pecuniae cunctae sint difficultates perviae auroque soleant adamantinae etiam perfringi fores, opportune nactus Myrmecis solitatem, ei amorem suum aperit et supplex eum medellam cruciatui deprecatur: nam sibi statutam decretamque mortem proximare, ni maturius cupito potiatur; nec eum tamen quicquam in re facili formidare debere, quippe cum vespera solus fide tenebrarum contactus atque absconditus introrepere et intra momentum temporis remeare posset; hic et huiusce modi suadelis validum addens ad postremum cuneum,¹ qui rigentem prorsus servi tenacitatem violenter diffunderet²; porrecta enim manu sua demonstrat ei novitate nimia candentes solidos aureos, quorum viginti quidem puellae destinasset, ipsi vero decem libenter offerret.

19 “Exhorruit Myrmex inauditum facinus et

¹ F *ad cuneum*. Robertson suggested adding *postremum* to solve the difficulty. Others have changed *addens ad* to a finite verb: e.g. *addebat, adigit*.

² F *diffunderet*.

in his hand. In this way he displayed admirable resolution in discharging the responsibility laid upon him.

18 “It was impossible, however, to conceal the noble lady’s beauty from Philesitherus’ fiery vigilance. Moreover he was especially stimulated and kindled by her very reputation for chastity and the notoriously excessive care with which she was guarded. He was ready to do and endure anything, girding himself with all his might to storm the impregnable discipline of the house. He trusted in the frailty of human honesty and was certain that all difficulties are surmountable with money and that gold breaks down even adamantine doors. He took advantage of an occasion when Myrmex was alone, revealed his paison to him, and begged and besought him for a little relief from his agony, since he had resolved and determined to hasten his own end, he said, unless he soon gained the object of his desire. And Myrmex need not be afraid at all, he added, because it was a simple affair. He would creep in alone during the evening, trusting the darkness to protect and conceal him, and be gone again in a moment. To these similar persuasions he added at the end a powerful wedge which would split wide open the slave’s stiff and solid resistance: he held out his hand and showed him some brand-new, shining gold pieces, of which, he said, he intended twenty for the girl, but gladly offered the other ten to Myrmex.

19 “The slave recoiled at this unheard-of outrage,

occlusis auribus effugit protinus. Nec auri tamen splendor flammeus oculos ipsius exire potuit, sed quam procul semotus et domum celeri gradu pervectus videbat tamen decora illa monetæ lumina, et opulentam prædam iam tenebat animo; miroque mentis salo et cogitationum dissensione misellus in diversas sententias carpebatur ac distrahebatur: illic fides, hic lucrum, illic cruciatus, hic voluptas. Ad postremum tamen formidinem mortis vicit aurum. Nec saltem spatio cupido formosæ pecuniæ leniebatur, sed nocturnas etiam curas invaserat pestilens avaritia, ut, quamvis erilis eum comminatio domi cohiberet, aurum tamen foras evocaret. Tunc devorato pudore et dimota cunctatione, sic ad aures dominae mandatum perfert. Nec a genuina levitate descendit mulier, sed exsecrando metallo pudicitiam suam protinus auctorata est. Ita gaudio perfusus advolat¹ ad suæ fidei præcipitium Myrmex, non modo capere, verum saltem contingere quam exitio suo viderat pecuniam cupiens; et magnis suis laboribus perfectum desiderium Philesithero lætitia percitus nuntiat, statimque destinatum præmium reposcit. Et tenet nummos aureos manus Myrmecis, quæ nec aereos norat.

¹ *advolat* has been added conjecturally; F has no verb in this clause.

stopped up his ears, and ran away at once. Yet he could not rid his eyes of the fiery brilliance of the gold. He put as much distance between them as he could and went home quickly; he still beheld those beautiful glints from the coins, and in his imagination he already held the rich reward. His mind was tossed on violent waves, and the poor fellow was pulled and torn in opposite directions by dissension among his thoughts: on one side loyalty, on the other profit; on one side torture, on the other pleasure. In the end, however, his fear of death was overcome by gold. His passion for the beautiful money was not at all dulled with the passage of time, but the plague of greed had even infected his night-time worries. The result was that, no matter how strongly his master's threats held him home, gold called him forth. Finally, swallowing his shame and putting aside all hesitation, he delivered Philesitherus' commission to his mistress's ears. The woman, true to her sex's fickleness, immediately hired out her honour in return for that abominable metal. Beside himself with joy, Myrmex hastened to the downfall of his fidelity, lusting not only to possess, but even just to touch the money which he had glimpsed to his own disgrace. In happy excitement he announced to Philesitherus that through his own great efforts the youth's desires had been fulfilled, and he immediately demanded the promised reward. Now Myrmex's hand, which had never even known the feel of copper, held coins of gold.

20 "Iamque nocte promotam solum perducit ad domum, probeque capite coniectum amatorem strenuum infert adusque dominae cubiculum. Commodum novis amplexibus Amori rudi litabant, commodum prima stipendia Veneri militabant nudi milites, et contra omnium opinionem captata noctis opportunitate improvisus maritus assistit suae domus ianuam. Iam pulsat, iam clamat, iam saxo fores verberat, et ipsa tarditate magis magisque suspectus dira comminatur Myrmeci supplicia. At ille repentino malo perturbatus et misera trepidatione ad inopiam consilii deductus, quod solum poterat, nocturnas tenebras sibi causabatur obsistere quin clavem curiose absconditam reperiret. Interdum Philesiterus cognito strepitu raptim tunicam¹ iniectus, sed plane prae turbatione pedibus intectis procurrit cubiculo. Tunc Myrmex tandem clave pessulis subiecta repandit fores et recipit etiam tunc fidem deum boantem dominum, eoque propere cubiculum petente, clandestino transcursu dimittit Philesitherum. Quo iam pro limine liberato, securus sui clausa domo rursum se reddidit quieti.

21 "Sed dum prima luce Barbarus procedit cubiculo, videt sub lectulo soleas incognitas, quibus inductus

¹ *F tunicas.*

20 "Late at night he led the eager lover to the house and then, alone and with his head well covered, right to his mistress's bedroom. Just when they were making a sacrifice to untried Love with their first embraces, just when they were fighting their first campaign as stripped soldiers of Venus, contrary to everyone's expectations her husband appeared at the door of his house, taking advantage of the night for a surprise visit. First he knocked, then he shouted, then he beat at the door with a stone, and as he became more and more suspicious because of the delay he began to threaten Myrmex with dreadful punishments. The latter, dismayed by the sudden disaster and reduced by pitiable terror to a state of witlessness, gave the only excuse he could think of, saying that he had carefully hidden the key and was having trouble finding it in the dark. Meantime Philesitherus heard the uproar, hurriedly threw on his tunic, and ran out of the bedroom; but in the confusion he quite forgot to put on his shoes. Then Myrmex finally inserted the key under the bolt, opened the door, and admitted his master, who was still bellowing oaths to the gods. As Barbarus hurried to the bedroom, Myrmex let Philesitherus out unnoticed, and once he was free on the other side of the threshold, Myrmex, relieved at his own safety, locked up the house and went back to bed.

21 "But when Barbarus was leaving the bedroom at dawn, he saw the strange sandals under the bed, the

Philesitherus irreperat; suspectisque e re nata quae gesta sunt, non uxori, non ulli familiarium cordolio patefacto, sublatis iis et in sinum furtim absconditis, iusso tantum Myrmece per conservos vincto forum versus attrahi, tacitos secum mugitus iterans rapidum dirigit gressum, certus solearum indicio vestigium adulteri posse se perfacile indispisci. Sed ecce per plateam dum Barbarus vultu turgido subductisque superciliis incedit iratus, ac pone eum Myrmex vinculis obrutus, non quidem coram noxae prehensus, conscientia tamen pessima permixtus, lacrimis uberibus ac postremis lamentationibus inefficacem commovet miserationem, opportune Philesitherus occurrens, quamquam diverso quodam negotio destinatus, repentina tamen facie permotus, non enim deterritus, recolens festinationis suae delictum et¹ cetera consequenter suspicatus sagaciter extemplo sumpta familiari constantia, dimotis servulis invadit cum summo clamore Myrmecem, pugnisque malas eius clementer obtundens, 'At te,' inquit 'nequissimum et periurum caput, dominus iste tuus et cuncta caeli numina, quae deierando temere devocasti,² pessimum pessime perduint, qui de balneis soleas hesterna

¹ F *ut*.

² F *devorasti*.

ones that Philesitherus had been wearing when he sneaked into the room. From this evidence he guessed what had happened, but did not reveal the torment in his heart to his wife or anyone else in the house. He picked up the sandals and secretly concealed them in the folds of his robe. Then he simply ordered Myrmex to be tied up by his fellow-servants and dragged off toward the Forum. He led the way at a rapid pace, silently growling to himself, confident that he could easily track the adulterer down with the sandals as a clue. So Barbarus walked down the street with a furious expression and his brows raised in anger, and behind him Myrmex laden with chains. Although he had not been caught in the act he was troubled by his guilty conscience, and his copious tears and terrible wailing were pitiful, but without effect. At this moment Philesitherus happened to cross their path. Though he was occupied with other business he was shocked by this unexpected sight. Undismayed, however, he recollected what he had forgotten in his hasty departure, cleverly deduced the rest of the situation, and immediately regained his customary self-possession. He pushed aside the slaves and attacked Myrmex, shouting at the top of his lungs and gently hitting his jaws with his fists. 'Villain!' he cried. 'Perjuring wretch! May your master there, and all the gods in heaven whom you have invoked with reckless oaths, punish you damnably as a damnable scoundrel! You stole my slippers at the

die mihi furatus es. Dignus hercules, dignus qui et ista vincula conteras et insuper carceris etiam tenebras perferas.'

"Hac opportuna fallacia vigorati iuvenis inductus, immo sublatus et ad credulitatem delapsus Barbarus, postliminio domum regressus, vocato Myrmece, soleas illas offerens et ignovit ex animo et uti domino redderet cui surripuerat suasit."

22 Hactenus adhuc anicula garriente suscipit mulier "Beatam illam, quae tam constantis sodalis libertate fruitur! At ego misella molae etiam sonum et ecce illius scabiosi asini faciem timentem familiarem incidi." Ad haec anus "Iam tibi ego probe suasum et confirmatum animi amatorem illum alacrem vadimonium¹ sistam." Et insuper conducta vespertina regressione cubiculo facessit. At pudica uxor statim cenas saliares comparat, vina pretiosa defaecat, pulmenta recentia tucctis temperat. Mensa largiter instructa denique, ut dei cuiusdam adventus sic exspectatur adulteri. Nam et opportune maritus foris apud naccam proximum cenitabat.

Ergo igitur metis die² propinquante, helcio tandem absolutus refectuique secure redditus, non tam hercules laboris libertatem gratulabar quam quod

¹ Or *vadimonio*.

² F *meridie*.

bath yesterday. You deserve it, by Hercules. You deserve to wear out those chains, and suffer in the dark depths of a prison besides.'

"Barbarus was taken in, elated in fact, by our lively lad's prompt trick, and lapsed into complete credulity. He returned back home, summoned Myrmece, handed him the slippers, pardoned him sincerely, and then urged him to return them to the owner from whom he had taken them."

22 The garrulous old woman had got to this point in her story when the baker's wife interrupted her. "Lucky the woman," she said, "who enjoys the liberty of such an intrepid companion! Poor me, I happened on a boyfriend who is afraid even of the noise of the mill-stone and the face of that mangy ass you see over there." "I will soon bring you that lively lover," the old woman replied, "fully recommended, stoutly confirmed, and guaranteed to meet his appointment." Adding a promise to return that evening, she left the room. The virtuous wife instantly began to prepare a feast fit for a priest, decanted some expensive wine, and seasoned fresh meat with sausage. Then with the table generously set she awaited the advent of her lover as if he were a god, for her husband conveniently happened to be dining out at the fuller's next door.

Therefore, as the day neared its close and I had at last been loosed from my halter and returned to carefree recreation, I was grateful, not so much for freedom from toil, by Hercules, as for the fact that

revelatis luminibus liber iam¹ cunctas facinorosae mulieris artes prospectare poteram. Sol ipsum quidem delapsus Oceanum subterrenas orbis plagas illuminabat, et ecce nequissimae anus adhaerens lateri temerarius adulter adventat, puer admodum et adhuc lubrico genarum splendore conspicuus, adhuc adulteros ipse delectans. Hunc multis admodum saviis exceptum mulier cenam iubet paratam accumbere.

23 Sed ut primum occursoriam potionem et incohatum gustum extremis labiis contingebat adulescens, multo celerius opinione rediens maritus adventat. Tunc uxor egregia diras devotiones in eum deprecata et crurum ei fragium amborum ominata,² exsanguis formidine trepidantem adulterum alveo ligneo, quo frumenta contusa³ purgari consuerant, temere propter iacenti suppositum abscondit; ingenitaque astutia dissimulato tanto flagitio, intrepidum mentita vultum, percontatur de marito cur utique contubernalis artissimi deserta cenula praematurus afforet.

At ille dolenti prorsus animo suspirans assidue, "Nefarium" inquit "et extremum facinus perditae feminae tolerare nequiens fuga me proripui. Hem qualis, dii boni, matrona, quam fida quamque sobria

¹ *F liber etiam.*

² *F eius fragium abominata.*

³ *F confusa.*

with my eyes uncovered I could now freely observe all the tricks of that wicked woman. The Sun had slipped right down beneath ocean and was illuminating the subterranean zones of the world when suddenly, clinging close beside the vile old woman, the bold lover made his appearance. He was no more than a boy, still conspicuous for the smooth brightness of his cheeks, still attracting male lovers himself. Welcoming him with a great many kisses, the woman invited him to take his place for the dinner she had prepared.

23 As the young man was just tasting the opening cup and raising the first course to the edge of his lips, her husband, returning far more quickly than expected, appeared at the door. Thereupon his excellent wife swore dreadful oaths against him, wished both his legs broken and hid her lover, who trembled in bloodless terror, under a wooden tub normally used for sifting the pounded grain, which happened to be lying overturned on the floor nearby. Her natural cunning enabled her to dissemble her wicked deed and assume a perfectly relaxed expression as she inquired of her husband why in the world he had left supper at his best friend's house and returned so early.

He was clearly very upset, and as he answered her he sighed repeatedly. "It was unspeakable and terrible," he said, "what that depraved woman did! I could not endure it, and I rushed away to escape. Good gods, to think that such a lady, so faithful and

turpissimo se dedecore foedavit! Iuro per istam ego sanctam Cererem me nunc etiam meis oculis de tali muliere minus credere.”

His instincta verbis mariti, audacissima uxor noscendae rei cupiens non cessat obtundere, totam prorsus a principio fabulam promeret. Nec destitit donec eius voluntati succubuit maritus et sic, ignarus suorum, domus alienae percenset infortunium.

- 24 “Contubernalis mei fullonis uxor, alioquin servati pudoris ut videbatur femina, quae semper secundo rumore gloriosa larem mariti pudice gubernabat, occulta libidine prorumpit in adulterum quempiam. Cumque furtivos amplexus obiret assidue, ipso illo denique momento quo nos lauti cenam petebamus cum eodem illo iuvene miscebatur in venerem. Ergo nostra repente turbata¹ praesentia, subitario ducta consilio, eundem illum subiectum contegit viminea cavea, quae fustium flexu tereti in rectum aggerata cumulum lacinias circumdatas suffita² candido fumo sulfuris inalbabat, eoque iam ut sibi videbatur tutissime celato mensam nobiscum secura participat. Interdum acerrimo gravique odore sulphuris iuvenis inescatus atque obnubilatus intercluso spiritu difflebat, utque est ingenium

¹ F *curvata*.

² F *suffisa*.

¹ It would be appropriate for the miller's house to have a small shrine to Ceres, the goddess of grain.

sober, has befouled herself so shamefully and disgracefully! I swear by our holy Ceres there,¹ even now I can hardly believe my own eyes about a woman like that.”

Excited by her husband's remarks, the unconscionable wife was eager to hear about the affair. She hammered at him to reveal the whole story right from the beginning, and did not let up until her husband surrendered to her wishes and recounted the misfortunes of another man's house, while unaware of his own.

- 24 “My friend the fuller's wife,” he began, “although she was usually, it seemed, a woman who preserved her chastity and always enjoyed a fine reputation for virtuous management of her husband's hearth, has burst out with a secret passion for some lover. She has been constantly meeting him for stolen embraces, and at the very moment when we came in for supper after our bath she and that same young man were making love. Disturbed by our sudden arrival, she was forced into a hasty plan, and concealed him under a wicker cage formed of smoothly bent sticks rising to a narrow top, which was fumigated with white sulphur fumes to bleach the clothes hanging all round it. Since he was safely hidden, as she supposed, she confidently joined us for supper. Meanwhile the acrid, heavy odour of sulphur was eating into the young man. Overcome by the cloud of fumes, he began to grow limp from suffocation. Furthermore the sulphur, as is the

vivacis metalli, crebras ei sternutationes commo-
 25 vebat. Atque ut primum e regione mulieris pone
 tergum eius maritus acceperat sonum sternuta-
 tionis—quod enim putaret ab ea profectum—
 solito sermone salutem ei fuerat imprecatus, et
 iterato rursus et frequentato saepius, donec rei
 nimietate commotus quod res erat tandem suspi-
 catur. Et impulsam mensam protinus remotaque
 cavea producit hominem crebros anhelitus aegre
 reflantem, inflammatusque indignatione contume-
 liae, gladium flagitans iugulare moriturum ges-
 tiebat, nisi respecto communi periculo vix eum ab
 impetu furioso cohibuissem, asseverans brevi
 absque noxa nostri suapte inimicum eius violentia
 sulphuris periturum. Nec suadela mea, sed ipsius rei
 necessitate lenitus, quippe iam semivivum illum
 in proximum deportat angiportum. Tum uxorem
 eius tacite suasi ac denique persuasi, secederet
 paululum atque ultra limen tabernae ad quampiam
 tantisper deverteret¹ familiarem sibi mulierem,
 quoad spatium fervens mariti sedaretur animus, qui
 tanto calore tantaque rabie percussus non erat
 dubius aliquid etiam de se suaque coniuge tristius
 profecto cogitare. Talium contubernalis epularum
 taedio fugatus larem reveni meum.”

¹ F does not give *deverteret* (added by Helm), but editors agree that a second verb is necessary.

natural property of that active chemical, caused him
 25 to sneeze repeatedly. Now the first time her hus-
 band heard the sound of a sneeze from his wife's
 direction, behind her back, thinking that it came
 from her he wished her good health in the usual
 way. And he did the same thing the second time
 and several more times, until he became disturbed
 by the excessive repetition and finally guessed the
 truth. Quickly he shoved the table away, lifted up
 the cage, and pulled out the man who was gasping
 in his struggle to breathe. Ablaze with indignation
 at his dishonour, the fuller called for his sword and
 would have cut the throat of the fainting man, had I
 not, out of fear for our common danger, managed to
 restrain him from the violent deed. I assured him
 that his foe would soon be dead anyway from the
 powerful effect of the sulphur, with no guilt on our
 part. He was mollified less by my arguments than
 by the force of circumstances, since the fellow was
 now only half alive; and he hauled him outside into
 the alley. Meanwhile I took his wife aside and
 finally succeeded in persuading her to leave the
 shop for a little while and live quietly with some
 woman friend until time softened her husband's
 seething anger. He was so gripped with a fit of
 temper that I knew beyond a doubt that he was
 thinking of inflicting terrible injury on himself and
 his wife. Disgust with my friend's dinner-party
 drove me away to seek refuge at my own hearth.”

26 Haec recensente pistore iam dudum procax et temeraria mulier verbis execrantibus fullonis illius detestabatur uxorem: illam perfidam, illam impudicam, denique universi sexus grande dedecus, quae suo pudore postposito torique genialis calcato foedere larem mariti lupanari maculasset infamia, iamque perdita nuptae dignitate prostitutae sibi nomen asciverit; addebat et tales oportere vivas exuri feminas. Et tamen taciti vulneris et suae sordidae conscientiae commonita, quo maturius stupratorem suum tegminis cruciatu liberaret, identidem suadebat maritum temperius quieti decedere. At ille, utpote intercepta cena profugus et¹ prorsus ieiunus, mensam potius comiter postulabat. Apponebat ei propere, quamvis invita, mulier quipini destinatam alii.

Sed mihi penita carpebantur praecordia et praecedens facinus et praesentem deterrimae feminae constantiam cogitanti, mecumque sedulo deliberabam si quo modo possem detectis ac revelatis fraudibus auxilium meo perhibere domino, illumque, qui ad instar testudinis alveum succubabat, depulso
27 tegmine cunctis palam facere. Sic erili contumelia me cruciatum tandem caelestis respexit Providentia. Nam senex claudus cui nostra tutela permissa fuerat universa nos iumenta, id hora iam postulante, ad lacum proximum bibendi causa gregatim prominabat. Quae res optatissimam mihi vindictae

¹ F *profugeret*.

26 As the baker told this story, his wife, bold and impudent as always, kept cursing and damning the fuller's wife as faithless and shameless and a great disgrace to the entire sex: she had disregarded her chastity, trampled under foot the bond of the marriage bed, stained her husband's home with the scandal of a whorehouse, and exchanged the dignity of a married woman for the name of prostitute. She went on to assert that such women should be burned alive. Recalling, however, her own secret wound and soiled conscience, she tried to release her own seducer more quickly from the torture of his confinement by several times urging her husband to retire early to bed. But since he was an exile from an interrupted supper and hence quite empty, he courteously requested a meal instead. His wife served him rapidly, reluctant though she was, since she had intended the meal for another.

My heart was racked to the depths by the thought of that horrible woman's past sins and present effrontery, and I kept thinking hard if there were any way I could help my master by uncovering and exposing her deceits, and dislodge the cover from that man who was lying under the vat like a
27 tortoise, revealing him for all to see. In my torment at the insult to my master, heavenly Providence finally smiled upon me. It was now the time of day when the lame old man entrusted with our care began to drive all of us animals in a herd to a nearby pond to drink. This circumstance offered me the

sumministravit occasionem. Namque praeter-grediens observatos extremos adulteri digitos, qui per angustias cavi tegminis prominebant, obliquata atque infesta ungula compressos usque ad summam minutiam contero, donec intolerabili dolore commotus, sublato flebili clamore repulsoque et abiecto alveo, conspectui profano redditus scaenam propudiosae mulieris patefecit. Nec tamen pistor damno pudicitiae magnopere commotus exsanguis pallore trepidantem puerum serena fronte et propitiata facie commulcens incipit.

“Nihil triste de me tibi, fili, metuas. Non sum barbarus, nec agresti morum squalore praeditus, nec ad exemplum naccinae truculentiae sulphuris te letali fumo necabo, ac ne iuris quidem severitate lege de adulteriis ad discrimen vocabo capitis tam venustum tamque pulchellum puellum, sed plane cum uxore mea partiario tractabo. Nec herciscundae familiae, sed communi dividendo formula dimicabo, ut sine ulla controversia vel dissensione tribus nobis in uno conveniat lectulo. Nam et ipse semper cum mea coniuge tam concorditer vixi ut ex secta prudentium eadem nobis ambobus placerent. Sed

¹ This is a pun on the name of Barbarus, the husband in the tale told to the baker's wife in chapters 17–21.

chance for revenge that I so strongly desired. As I walked by, I caught sight of the tips of the adulterer's fingers sticking out through narrow openings in his hollow cover. I shifted my hoof to the side, struck his fingers, and applied pressure, crushing them flatter and flatter until he was overcome by the unbearable pain. He uttered a tearful scream, pushed the vat off, and hurled it away. His appearance disclosed to the eyes of the uninstructed world the secret life of the shameless hussy. The baker, however, was not particularly moved at this damage to his honour. His face was calm and his expression kind as he began to speak caressingly to the bloodlessly pale and trembling boy.

“You have nothing harsh to fear from me, son,” he said. “I am not barbarous,¹ and I do not share the boorishness of rustic morality. I will not model myself on the fuller's savagery and kill you with lethal sulphur fumes, and I will not even invoke the strictness of the law to try you on capital charges under the statutes against adultery. You are such a charming and pretty boy: I will treat you as the joint property of my wife and me. Instead of a probate to split an estate, I will institute a suit to share common assets, contending that without controversy or dissension we three should enter into contract in the matter of one bed. You see, I have always lived in such harmony with my spouse that, in accordance with the teachings of the wise, we both have the same tastes. But the principle of equity does not

nec aequitas ipsa patitur habere plus auctoritatis uxorem quam maritum."

- 28 Talis sermonis blanditiae cavillatum deducebat ad torum nolentem puerum, sequentem tamen. Et pudicissima illa uxore alterorsus disclusa, solus ipse cum puero cubans gratissima corruptarum nuptiarum vindicata perfruebatur. Sed cum primum rota solis lucida diem peperit, vocatis duobus e familia validissimis, quam altissime sublato puero, ferula nates eius obverberans, "Tu autem," inquit "tam mollis ac tener et admodum puer, defraudatis amatoribus aetatis tuae flore, mulieres appetis atque eas liberas, et conubia lege sociata corrumpis, et intempestivum tibi nomen adulteri vindicas?"

His et pluribus verbis compellatum et insuper affatim plagis castigatum forinsecus abicit. At ille adulterorum omnium fortissimus, insperata potitus salute, tamen nates candidas illas noctu diuque dirruptus, maerens profugit. Nec setius pistor ille nuntium remisit uxori eamque protinus de sua proturbavit domo.

- 29 At illa praeter genuinam nequitiam contumelia etiam, quamvis iusta, tamen altius commota atque exasperata ad armillum revertit, et ad familiares

permit a wife to have greater right of ownership than her husband."

- 28 When he had finished mocking the boy with the gentleness of this speech, he led him off to bed. Reluctantly the boy followed; and the miller, locking up his virtuous wife in another room, lay alone with the boy and enjoyed the most gratifying revenge for his ruined marriage. But when first the Sun's bright wheel gave birth to day, he summoned the two strongest slaves in the house, ordered them to lift the boy up as high as they could, and then flogged his buttocks with a rod. "You," he said, "you are soft and tender, you are still a child — what are you up to, cheating lovers of the bloom of your youth by chasing after women — and free women at that — breaking up properly sanctioned marriages, and claiming the name of adulterer before your time?"

When he had denounced him with these taunts and more, and had also had his fill of punishing him with whipping, he threw him out of the house. And so the boldest lover in the world, having unexpectedly escaped with his life, but with his white buttocks the worse for their treatment both during the night and in the daytime, ran away in tears. Nonetheless the baker gave notice of divorce to his wife and immediately expelled her from his house.

- 29 But her natural maliciousness was further excited and exacerbated by this insult, deserved though it was. She returned to her old tricks again

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feminarum artes accenditur; magnaque cura requisitam veteratricem quandam feminam, quae devotionibus ac maleficiis quidvis efficere posse credebatur, multis exorat precibus multisque suffarcinat muneribus, alterum de duobus postulans, vel rursus mitigato conciliari marito vel, si id nequiverit, certe larva vel aliquo diro numine immisso violenter eius expugnari spiritum. Tunc saga illa et divini potens primis adhuc armis facinosae disciplinae suae velitatur, et vehementer offensum mariti flectere atque in amorem impellere conatur animum. Quae res cum ei sequius ac rata fuerat proveniret, indignata numinibus et praeter praemii destinatum compendium contemptione¹ etiam stimulata, ipsam iam miserrimi mariti incipit imminere capiti, umbramque violenter peremptae mulieris ad exitium eius instigare.

30 Sed forsitan lector scrupulosus reprehendens narratum meum sic argumentaberis: “Unde autem tu, astutule asine, intra terminos pistrini contentus,² quid secreto, ut affirmas, mulieres gesserint scire potuisti?” Accipe igitur quem ad modum homo curiosus iumentum faciem sustinens cuncta quae in perniciem pistoris mei gesta sunt cognovi.

Diem ferme circa mediam repente intra pistrinum mulier reatu miraeque tristitiae deformis

¹ *F contentione.*

² *F contectus.*

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and was roused to use arts natural to women. After a careful search she found an old hag who was believed to be able to accomplish anything with spells and witchcraft. She entreated her with many pleas and gorged her with many gifts, requesting one of two alternatives: either to soften her husband's anger and bring about a reconciliation; or, if that were impossible, to send some ghoul or dreadful power to attack and destroy his life's breath. Then the witch, with her control of the supernatural, opened fire, using at first only the elementary weapons of her wicked science. She tried to bend the husband's strongly offended spirit and force it toward love. When this turned out otherwise than she had expected, she grew angry at the spirits. Goaded on by their disdain no less than the payment promised as her reward, she now turned her threats against the very life of the unhappy husband by inciting the ghost of a murdered woman to destroy him.

30 But perhaps as a careful reader you will find fault with my story, reasoning as follows: “How did it happen, you clever little ass, that though you were shut up in the confines of the mill you were able to find out what the women were doing in secret, as you insist?” So let me tell you how I, an inquisitive man under the guise of a beast of burden, discovered all they did to bring about my baker's destruction.

About midday a woman suddenly appeared inside the mill-house, dressed like someone accused

apparuit, flebili centunculo semiamicta, nudis et intectis pedibus, lurore buxco macieque foedata, et discerptae comae semicanae sordentes inspersu cineris pleramque eius anteventulae¹ contegebant faciem. Haec talis, manu pistori² clementer iniecta, quasi quippiam secreto collocutura, in suum sibi cubiculum³ deducit eum et adducta fore quam diutissime demoratur. Sed cum esset iam confectum omne frumentum quod inter manus opifices tractaverant, necessarioque peti deberet aliud, servuli cubiculum propter astantes dominum vocabant operique supplementum postulabant. Atque ut illis iterum et saepicule vocaliter⁴ clamantibus nullus respondit dominus, iam forem pulsare validius et, quod diligentissime fuerat oppessulata, maius piusque aliquid opinantes, nisu⁵ valido reducto vel diffracto cardine, tandem patefaciunt aditum. Nec uspiam reperta illa muliere, vident e quodam tigillo constrictum iamque exanimem pendere dominum; eumque nodo cervicis absolutum detractumque summis plangoribus summisque lamentationibus atque ultimo lavacro procurant, peractisque feralibus officiis, frequenti prosequente comitatu, tradunt sepulturae.

31 Die sequenti filia eius accurrit e proximo castello,

¹ F *anceventulae*. ² F *pistoris*.

³ The reading *sibi cubiculum* seems certain: F originally had *sibiculum*, which the scribe then changed to *cubiculum*.

⁴ F *illis saepicule et intervocaliter*. ⁵ F *nisi*.

of a crime and ravaged by some terrible grief. She was only half clothed in tearful rags, her feet were bare and unprotected, and she was disfigured by emaciation and the pallor of boxwood. Her greying hair was dishevelled and soiled with a sprinkling of ashes, and it hung down over her forehead, hiding most of her face. This strange woman gently laid a hand on the baker's arm as if she had something to tell him privately, took him away to his own room, and remained there with the door shut for a very long time. But when all the grain which the workers had been dealing with was now processed and more had to be asked for, the slaves stood outside the door and called to their master to request a new supply to work on. After they had shouted several times at the top of their voice without any response from the master, they began to pound violently on the door. When they found that it was thoroughly bolted, suspecting that something was seriously amiss, they dislodged or broke the hinges with a powerful heave and finally forced their way in. The woman was nowhere to be seen, but they found their master hanging from a rafter and already dead. They freed him from the noose round his neck and pulled him down, mourned him with intense wailing and vehement beating of breasts, and gave his body its last washing. After they had finished the laying-out ceremonies they carried him off for burial, accompanied by a large procession.

31 Next day his daughter arrived in haste from the

in quod pridem denupserat, maesta atque crines pendulos quatiens et interdum pugnis obtundens ubera. Quae nullo quidem domus infortunium nuntiante cuncta cognorat, sed ei per quietem obtulit sese flebilis patris sui facies adhuc nodo revincta cervice, eique totum novercae scelus aperuit de adulterio, de maleficio, et quem ad modum larvatus ad inferos demeasset. Ea cum se diutino plangore cruciasset, concursu familiarium cohibita tandem pausam luctui fecit. Iamque nono die rite completis apud tumulum sollemnibus, familiam supellectilemque et omnia iumenta ad hereditariam deducit auctionem. Tunc unum larem varie dispergit venditionis incertae licentiosa Fortuna. Me denique ipsum pauperculus quidam hortulanus comparat quinquaginta nummis, magno, ut aiebat, sed ut communi labore victum sibi quaereret.

32 Res ipsa mihi poscere videtur ut huius quoque serviti mei disciplinam exponam. Matutino me multis holeribus onustum proximam civitatem deducere consuerat dominus atque ibi venditoribus tradita merce¹ dorsum insidens meum, sic hortum redire. Ac dum fodiens, dum irrigans ceteroque incurvus labore deservit, ego tantisper otiosus

¹ *F mercede.*

¹ As he described the work at the miller's in chapters 12–13.

next town, where she had gone to live after her marriage some time before. She was mourning and shaking her loose-hanging locks and frequently beat her breasts with her fists. Although no one had told her of the family's misfortune, she knew it all. Her father's tearful image had appeared to her in her sleep, his neck still tied with a noose, and had revealed everything to her: her stepmother's crime of adultery and of sorcery, and how he had been possessed by the ghost and had travelled down to the Underworld. After she had tortured herself with long lamentation, the friends who had gathered round finally restrained her, and she halted her mourning. Once the rituals at the tomb had been duly completed on the ninth day, she auctioned off the estate, including slaves, furniture, and all the animals. At that time the capricious Fortune of unpredictable auctioning dispersed the single hearth and home in different directions. As for me, a humble market-gardener bought me for fifty sesterces — a high price, as he said, but he hoped to earn a living for himself from our common toil.

32 Circumstances require me, I think, to describe the regime of this new slavery of mine as well.¹ In the morning my master would load me with piles of vegetables and lead me to the nearby town, and, when he had turned his produce over to the vendors there, return to his farm riding on my back. Afterwards, while he bent like a slave to his digging and irrigating and other tasks, I would refresh myself at

placida quiete recreabar. Sed ecce siderum ordinatis ambagibus per numeros dierum ac mensuum remeans annus post mustulentas autumni delicias ad hibernas Capricorni pruinas deflexerat, et assiduis pluviis nocturnisque rorationibus sub dio et intecto conclusus stabulo, continuo discruciarbar frigore, quippe cum meus dominus prae nimia paupertate ne sibi quidem nedum mihi posset stramen aliquod vel exiguum tegimen parare, sed frondoso casulae contentus umbraculo degeret. Ad hoc matutino lutum nimis frigidum gelusque praeacuta frustra nudis invadens pedibus enicabar,¹ ac ne suetis saltem cibariis ventrem meum replere poteram. Namque et mihi et ipsi domino cena par ac similis, oppido tamen tenuis aderat, lactucae veteres et insuaves illae, quae seminis enormi senecta ad instar scoparum in amaram caenosi sucus cariem exolescunt.

33 Nocte quadam paterfamilias quidam e pago proximo, tenebris illuniae caliginis impeditus et imbre nimio madefactus atque ob id ab itinere directo cohibitus, ad hortulum nostrum iam fesso equo deverterat; receptusque comiter pro tempore, licet non delicato, necessario tamen quietis subsidio, remunerari benignum hospitem cupiens, promittit ei de praediis suis sese daturum et frumenti et olivi aliquid et amplius duos vini cados. Nec moratus

¹ *Fenitabar.*

leisure with undisturbed rest. But soon, as the stars moved in their appointed courses, the year, passing through the count of days and months, had sloped down past the vintage pleasures of autumn into the wintry frosts of Capricorn. The rain was unremitting and the nights were heavy with dew; and I, enclosed in an unroofed stall under the open sky, was constantly tortured by the cold, since my master was so extremely poor that he could not even afford any straw mat or thin coverlet for himself, much less for me, but had to live content with the leafy shelter of his little hut. In addition, in the morning when my unshod feet touched the freezing mud and sharp chunks of ice, I was tormented to death. And I could not even fill my belly with normal fodder, since my master and I had exactly the same dinner, but an extremely scant one: old, bitter lettuce which had run to seed so long ago that it looked like a broom, and had overripened into a bitter mess of muddy juice.

33 One night a property-owner from the next district, hindered by the obscurity of the moonless dark and soaked by heavy rain, had been forced to break his journey and to turn off at our little garden with his weary horse. He was hospitably received, as was fitting in the circumstances; and wishing to repay his kind host for the helpful assistance of rest—much-needed if not luxurious—he promised to give him some grain and olive-oil and even two casks of wine from his own estates. Without delay my

meus, sacco et utribus vacuis secum apportatis, nudae spinae meae residens ad sexagesimum stadium profectionem comparat. Eo iam confecto viae spatio, pervenimus ad praedictos agros, ibique statim meum dominum comis hospes opipari prandio participat.

Iamque iis poculis mutuis altercantibus mirabile prorsus evenit ostentum. Una de cetera cohorte gallina per mediam cursitans aream clangore genuino velut ovum parere gestiens personabat. Eam suus dominus intuens, "O bona" inquit "ancilla et satis fecunda, quae multo iam tempore cotidianis nos partubus saginasti. Nunc etiam cogitas, ut video, gustulum nobis praeparare." Et "Heus," inquit "puer, calathum fetui gallinaceo destinatum angulo solito collocato." Ita uti fuerat iussum procurante puero, gallina consuetae lecticulae spreto cubili ante ipsos pedes domini praematurum sed magno prorsus futurum scrupulo prodidit partum. Non enim ovum quod scimus illud; sed pinnis et unguibus et oculis et voce etiam perfectum edidit pullum, qui matrem suam coepit continuo comitari.

34 Nec eo setius longe maius ostentum et quod omnes merito perhorrescerent exoritur. Sub ipsa enim mensa quae reliquias prandii gerebat terra dehiscens imitus largissimum emicuit sanguinis

master took a sack and some empty wine-skins and climbed on to my bare back, ready to set out on a sixty-stade trip.¹ When we had completed that distance we reached the aforesaid farm, and there the courteous host at once invited my master to a sumptuous dinner.

Then, as they were conversing and sharing cups of wine, a truly remarkable portent occurred. One of the flock of hens began running round the middle of the yard cackling in the usual way, as if she wanted to lay an egg. Her master looked at her and said, "What a good, productive girl you are! You have been fattening us such a long time now with your daily deliveries. Now too, I see, you are planning to prepare us our appetiser. Boy," he went on, "put the basket that is kept for the laying hens in its usual corner." The slave made the preparations just as he was ordered, but the hen spurned the nest of her customary couch and laid her egg right at her master's feet. The delivery was premature but destined to cause very great anxiety, for it was not an egg as we know them that she laid, but a fully developed chick with feathers and claws and eyes and a chirp, and it immediately began to follow its mother around.

34 But that was not all. A much more serious portent occurred which would justifiably terrify anyone. Right under the table, which still held the leftovers from dinner, the ground cracked open and gushed forth a vast fountain of blood from the

¹ About seven miles.

fontem. Hinc resultantes uberrimae guttae mensam cruore perspergunt. Ipsoque illo momento quo stupore defixi mirantur ac trepidant divina praesagia, concurrunt unus e cella vinaria nuntians omne vinum, quod olim diffusum fuerat, in omnibus doliis ferventi calore et prorsus ut igne copioso subito rebullire. Visa est interea mustela etiam mortuum serpentem forinsecus mordicus attrahens, et de ore pastoricii canis virens exsiluit ranula, ipsumque canem, qui proximus consistebat, aries appetitum unico morsu strangulavit. Haec tot ac talia ingenti pavore domini illius et familiae totius ad extremum stuporem deiecerant animos, quid prius quidve posterius, quid magis quid minus numinum caelestium leniendis minis quot et qualibus procuraretur 35 hostiis. Adhuc omnibus expectatione taeterrimae formidinis torpidis accurrit quidam servulus, magnas et postremas domino illi fundorum clades annuntians.

Namque is adultis iam tribus liberis doctrina instructis et verecundia praeditis vivebat gloriosus. His adulescentibus erat cum quodam paupere modi-

¹ Roman annalists regularly listed the *prodigia* which occurred in and around Rome during the year, and the special sacrifices decreed by the state board of religious advisers to restore the good will of the gods and avoid the disasters which those *prodigia* portended. See, for example, Livy XXI 62 and XXIV 10, as well as the

depths below. A shower of drops splashed up and sprinkled the table with gore. And at that very moment, as they marvelled and trembled in dumbfounded astonishment at these divine portents, someone came running up from the wine-cellar and reported that all the wine, which had been distributed into vats long before, was fermenting with boiling heat, just as if someone had laid a roaring fire under them. At this time also a weasel was observed dragging in its mouth a dead snake from its lair, a green frog jumped out of the mouth of one of the sheep-dogs, and the same dog was attacked by a ram standing near him, who strangled him with a single bite. The number and variety of these prodigies immensely frightened the master and all his household and plunged them into a state of utter paralysis. They were at a loss as to how to alleviate these threats from the heavenly powers: what to do first, what later, what was more important and what less, how many victims and what 35 kinds to sacrifice in expiation.¹ While they were all still numbly waiting for some frightful horror, a slave came running to report to the landowner a great and irreparable disaster.

The man had three grown sons, well educated and modestly behaved, who were the pride of his life. These young men had a long-standing friendship with a certain poor man who owned a modest collection of these prodigies by Julius Obsequens (in the Loeb Livy, Vol. 14, pp. 238–319).

cae casulae domino vetus familiaritas. At enim casulae parvulae conterminos magnos et beatos agros possidebat vicinus potens et dives et iuvenis et splendidae¹ prosapiae, sed² maiorum gloria male utens pollensque factionibus et cuncta facile faciens in civitate; hic³ hostili modo vicini tenuis incursabat pauperiem pecua trucidando, boves abigendo, fruges adhuc immaturas obterendo. Iamque tota frugalitate spoliatum ipsis etiam glebulis exterminare gestiebat, finiumque inani commota quaestione terram totam sibi vindicabat. Tunc agrestis, verecundus alioquin, avaritia divitis iam spoliatus, ut suo saltem sepulcro paternum retineret solum, amicos plurimos ad demonstrationem finium trepidans eximie corrogarat. Aderant inter alios tres illi fratres cladibus amici quantum quantum ferentes auxilium.

36 Nec tamen ille vesanus tantillum praesentia multorum civium territus vel etiam confusus, licet non rapinis, saltem verbis temperare voluit, sed illis clementer expostulantibus fervidosque eius mores blanditiis permulcentibus, repente suam suorumque carorum salutem quam sanctissime adiurans asseverat parvi se pendere tot mediatorum

¹ *splendidae* added by Rohde, comparing VIII 2.

² *sed* added by Robertson.

³ *hic* added by Helm.

cottage. Next door to his tiny cottage was a large and rich farm owned by a powerful and wealthy youth of noble birth. But he misused the glory of his ancestral origins, gained power through intrigue, and freely did whatever he liked in the city. He made incursions like an enemy against the poor holdings of his humble neighbour, killing his flocks, stealing his cattle, and trampling down his crops before they ripened. Having robbed him of all his thrift had gained, he was now bent on driving him off the very soil itself by instigating an unfounded lawsuit over boundaries and claiming the entire land for himself. The farmer was a deferential man, but now that he had been stripped bare by the greed of his rich neighbour he wished at least to retain his family plot for his own tomb; and so, with great trepidation, he had invited a large number of friends to gather for a formal indication of boundaries. Among others were the three brothers, who came to bring whatever help they could, however little, to their friend in his disaster.

36 That madman, however, was not the least deterred nor even disturbed by the presence of so many townsfolk. To say nothing of his plunderings, he was not even willing to moderate his language. When they gently complained and tried to soothe his hotheadedness with soft words, he immediately swore a mighty, sacred oath by his own life and the lives of those dear to him, asserting that he attached little weight to the presence of all those mediators,

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praesentiam, denique vicinum illum auriculis per suos servulos sublatum de casula longissime statimque proiectum iri. Quo dicto insignis indignatio totos audientium pertemptavit animos. Tunc unus e tribus fratribus incunctanter et paulo liberius respondit, frustra eum suis opibus confisum tyrannica superbia comminari, cum alioquin pauperes etiam liberali legum praesidio de insolentia locupletium consueverint vindicari.

Quod oleum flammae, quod sulphur incendio, quod flagellum Furiae, hoc et iste sermo truculentiae hominis nutrimento fuit. Iamque ad extremam insaniam vecors, suspendium sese et totis illis et ipsis legibus mandare proclamans, canes pastoricios villaticos feros atque immanes, assuetos abiecta per agros essitare cadavera, praeterea etiam transeuntium viatorum passivis¹ morsibus alumnatos, laxari atque in eorum exitium inhortatos immitti praecipit. Qui simul signo solito pastorum incensi atque inflammati sunt, furiosa rabie conciti et latratibus etiam absonis horribiles eunt in homines, eosque variis aggressi vulneribus distrahunt ac lacerant, nec fugientibus saltem compercunt,² sed eo magis irritiores sequuntur.

37 Tunc inter confertam trepidae multitudinis stragem, e tribus iunior offenso lapide atque

¹ *F passibus.*

² *F compercunt.*

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and that he was going to have his slaves pick the neighbour up by his ears and throw him out of his hut right now as far as they could. These words aroused the most violent indignation in all the listeners' minds. Then one of the three brothers unhesitatingly and rather boldly replied that it would do him no good to depend on his wealth and make threats like an arrogant tyrant, since now, as always, even the poor were defended against the insolence of the rich by the liberating protection of the law.

As oil to a flame, as sulphur to a blaze, as a whip to a Fury, so that speech was food to the fellow's savagery. He was now maddened to the point of total insanity. Shouting that he would see them all hanged, and the laws too, he gave orders to loose the dogs and turn them on the people with the command to kill. These were fierce, monstrous farm- and sheep-dogs, accustomed to eat corpses abandoned in the fields and trained in addition to bite passing travellers indiscriminately. As soon as the herdsmen's usual signal had ignited and inflamed them, they went for the men with mad savagery, terrifying them with their discordant barks. They attacked and wounded their victims all over, ripping and tearing them to shreds. Not even those who fled were spared, since the dogs only pursued them all the more viciously.

37 In the thick of the confused butchery of this terrified mob, the youngest of the three brothers

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obtunsis digitis terrae prosternitur, saevisque illis et ferocissimis canibus instruit nefariam dapem; protinus enim nancti praedam iacentem miserum illum adolescentem frustatim discerpunt. Atque ut eius letalem ululatum cognovere¹ ceteri fratres, accurrunt maesti suppetias, obvolutisque lacinia laevis manibus lapidum crebris iactibus propugnare fratri atque abigere canes aggrediuntur. Nec tamen eorum ferociam vel conterere vel expugnare potuere, quippe cum miserrimus adulescens ultima voce prolata, vindicarent de pollutissimo divite mortem fratris iunioris, ilico laniatus interisset.

Tunc reliqui fratres, non tam hercules desperata quam ultro neglecta sua salute, contendunt ad divitem, atque ardentibus animis impetuque vesano lapidibus crebris in eum velitantur. At ille cruentus et multis ante flagitiis similibus exercitatus percussor iniecta lancea duorum alterum per pectus medium transadegit. Nec tamen peremptus ac prorsum exanimatus adulescens ille terrae concidit; nam telum transvectum atque ex maxima parte pone tergum elapsum soloque nisus violentia defixum rigore librato suspenderat corpus.

Sed et quidam de servulis procerus et validus, sicario illi ferens auxilium, lapide contorto tertii

¹ Or *agnovere*.

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tripped on a rock, smashed his toes, and fell sprawling to the ground, where he offered a hideous banquet to the cruel, wildly ferocious dogs. As soon as they found a prey lying defenceless, they began to tear the poor young lad apart slice by slice. When the other two brothers recognised his dying screams they ran in agony to his assistance. Wrapping the ends of their cloaks round their left hands, they hurled stone after stone in an effort to defend their brother and drive the dogs off, but they failed to subdue or conquer their ferocity. And so the pitiful youth spoke his last words, "Avenge your younger brother's death on that filthy, corrupt rich man," and straightway died, ripped to shreds.

The surviving brothers, less, by Hercules, out of desperation than with a willing disregard for their own safety, rushed in blazing anger toward the rich man. In an insane attack they began pelting him with stones. But the bloody assassin, trained by much previous practice in similar acts of violence, hurled his lance and drove it clean through the breast of one of the two brothers. But dead though he was, and completely lifeless, he did not fall to earth: the spear, which passed through his body and projected out behind his back almost to its full length, stuck fast in the ground from the forcefulness of the cast, and his body hung balanced on the stiff shaft.

Meanwhile a tall, strong slave, coming to the murderer's aid, had slung a stone in a long trajec-

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illius iuvenis dexterum brachium longo iactu petierat, sed impetu casso per extremos digitos transcurrentis lapis contra omnium opinionem deciderat
38 innoxius. Nonnullam tamen sagacissimo iuveni proventus humanior vindictae speculam sumministravit. Ficta namque manus suae debilitate sic crudelissimum iuvenem compellat: “Fruere exitio totius nostrae familiae, et sanguine trium fratrum insatiabilem tuam crudelitatem pasce, et de prostratis tuis civibus gloriose triumphas, dum¹ scias, licet privato suis possessionibus paupere fines usque et usque proterminaveris, habiturum te tamen vicinum aliquem. Nam haec etiam dextera, quae tuum prorsus amputasset caput, iniquitate fati contusa decidit.”

Quo sermone, alioquin exasperatus, furiosus latro rapto gladio sua miserrimum iuvenem manu perempturus invadit avidus. Nec tamen sui molliorem provocarat; quippe insperato et longe contra eius opinionem resistens iuvenis complexu fortissimo arripit eius dexteram, magnoque nisu ferro librato multis et crebris ictibus impuram elidit divitis animam, et, ut accurrentium etiam familiarium manu se liberaret, confestim adhuc inimici sanguine delibuto mucrone gulam sibi prorsus exsecuit.

Haec erant quae prodigiosa praesagaverant

¹ *F triumphandum.*

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tory, aimed at the right arm of the third young man. But the blow was ineffective, contrary to what everyone expected, and the stone had merely grazed the tips of his fingers and fallen harmlessly to the
38 ground. This relatively merciful result, however, presented the clever youth with a tiny hope of revenge. Pretending that his hand was crippled, he called out to the cruel youth. “Enjoy,” he cried, “the total destruction of our family, and feed your insatiable cruelty on three brothers’ blood. Hold your glorious triumph over the fallen bodies of your fellow-citizens. But know this: although you may rob a pauper of his holdings and extend your property-lines farther and farther, you will still always have a neighbour. Now even my right hand, which would have cut your head clean off, lies smashed through Fate’s injustice.”

This speech maddened the already infuriated robber, and he seized his sword to attack the wretched youth, eager to kill him with his own hands. But he had challenged someone no softer than himself. Unexpectedly and quite contrary to what he had foreseen, the youth resisted, seized his opponent’s right arm in a mighty grip, levelled his weapon with great force, and struck blow after blow, driving out the rich man’s filthy soul. Then, to liberate himself from the band of slaves who were running up, he quickly took the blade still wet with his enemy’s blood and cut his own throat.

Such were the events which those portentous

ostenta, haec quae miserrimo domino fuerant nuntiata. Nec ullum verbum ac ne tacitum quidem fletum tot malis circumventus senex quivit emittere, sed arrepto¹ ferro, quo commodum inter suos epulones caseum atque alias prandii partes diviserat, ipse quoque ad instar infelicissimi sui filii iugulum sibi multis ictibus contrucidat, quoad super mensam cernulus corruens portentuarii cruoris maculas novi sanguinis fluvio proluit.

39 Ad istum modum puncto brevissimo dilapsae domus fortunam hortulanus ille miseratus, suosque casus graviter ingemescens depensis² pro prandio lacrimis, vacuasque manus complaudens saepicule, protinus incenso me retro quam veneramus viam capessit. Nec innoxius ei saltem regressus evenit.

Nam quidam procerus et, ut indicabat habitus atque habitudo, miles e legione, factus nobis obvius, superbo atque arroganti sermone percontatur quorsum vacuum duceret asinum. At meus, adhuc maerore permixtus et alias Latini sermonis ignarus, tacitus praeteribat. Nec miles ille familiarem cohibere quivit insolentiam, sed indignatus silentio eius ut convicio, viti quam tenebat obtundens eum dorso meo proturbat. Tunc hortulanus supplicue respondit, sermonis ignorantia se quid ille diceret scire non

¹ *F abrepto.*

² *F depensis.*

¹ A centurion's staff, carried as an emblem of authority.

signs had forecast; such were the events reported to the pitiable master of the house. Beset by all these misfortunes, the old man was unable to utter a single word or even shed a silent tear. He simply picked up the blade which he had just now been using to divide the cheese and other courses of the meal among his guests and, in imitation of his unfortunate son, stabbed his throat repeatedly until he collapsed head down over the table, washing away the stains of the portent's gore with a stream of fresh blood.

39 Thus in a brief space of time the family was utterly destroyed. The gardener pitied its misfortune and, bitterly lamenting his own troubles, paid for his meal by bursting into tears. He repeatedly wrung his empty hands, then quickly climbed on my back and set out to retrace the road by which we had come. But as it turned out even he did not get home safely.

On the road we encountered a tall man whose dress and manners marked him as a legionary. He inquired in a haughty and arrogant tone where my master was taking his empty ass. But my master, who was still confused with grief and furthermore did not know Latin, walked right past him without a word. The soldier, unable to restrain his natural insolence, took offence at the gardener's silence as if it were an insult and struck him with the vine-staff¹ he was carrying, knocking him off my back. The gardener then humbly answered that he could not

posse. Ergo igitur Graece subiciens miles “Ubi” inquit “ducis asinum istum?” Respondit hortulanus petere se civitatem proximam. “Sed mihi” inquit “opera¹ eius opus est; nam de proximo castello sarcinas praesidis nostri cum ceteris iumentis debet advehere.” Et iniecta statim manu loro me quo ducebar arreptum incipit trahere. Sed hortulanus, prioris plagae vulnere prolapsus capite sanguinem detergens, rursus deprecatur civilius atque mansuetius versari commilitonem, idque per spes prosperas eius orabat adiurans. “Nam et hic ipse” aiebat “iners asellus et nihilo minus mordax² morboque detestabili caducus vix etiam paucos holerum maniculos de proximo hortulo solet anhelitu languido fatigatus subvehere, nedum ut rebus amplioribus idoneus videatur gerulus.”

40 Sed ubi nullis precibus mitigari militem magisque in suam perniciem advertit efferari, iamque inversa vite de vastiore nodulo cerebrum suum diffindere, currit ad extrema subsidia, simulansque sese³ ad commovendam miserationem genua eius velle contingere, summissus atque incurvatus, arreptis eius utrisque pedibus sublimem elatum terrae graviter applaudit, et statim qua pugnibus, qua cubitis, qua morsibus, etiam de via lapide correpto totam faciem manusque eius et latera con-

¹ *F operae.*

² *mordax* added by Plasberg.

³ *F simulans quaerere.*

understand what the soldier said because he did not know the language. So the soldier responded in Greek. “Where,” he asked, “are you taking that ass of yours?” The gardener replied that he was heading for the next city. “Well, I need his services,” said the other. “He must carry our commanding officer’s baggage from the nearby fort with all the other pack-animals.” He immediately laid hands on me, took hold of my lead-rope, and started to drag me away. But the gardener, wiping away the blood flowing from the wound on his head caused by the earlier blow, again pleaded with his “fellow-soldier” to behave more civilly and mercifully, begging and abjuring him in the name of the soldier’s hopes for success. “Besides,” he added, “though this ass is a lazy beast, he is given to biting and has falling-fits from a terrible disease. He can scarcely even carry a few handfuls of vegetables from my garden nearby without getting tired and out of breath, so I think he would be still less a suitable porter for larger loads.”

40 When he perceived that the soldier was not softened by his appeals, but was becoming more wildly intent on destroying him and had now reversed his staff and was splitting his skull with the thicker end, he resorted to extreme measures. Pretending that he wished to touch the soldier’s knees to arouse his pity, he stooped down, bent over, grabbed both his feet, lifted him high in the air, and dashed him heavily to the ground. Then he began at once to pound him on the face and hands and sides

verberat. Nec ille, ut primum humi supinatus est, vel repugnare vel omnino munire se potuit, sed plane identidem comminabatur, si surrexisset, sese concisurum eum machaera sua frustatim. Quo sermone eius commonefactus hortulanus eripit ei spatham, eaque longissime abiecta rursum saevioribus eum plagis aggreditur. Nec ille prostratus et praeventus vulneribus ullum reperire saluti quiens subsidium, quod solum restabat, simulat sese mortuum.

Tunc spatham illam secum asportans hortulanus incenso me concito gradu recta festinat ad civitatem, nec hortulum suum saltem curans invisere, ad quempiam sibi devertit familiarem. Cunctisque narratis deprecatur periclitanti sibi ferret auxilium, seque cum suo sibi asino tantisper occultaret, quoad celatus spatio bidui triduae capitalem causam evaderet. Nec oblitus ille veteris amicitiae prompte suscipit, meque per scalas complicitis pedibus in superius cenaculum attracto, hortulanus deorsus in ipsa tabernula derepit¹ in quendam cistulam et supergesto delitiscit orificio.

41 At miles ille, ut postea didici, tandem velut emersus gravi crapula nutabundus tamen et tot

¹ F *tabernacula direpit*.

with his fists, elbows, teeth, and even a rock grabbed from the road. Once the soldier had been thrown to the ground he was unable to fight back or even defend himself, but he kept threatening the gardener again and again that if he ever got to his feet he would hack him to pieces with his cutlass. Warned by these words, the gardener snatched the soldier's sword and threw it far away, and then returned to the attack with even more savage blows. The soldier, flat on the ground, hindered by his wounds, and unable to discover any other means to save his skin, did the only thing left and pretended to be dead.

Then, taking the sword with him, the gardener climbed on my back, and hurried straight to town at full speed. Without even bothering to look in at his own garden, he stopped at the house of one of his friends and told him the whole story. He begged him to help him in his danger by hiding him along with his ass long enough for him to lie low for two or three days and escape arrest on a capital charge. The other, in consideration of their long friendship, readily undertook to help him. They tied my feet together and dragged me up the stairs into an upper room. Downstairs in the shop the gardener crept into a chest, put its lid over the opening, and hid there.

41 Now the soldier, as I later learned, finally arrived in town, looking as if he had just recovered from a terrible hangover but could just barely walk. He

plagarum dolore saucius baculoque se vix sustinens, civitatem adventat confususque de impotentia deque inertia sua quicquam ad quemquam referre popularium, sed tacitus iniuriam devorans, quosdam commilitones nactus is tantum¹ clades enarrat suas. Placuit ut ipse quidem contubernio se tantisper absconderet — nam praeter propriam contumeliam militaris etiam sacramenti genium ob amissam spatham verebatur — ipsi autem signis nostris enotatis investigationi vindictaeque sedulam darent operam.

Nec defuit vicinus perfidus qui nos ilico occultari nuntiaret. Tum commilitones accersitis magistratibus mentiuntur sese multi pretii vasculum argenteum praesidis in via perdisse, idque hortulanum quendam repperisse nec velle restituere, sed apud familiarem quendam sibi delitescere. Tunc magistratus et damno et² praesidis nomine cognito veniunt ad deversori nostri fores claraque voce denuntiant hospiti nostro nos, quos occultaret apud se certo certius, dedere potius quam discrimen proprii subiret capitis. Nec ille tantillum conterritus salutique studens eius quem in suam receperat fidem, quicquam de nobis fatetur ac diebus plusculis nec vidisse quidem illum hortulanum contendit. Contra

¹ *F istam tum.*

² The second *et* is an editorial addition.

was weak from the pain of his numerous wounds, and barely able to support himself with his staff. He was too ashamed to tell any of the townspeople anything about his impotent incompetence, but swallowed the insult in silence. Only when he met some fellow-soldiers did he tell them the story of his disaster. They decided that he should hide out for a time in their quarters, since, besides his personal disgrace, the loss of his sword made him fear the protecting deity of his military oath. In the meantime they would take note of our distinguishing marks and make a concerted effort to find us and get revenge.

And of course there was a treacherous neighbour to inform them precisely where we were hiding. The soldiers then summoned the town magistrates and falsely alleged that they had lost a valuable silver pitcher of their commander's along the road, and that a gardener had found it but refused to give it back and was hiding out at a friend's house. The magistrates, when they heard the amount of the loss and the commander's name, came to the door of our lodgings and announced to our host in a loud voice that they were absolutely certain he was hiding us, and commanded him to surrender us rather than risk capital punishment himself. He was not in the least terrified, however, and zealously defended the safety of the man he had pledged to protect, admitting nothing about us and maintaining that he had not even seen the gardener for

commilitones ibi nec uspiam illum delitiscere adiurantes genium principis contendebant. Postremum magistratibus placuit obstinate denegantem scrutinio detegere. Immissis itaque lictoribus ceterisque publicis ministeriis angulatim cuncta sedulo perlustrari iubent, nec quisquam mortalium ac ne ipse quidem asinus intra limen comparere nuntiatur.

42 Tunc gliscit violentior utrimqueseclus contentio, militum pro comperto de nobis asseverantium fidemque Caesaris identidem implorantium, at illius negantis assidueque deum numen obtestantis. Qua contentione et clamoso strepitu cognito, curiosus alioquin et inquieti procacitate praeditus asinus, dum obliquata cervice per quandam fenestram quidnam sibi vellet tumultus ille prospicere gestio, unus e commilitonibus casu fortuito colli-matis oculis ad umbram meam cunctos testatur incoram. Magnus denique continuo clamor exortus est, et emensis protinus scalis iniecta manu quidam me velut captivum detrahunt. Iamque omni sublata cunctatione scrupulosius contemplantes singula, cista etiam illa revelata, repertum productumque et oblatum magistratibus miserum hortulanum poenas scilicet capite pensurum in publicum deducunt carcerem, summoque risu meum prospectum cavil-

several days. On the other side the soldiers contended, swearing by the Emperor's genius, that the gardener was hiding there and nowhere else. The magistrates finally decided, in the face of the man's stubborn denials, to expose him by a search. They ordered the lictors and other public officers to enter and examine the whole place carefully, corner by corner. These reported that there was not a mortal soul to be seen inside the house, not even the ass.

42 Then the argument grew more violent on both sides. The soldiers asserted that they had received definite information about us and swore repeatedly in the name of the Emperor, while the man denied it and kept calling on the gods as his witnesses. When I heard the noisy uproar of their argument — being by nature an inquisitive ass endowed with restless impulsiveness — I wriggled my neck out through a little window and tried to see what in the world all the noise meant. Just then one of the soldiers happened by pure chance to look round and catch sight of my shadow. He called all the others to look and instantly a great clamour arose. Some of them ran upstairs, seized me, and dragged me down like a prisoner. With all doubt now removed, they examined every part of the house more thoroughly than before. This time they opened the chest. There they discovered the poor gardener, brought him out, handed him over to the magistrates, and took him off to the public gaol, no doubt for execution. Meanwhile they kept up a steady stream of loud

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lari non desinunt. Unde etiam de prospectu et umbra asini natum est frequens proverbium.

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laughter and jests about my peeping. And this is the origin of the proverb about the peeping ass and his shadow.¹

¹ Apuleius playfully combines two Greek proverbial expressions: ἐξ ὄνου παρακίψεως “because an ass peeped in,” and περὶ ὄνου σκίας “about an ass’s shadow,” both used to designate trivial or insignificant matters.

LIBER X

1 Die sequenti meus quidem dominus hortulanus quid egerit nescio, me tamen miles ille qui propter eximiam impotentiam pulcherrime vapularat ab illo praesepio nullo equidem contradicente diductum abducit, atque a suo contubernio—hoc enim mihi videbatur—sarcinis propriis onustum et prorsum exornatum armatumque militariter producit ad viam. Nam et galeam nitore praemicantem et scutum gerebam longius relucens,¹ sed etiam lanceam longissimo hastili conspicuam, quae scilicet non disciplinae tunc quidem causa, sed propter terrendos miseros viatores in summo atque edito sarcinarum cumulo ad instar exercitus sedulo composuerat. Confecta campestri nec adeo difficili via ad quandam civitatulam pervenimus, nec in stabulo, sed in domo cuiusdam decurionis devertimus. Statimque me commendato cuidam servulo ipse ad praepositum suum, qui mille armatorum ducatum sus-

¹ F *scutum cetera longiorem lucens.*

BOOK X

1 How my master the gardener fared the next day I do not know. As for me, that soldier who had received such a beautiful beating for his extraordinarily bad temper unfastened me from the stable without anyone stopping him and led me away. He loaded me with his own luggage from his barracks, as I assumed it was, and took me out on to the road, thoroughly decorated and garnished in military style. I was carrying a brightly flashing helmet, a shield which flashed farther still, and a spear, too, with a conspicuously long shaft. He had carefully heaped up his baggage in a high pile and arranged these items at the very top like an army on the march, not on this occasion because of army regulations, but to terrify poor travellers. At the end of a level and not very difficult journey we came to a small town, where we put up not at an inn, but at the home of one of the town-councillors. The soldier immediately handed me over to a slave and set off promptly to report to his superior officer, who had

2 tinebat, sollicite proficiscitur. Post dies plusculos ibidem dissignatum scelestum ac nefarium facinus memini, sed ut vos etiam legatis, ad librum profero.

Dominus aedium habebat iuvenem filium probe litteratum atque ob id consequenter pietate, modestia praecipuum, quem tibi quoque provenisse cuperes vel talem. Huius matre multo ante defuncta, rursum matrimonium sibi reparaverat, ductaque alia filium procreaverat alium, qui adaeque iam duodecimum annum aetatis supergressus erat.¹ Sed noverca forma magis quam moribus in domo mariti praepollens, seu naturaliter impudica seu fato ad extremum impulsus flagitium, oculos ad privignum adiecit.

Iam ergo, lector optime, scito te tragoediam, non fabulam, legere et a socco ad cothurnum ascendere.

Sed mulier illa, quamdiu primis elementis Cupido parvulus nutriebatur, imbecillis adhuc eius viribus facile ruborem tenuem deprimens silentio resistebat. At ubi, completis igne vesano totis praecordiis, immodice bacchatus Amor exaestuabat, saevienti deo iam succubuit, et languore simulato vulnus animi mentitur in corporis valetudine. Iam

¹ *F supergresserat.*

¹ The reference is to the story of Phaedra, whose frustrated love for her stepson Hippolytus is the subject of tragedies by Euripides and Seneca.

2 command over a thousand armed troops. A few days later, I recall, an outrageous and abominable crime was perpetrated there, which I am adding to my book so that you can read it too.

The owner of the house had a young son with a good liberal education, who was consequently unusually obedient and modestly behaved — indeed the kind of son you would wish to have as your own. The boy's mother had died many years before, and the father had remarried. By his second wife he had had a second son, who had just completed his twelfth year. The stepmother, however, held sway in her husband's house more by beauty than by character; and whether naturally unchaste or driven by fate to the unforgivably wicked deed, she turned covetous eyes toward her stepson.

So now, excellent reader, know that you are reading a tragedy, and no light tale, and that you are rising from the lowly slipper to the lofty buskin.¹

As long as an infant Cupid was being nourished in his most rudimentary stage, the woman easily controlled her slight flush and silently resisted his still feeble force. But when her whole heart was filled with raving fire, and Amor² raged unchecked in hot frenzy, she finally surrendered to the savage god. By feigning illness she pretended that her heart's wound was a matter of her body's health. In

² Amor and Cupid are alternative names for the god of love.

cetera salutis vultusque detrimenta et aegris et amantibus examussim convenire nemo qui nesciat: pallor¹ deformis, marcentes oculi, lassa genua, quies turbida, et suspiritus cruciatus tarditate vehementior. Crederes et illam fluctuare tantum vaporibus febrium, nisi quod et flebat. Heu medicorum ignarae mentes, quid venae pulsus, quid coloris intemperantia, quid fatigatus anhelitus et utrimqueseucus iactatae crebriter laterum mutuae vicissitudines! Dii boni, quam facilis licet non artificii medico, cuivis tamen docto Veneriae cupidinis comprehensio, cum videas aliquem sine corporis calore flagrantem!

3 Ergo igitur impatientia furoris altius agitata diutinum rupit silentium et ad se vocari praecipit filium—quod nomen in eo, si posset,² ne ruboris admoneretur libenter eraderet. Nec adulescens aegrae parentis moratus imperium, senili tristitie striatam gerens frontem, cubiculum petit, uxori patris matrique fratris utcumque debitum sistens obsequium. Sed illa cruciabili silentio diutissime fatigata, et ut in quodam vado dubitationis haerens, omne verbum quod praesenti sermoni putabat aptissimum rursus improbens, nutante etiam nunc

¹ F *pallore*.

² F *in eos ipsos sed*.

¹ An allusion to Virgil, *Aeneid* IV 65, at the beginning of his description of the symptoms of Dido's passion for Aeneas: *heu vatium ignora mentes* "alas the ignorance of seers' minds."

general, as everyone knows, the damage to one's health and appearance are exactly alike in the sick and the love-sick: abnormal pallor, languid eyes, weak knees, restless sleep, and sighing which becomes more intense with the protraction of the torture. You would suppose in her case too that she was just feverish from her high temperature, except that she also wept. Alas, the ignorance of doctors' minds!¹ They cannot interpret this throbbing of the veins, unsteadiness of the complexion, laboured breathing, and frequent tossing back and forth from side to side. Good gods, how easy it is for any educated man—even if he is not a medical specialist—to recognise sexual desire when you see someone burning without any physical fever!

3 She became, therefore, more and more deeply disturbed by her intolerable madness until she broke her long silence and had her "son" summoned to her side—a word which she would gladly have erased in his case if she could, so as not to be reminded of her shame. The youth responded unhesitatingly to his sick parent's command; his brow furrowed with an old man's sadness, he came to her bedroom out of courteous duty to his father's wife and brother's mother. But she had been harassed by the torments of silence for so long that she was caught fast, as it were, on the shoals of doubt. Every time she thought of some word as being the most appropriate for the conversation at hand, she would reject it again; and even now when her sense of

pudore, unde potissimum caperet exordium decunctatur. At iuvenis nihil etiam tunc sequius suspiratus summisso vultu rogat ultro praesentis causas aegritudinis. Tunc illa nacta solitudinis damnosam occasionem prorumpit in audaciam, et ubertim allacrimans laciniaque contegens faciem voce trepida sic eum breviter affatur:

“Causa omnis et origo praesentis doloris et etiam medela ipsa et salus unica mihi tute ipse es. Isti enim tui oculi per meos oculos ad intima delapsi praecordia meis medullis acerrimum commovent incendium. Ergo miserere tua causa pereuntis, nec te religio patris omnino deterreat, cui morituram prorsus servabis uxorem. Illius enim recognoscens imaginem in tua facie merito te diligo. Habes solitudinis plenam fiduciam, habes capax necessarii facinoris otium. Nam quod nemo novit paene non fit.”

4 Repentino malo perturbatus adulescens, quamquam tale facinus protinus exhorruisset, non tamen negationis intempestiva severitate putavit exasperandum, sed caetae promissionis dilatione leniendum. Ergo prolixè pollicetur et bonum caperet

shame was tottering she hesitated over how best to start her speech. But the youth, who even then suspected nothing amiss, with respectful countenance took the lead himself and asked the causes of her present illness. They were alone, and she seized this dangerous opportunity to break out into boldness. Weeping copiously and covering her face with the edge of her robe, she addressed him briefly in a trembling voice.

“The entire cause and source of my present pain, as well as its cure and my only hope for recovery, is you, just you. Those eyes of yours have slipped through my eyes and down into the very centre of my heart, where they are kindling the most intense fire in my marrow. So take pity on a woman who is dying because of you. You should not be deterred in the least by reverence for your father: his wife is at death’s door and you will be saving her for him; because I see his likeness in your face, I am justified in loving you. You have nothing to fear since we are alone, and you have enough free time to perform the necessary deed. What no one knows is almost non-existent.”

4 The young man was shocked by this unexpected evil; but, though he instantly recoiled from such an act, he thought it was better not to worsen the crisis by the untimely harshness of a refusal, but rather to alleviate it by the delaying tactic of a guarded promise. With abundant assurances, therefore, he pressingly urged her to be of good heart and devote

animum refectionique se ac saluti redderet impendio suadet, donec patris aliqua profectioe liberum voluptati concederetur spatium, statimque se refert a noxio conspectu novercae. Et tam magnam domus cladem ratus indigere consilio pleniore, ad quendam compertae gravitatis educatorem senem protinus refert. Nec quicquam diutina deliberatione tam salubre visum quam fuga celeri procellam fortunae saevientis evadere.

Sed impatiens vel exiguae dilationis, mulier ficta qualibet causa confestim marito miris persuadet artibus ad longissime dissitas festinare villulas. Quo facto maturatae spei vesania praeceps promissae libidinis flagitat vadimonium. Sed iuvenis, modo istud modo aliud causae faciens, execrabilem frustratur eius conspectum, quoad illa, nuntiorum varietate pollicitationem sibi denegatam manifesto perspicuens, mobilitate lubrica nefarium amorem ad longe deterius transtulisset odium. Et assumpto statim nequissimo et ad omne facinus emancipato quodam dotali servulo, perfidiae suae consilia communicat. Nec quicquam melius videtur quam vita miserum privare iuvenem. Ergo missus continuo furcifer venenum praesentarium comparat, idque vino diligenter dilutum insontis privigni praeparat

herself to rest and recovery until some absence of his father's allowed them free time for their pleasure. Then he hastened away from the offensive sight of his step-mother. Convinced that such a great disaster to the family needed fuller advice, he took his problem at once to an old teacher of tested worth. After long deliberation they decided that the safest course was to escape the storm of savage fortune by rapid flight.

The woman, however, in her impatience over even a tiny postponement, made up some excuse or other with which immediately and with remarkable skill she persuaded her husband to pay an urgent visit to his widely scattered country estates. As soon as he had left, in the madness of her ripened hope she impetuously demanded that he honour his promise of passion. But the boy alleged first one excuse and then another to avoid the detestable sight of her. When finally, from the variety of his messages, she perceived unmistakably that he had reneged on his pledge, with slippery inconstancy she transformed her unspeakable love into a far more wicked hatred. She immediately took into her confidence a slave who had been part of her dowry, a villainous fellow ready to undertake any crime. She confided to him her treacherous plans, and they decided that the best thing was to deprive the poor boy of his life. So the scoundrel was instantly sent out to buy some fast-working poison, which he then carefully dissolved in wine to have ready for the

exitio.

5 Ac dum de oblationis opportunitate secum noxii deliberant homines, forte fortuna puer ille iunior, proprius pessimae feminae filius, post matutinum laborem studiorum domum se recipiens, prandio iam capto sitiens, repertum vini poculum in quo venenum latebat inclusum nescius fraudis occultae continuo perduxit haustu. Atque ubi fratri suo paratam mortem ebibit, exanimis terrae procumbit; ilicoque repentina pueri pernicie paedagogus commotus ululabili clamore matrem totamque ciet familiam. Iamque cognito casu noxiae potionis, varie quisque praesentium auctores insimulabant extremi facinoris. Sed dira illa femina et malitiae novercalis exemplum unicum, non acerba filii morte, non parricidii conscientia, non infortunio domus, non luctu mariti vel aerumna funeris commota, cladem familiae in¹ vindictae compendium traxit; missoque protinus cursore qui vianti marito domus expugnationem nuntiaret, ac mox eodem ocius ab itinere regresso, personata nimia temeritate insimulat privigni veneno filium suum interceptum. Et hoc quidem non adeo mentiebatur, quod iam destinatam iuveni mortem praevenisset puer.

¹ F omits *in*.

innocent stepson's murder.

5 While the evil pair were deliberating about a suitable occasion for offering the cup, the chance of fortune intervened. The younger boy, that dreadful woman's own son, came home after a morning's work at school, ate his lunch and, feeling thirsty, discovered the cup of wine containing the concealed poison. Unaware of the danger lurking therein, he drank it in one quick gulp, and when he had swallowed the death prepared for his brother he fell lifeless to the ground. The boy's attendant, alarmed by his sudden collapse, immediately raised a cry of grief which summoned his mother and the whole household. When they discovered the tragedy of the poisoned drink, everyone present began to accuse different people of responsibility for the monstrous crime. That dreadful woman, however, an extreme example of stepmotherly wickedness, was disturbed neither by her son's harsh death, nor by her own guilt as murderess, nor by the family's misfortune, nor by her husband's mourning, nor by the agony of a funeral. Instead she turned the family catastrophe to profit for her own revenge. She sent off a runner at once to report to her absent husband the tragedy in his home, and he soon returned in haste from his trip. Then, playing her part with extreme audacity, she pretended that her own son had been poisoned by her stepson. Indeed this was not a total lie, seeing that the younger boy had anticipated the death prescribed for the older one. But she claimed

Sed fratrem iuniorem fingeat ideo privigni scelere peremptum, quod eius probrosae libidini qua se comprimere temptaverat nolisset succumbere. Nec tam¹ immanibus contenta mendaciis addebat sibi quoque ob detectum flagitium eundem illum gladium comminari.

Tunc infelix duplici filiorum morte percussus magnis aerumnarum procellis aestuat. Nam et iuniorem incoram sui funerari videbat, et alterum ob incestum parricidiumque capitis scilicet damnatum iri certo sciebat. Ad hoc uxoris dilectae nimium mentitis lamentationibus ad extremum subolis impellebatur odium.

- 6 Vixdum pompae funebres et sepultura filii fuerant explicatae et statim ab ipso eius rogo senex infelix, ora sua recentibus adhuc rigans lacrimis trahensque cinere sordentem canitiem, foro se festinus immittit. Atque ibi tum fletu, tum precibus, genua etiam decurionum contingens, nescius fraudium pessimae mulieris in exitium reliqui filii plenis operabatur affectibus: illum incestum paterno thalamo, illum parricidam fraterno exitio, et in comminata novercae caede sicarium. Tanta denique miseratione tantaque indignatione curiam sed et plebem maerens inflammaverat ut, remoto iudicandi taedio et accusationis manifestis pro-

¹ *F tamen.*

that her stepson had murdered his younger brother because she had refused to succumb to the stepson's shameful lust when he had tried to seduce her. Not content with these monstrous lies, she added that he had even threatened her too with a sword for revealing his crime.

So now this unhappy man was battered by the double death of his sons and tossed in a great storm of tribulation; for he saw the younger buried in front of his very eyes, and he knew surely that the other would doubtless be sentenced to death for incest and parricide. Furthermore, the feigned lamentations of the wife he loved too well were driving him utterly to detest his own offspring.

- 6 The funeral procession and burial of his son were hardly finished, when the unhappy old man rushed immediately from the pyre, still wetting his cheeks with fresh tears and tearing his ash-soiled hair, and hurried to the forum. There he wept, he entreated, he even grasped the councilmen's knees: in his ignorance of his dreadful wife's treacheries he employed the full range of his emotions for the destruction of his surviving son. He called him an incestuous defiler of his father's bed, a murderer stained with the blood of his brother, and an assassin who threatened to kill his stepmother. The grieving father inflamed the council and the people too with so much pity and such intense anger that they wanted to dispense with the nuisance of a trial, with its clear demonstrations by the prosecution

bationibus et responsionis meditatis ambagibus, cuncti conclamarint lapidibus obrutum publicum malum publice vindicari.

Magistratus interim metu periculi proprii, ne de parvis indignationis elementis ad exitium disciplinae civitatisque seditio procederet, partim decuriones deprecari, partim populares compescere ut, rite et more maiorum iudicio reddito et utrimquesequs allegationibus examinatis, civiliter sententia promeretur, nec ad instar barbaricae feritatis vel tyrannicae impotentiae damnaretur aliquis inauditus et in pace placida tam dirum saeculo proderetur exemplum.

7 Placuit salubre consilium, et ilico iussus praeco pronuntiat, patres in curiam convenirent. Quibus protinus dignitatis iure consueta loca residentibus, rursum praeconis vocatu primus accusator incedit. Tunc demum clamatus inducitur etiam reus, et exemplo legis Atticae Martiique iudicii causae patronis denuntiat praeco neque principia dicere neque miserationem commovere.

Haec ad istum modum gesta compluribus mutuo sermocinantibus cognovi. Quibus autem verbis

¹ An allusion to the court of the Areopagus at Athens, which had jurisdiction over certain kinds of homicide.

and studied evasions by the defence. They shouted in unison that this curse on the people should be punished by the people, crushed under a rain of stones.

The magistrates meanwhile were afraid of the danger to themselves if sedition should arise from the small seeds of anger and go on to destroy public order and civic government. Some of them interceded with the councillors, others restrained the common people, arguing that a verdict ought to be rendered with due process and customary procedure, that the allegations of both sides should be examined, and that a sentence should then be pronounced in a civilised manner. They must not, like savage barbarians or uncontrolled tyrants, condemn a man unheard: in a time of peace and tranquillity that would be a dreadful example to set for future generations.

7 This salutary advice was adopted, and the herald was immediately instructed to proclaim that the town fathers should convene in the council-chamber. They quickly took their customary seats in order of rank, and then, at a further signal from the herald, the prosecutor came forward first. Then finally the defendant was summoned and brought in, and in accordance with Attic law and the court of Mars¹ the herald forbade the advocates in the case to speak prefaces or to try to arouse pity.

I heard that this was the way things proceeded from a great many conversations. Since I was away

accusator urserit, quibus rebus diluerit reus ac prorsus orationes altercationesque neque ipse absens apud praesepium scire, neque ad vos quae ignoravi possum enuntiare, sed quae plane comperi ad istas litteras proferam.

Simul enim finita est dicentium contentio, veritatem criminum fidemque probationibus certis instrui, nec suspicionibus tantam coniecturam permitti placuit, atque illum potissimum servum, qui solus haec ita gesta esse scire diceretur, sisti modis omnibus oportere. Nec tantillum cruciarius ille vel fortuna tam magni iudicii vel confertae conspectu curiae vel certe noxia conscientia sua deterritus, quae ipse finxerat quasi vera asseverare atque asserere incipit: quod se vocasset indignatus fastidio novercae iuvenis, quod ulciscens iniuriam filii eius mandaverit necem, quod promisisset grande silentii praemium, quod recusanti mortem sit comminatus, quod venenum sua manu temperatum dandum fratri reddiderit, quod ad criminis probationem reservatum poculum neglexisse suspicatus sua postremum manu porrexerit puero. Haec eximie¹ ad

¹ *Eximia enim.*

at the manger, however, I cannot know what words the accuser used to press the charges and what means the defendant used to rebut them—the actual speeches and debates, in effect. What I did not know I cannot report to you, but what I reliably ascertained I shall set down on these pages.

As soon as the speakers' arguments were finished, it was decided to procure definite tests for the truth and reliability of the charges, and not to entrust such an important decision to mere suspicions. In particular they decided that the slave, who was said to be the only one who knew that these events had happened as described, ought by all means to take the stand. That gallows-bird was not the least bit deterred by the fortune of such a weighty trial, nor by the sight of the packed council-chamber, nor even by his own guilty conscience; but he began to affirm and assert his own fabricated story as if it were true: namely that the youth had summoned him in anger over his stepmother's scorn; that to avenge the insult the youth ordered him to kill his mistress's son; that he had promised him a great reward for his silence; that he threatened him with death when he refused; that he had given him the poison mixed with his own hands to administer to his brother; and that finally, suspecting him of neglecting his orders and keeping the cup as evidence for a criminal charge, the youth had handed the boy the cup himself. This account, which evinced an all too plausible sem-

veritatis imaginem verberone illo sine ulla tum¹
trepidatione proferente,² finitum est iudicium.

- 8 Nec quisquam decurionum tam aequus remanserat iuveni quin eum evidentem noxae compertum insui culleo pronuntiaret. Cum iam sententiae pares, cunctorum stilis ad unum sermonem congruentibus, ex more perpetuo in urnam aeream deberent coici, quo semel conditis calculis, iam cum rei fortuna transacto, nihil postea commutari licebat, sed mancipabatur potestas capitis in manum carnificis, unus e curia senior prae ceteris compertae fidi atque auctoritatis praecipuae medicus, orificium urnae manu contegens ne quis mitteret calculum temere, haec ad ordinem pertulit:

“Quod aetatis sum, vobis approbatum me vixisse gaudeo, nec patiar falsis criminibus petito reo manifestum homicidium perpetrari, nec vos, qui iure iurando astricti iudicatis, inductos servuli mendaciorum peierare. Ipse non possum calcata numinum religione conscientiam meam fallens perperam pronuntiare. Ergo ut res est de me cognoscite.

- 9 “Furcifer iste, venenum praesentarium com-

¹ F *simulatum*.

² F *perferente*.

¹ The penalty under ancient Roman law for parricide: the guilty person was first scourged and then sewn into a leather sack and thrown into the sea.

blance of truth, was delivered by that scoundrel without a trace of nervousness, and the trial came to an end.

- 8 None of the councillors had remained so impartial toward the young man as not to pronounce him manifestly guilty and sentence him to be sewn in the sack.¹ Their votes, which all agreed, since all had written the same word—guilty, were about to be thrown into the bronze urn in accordance with immemorial custom. Once the ballots were lodged inside, the defendant's fortune was done with and nothing could be changed thereafter; power over his life was delivered into the hands of the executioner. But one of the older councillors, a man above all others of proven honesty and an exceptionally respected physician, covered the mouth of the urn with his hand to prevent anyone from thoughtlessly inserting his ballot, and then made the following speech to the court:

“Old as I am, happily I have lived my whole life with a good reputation among you, and I shall not permit an obvious murder to be perpetrated when a defendant is attacked with false accusations. Nor shall I permit you, who are bound by oath as you sit in judgement, to be led by the lies of a worthless slave to commit perjury. I myself cannot trample upon religious obligation and cheat my own conscience by pronouncing a wrong sentence. Therefore listen to me and learn the facts.

- 9 “That scoundrel of a slave came to me not long

parare sollicitus centumque aureos solidos offerens pretium, me non olim convenerat, quod aegroto cuidam dicebat necessarium, qui morbi inextricabilis veterno vehementer implicatus vitae se cruciatui subtrahere gestiret. At ego, perspicuus malum istum verberonem blaterantem atque inconcinne causificantem certusque aliquod moliri flagitium, dedi quidem potionem; dedi, sed futurae quaestioni praecavens non statim pretium quod offerebatur accepi. Sed 'Ne forte aliquis' inquam 'istorum quos offers aureorum nequam vel adulter reperiatur, in hoc ipso sacculo conditos eos anulo tuo praenota, donec altera die nummulario praesente comprobentur.' Sic inductus signavit pecuniam, quam exinde, ut iste repraesentatus est iudicio, iussi de meis aliquem curriculo taberna promptam afferre, et ecce perlatam coram exhibeo. Videat et suum sigillum recognoscat. Nam quem ad modum eius veneni frater insimulari potest, quod iste comparaverit?"

- 10 Ingens exinde verberonem corripit trepidatio, et in vicem humani coloris succedit pallor infernus, perque universa membra frigidus sudor emanabat. Tunc pedes incertis alternationibus commovere, modo hanc modo illam capitis partem scalpere, et ore semiclauso balbutiens nescio quas affannas effutire, ut eum nemo prorsus a culpa vacuum merito

ago, anxious to buy some instantaneous poison, and he offered me a price of a hundred gold pieces. He said it was needed for a sick man who was tightly enmeshed in the slow decay of an incurable disease and desired to free himself from life's torture. When I heard that wicked rascal babbling away with his clumsy excuses, I was convinced that he was engineering some crime, but I gave him a potion. Yes, I gave it to him, but I took precautions in case of a future investigation. I did not accept outright the money he offered, but told him instead, 'Just to be sure that some of those gold pieces you are paying me do not turn out to be worthless or counterfeit, leave them in their own sack and seal it with your ring until they can be verified tomorrow in a banker's presence.' And so I persuaded him to put his seal on the money. As soon as he was brought before the court I ordered one of my servants to get it from my shop and bring it here on the run. Here it is: it has arrived and I place it before you as an exhibit. Have him look and recognise his own seal. Now, how can the brother be charged with the poison which this slave purchased?"

- 10 At this point a mighty fit of trembling seized the scoundrel, a deathly pallor took the place of his normal complexion, and cold sweat flowed over his entire body. He shuffled his feet unsteadily, scratched first one part of his head and then another, and muttered with his mouth half-closed, babbling some sort of nonsense. Absolutely no one

crederet. Sed revalescente rursus astutia constantissime negare et accersere mendacii non desinit medicum. Qui praeter iudicii religionem cum fidem suam coram lacerari videret, multiplicato studio verberonem illum contendit redarguere, donec iussu magistratum ministeria publica contrectatis nequissimi servi manibus anulum ferreum deprehensum cum signo sacculi conferunt, quae comparatio praecedentem roboravit suspicionem. Nec rota vel eculeus more Graecorum tormentis eius apparata iam deerant, sed offirmatus mira praesumptione nullis verberibus ac ne ipso quidem succumbit igni.

- 11 Tum medicus "Non patiar," inquit "hercules, non patiar vel contra fas de innocente isto iuvene supplicium vos sumere, vel hunc ludificato nostro iudicio poenam noxii facinoris evadere. Dabo enim rei praesentis evidens argumentum. Nam cum venenum peremptorium comparare pessimus iste gestiret, nec meae sectae crederem convenire causas ulli praebere mortis nec exitio, sed saluti hominum medicinam quaesitam esse didicissem, verens ne, si daturum me negassem, intempestiva repulsa viam

¹ Compare the following statement from the Hippocratic oath: "I will use treatment to help the sick according to my ability and judgement, but never with a view to injury and wrong-doing. Neither will I administer a poison to

could reasonably believe that he was free of guilt. But, recovering his craftiness again, he unshakably denied everything and persisted in accusing the doctor of lying. When the latter saw his own honesty being publicly torn to shreds, along with the sanctity of the judicial process, he exerted himself with redoubled eagerness to convict the scoundrel, until finally, on orders from the magistrates, public officers grasped the vile slave's hands, removed his iron ring, and matched it with the seal on the sack. The comparison confirmed the suspicion which had already arisen. Now they applied tortures, including the wheel and the rack, in the Greek manner, but he persevered with astonishing obstinacy and refused to succumb to blows or even fire.

- 11 The doctor then spoke again. "I will not stand for it, by Hercules! I shall not permit you to act against justice and punish that innocent young man; and I shall not allow this rogue to make a mockery of our judicial process and escape the penalty for his guilty deed. I shall now give you plain proof of the real facts. When that villain came to me all eager to buy a deadly poison, I did not believe it consistent with my profession to provide anyone with the means of death, but had been taught that medicine was invented not to harm, but to cure people.¹ But I was afraid that if I refused to give it to him I would be abetting a crime by my ill-timed denial, and that he anybody when asked to do so, nor will I suggest such a course" (see Loeb Hippocrates, Vol. I, p. 299).

sceleri sumministrarem et ab alio quopiam exitiabilem mercatus hic potionem vel postremum gladio vel quovis telo nefas incohatum perficeret, dedi venenum, sed somniferum, mandragoram illum gravedinis compertae famosum et morti simillimi soporis efficacem. Nec mirum desperatissimum istum latronem certum extremae poenae, quae more maiorum in eum competit, cruciatus istos ut leviores facile tolerare. Sed si vere puer meis temperatam manibus sumpsit potionem, vivit et quiescit et dormit, et protinus marcido sopore discusso remeabit ad diem lucidam. Quod sive peremptus est, sive¹ morte praeventus est, quaeratis licet causas mortis eius alias.”

12 Ad istum modum seniore adorante placuit,² et itur confestim magna cum festinatione ad illud sepulcrum quo corpus pueri depositum iacebat. Nemo de curia, de optimatibus nemo, ac ne de ipso quidem populo quisquam qui non illuc curiose confluxerit. Ecce pater, suis ipse manibus coperculo capuli remoto, commodum discusso mortifero sopore surgentem postliminio mortis deprehendit filium, eumque complexus artissime, verbis impar praesenti gaudio, producit ad populum. Atque ut erat adhuc feralibus amiculis instrictus atque obditus deportatur ad iudicium puer. Iamque

¹ F *si*. Some editors delete the preceding clause, *sive peremptus est*, perhaps rightly.

² Perhaps some infinitive meaning “investigate” or “verify” should be added; Robertson suggests *explorare*.

would either buy a destructive potion from someone else or accomplish his abominable enterprise in the end with a sword or some other weapon. And so I gave him a drug, but a soporific, mandragora, well known for its proven lethargic effect, which produces a coma very like death. It is no wonder if that criminal can easily endure your tortures as being comparatively mild, since he is utterly desperate and sure of receiving the maximum penalty due to him in accordance with tradition. However, if the boy really took the medicine which I mixed with my own hands, he is alive and resting and sleeping, and he will soon shake off his languid coma and return to the light of day. But if he has been killed or overcome by death, you must seek causes for his death elsewhere.”

12 Thus did the old man plead, and his contention found favour. They went immediately in great haste to the sepulchre where the boy's body lay entombed. Absolutely everyone—councillors, noblemen, even the common people—streamed to that spot in their curiosity. And now the father took the lid off the sarcophagus with his own hands and found his son just shaking off his death-dealing coma and rising up, back from the realms of the dead. He embraced him tightly, unable to find words equal to the joy of that moment, and led him outside to show to the people. The boy was brought before the court just as he was, swaddled and wrapped in his burial garments. Now that the

liquido servi nequissimi atque mulieris nequioris patefactis sceleribus procedit in medium nuda veritas, et novercae quidem perpetuum indicitur exilium, servus vero patibulo suffigitur, et omnium consensu bono medico sinuntur aurei, opportuni somnii pretium. Et illius quidem senis famosa atque fabulosa fortuna providentiae divinae condignum accepit exitum, qui momento modico, immo puncto exiguo, post orbitatis periculum adulescentium duorum pater repente factus est.

- 13 At ego tunc temporis talibus fatorum fluctibus volutabar. Miles ille, qui me nullo vendente comparaverat et sine pretio suum fecerat, tribuni sui praecepto debitum sustinens obsequium, litteras ad magnum scriptas principem Romam versus perlaturus, vicinis me quibusdam duobus servis fratribus undecim denariis vendidit. His erat dives admodum dominus. At illorum alter pistor dulciarius, qui panes et mellita concinnabat edulia, alter cocus, qui sapidissimis intrimentis sucuum pulmenta condita vapore molliabat. Unico illi contubernio communem vitam sustinebant, meque ad vasa illa compluria gestanda praedestinarant,¹ quae domini regiones plusculas pererrantis variis usibus erant necessaria. Asciscor itaque inter duos illos fratres tertius contubernalis, haud ullo tempore tam benivolam fortunam expertus. Nam vespera

¹ Should perhaps be emended to *destinarant* or *praestinarant*, but cf. IV 15.

crimes of that vilest of slaves and the yet viler woman were clearly revealed, the naked truth came forth for all to see. The stepmother was sentenced to perpetual exile, the slave was crucified, and with everyone's consent the good doctor was allowed to keep the gold pieces as payment for his timely prescription of sleep. As for the father himself, his famed and storied fortune received an ending worthy of divine providence: a short while—no, only an instant—after he had been in peril of childlessness, he suddenly became the father of two young men.

- 13 As for me, here are the waves of destiny on which I was then being tossed. The soldier had bought me from no seller and made me his own at no cost; but he sold me for eleven denarii when, in dutiful obedience to an order from his tribune, he had to carry a letter to the great emperor in Rome. The buyers were two slaves from the neighbourhood, who were brothers and whose master was very rich. One of them was a pastry-cook who concocted breads and honeyed desserts, the other a chef who cooked tender meat-dishes, flavouring them with the tastiest seasoned sauces. They lived together, sharing their livelihood, and they had bought me specifically to carry the numerous utensils they needed for various purposes as their master travelled about from region to region. Thus I was adopted as a third messmate to those two brothers. I had never known fortune to treat me so kindly. In the evenings, after

post opiparas cenas earumque splendidissimos apparatus multas numero partes in cellulam suam mei solebant reportare domini, ille porcorum, pullo-
 rum, piscium, et cuiusce modi pulmentorum largissimas reliquias, hic panes, crustula, lucunculos,¹ hamos, laterculos,² et plura scitamenta mellita. Qui cum se refecturi clausa cellula balneas petissent, oblati ego divinitus dapibus affatim saginabar. Nec enim tam stultus eram tamque vere asinus ut dulcissimis illis relictis cibus cenarem asperrimum faenum.

14 Et diu quidem pulcherrime mihi furatrinae procedebat artificium, quippe adhuc timide et satis parce surripienti de tam multis pauciora, nec illis fraudes ullas in asino suspicantibus. At ubi fiducia latendi pleniore capta partes opimas quasque devorabam et iucundiora eligens abligurribam dulcia, suspicio non exilis fratrum pupugit animos, et quamquam de me nihil etiam tum tale crederent, tamen cotidiani damni studiose vestigabant reum. Illi vero postremo etiam mutuo sese rapinae turpisimae criminabantur, iamque curam diligentiorum et acriorem custodelam et dinumerationem adhibebant partium. Tandem denique rupta verecundia sic alter alterum compellat:

“At istud iam neque aequum ac ne humanum quidem cotidie te³ partes electiores surripere

¹ F *Iucunculos*. ² F *lacertulos*.

³ F *ac*.

luxurious dinners with the most brilliant trimmings, my masters used to bring back lots of leftovers to their lodgings: the one brought extremely generous remnants of pork, fowl, fish, and every other kind of meat; the other breads, cookies, fritters, croissants, biscuits, and many other honey-sweetened dainties. As soon as they locked up their room and went to the baths to refresh themselves, I would stuff myself to capacity on those heaven-sent feasts. After all I was not such a complete fool or so truly an ass as to pass by those delicious dishes and dine on coarse hay.

14 For a long time my ingenious thievery proceeded beautifully, since as yet I was cautiously and quite modestly stealing only a few items from a great many, and they suspected no wrongdoing from an ass. But as I acquired greater confidence in deceit and began devouring all the richest spoils and picking out the tastier sweets to lick up, then the brothers' minds were stung with no mean suspicion. Although they still could not believe any such thing of me, they tried zealously to track down the culprit behind their daily losses. Finally they even began to suspect each other of this base thievery and started taking more careful precautions, keeping a sharper watch and taking inventory of the leftovers. In the end one of them cast reserve aside and accused the other.

“What you are doing is unfair,” he said, “and inhuman too: stealing the choicest leftovers every

atque iis dividitis peculium latenter augere, de reliquis aequam vindicare divisionem. Si tibi denique societas ista displicet, possumus omnia quidem cetera fratres manere, ab isto tamen nexu communionis discedere. Nam video in immensum damni procedentem querelam nutrire nobis immanem discordiam.”

Subicit alius: “Laudo istam tuam mehercules et ipse constantiam, quod cotidie furatis clanculo partibus praevenisti querimoniam, quam diutissime sustinens tacitus ingemescebam, ne viderer rapinae sordidae meum fratrem arguere. Sed bene quod utrimquesecus sermone prolato iacturae remedium¹ quaeritur, ne silentio procedens simultas Eteocleas nobis contentiones pariat.”

15 His et similibus altercati conviciis deierantur utrique nullam se prorsus fraudem, nullam denique surreptionem factitasse, sed plane debere cunctis artibus communis dispendii latronem inquiri. Nam neque asinum, qui solus interesset, talibus cibis affici posse, et tamen cotidie partes electiles comparere nusquam, nec utique cellulam suam tam immanes involare muscas, ut olim Harpyiae fuere quae diripiebant Phineias dapes.

Interea liberalibus cenis inescatus et humanis

¹ *F medium.*

¹ Alluding to the strife between Oedipus' sons, Eteocles and Polynices, which resulted in the death of both, each at his brother's hands.

day and selling them to increase your savings secretly, and then demanding an equal division of what is left. If you are dissatisfied with our present association, we can remain brothers in all other respects, but dissolve our ties of common ownership; for I see this complaint causing us enormous loss and breeding bitter dissension between us.”

“By Hercules,” answered the other, “I really congratulate you on your self-possession. You have been surreptitiously stealing the leftovers every day, and now you have anticipated my own complaint, which I have silently been enduring and bemoaning to myself for a long time, so that I would not appear to be accusing my brother of sordid thievery. But it is a good thing that we have both spoken out and are seeking a cure for our losses; otherwise our anger might have continued in silence and produced the strife of Eteocles all over again.”¹

15 When they had finished arguing and wrangling like this, they both swore that they had committed no cheating or pilfering, and agreed that they ought to search with all the skill at their disposal for the thief responsible for their common loss. The ass, they said, who was the only creature present, could not possibly be attracted by that sort of dish, and yet every day their choice bits were disappearing. Surely there were no monstrous flies soaring into their room like the Harpies of old who plundered Phineus' feasts.

I, meanwhile, having been satiated with generous

affatim cibus saginatus, corpus obesa pinguitie com-
pleveram, corium arvina succulenta molliveram,
pilum liberali nitore nutriveram. Sed iste corporis
mei decor pudori peperit grande dedecus. Insolita
namque tergoris vastitate commoti, faenum prorsus
intactum cotidie remanere cernentes, iam totos ad
me dirigunt animos. Et hora consueta velut balneas
petituri, clausis ex more foribus, per quandam modi-
cam cavernam rimantur me passim expositis epulis
inhaerentem. Nec ulla cura iam damni sui habita,
mirati monstruosas asini delicias risu maximo
dirumpuntur, vocatoque uno et altero ac dein plu-
ribus conservis, demonstrant infandam memoratu
hebetis iumentum gulam. Tantus denique ac tam
liberalis cachinnus cunctos invaserat ut ad aures
16 quoque praetereuntis perveniret domini. Scisci-
tatus denique quid bonum rideret familia, cognito
quod res erat, ipse quoque per idem prospiciens
foramen delectatur eximie. Ac dehinc risu ipse
quoque latissimo adusque intestinorum dolorem
redactus, iam patefacto cubiculo proxime consistens
coram arbitratur. Nam et ego tandem ex aliqua
parte mollius mihi reidentis fortunae contem-
platus faciem, gaudio praesentium fiduciam mihi

dinners and crammed to capacity with human food,
had filled out my frame with heavy fat, softened my
hide with succulent grease, and nourished my coat
with a noble sheen. But this corporeal grace of mine
produced a great disgrace to my honour. The bro-
thers were struck by my unusual expansiveness
of girth, and, noticing that my hay remained com-
pletely untouched every day, they focused their total
attention on me. At their customary hour they
locked the door as usual, as if they were going to the
baths, and spied on me through a small crack.
When they saw me tucking into the banquet which
was spread all about, they forgot all concern over
their losses and, in their amazement at this mon-
strous taste in an ass, they split their sides laugh-
ing. They called a couple of fellow-servants, and
then several more, to show them the unspeakable
gluttony of a lazy ass. They were all attacked by
such loud and unrestrained laughter that the sound
even reached their master's ears as he was passing
16 nearby. He inquired what in heaven's name the ser-
vants were laughing at, and when he discovered
what it was, the master also peeped through the
same hole. He too was exceptionally amused, and
laughed so hard and long that his belly ached. Then
he had them open the door to the room so that he
could stand close to me and watch openly. For my
part, because I saw fortune's face finally smiling
somewhat more kindly on me and was inspired with
confidence by the delight of the people in the room,

sumministrante, nec tantillum commotus securus esitabam, quoad novitate spectaculi laetus dominus aedium duci me iussit, immo vero suis etiam ipse manibus ad triclinium perduxit, mensaque posita omne genus edulium solidorum et illibata fercula iussit apponi. At ego, quamquam iam bellule suffarcinatus, gratiosum commendatioremque me tamen ei facere cupiens, esurienter exhibitas escas appetebam. Nam et quid potissimum abhorreret asino excogitantes scrupulose, ad explorandam mansuetudinem id offerebant mihi, carnes lasere infectas, altilia pipere inspersa, pisces exotico iure perfusos. Interim convivium summo risu personabat.

Quidam denique praesens scurrula "Date" inquit "sodali huic quippiam meri." Quod dictum dominus secutus "Non adeo" respondit "absurde iocatus es, furcifer. Valde enim fieri potest ut contubernalis noster poculum quoque mulsi libenter appetat." Et "Heus," ait "puer, lautum diligenter ecce illum aureum cantharum mulso contempera et offers¹ parasito meo. Simul quod ei praebiberim commoneto."

Ingens exin oborta est epulorum expectatio. Nec ulla tamen ego ratione conterritus, otiose ac satis genialiter contorta in modum ligulae² postrema labia grandissimum illum calicem uno haustu perduxit.³ Et clamor exurgit consona voce cunctorum salute me prosequentium.

¹ Most editors emend to *offer*.

² *F linguae*.

³ *F perauxi*.

I was not a bit disturbed, but unconcernedly kept right on eating. Soon the master of the house, delighted by the novelty of the spectacle, ordered me to be taken—or rather conducted me himself with his own hands—to the dining room; there he had a table set and all sorts of whole dishes and untasted plates put before me. Although I was already splendidly stuffed, I wanted to be agreeable and win his favour, and so I hungrily attacked the dainties laid out before me. Calculating precisely what would be most abhorrent to an ass and trying to test my tameness, they offered me meats spiced with silphium, fowl sprinkled with pepper, and fish steeped in exotic sauce. All the while the banquet-hall resounded with uproarious laughter.

Then one buffoon who was present said, "Give you friend here a little wine." The master took up this suggestion. "That is not such a ridiculous joke, you scoundrel," he said. "It is quite possible that our messmate would be glad to have a cup of mead to go with his food." Then he turned to a slave and said, "Here, boy, rinse this golden cup carefully, mix in some mead and offer it to my free-booter here. Advise him also that I have drunk to his health."

There was a mighty surge of anticipation among the banqueters. Not in the least abashed, I leisurely and cheerfully curled the edges of my lips like a ladle and swallowed down the huge cup in one gulp. A shout arose, as with one voice they all wished me good health.

17 Magno denique delibutus gaudio dominus, vocatis servis suis, emptoribus meis, iubet quadruplum restitui pretium, meque cuidam acceptissimo liberto suo et satis peculiato magnam praefatus diligentiam¹ tradidit. Qui me satis humane satisque comiter nutriebat et, quo se patrono commendatorem faceret, studiosissime voluptates eius per meas argutias instruebat. Et primum me quidem mensam accumbere suffixo cubito, dein alluctari et etiam saltare sublatis primoribus pedibus perdocuit, quodque esset apprime mirabile, verbis nutum commodare, ut quod nollem relato, quod vellem deiecto capite monstrarem, sitiensque pocillatore respecto, ciliis alterna conivens, bibere flagitarem. Atque haec omnia perfacile oboediebam, quae nullo etiam monstrante scilicet facerem. Sed verebar ne, si forte sine magistro humano ritu ederem pleraque, rati scaevum praesagium portendere, velut monstrum ostentumque me obtruncatum vulturiis opimum pabulum redderent. Iamque rumor publice crebuerat, quo conspectum atque famigerabilem meis miris artibus effeceram dominum: "Hic est qui sodalem convivamque possidet asinum luctantem, asinum saltantem, asinum voces humanas intellegentem, sensum nutibus experimentem."

¹ *F magna . . . diligentia.*

¹ In Greece and Rome negation was, and still is, expressed by raising the chin.

17 The master was overwhelmed with delight. He summoned the slaves who had bought me and had them paid four times my price. Then he turned me over to a favourite and quite well-off freedman of his, instructing him to exercise great care of me. That man showed me great kindness and civility, and to ingratiate himself further with his patron he went to considerable trouble to devise ways of amusing him with my clever tricks. First he taught me to recline at table leaning on my elbow; then he taught me to wrestle, and even to dance with my forefeet in the air. Most amazing of all, he taught me to respond to words with a gesture: I would show what I did not want by raising my chin and what I wanted by dropping it¹; and when I was thirsty I would look round at the cupbearer and wink my eyelids alternately to ask for a drink. It was very easy to obey all these instructions, which of course I could have done even without coaching; but I was afraid that if I performed too many acts in human fashion without a teacher, people would think that I was an unlucky omen and, as if I were a monstrosity, slaughter me and offer me as a sumptuous meal to the vultures. Soon word of me had spread among the public, and I had made my owner illustrious and famous with my remarkable talents. "This is the man," they said, "who owns as companion and dinner-guest an ass who wrestles, an ass who dances, an ass who understands men's language and can say what he wants by nods."

18 Sed prius est ut vobis, quod initio facere debueram, vel nunc saltem referam quis iste vel unde fuerit. Thiasus — hoc enim nomine meus nuncupabatur dominus — oriundus patria Corintho, quod caput est totius Aethiopiae provinciae, ut eius prosapia atque dignitas postulabat, gradatim permensis honoribus quinquennali magistratui fuerat destinatus, et ut splendori capessendorum responderet fascium, munus gladiatorium triduani spectaculi pollicitus latius munificentiam suam porrigebat. Denique gloriae publicae studio tunc Thessaliam etiam accesserat, nobilissimas feras et famosos inde gladiatores comparaturus, iamque ex arbitrio dispositis coemptisque omnibus domuitionem parabat. Spretis luculentis illis suis vehiculis ac posthabitis decoris raedarum¹ carpentis, quae partim contacta, partim revelata frustra novissimis trahebantur consequiis, equis etiam Thessalicis et aliis iumentis Gallicanis, quibus generosa suboles perhibet pretiosam dignitatem, me, phaleris aureis et fucatis ephippiis et purpureis tapetis et frenis argenteis et pictilibus balteis et tintinnabulis perargutis exornatum, ipse residens amantissime nonnumquam commissimis affatur

¹ *F praedarum.*

¹ His name means a religious celebration or a band of worshippers, and is usually associated with the rites of Dionysus.

18 Before I go any further, I should at least tell you now (as I should have done at the start) who my owner was and where he came from. Thiasus¹ was my master's name and he was a native of Corinth, the capital of the entire province of Aethiopia. As his ancestry and position demanded, he had risen through the various grades of public office and had now been nominated for the quinquennial magistracy.² To make an adequate response to the honour of receiving the fasces, he had promised a three-day spectacle of gladiatorial games in a generous sharing of munificence. In his pursuit of public glory he had even travelled to Thessaly at that time to buy the most renowned wild beasts and famous gladiators there. Having now arranged and bought everything according to plan, he was preparing his return home. He spurned his splendid carriages and rejected his beautiful four-wheeled wagons, which followed unused, some covered and some open, at the very end of his retinue. Likewise he despised his Thessalian horses and other Gallic mounts, whose noble breeding ensured their high-priced esteem. He had me decked out instead with gold discs and dyed caparisons and crimson tapestries and silvered bridle and decorated halter and shrill tinkling bells, and he himself rode on my back. From time to time he would address me most fondly

² The highest municipal office, that of *duumvir quinquennalis*.

sermonibus, atque inter alia pleraque summe se delectari profitebatur quod haberet in me simul et convivam et vectorem.

19 At ubi partim terrestri, partim maritimo itinere confecto Corinthum accessimus, magnae civium turbae confluebant, ut mihi videbatur, non tantum Thiasi studentes¹ honori quam mei conspectus cupientes. Nam tanta etiam ibidem de me fama pervaserat ut non mediocri quaestui praeposito illi meo fuerim. Qui cum multos videret nimio favore lusus meos spectare gestientes, obserata fore atque singulis eorum sorsus admissis, stipes acceptans non parvas summulas diurnas corradere consuerat.

Fuit in illo conventiculo matrona quaedam pol-lens et opulens. Quae more ceterorum visum meum mercata ac dehinc multiformibus ludicris delectata, per admirationem assiduam paulatim in admirabilem mei cupidinem incidit. Nec ullam vesanae libidini medelam capiens ad instar asinariae Pasiphaeae complexus meos ardentem exspectabat. Grandi denique praemio cum altore meo depecta est noctis unius concubitum. At ille nequaquam anxius *ecquid*² posset de me suave provenire, lucro suo

¹ *F dantes.*

² *anxius ecquid* is merely one of a number of possible conjectural additions to supply necessary meaning and syntax.

with kind and friendly remarks: among other things he announced that he was extremely delighted that in me he had at one and the same time both a companion and a conveyance.

19 When, after a journey made partly by land and partly by sea, we arrived at Corinth, great crowds of townspeople gathered, less in order to do honour to Thiasus, in my opinion, than from their desire to see me. Even there my reputation had spread so widely that I became a source of no little profit to my overseer. Observing that many people were extremely enthusiastic in their eagerness to watch my performances, he bolted the door and admitted them separately one at a time. He charged for admission and regularly raked in considerable sums every day.

Among the crowds was a certain influential and wealthy lady, who, after paying for a look at me just like everyone else and enjoying my various tricks, out of her constant wonder at me gradually conceived a wondrous desire for me. She took no remedy for her insane passion but, like some asinine Pasiphaeae,¹ ardently yearned for my embraces. She therefore bargained with my keeper, offering him a large price to lie with me for one night; and he agreed, not the least concerned whether anything pleasant could result for me, but content only with passion for a bull. The issue of their union was the Minotaur, half-bull and half-man.

¹ The wife of king Minos of Crete, who conceived a

tantum contentus,¹ annuit.

20 Iam denique cenati e triclinio domini deceramus, et iam dudum praestolantem cubiculo meo matronam offendimus. Dii boni, qualis ille quamque praeclarus apparatus! Quattuor eunuchi confestim pulvillis compluribus ventose tumentibus pluma delicata terrestrem nobis cubitum praestruunt, sed et stragula veste auro ac murice Tyrio depicta probe consternunt, ac desuper brevibus admodum, sed satis copiosis pulvillis aliis nimis modicis,² quis maxillas et cervices delicatae mulieres suffulcire consuerunt, superstruunt. Nec dominae voluptates diutina sua praesentia morati, clausis cubiculi foribus facessunt. At intus cerei praeclara micantes luce nocturnas nobis tenebras inalabant.

21 Tunc ipsa cuncto prorsus spoliata tegmine, taenia quoque qua decoras devinxerat papillas, lumen propter assistens, de stagneo vasculo multo sese perungit oleo balsamino³ meque indidem largissime perfricat, sed multo tanta impensius; tura⁴ etiam nares perfundit meas. Tunc exosculata presule, non qualia in lupanari solent basiola iactari vel meretricum poscinumnia vel adventorum negantinumnia, sed pura atque sincera, instruit et blandissimos affatus: "Amo" et "Cupio" et "Te solum diligo" et "Sine te iam vivere nequeo," et

¹ Should perhaps be emended to *intentus*.

² *nimis modicis* should perhaps be deleted as an explanatory paraphrase. Helm suggests emending to *medicatis* "perfumed". ³ *F balsamo*. ⁴ *F cura*.

his own gain.

20 We had just finished supper and left my owner's dining room when we met the lady, who had already been waiting for a long time in my room. Good gods, what luxurious and splendid fittings! Four eunuchs were hastily making a bed for us on the ground out of a large number of pillows airily puffed out with soft feathers. Over these they carefully laid covers coloured with gold cloth and Tyrian purple, and on top they scattered some other pillows, small but quite numerous, the kind that refined women use to support their chins and necks. They did not delay their mistress's pleasure by their continued presence, but closed the bedroom door and went away. Inside wax candles sparkled with brilliant light and whitened the night's darkness for us.

21 Then she stripped herself of all her clothes, including the band with which she had bound her lovely breasts. Standing next to the light, she anointed herself all over with oil of balsam from a pewter jar, and lavishly rubbed me down with the same, but with much greater eagerness. She even moistened my nostrils with frankincense. Then she kissed me intimately — not the sort of kisses tossed about in a whorehouse, the money-begging kisses of prostitutes or the money-refusing kisses of customers, but pure and uncorrupted. And she spoke to me with tender affection, saying "I desire you," "I want you," "It is you alone I love," "I can not live without you," and all the other expressions women

cetera quis mulieres et alios inducunt et suas testantur affectationes. Capistroque me prehensum more quo didiceram reclinat facile, quippe cum nil novi nihilque difficile facturum mihi viderer, praesertim post tantum temporis tam formosae mulieris cupientis amplexus obiturus. Nam et vino pulcherrimo atque copioso memet madefeceram et unguento fragrantissimo prolubium libidinis suscitaram.

22 Sed angebar plane non exili metu reputans quem ad modum tantis tamque magnis cruribus possem delicatam matronam inscendere, vel tam lucida tamque tenera et lacte ac melle confecta membra duris unguibus complecti, labiasque modicas ambroseo rore purpurantes tam amplo ore tamque enormi et saxeis dentibus deformi¹ saviari, novissime quo pacto, quamquam ex unguiculis perpruriscens, mulier tam vastum genitale susciperet. Heu me, qui dirrupta nobili femina bestiis obiectus munus instructurus sim mei domini! Molles interdum vuculas et assidua savia et dulces gannitus commorsicantibus oculis iterabat illa, et in summa "Teneo te," inquit "teneo, meum palumbulum, meum passerem."² Et cum dicto vanas fuisse cogitationes meas ineptumque monstrat metum. Artissime namque complexa totum me prorsus, sed

¹ F *deformis*.

² F *passarem*.

use to stimulate their lovers and to declare their own feelings. Next she took me by my halter and made me lie down, as I had learned to do. I obeyed readily, because I did not think my task would be anything new or difficult, and especially since for the first time in a long while I was about to enjoy the passionate embraces of a very beautiful woman. Furthermore I had saturated myself with a generous quantity of the finest wine and aroused my desire for sex with the heady fragrance of the ointment.

22 I was distressed, however, and not a little frightened as I wondered how I, with so many and such large legs, could mount such a delicate lady; or how I could embrace such a soft, translucent body, all compact of milk and honey, with my hard hoofs; or how I could kiss those fine lips reddened by ambrosial dew with my great monstrous misshapen mouth with its stone-sized teeth. Finally, even though she was itching for it to the tips of her toes, how could the woman contain my huge organ? Woe unto me if I should rupture the noble lady and get thrown to the beasts to provide part of my owner's gladiatorial show. Meantime she kept repeating tender words and constant kisses and sweet moans with eyes that bit into me. Finally she said, "I am holding you, I am holding you, my little dove, my sparrow." And as she spoke she demonstrated that my calculations had been vain and my fear pointless, because she clasped me very tightly and

totum recepit. Illa vero quotiens ei parcens nates recellebam, accedens totiens nisu rabido et spinamprehendens meam applicitiore¹ nexu inhaerebat, ut hercules etiam deesse mihi aliquid ad suppleendam eius libidinem crederem, nec Minotauri matrem frustra delectatam putarem adultero mugienti. Iamque operosa et pervigili nocte transacta, vitata lucis conscientia facessit mulier, condicto pari noctis futurae pretio.

- 23 Nec gravate magister meus voluptates ex eius arbitrio largiebatur, partim mercedes amplissimas acceptando, partim novum spectaculum domino praeparando. Incunctanter ei denique libidinis nostrae totam detegit scaenam. At ille liberto magnifice munerato destinat me spectaculo publico. Et quoniam neque egregia illa uxor mea propter dignitatem, neque prorsus ulla alia inveniri potuerat grandi praemio, vilis acquiritur aliqua sententia praesidis bestiis addicta, quae mecum incoram publicans pudicitiam² populi caveam frequentaret. Eius poenae talem cognoveram fabulam.

Maritum habuit, cuius pater peregre proficiscens mandavit uxori suae, matri eiusdem iuvenis—quod enim sarcina praegnationis oneratam eam relinquebat—ut, si sexus sequioris edidisset fetum,

¹ F *adpliciore*.

² F *incoram publicam*; the correction is Robertson's, who compares Tacitus, *Germ.* 19.

¹ See note at chapter 19.

took in absolutely all of me—yes, all of me. In fact every time I tried to spare her and pull back my buttocks, she would push closer with a mad thrust, grab my spine, and cling in an even closer embrace, until, by Hercules, I believed that I did not even have enough to fulfil her desire, and that the Minotaur's mother might have had reason to take her pleasure with her mooring paramour.¹ After we had passed a busy and sleepless night the woman departed, avoiding the complicity of daylight, after agreeing to the same price for another night.

- 23 My trainer was not unhappy to dispense these joys at her command, because he was not only taking in a very large profit but also rehearsing a new show for his master, to whom he unhesitatingly disclosed our entire sexual performance. The master rewarded his freedman generously, and decided that I should take part in his public spectacle. Since that excellent wife of mine could not be considered because of her social position, and absolutely no one else could be found even for a high price, a depraved woman was procured, one already sentenced by the governor's order to be thrown to the beasts, to appear with me in a packed theatre and exhibit the loss of her virtue. I learned the following story of her condemnation.

She had a husband, whose father, about to go abroad, had commanded his wife (the young man's mother), whom he was leaving laden with the burden of pregnancy, that if she produced a child of the

protinus quod esset editum necaretur. At illa, per absentiam¹ mariti nata puella,² insita matribus pietate praeventa descivit ab obsequio mariti, eamque prodidit vicinis alumnam, regressoque iam marito natam necatamque nuntiavit. Sed ubi flos aetatis nuptialem virgini diem flagitabat, nec ignaro marito dotare filiam pro natalibus quibat, quod solum potuit, filio suo tacitum secretum aperuit. Nam et oppido verebatur ne quo casu, calor*i* iuvenalis impetu lapsus, nescius nesciam sororem incurreret. Sed pietatis spectatae iuvenis et matris obsequium et sororis officium religiose dispensat, et, arcanis domus venerabilis silentii custodiae traditis,³ plebeiam facie tenus praetendens humanitatem, sic necessarium sanguinis sui munus aggreditur ut desolatam vicinam puellam parentumque praesidio viduatam domus suae tutela receptaret, ac mox artissimo multumque sibi dilecto contubernali, largitus de proprio dotem, liberalissime traderet.

24 Sed haec bene atque optime plenaque cum sanctimonia disposita feralem Fortunae nutum latere

¹ F *abstinentiam*.

² F *natam puellam*.

³ F *tradidit*.

weaker sex, the baby was to be killed at once. During her husband's absence, she gave birth to a girl; but, overcome by her natural maternal feelings, she rebelled from obeying her husband. She gave the child to neighbours to raise, and when her husband returned she announced that a girl had been born and killed. But when youth's bloom began to demand a wedding day for the maiden, and the mother was unable to provide a dowry suitable to the girl's birth without her husband's knowledge, she did the only thing possible and revealed the unspoken secret to her son. She was also very afraid, you see, that by some accident, under the impulse of hot-blooded youth, he might slip and attack his own sister without either of them being aware of their relationship. With his exemplary sense of responsibility, the young man scrupulously discharged both his obligation to his mother and his duty to his sister. Entrusting the secrets of his respectable family to the safeguard of silence, and pretending on the surface to be acting out of common humanity, he set about the task required by the ties of blood. He received the girl from the neighbours, abandoned without a parent's protection, into the guardianship of his own home; and he soon made an excellent marriage for her with one of his close and well-loved friends, supplying a generous dowry from his own resources.

24 But these excellent arrangements, made in a thoroughly responsible way, could not escape the

non potuerunt, cuius instinctu domum iuvenis protinus se direxit saeva Rivalitas. Et ilico haec eadem uxor eius, quae nunc bestiis propter haec ipsa fuerat addicta, coepit puellam velut aemulam tori succubamque primo suspicari, dehinc detestari, dehinc crudelissimis laqueis mortis insidiari.

Tale denique comminiscitur facinus. Anulo mariti surrepto, rus profecta¹ mittit quendam servulum sibi quidem fidelem, sed de ipsa Fide pessime merentem, qui puellae nuntiaret quod eam iuvenis profectus ad villulam vocaret ad sese, addito ut sola et sine ullo comite quam maturissime perveniret. Et ne qua forte nasceretur veniendi cunctatio, tradit anulum marito subtractum, qui monstratus fidem verbis astipularetur. At illa mandatu fratris obsequens—hoc enim nomen sola sciebat—respecto etiam signo eius quod offerebatur, naviter ut praeceptum fuerat incommitata festinat. Sed ubi fraudis extremae lapsa decipulo laqueos insidiarum accessit, tunc illa uxor egregia sororem mariti, libidinosae furiae stimulis efferata, primum quidem nudam flagris ultime verberat, dehinc quod res erat clamantem quodque frustra paelicatus indignatione bulliret, fratrisque nomen saepius iterantem, velut

¹ *F profecto.*

fatal nod of Fortune, at whose instigation cruel Jealousy steered her course straight for the young man's house. Instantly his wife—the woman who had now been condemned to the beasts for this crime—began first to suspect the girl as a rival and concubine to share her bed, then to curse her, and finally to plot her death with the cruellest of snares.

In the end she devised the following scheme. She secretly removed her husband's ring and, setting off to the country, sent a servant of hers—loyal to her but no true servant of Loyalty—to tell the girl that the young man had gone to his country house and wanted to see her there, adding that she should come as soon as she could, alone and unaccompanied. So that she would feel no hesitation about coming, the wife gave the servant the ring which she had taken from her husband, which he could show her to guarantee the reliability of the message. The girl, in obedience to her brother's command—she alone knew that it was a "brother's"—inspected the proffered seal and then lost no time in setting out, alone as instructed. When she had fallen into the trap of cunning deceit and was caught fast in the snare, that most splendid wife, driven wild by the goads of passionate fury, stripped her husband's sister and whipped her as hard as she could. The girl kept screaming the truth, telling the wife that her boiling anger about a rival was groundless, and repeating the word "brother" over and over; but just as if the girl were lying and mak-

mentitam atque cuncta fingentem titione candenti inter media femina detruso crudelissime necavit.

25 Tunc acerbae mortis exciti nuntiis frater et maritus accurrunt, variisque lamentationibus defletam puellam tradunt sepulturae. Nec iuvenis sororis suae mortem tam miseram et quae minime par erat illatam aequo tolerare quivit animo, sed medullitus dolore commotus acerrimaeque¹ bilis noxio furore perfusus exin flagrantissimis febribus ardebat, ut ipsi quoque iam medela videretur esse necessaria. Sed uxor, quae iam pridem nomen uxoris cum fide perdiderat, medicum convenit quendam notae perfidiae, qui iam multarum palmarum spectatus proeliis magna dexteræ suae tropaea numerabat, eique protinus quinquaginta promittit sestertia, ut ille quidem momentarium venenum venderet, illa² autem emeret mortem mariti sui. Quo compecto³ simulatur necessaria praecordiis leniendis bilique subtrahendae illa prae nobilis potio quam sacram Saluti⁴ doctiores nominant, sed in eius vicem⁵ subditur alia Proserpinae sacra. Iamque praesente familia et nonnullis amicis et affinibus, aegroto medicus poculum probe temperatum manu sua porrigebat.

¹ F *acerrimeque*.

² Usually emended to *ipsa*.

³ F reads *confecto*, but with indications of uncertainty.

⁴ *Saluti*, placed in F at the end of the sentence, was transposed here by Haupt.

⁵ F *vice*.

ing up the whole story, the wife savagely murdered her by thrusting a white-hot firebrand between her thighs.

25 Summoned by the news of her bitter death, her brother and her husband rushed to the spot, mourned her with all manner of lamentation, and buried her. The young man could not calmly endure his sister's death, a death so pitiful and inflicted so unjustly. He was shaken to the very marrow by his grief and bitterly drenched with the poisonous fury of bile. He began to burn with such flaming fevers that he too now seemed to need medicine. His wife, who had long since lost the name as well as the loyalty of a wife, went to see a certain physician of known villainy, who had won many a triumph in the battles he had engaged in and could count considerable trophies from the work of his right hand. She immediately promised him 50,000 sesterces if he would sell her an instantaneous poison and she could buy her husband's death. When this was settled, he pretended to make up the well-known potion for soothing the inner organs and drawing off bile, which the learned call "life's elixir"; but in its place he substituted another drug, a death's elixir.¹ Then, in the presence of the young man's family and several friends and relatives, the doctor took the carefully mixed drink in his own hand and offered it to the sick man.

¹ Literally "sacred to Proserpina" (the goddess of death).

26 Sed audax illa mulier, ut simul et conscium sceleris amoliretur et quam desponderat pecuniam lucraretur, coram detento calice, "Non prius," inquit "medicorum optime, non prius carissimo mihi marito trades istam potionem quam de ea bonam partem hauseris ipse. Unde enim scio an noxium in ea lateat venenum? Quae res utique te, tam prudentem tamque doctum virum, nequaquam offendit, si religiosa uxor circa salutem mariti sollicita necessariam affero pietatem."

Qua mira desperatione truculentae feminae repente perturbatus medicus, excussusque toto consilio et ob angustiam temporis spatio cogitandi privatus, antequam trepidatione aliqua vel cunctatione ipsa daret malae conscientiae suspicionem, indidem de potione gustavit ampliter. Quam fidem secutus adulescens etiam sumpto calice quod offerebatur hausit. Ad istum modum praesenti transacto negotio medicus quam celerrime domum remeabat, salutifera potione pestem praecedentis veneni festinans extinguere. Nec eum obstinatione sacrilega qua semel coeperat truculenta mulier ungue latius a se discedere passa est "priusquam" inquit "digesta potione medicinae proventus appareat." Sed aegre¹

¹ F *aegra*.

26 That shameless woman, however, wishing simultaneously to get rid of her accomplice in crime and save the money she had promised, stopped him in plain view from passing the cup. "You shall not, noble physician," she said, "you shall not give that medicine to my beloved husband until you have first drunk a good portion of it yourself. How do I know that some harmful poison is not concealed in it? This precaution surely does not offend so careful and well-educated a man as yourself, if as a devoted wife anxious for my husband's welfare I show a proper sense of responsibility."

This was an amazing and desperate stroke by the fierce woman, and it threw the physician into sudden confusion and shock. The pressure of time deprived him of any room for thought, and so, before he should arouse any suspicion of a bad conscience by showing fear or even hesitation, he took a generous taste of the medicine. Reassured by this, the young man accepted the cup and drank down the proffered dose. The doctor, having now fulfilled his business obligation, wished to get home as quickly as possible, since he was in a hurry to quench the destructiveness of the earlier poison with some life-saving antidote. But the vicious woman, with damnable persistence in the scheme she had begun, would not let him move a hair's breadth away from her "until," she said, "the dose spreads through the body and the medicine's effect begins to show." After a long time and with great difficulty he finally wore

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precibus et obtestationibus eius multum ac diu fatigata tandem abire concessit. Interdum perniciem caecam totis visceribus furem medullae penitus attraxerant. Multum denique saucius et gravedine somnulentia iam demersus domum pervadit aegerime. Vixque enarratis cunctis ad uxorem, mandato saltem promissam mercedem mortis geminatae deposceret, sic elisus violenter spectatissimus medicus effundit spiritum.

- 27 Nec ille¹ tamen iuvenis diutius vitam tenuerat, sed inter fictas mentitasque lacrimas uxoris pari casu mortis fuerat extinctus. Iamque eo sepulto, paucis interiectis diebus quis feralia mortuis litan- tur obsequia, uxor medici pretium geminae mortis petens aderat. Sed mulier usquequaque sui similis, fidei suppressens faciem, praetendens imaginem, blandiculae respondit, et omnia prolixè accumu- lateque pollicetur, et statutum praemium sine mora se reddituram constituit, modo paucillam de ea potione largiri sibi vellet ad incepti negotii persecu- tionem. Quid pluribus? Laqueis fraudium pes- simarum uxor inducta medici facile consentit et, quo se gratiorem locupletae feminae faceret, propè- ter domo petitam totam prorsus veneni pyxidem mulieri tradidit. Quae grandem scelerum nanta materiam longe lateque cruentas suas manus porrigit.

¹ *F illa; illo* is also possible as ablative of comparison referring to the doctor.

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her down with his many entreaties and protesta- tions, and she permitted him to leave. Meanwhile the hidden bane raging through his intestines had been deeply absorbed into his marrow. Very ill and already sunken into a comatose torpor, he made it home with extreme difficulty. He had barely told his wife the whole story and bidden her at least to demand the promised payment for this twin murder when, choking violently, the illustrious physician gave up the ghost.

- 27 Nor, for his part, had the young husband kept any longer hold on life, but died a like death amid the simulated false tears of his wife. After he had been buried and the few days for offering funeral rites to the dead had passed, the doctor's wife arrived seeking payment for the double murder. The woman remained true to her nature. Conceal- ing the face of honesty but wearing its mask, she answered the doctor's wife politely and promised her everything generously and in good measure; she asserted that she would pay the agreed price at once, but would she please give her a bit more of the same potion to finish the job. To make a long story short, the doctor's wife was caught in the noose of wicked treachery and readily assented. To ingra- tiate herself further with the rich lady, she hastened home, fetched the entire box of poison, and handed it to the woman. The latter, having now acquired ample materials for the commission of her crimes, stretched out her blood-stained hands far and wide.

28 Habebat filiam parvulam de marito quem nuper necaverat. Huic infantulae quod leges necessariam patris successionem deferrent sustinebat aegerrime, inhiansque toto filiae patrimonio imminebat et capiti. Ergo certa defunctorum liberorum matres sceleratas hereditates excipere, talem parentem praebeuit qualem exhibuerat uxorem, prandioque commento pro tempore et uxorem medici simul et suam filiam veneno eodem percutit. Sed parvulae quidem tenuem spiritum et delicata ac tenera praecordia conficit protinus virus infestum, at uxor medici, dum noxiis ambagibus pulmones eius pererarat tempestas detestabilis potionis, primum suspicata quod res erat, mox urgente spiritu iam certo certior, contendit ad ipsam praesidis domum, magnoque fidem eius protestata clamore et populi concitato tumultu, utpote tam immania detectura flagitia, efficit statim sibi simul et domus et aures praesidis patefierent. Iamque ab ipso exordio crudelissimae mulieris cunctis atrocitatibus diligenter expositis, repente mentis nubilo turbine correpta semihiantes adhuc compressit labias et, attritu dentium longo stridore reddito, ante ipsos praesidis pedes exanimis corrui.

28 She had a baby daughter by the husband whom she had just murdered. She was furious that the laws awarded the father's inheritance by natural right to this little girl, and in her lust for her daughter's entire patrimony she became a threat to the child's life too. Knowing that mothers can inherit from their children crime-tainted legacies, she proved herself to be as wicked a parent as she had been a wife. She contrived a dinner party to fit the occasion and simultaneously struck down both the doctor's wife and her own daughter with the same poison. In the little girl's case the deadly venom quickly despatched her feeble lungs and delicate and sensitive vitals. Not so the doctor's wife. While the storm of the abominable drug raged through her lungs in its poisonous path, she first suspected the truth and then soon, as her breathing became laboured, she was absolutely certain. She hurried straight to the governor's house and, appealing with a loud cry for his protection, raised an uproar among the crowd, saying that she had appalling crimes to reveal. She managed to get the governor to open both his house and his ears to her at once. Starting from the very beginning she made a careful exposition of all the atrocities committed by that ruthless woman when suddenly her mind was gripped by a cloud of dizziness, her half-open lips locked together, a long rasping noise came from her grating teeth, and she collapsed lifeless at the governor's very feet.

Nec ille, vir alioquin exercitus, tam multiforme facinus excetrae¹ venenatae dilatione languida passus marcescere, confestim cubiculariis mulieris attractis vi tormentorum veritatem eruit, atque illam, minus quidem quam merebatur, sed quod dignus cruciatus alius excogitari non poterat, certe bestiis obiciendam pronuntiavit.

29 Talis mulieris publicitus matrimonium confarreaturus ingentique angore oppido suspensus exspectabam diem muneris, saepius quidem mortem mihimet volens consciscere priusquam scelerosae mulieris contagio macularer vel infamia publici spectaculi depudescerem. Sed privatus humana manu, privatus digitis, ungula rotunda atque mutila gladium stringere nequaquam poteram. Plane tenui specula solabar clades ultimas, quod ver in ipso ortu iam gemmulis floridis cuncta depingeret et iam purpureo nitore prata vestiret, et commodum dirrupto spineo tegmine spirantes cinnameos odores promicarent rosae, quae me priori meo Lucio redderent.

Dies ecce muneri destinatus aderat. Ad consaeptum caveae prosequente populo pompatico favore deducor. Ac dum ludicris scaenicorum choreis primitiae spectaculi dedicantur, tantisper ante portam constitutus pabulum laetissimi graminis, quod in

¹ F *excreta*.

As an experienced administrator he did not allow the many crimes of this poisonous serpent to pale from long delays, but immediately arrested her chambermaids and tortured the truth out of them. As for the woman, although it was less than she deserved, but because no other punishment could be devised that was appropriate, he sentenced her at least to be thrown to the beasts.

29 That was the woman with whom I was supposed to celebrate the solemnities of marriage in public. I awaited the day of the show in a state of terrible suspense and great torment, frequently wishing to kill myself rather than be polluted by the infection of that depraved woman or shamed by the disgrace of a public spectacle. But, lacking a human hand and fingers, I had no way to unsheath a sword with my round, misshapen hoof. In this uttermost catastrophe I consoled myself with just one slender hope: spring in her moment of birth was now painting everything with her flowery jewels and clothing the meadows with crimson brilliance; and recently the roses had burst their thorny covers and sparkled forth, exhaling their spicy fragrance—roses that could restore me to the Lucius I used to be.

And now the day appointed for the show had come. I was led to the outside wall of the theatre, escorted by crowds in an enthusiastic parade. The opening of the show was given over to actors' mimic dances; meanwhile I enjoyed myself standing in front of the gate, browsing on the lush, rich grass

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ipso germinabat aditu, libens affectabam, subinde curiosos oculos patente porta spectaculi prospectu gratissimo reficiens.

Nam puelli puellaeque virenti florentes aetatula, forma conspiciui, veste nitidi, incessu gestuosi, Graecanicam saltaturi pyrricam, dispositis ordinationibus decoros ambitus inerrabant, nunc in orbem rotatum flexuosi, nunc in obliquam seriem conexi, et in quadratum patorem cuneati, et in catervae discidium separati. At ubi discursus reciproci multinodas ambages tubae terminalis cantus explicuit, aulae¹ subducto et complicitis sipariis scaena disponitur.

30 Erat mons ligneus, ad instar incluti montis illius quem vates Homerus Idaeum cecinit, sublimes instructus fabrica, consitus virectis et vivis arboribus, summo cacumine de manibus fabri fonte manante fluviales aquas eliquans. Capellae pauculae tondebant herbulas, et in modum Paridis, Phrygii pastoris, barbaricis amiculis umeris defluentibus pulchre indusiatus adulescens, aurea tiara contacto capite, pecuarium simulabat magisterium. Adest luculentus puer, nudus nisi quod ephebica chlamida sinistrum tegebat umerum,

¹ *F albeo*, corrected to *alveo*.

¹ This was originally a war-dance, but the term was extended to various sorts of suggestive mimic dance.

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which grew right in the entrance-way, and occasionally refreshing my inquisitive eyes with a delightful glimpse of the show through the open gate.

There were boys and girls in the bloom of verdant youth, outstanding in beauty, resplendent in costume, and graceful in movement, all ready to dance the Greek Pyrrhic.¹ They went through beautiful dance-cycles with carefully arranged patterns, now turning into a rounded circle, now linked into a slanting chain, then wedged into a hollow square, then split into separate sections. But when the horn's concluding note had unravelled the knotted complexities of their alternating movements, the curtain was raised, the screens folded back, and the stage was set.

30 There stood a wooden mountain, constructed with lofty craftsmanship to resemble the famous mountain of which the bard Homer sang, Mount Ida.² It was planted with bushes and live trees, and at its very peak, from a flowing fountain made by the designer's hand, it poured river-water. A few goats were browsing among the low grasses, and a young man, beautifully attired like the Phrygian shepherd Paris, with exotic robes flowing over his shoulders and a golden tiara covering his head, was feigning mastery of the flock. Then a radiantly beautiful boy appeared, naked except for an ephebic cape covering his left shoulder. He attracted all

² A high mountain near Troy.

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flavis crinibus usquequaque conspicuus, et intercomas eius aureae pinnulae colligatione¹ simili sociatae prominebant; quem² et virgula Mercurium indicabant. Is saltatorie procurrens malumque bracteis inauratum dextra gerens ei³ qui Paris videbatur porrigit, quid mandaret Iuppiter nutu significans, et protinus gradum scitule referens e conspectu facessit. Insequitur puella vultu honesta in deae Iunonis speciem similis: nam et caput stringebat diadema candida, ferebat et sceptrum. Irrupit alia, quam putares Minervam, caput cōnecta fulgenti galea — et oleaginea corona tegebatur ipsa galea — clipeum attollens et hastam qua
31 tiens, et qualis illa cum pugnat. Super has introcessit alia, visendo decore praepollens, gratia coloris ambrosei designans Venerem, qualis fuit Venus cum fuit virgo, nudo et intecto corpore perfectam formositatem professa, nisi quod tenui pallio bombycino inumbrabat spectabilem pubem. Quam quidem laciniam curiosulus ventus satis amanter nunc lasciviens reflabat, ut dimota pateret flos aetulae, nunc luxurians aspirabat, ut adhaerens presule membrorum voluptatem graphice liniaret.⁴

¹ F *cognitione*.

² F *quem caduceum*.

³ *ei* added conjecturally; others add *adulescenti*.

⁴ F *liciniaret*.

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eyes with his blond curls, and from his hair projected little golden wings symmetrically attached; a caduceus and wand identified him as Mercury. He danced forward, carrying in his right hand an apple gilded with gold leaf, which he held out to the person who was acting Paris. Then, after indicating Jupiter's instructions¹ with a nod, he quickly and elegantly retraced his steps and disappeared. Next came a girl of respectable appearance, got up as the goddess Juno: her head was bound with a pure white diadem and she carried a sceptre. On came another girl, whom you would have recognised as Minerva: her head was covered by a gleaming helmet and the helmet itself was topped with an olive wreath; she held a shield and brandished a spear, in
31 the attitude of the goddess when fighting. After these another girl made her entrance, surpassingly beautiful to look at, with a charming ambrosial complexion, representing Venus as Venus looked when she was a virgin. She displayed a perfect figure, her body naked and uncovered except for a piece of sheer silk with which she veiled her comely charms. An inquisitive little breeze would at one moment blow this veil aside in wanton playfulness so that it lifted to reveal the flower of her youth, and at another moment it would gust exuberantly against it so that it clung tightly and graphically delineated her body's voluptuousness. Moreover, the very

¹ Namely, to act as judge in the goddesses' beauty contest.

Ipsæ autem color deæ diversus in speciem: corpus candidum, quod caelo demeat, amictus caeruleus, quod mari remeat.

Iam singulas virgines quæ deæ putabantur sui comitabantur¹ comites, Iunonem quidem Castor et Pollux, quorum capita cassides ovatae stellarum apicibus insignes contegebant; sed et isti Castores erant scaenici pueri. Haec puella, varios modulos Iastia² concinente tibia, procedens quieta et inaffecteda gesticulatione nutibus honestis pastori pollicetur, si sibi praemium decoris addixisset, sese regnum totius Asiae tributuram. At illam quam cultus armorum Minervam fecerat duo pueri muniebant, proelialis deæ comites armigeri, Terror et Metus, nudis insultantes gladiis. At pone tergum tibicen Dorium³ canebat bellicosum et, permiscens bombis gravibus tinnitus acutos in modum tubæ, saltationis agilis vigorem suscitabat. Haec inquieto capite et oculis in aspectu⁴ minacibus citato et intorto genere gesticulationis alacer demonstrabat Paridi, si sibi formæ victoriam tradidisset, fortem tropæisque bellorum inclutum suis adminiculis

¹ *sui comitabantur* is an editorial addition. Some verb is needed; other suggestions include *tutabantur* and *sequebantur*.

² *Iastia*.

³ *I tibicenorium*.

⁴ *I aspectum*.

¹ Twin sons of Leda born from an egg after their mother had been impregnated by Jupiter in the form of a swan. Helen was their sister. They became immortal as the

colouring of the goddess offered variety to the eye—her body white because she comes down from heaven, her robe blue because she comes up from the sea.

Each of the maidens who was acting a goddess was accompanied by her own companions. Juno was followed by Castor and Pollux,¹ whose heads were capped with egg-shaped helmets marked by stars at their peaks. In fact these twin Castors were also boys from the stage-company. Accompanied by an Ionian flute playing various tunes, Juno stepped forward with quiet and unaffected movements, and with lady-like gestures promised the shepherd that if he awarded her the prize for beauty she would assign him rule over all Asia. Now the girl whose military equipment had turned her into Minerva was guarded by two boys, armour-bearing companions of the battle-goddess, Terror and Fear, who leaped forward with naked swords. Behind their backs a piper played a martial Dorian tune and mixed deep growls with shrill whistles like a war-trumpet, rousing the energy of their brisk dance. She tossed her head and glared menacingly, and with quick, jerky gestures indicated to Paris that if he assigned her the victory in beauty he would become, with her assistance, brave and renowned constellation Gemini and were protectors of sailors. As Roman divinities they were known collectively as the Castores and had a temple in the Roman Forum.

futurum.

32 Venus ecce cum magno favore caveae in ipso meditullio scaenae, circumfuso populo laetissimorum parvulorum, dulce surridens constitit amoene. Illos teretes et lacteos puellōs diceres tu Cupidines veros de caelo vel mari commodum involasse; nam et pinnulis et sagittulis et habitu cetero formae praeclare congruebant, et velut nuptiales epulas obiturae dominae coruscis praeucebant facibus. Et influunt innuptarum puellarum decorae suboles, hinc Gratiae gratissimae, inde Horae pulcherrimae, quae iaculis floris serti et soluti deam suam propitiantes scitissimum construxerant chorum, dominae voluptatum veris coma blandientes. Iam tibiae multiforabiles cantus Lydiōs dulciter consonant. Quibus spectatorum pectora suave mulcentibus, longe suavior Venus placide commoveri cunctantique lente vestigio et leniter fluctuante spinula¹ et sensim adnutante capite coepit incedere, mollique tiliarum sono delicatis respondere gestibus, et nunc mite coniventibus, nunc acre comminantibus gestire pupulis, et nonnunquam saltare solis oculis. Haec ut primum ante iudicis conspectum facta est, nisu bracciorum polliceri videbatur, si fuisset deabus ceteris antelata,

¹ F *fluctuantes pinnulas*.

for trophies gained in war.

32 And now Venus, amidst loud applause from the audience, delightfully took her position at the very centre of the stage, smiling sweetly and surrounded by a whole mob of happy little boys. You would have said that those soft, round, milky-skinned babies were real Cupids who had just flown in from the sky or the sea. With their little wings and tiny arrows and all the rest of their costume they fitted the part splendidly, and they lit the way for their mistress with twinkling torches as if she were on her way to her wedding feast. Then in streamed handsome groups of unwed girls, on one side the graceful Graces, on the other the lovely Hours, worshipping their goddess by throwing garlands and loose flowers; they formed a most elegant dance-pattern as they beguiled the Queen of pleasures with the tresses of Spring. Now flutes with many stops played Lydian melodies in sweet harmony; and while these tunes were delightfully charming the spectators' hearts, far more delightfully Venus started gently to move. With slow hesitant step and smoothly undulating body and gently moving head she began to walk forward, and to respond to the soft sound of the flutes with delicate movements. She gestured with her glances, now softly languid, now sharply threatening, and sometimes she would dance with her eyes alone. As soon as she arrived in sight of her judge, she could be seen to promise, with a motion of her arms, that if she were preferred over

daturam se nuptam Paridi forma praecipuam suique consimilem. Tunc animo volenti Phrygius iuvenis malum quod tenebat aureum velut victoriae calculum puellae tradidit.

33 Quid ergo miramini, vilissima capita, immo forensia pecora, immo vero togati vulturii, si toti nunc iudices sententias suas pretio nundinantur, cum rerum exordio inter deos et homines agitata iudicium corruperit gratia, et originalem sententiam magni Iovis consiliis electus iudex rusticanus et opilio lucro libidinis vendiderit, cum totius etiam suae stirpis exitio? Sic hercules et alii sequensque¹ iudicium inter inclutos Achivorum duces celebratum, vel cum falsis insimulationibus eruditione doctrinaque praepollens Palamedes proditionis damnatur, vel² virtute Martia praepotenti praefertur Ulixes³ modicus Aiaci maximo. Quale autem et illud iudicium apud legiferos Athenienses catos illos et omnis scientiae magistros? Nonne

¹ *F sequens.*

² This second *vel* is an editorial addition.

³ *Fauxies.*

¹ Helen.

² Palamedes, one of the Greek heroes fighting at Troy, was destroyed through the machinations of Ulysses, who forged a letter from the Trojan king Priam and planted it in Palamedes' tent. After the death of Achilles, his

the other goddesses she would give Paris a bride of surpassing beauty, the very image of herself.¹ At that point the Phrygian youth eagerly handed the girl the golden apple he was holding, so casting the vote for her victory.

33 Why are you so surprised, you cheap ciphers—or should I say sheep of the courts, or better still vultures in togas—if nowadays all jurors hawk their verdicts for a price, since at the world's beginning an adjudication between gods and men was corrupted by beauty's influence, and a country shepherd, chosen judge on the advice of great Jupiter, sold the first verdict for a profit of pleasure, resulting in the destruction of himself and his entire race? And it was the same, by Hercules, with a second and yet another celebrated case among the far-famed princes of the Achaeans, when Palamedes, a man of superior learning and wisdom, was condemned for treason because of false accusations, or mediocre Ulysses was preferred to great Ajax, who was supreme in martial valour.² And what kind of a trial was that one held by the Athenians, those skilful legislators and teachers of all knowledge? Is it not true that that divinely wise old

his armour was awarded by vote of the Greek chieftains to Ulysses, and the injury to Ajax's pride resulted in his suicide. Both these mythological examples of unjust conviction are also used by Socrates in Plato's *Apology* (41b).

divinae prudentiae senex, quem sapientia praetulit cunctis mortalibus deus Delphicus, fraude et invidia nequissimae factionis circumventus velut corruptor adolescentiae, quam frenis coercebat, herbae pestilentis suco noxio peremptus est, relinquens civibus ignominiae perpetuae maculam, cum nunc etiam egregii philosophi sectam eius sanctissimam praeoptent et summo beatitudinis studio iurent in ipsius nomen?

Sed ne quis indignationis meae reprehendat impetum secum sic reputans “Ecce nunc patiemur philosophantem nobis asinum?” rursus unde decessi revertar ad fabulam.

- 34 Postquam finitum est illud Paridis iudicium, Iuno quidem cum Minerva tristes et iratis similes e scaena redeunt, indignationem repulsae gestibus professae, Venus vero gaudens et hilaris laetitiam suam saltando toto cum choro professa est. Tunc de summo montis cacumine per quandam latentem fistulam in excelsum prorumpit vino crocus diluta, sparsimque defluens pascentes circa capellas odoro perpluit imbre, donec in meliorem maculatae speciem canitiem propriam luteo colore mutarent. Iamque tota suave fraglante cavea montem illum ligneum terrae vorago decepit.

¹ Socrates, who was tried by the Athenians and condemned to drink hemlock, in 399 B.C. See Plato's *Apology* 21a for the Delphic oracle, and 24b ff. for the charge.

man, whom the Delphic god pronounced superior to all other mortals in intelligence, was attacked by the lies and malice of an utterly worthless faction, accused of being a corruptor of the young—whom he was in fact keeping in rein—and murdered with the poisonous juice of a baleful herb?¹ He bequeathed to his fellow-citizens the stain of eternal disgrace, because even to this day the best philosophers choose his holy school and in their zealous pursuit of happiness swear by his very name.

But I am afraid one of you may reproach me for this attack of indignation and think to himself, “So, now are we going to have to stand an ass lecturing us on philosophy?” So I shall return to the story at the point where I left it.

- 34 After the judgement of Paris was completed, Juno and Minerva went off stage, gloomy and acting angry, proclaiming with gestures their wrath at being defeated. Venus, on the other hand, joyfully and gaily proclaimed her happiness by dancing with her entire chorus. Then, from a hidden pipe at the very peak of the mountain, saffron dissolved in wine came spurting up into the air and rained down in a fragrant shower, sprinkling the goats that were grazing all round, until, dyed to a greater beauty, they exchanged their natural whiteness for a yellow hue. Finally, when the theatre was filled with the delightful fragrance, a chasm in the earth opened and swallowed up the wooden mountain.

Ecce quidam miles per mediam plateam dirigit cursum, petiturus iam populo postulante illam de publico carcere mulierem, quam dixi propter multiforme scelus bestiis esse damnatam meisque praeclaris nuptiis destinatam. Et iam torus genialis scilicet noster futurus accuratissime disternebatur lectus Indica testudine perlucidus, plumea congerie tumidus, veste serica floridus.

At ego praeter pudorem obeundi publice concubitus, praeter contagium scelestae pollutaeque feminae, metu etiam mortis maxime cruciabar, sic ipse mecum reputans, quod in amplexu Venerio scilicet nobis cohaerentibus, quaecumque ad exitium mulieris bestia fuisset immissa, non adeo vel prudentia sollers vel artificio docta vel abstinencia frugi posset provenire, ut adiacentem lateri meo laceraret mulierem, mihi vero quasi indemnato et
35 innoxio parceret. Ergo igitur non de pudore iam, sed de salute ipsa sollicitus, dum magister meus lectulo probe coaptando districtus¹ inservit, et tota familia partim ministerio venationis occupata, partim voluptario spectaculo attonita, meis cogitationibus liberum tribuebatur arbitrium, nec magnopere quisquam custodiendum tam mansuetum putabat asinum, paulatim furtivum pedem

¹ *F districtus.*

And now a soldier came hurrying across the theatre floor in answer to the audience's demands, to fetch the woman from the public prison, the one who I told you had been condemned to the beasts for her manifold crimes and engaged to make an illustrious match with me. And now a bed, evidently meant to serve as our honeymoon couch, was being elaborately made up, shining with Indian tortoiseshell, piled high with a feathered mattress, and spread with a flowery silk coverlet.

But as for me, besides my shame at indulging in sexual intercourse in public, besides the contagion of this damnable polluted woman, I was greatly tormented by the fear of death; for I thought to myself that, when we were in fact fastened together in Venus' embrace, any wild animal that might be let in to slaughter the woman could not possibly turn out to be so intelligently clever or so skilfully educated or so temperately moderate as to mangle the woman lying attached to my loins while sparing me on the grounds that I was unconvicted and innocent.
35 So now I was afraid not for my honour, but for my very life. While my trainer gave his full attention to the proper fitting of our couch, and all the slaves were busy, some occupied with preparations for the hunting-spectacle, the others spellbound by the sensual pleasure of the show, I was allowed free rein for my own devices. Besides, no one thought that such a tame ass needed to be watched very carefully. So I slowly moved forward without being observed until

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proferens portam quae proxima est potitus, iam cursu memet¹ celerrimo proripio, sexque totis passuum milibus perniciter confectis Cenchreas pervado, quod oppidum audit quidem nobilissimae coloniae Corinthiensium, alluitur autem Aegaeo et Saronico mari. Inibi portus etiam tutissimum navium receptaculum magno frequentatur populo. Vitatis ergo turbulis et electo secreto litore, prope ipsas fluctuum aspergines in quodam mollissimo harenae gremio lassum corpus porrectus refoveo. Nam et ultimam diei metam curriculum solis deflexerat, et vespertinae² me quieti traditum dulcis somnus oppresserat.

¹ F *cursum met.*

² Often emended to *vespertinae* (cf. III 1).

METAMORPHOSES X

I reached the nearest gate, and then hurled myself forward with the utmost rapidity. I covered six whole miles at full speed and arrived at the town of Cenchreae, which is well-known as part of the illustrious territory of the Corinthians, and is washed by the Aegean Sea and the Saronic Gulf. The port there is a safe harbour for ships and has a large population. I avoided the crowds, therefore, and chose a hidden stretch of shore. There, right next to the spray from the breakers, I stretched out in a soft hollow of sand to refresh my weary body, for the Sun's chariot had raced round the last turning-post of the day. As I surrendered myself to the evening's quiet, sweet sleep overwhelmed me.

LIBER XI

1 Circa primam ferme noctis vigiliam experrectus pavore subito, video praemicantis lunae candore nimio completum orbem commodum marinis emergentem fluctibus. Nactusque opacae noctis silentiosa secreta, certus etiam summam deam praecipua maiestate pollere resque prorsus humanas ipsius regi providentia, nec tantum pecunia et ferina, verum inanima etiam divino eius luminis numinisque nutu vegetari, ipsa etiam corpora terra caelo marique nunc incrementis consequenter augeri, nunc detrimentis obsequenter imminui, fato scilicet iam meis tot tantisque cladibus satiato et spem salutis, licet tardam, sumministrante, augustum specimen deae praesentis statui deprecari. Confestimque discussa pigra quiete laetus et alacer¹ exsurgo meque protinus purificandi studio marino lavacro trado, septiesque summerso fluctibus capite,

¹ F *quiete alacere* (see next note).

BOOK XI

1 About the first watch of the night I awoke in sudden fright and saw, just emerging from the waves of the sea, the full circle of the moon glistening with extraordinary brilliance. Surrounded by the silent mysteries of dark night, I realised that the supreme goddess now exercised the fullness of her power; that human affairs were wholly governed by her providence; that not only flocks and wild beasts but even lifeless things were quickened by the divine favour of her light and might; and that individual bodies on land, in the sky, and in the sea grew at one period in consequence of her waxing and diminished at another in obedience to her waning. Since fate, it seemed, was now satiated with the number and intensity of my sufferings, and was offering me the hope, albeit late, of deliverance, I decided to pray to the august image of the goddess present before me. Quickly I shook off my sluggish sleep and arose happily and eagerly. Desiring to purify myself I went at once to bathe in the sea, plunging my head under

quod eum numerum praecipue religionibus aptissimum divinus ille Pythagoras prodidit, deam¹ praepotentem lacrimoso vultu sic apprecabar.

2 “Regina caeli—sive tu Ceres alma frugum parens originalis, quae, repertu laetata filiae, vetustae glandis ferino remoto pabulo, miti commostrato cibo, nunc Eleusiniam glebam percolis; seu tu caelestis Venus, quae primis rerum exordiis sexuum diversitatem generato Amore sociasti et aeterna subole humano genere propagato nunc circumfluo Paphi sacrario coleris; seu Phoebi soror, quae partu fetarum medelis lenientibus recreato populos tantos educasti praeclarisque nunc veneraris delubris Ephesi; seu nocturnis ululatibus horrenda Proserpina, triformi facie larvales impetus comprimens, terraeque claustra cohibens, lucos diversos inerrans vario cultu propitiaris—ista luce feminea collus-

¹ *F laetus et alacer deam.*

¹ A Greek philosopher of the sixth century B.C., who founded an ascetic religious community, and is chiefly known for his doctrine of the transmigration of souls and various numerological theories.

² See VI 2 and note.

³ Used of Venus, *caelestis* suggests (1) the Phoenician goddess Astarte, who frequently has the epithet *caelestis* in Latin inscriptions, and (2) the Platonic concept of higher celestial love in contrast to lower earthly love (see Plato, *Symposium* 180d and Apuleius, *Apology* 12).

⁴ See IV 29 and note.

the waves seven times, because the divine Pythagoras¹ had declared that number to be especially appropriate to religious rituals. Then, my face covered with tears, I prayed to the mighty goddess.

2 “O queen of heaven—whether you are bountiful Ceres, the primal mother of crops, who in joy at the recovery of your daughter took away from men their primeval animal fodder of acorns and showed them gentler nourishment, and now dwell in the land of Eleusis²; or heavenly Venus,³ who at the first foundation of the universe united the diversity of the sexes by creating Love and propagated the human race through ever-recurring progeny, and now are worshipped in the island sanctuary of Paphos⁴; or Phoebus’ sister, who brought forth populous multitudes by relieving the delivery of offspring with your soothing remedies, and now are venerated at the illustrious shrine of Ephesus⁵; or dreaded Proserpina of the nocturnal howls, who in triple form repress the attacks of ghosts and keep the gates to earth closed fast, roam through widely scattered groves and are propitiated by diverse rites⁶—you

⁵ Diana (and especially her Greek counterpart Artemis) was invoked to help women in childbirth under the cult-title Lucina (Greek *Eileithyia*). At Ephesus in Asia Minor she was worshipped as an Asiatic fertility goddess.

⁶ Proserpina, queen of the dead, here shares the attributes of Hecate, a chthonic deity associated with the Underworld and with magic.

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trans cuncta moenia, et udis¹ ignibus nutriens laeta semina, et Solis ambagibus dispensans incerta lumina; quoquo nomine, quoquo ritu, quaqua facie te fas est invocare: tu meis iam nunc extremis aerumnis subsiste, tu fortunam collapsam affirma, tu saevis exanclatis casibus pausam pacemque tribue. Sit satis laborum, sit satis periculorum. Depelle quadripedis diram faciem, redde me conspectui meorum, redde me meo Lucio. Ac si quod offensum numen inexorabili me saevitia premit, mori saltem liceat, si non licet vivere.”

3 Ad istum modum fuis precibus et astructis miseris lamentationibus, rursus mihi marcentem animum in eodem illo cubili sopor circumfusus oppressit. Necdum satis coniveram² et ecce pelago medio venerandos diis etiam vultus attollens emergit divina facies; ac dehinc paulatim toto corpore perlucidum simulacrum excusso pelago ante me constitisse visum est. Eius mirandam speciem ad vos etiam referre conitar, si tamen mihi disserendi tribuerit facultatem paupertas oris humani, vel ipsum numen eius dapsilem copiam elocutilis facundiae sumministraverit.

Iam primum crines uberrimi prolixique et sensim intorti per divina colla passive dispersi molliter

¹ *F undis.*

² Or *conixeram*, for *F's conipseram*.

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who illumine every city with your womanly light, nourish the joyous seeds with your moist fires, and dispense beams of fluctuating radiance according to the convolutions of the Sun—by whatever name, with whatever rite, in whatever image it is meet to invoke you: defend me now in the uttermost extremes of tribulation, strengthen my fallen fortune, grant me rest and peace from the cruel mischances I have endured. Let this be enough toil, enough danger. Rid me of this dreadful four-footed form, restore me to the sight of my own people, restore me to the Lucius I was. But if some divine power that I have offended is harassing me with inexorable savagery, at least let me die, if I may not live.”

3 When I had thus poured out my prayer and added pitiable lamentations, my fainting spirit was once more engulfed and overwhelmed by sleep on that same couch. I had hardly closed my eyes when suddenly from the midst of the sea a divine face emerged, displaying a countenance worthy of adoration even by the gods. Slowly it appeared until its whole body came into view and, the brine shaken off, a radiant vision stood before me. I shall try to describe its marvellous appearance for you too, if only the poverty of human speech allows me the means of expression, or the deity herself supplies me with rich abundance of rhetorical skill.

First of all her hair, thick, long, and lightly curled, flowed softly down, loosely spread over her

defluebant. Corona multiformis variis floribus sublimem destrinxerat verticem, cuius media quidem super frontem plana rotunditas in modum speculi, vel immo argumentum lunae, candidum lumen emicabat, dextra laevaue sulcis insurgentium viperarum cohibita, spicis etiam Cerialibus desuper porrectis ornata. Tunica¹ multicolor, bysso tenui pertexta, nunc albo candore lucida, nunc croceo flore lutea, nunc roseo rubore flammida; et quae longe longaeque etiam meum confutabat optutum palla nigerrima splendens atro nitore, quae circumcirca remeans et sub dexterum latus ad umerum laevum recurrens, umbonis vicem deiecta parte lacinae, multiplici contabulatione pendula, ad ultimas oras nodulis fimbriarum decoriter fluctuabat. Per intexam extremitatem et in ipsa eius planitie stellae dispersae coruscabant, earumque media semenstris luna flammeos spirabat ignes. Quaquam tamen insignis illius pallae perfluebat ambitus, individuo nexu corona totis floribus totisque constructa pomis adhaerebat. Iam gestamina longe diversa. Nam dextra quidem ferebat aereum crepitaculum, cuius per angustam laminam in modum baltei recurvatam traiectae mediae paucae virgulae, crispante brachio trigemi-

¹ F omits *ornata tunica*.

¹ This is usually taken to refer to the special knot between the breasts that was a distinctive feature of Isiac dress.

divine neck and shoulders. The top of her head was encircled by an intricate crown into which were woven all kinds of flowers. At its midpoint, above her forehead, a flat round disc like a mirror—or rather a symbol for the moon—glistened with white light. To right and left the crown was bounded by coils of rearing snakes, and adorned above with outstretched ears of wheat. Her robe, woven of sheer linen, was of many colours, here shining with white brilliance, there yellow with saffron bloom, there flaming with rosy redness; and what most especially confounded my sight was a deep black cloak gleaming with dark sheen, which was wrapped about her, running under her right arm up to her left shoulder, with part of its border let down in the form of a knot¹; it hung in complicated pleats, beautifully undulating with knotted tassels at its 4 lower edge. Along the embroidered border and over the surface of the cloak glittering stars were scattered, and at their centre the full moon exhaled fiery flames. Wherever streamed the hem of that wondrous robe, a garland of flowers and fruits of every kind was attached to it with an inseparable bond. She carried a wide variety of emblems. In her right hand she held a bronze rattle² made of a narrow strip curved like a belt, with a few rods across the middle which produced a tinkling sound as her arm

² The technical term for this Isiac musical instrument is *sistrum*.

nos iactus, reddebant argutum sonorem. Laevae vero cymbium dependebat aureum, cuius ansulae, qua parte conspicua est, insurgebat aspis caput extollens arduum cervicibus late tumescentibus. Pedes ambroseos tegebant soleae palmae victricis foliis intextae. Talis ac tanta, spirans Arabiae felicia germina, divina me voce dignata est:

- 5 “En adsum tuis commota, Luci, precibus, rerum naturae parens, elementorum omnium domina, saeculorum progenies initialis, summa numinum, regina manium, prima caelitem, deorum dearumque facies uniformis, quae caeli luminosa culmina, maris salubria flamina, inferum deplorata silentia nutibus meis dispenso; cuius numen unicum multiformi specie, ritu vario, nomine multiugo totus veneratur orbis. Inde primigenii Phryges Pessinuntiam¹ deum matrem, hinc autocthones Attici Cecropeiam Minervam, illinc fluctuantes Cyprii Paphiam Venerem, Cretes sagittiferi Dictynnam Dianam, Siculi trilingues Stygiam² Proserpinam, Eleusinii vetusti

¹ F *pessinuntant*.

² F *stigiam*.

¹ Word-play, since the Roman province was known as Arabia Felix (“Fertile Arabia”).

² This tradition is first found in Herodotus II 2.

³ Cybele, whose chief cult-centre was at Pessinuntum in Phrygia.

⁴ Cecrops was the mythical first king of Attica, the region including Athens, whose patron goddess was Athene, Minerva’s Greek counterpart.

moved in a triple beat. From her left hand hung a golden boat-shaped vessel, and on the projecting part of its handle there rose an asp, rearing its head high and swelling its neck wide. Her ambrosial feet were shod in sandals woven from leaves of victory-palm. Such was her imposing appearance as, exhaling the fertile fragrances of Arabia,¹ she favoured me with her divine voice.

- 5 “Behold, Lucius, moved by your prayers I have come, I the mother of the universe, mistress of all the elements, and first offspring of the ages; mightiest of deities, queen of the dead, and foremost of heavenly beings; my one person manifests the aspect of all gods and goddesses. With my nod I rule the starry heights of heaven, the health-giving breezes of the sea, and the plaintive silences of the underworld. My divinity is one, worshipped by all the world under different forms, with various rites, and by manifold names. In one place the Phrygians, first-born of men,² call me Pessinuntine Mother of the Gods,³ in another the autochthonous people of Attica call me Cecropian Minerva,⁴ in another the sea-washed Cyprians call me Paphian Venus; to the arrow-bearing Cretans I am Dictynna⁵ Diana, to the trilingual⁶ Sicilians Ortygian Proserpina, to the

⁵ An early Cretan goddess sometimes identified, as here, with Diana.

⁶ The three tongues are probably Punic, Greek, and Latin.

Actaeam¹ Cererem, Iunonem alii, Bellonam alii, Hecatam isti, Rhamnusiam illi, et qui nascentis dei Solis incohantibus illustrantur radiis Aethiopes utrique² priscaque doctrina pollentes Aegyptii, caerimoniis me propriis percolentes, appellant vero nomine reginam Isidem. Adsum tuos miserata casus, adsum favens et propitia. Mitte iam fletus et lamentationes omitte. Depelle maerorem. Iam tibi providentia mea illucescit dies salutaris. Ergo igitur imperiis istis meis animum intende sollicitum. Diem qui dies ex ista nocte nascetur aeterna mihi nuncupavit religio, quo sedatis hibernis tempestatibus et lenitis maris procellosis fluctibus, navigabili iam pelago rudem dedicantes carinam primitias commeatus libant mei sacerdotes. Id sacrum nec sollicita nec
 6 profana mente debebis operiri. Nam meo monitu sacerdos in ipso procinctu pompae roseam manu dextera sistro cohaerentem gestabit coronam. Incunctanter ergo dimotis turbulis alacer continuare pompam mea³ volentia fretus, et de proximo clementer velut manum sacerdotis osculabundus rosis

¹ F *vetustam deam*.

² F reads either *arique* or *trique*.

³ F *meam*.

¹ See VI 4 and note.

² See VIII 25 and note.

³ See note at XI 2.

ancient people of Eleusis Attic Ceres; some call me Juno,¹ some Bellona,² others Hecate,³ and still others Rhamnusia⁴; the people of the two Ethiopias,⁵ who are lighted by the first rays of the Sun-God as he rises every day, and the Egyptians, who are strong in ancient lore, worship me with the rites that are truly mine and call me by my real name, which is Queen Isis. I have come in pity at your misfortunes; I have come in sympathy and good will. Now stop your tears and cease your lamentation; banish your grief. Now by my providence your day of salvation is dawning. So, therefore, pay careful attention to these commands of mine. The day which will be the day born from this night has been proclaimed mine by everlasting religious observance: on that day, when the winter's tempests are lulled and the ocean's storm-blown waves are calmed, my priests dedicate an untried keel to the now navigable sea and consecrate it as the first fruits of voyaging. You must await this rite with an
 6 attitude both calm and reverent. At my command, my priest, as part of his equipment for the procession, will carry in his right hand a garland of roses attached to the sistrum. So do not hesitate, but eagerly push through the crowd and join the procession, relying on my good will; go right up to the priest and gently, as if you were going to kiss his

⁴ A cult-title of Nemesis, a Greek goddess of retribution.

⁵ Those on the two sides of the upper Nile.

decerptis, pessimae mihi que iam dudum detestabilis¹ beluae istius corio te protinus exue. Nec quicquam rerum mearum reformides ut arduum. Nam hoc eodem momento quo tibi venio, simul et ibi praesens, quae sunt sequentia sacerdoti meo per quietem facienda praecipio. Meo iussu tibi constricti comitatus decedent populi, nec inter hilares caerimonias et festiva spectacula quisquam deformem istam quam geris faciem perhorrescet, vel figuram tuam repente mutatam sequius interpretatus aliquis maligne criminabitur.

“Plane memineris et penita mente conditum semper tenebis mihi reliqua vitae tuae curricula adusque terminos ultimi spiritus vadata. Nec iniurium, cuius beneficio redieris ad homines, ei totum debere quod vives. Vives autem beatus, vives in mea tutela gloriosus, et cum spatium saeculi tui permensus ad inferos demearis, ibi quoque in ipso subterraneo semirotondo me, quam vides, Acherontis tenebris interlucentem Stygiisque penetralibus regnantem, campos Elysios incolens ipse, tibi propitiam frequens adorabis. Quodsi sedulis obsequiis

¹ *F detestabilis iam dudum.*

¹ Perhaps because of the ass's association with Seth, in Egyptian myth the murderer of Isis' husband Osiris; but also because of the lust and curiosity thought to be characteristic of asses.

² That is, in the belief that Lucius was a magician, a serious offence in Roman law.

hand, pluck the roses and cast off at once the hide of that wretched beast which I have long detested.¹ And do not shrink from any of my instructions because it seems difficult: for at this very moment when I come to you I am present there too and am instructing my priest in his sleep about what he must do next. At my command the tight-packed crowd of people will give way before you, and no one in the midst of the joyous rites and festive revelries will shrink from the unsightly aspect that you present. Nor will anyone misinterpret your sudden transformation and prefer charges against you out of spite.²

“You will clearly remember and keep forever sealed deep in your heart the fact that the rest of your life's course is pledged to me until the very limit of your last breath. Nor is it unjust that you should owe all the time you have to live to her by whose benefit you return to the world of men. Moreover you will live in happiness, you will live in glory, under my guardianship. And when you have completed your life's span and travel down to the dead, there too, even in the hemisphere under the earth, you will find me, whom you see now, shining among the shades of Acheron³ and holding court in the deep recesses of the Styx, and while you dwell in the Elysian fields I will favour you and you will constantly worship me. But if by assiduous obedience, wor-

³ Another of the rivers of the Underworld.

et religiosis ministeriis et tenacibus castimoniis numen nostrum promerueris, scies ultra statuta fato tuo spatia vitam quoque tibi prorogare mihi tantum licere."

7 Sic oraculi venerabilis fine prolato¹ numen invictum in se recessit. Nec mora cum somno protinus absolutus pavore et gaudio ac dein sudore nimio permixtus exurgo, summeque miratus deae potentis tam claram praesentiam, marino rore respersus magnisque imperiis eius intentus monitionis ordinem recolebam. Nec mora cum noctis atrae fugato nubilo Sol exurgit aureus, et ecce discursu religioso ac prorsus triumphali turbulae complent totas plateas, tantaque hilaritudine praeter peculiarem meam gestire mihi cuncta videbantur ut pecua etiam cuiusce modi et totas domos et ipsum diem serena facie gaudere sentirem. Nam et pruina pridiana dies apricus ac placidus repente fuerat insecutus, ut canorae etiam aviculae prolectatae verno vapore concentus suaves assonarent, matrem siderum, parentem temporum orbisque totius dominam blando mulcentes affamine. Quid quod arbores etiam, quae pomifera subole fecundae quaeque earum tantum umbra contentae steriles, austrinis laxatae flatibus, germine foliorum renidentes, clementi motu bracciorum dulces strepitus obsibilabant. Magnoque procellarum sedato

¹ *F per lato.*

shipful service, and determined celibacy you win the favour of my godhead, you will know that I—and I alone—can even prolong your life beyond the limits determined by your fate."

7 This was the end of the holy revelation, and the invincible divinity now withdrew into herself. At once I was quickly released from sleep, and I rose in a confusion of fear and joy, and covered with sweat. Struck with the utmost amazement by this clear manifestation of the powerful goddess's presence, I sprinkled myself with sea-spray and, intent on her great commands, reviewed her admonitions in order. At once the cloud of dark night was banished and the Sun arose all gold. Suddenly groups of people filled all the streets, milling about in a religious and truly triumphant mood. Beyond my own private joy, everything seemed to be so filled with happiness that I could feel every sort of animal, and all the houses, and even the day itself rejoicing with bright faces. For a sunny and calm day had come close on the heels of yesterday's frost, so that even the songbirds were enticed by the spring warmth to sing lovely harmonies, soothing with their charming greetings the mother of the stars, parent of the seasons, and mistress of the whole world. Why, even the trees—both the fertile ones with their offspring of fruit and the fruitless ones content to produce only shade—loosened by the southerly breezes and glistening with leaf-buds, rustled sweet whispers with the gentle motion of their arms. The mighty

fragore ac turbido fluctuum tumore posito, mare quietas alluvies temperabat. Caelum autem, nubilosa caligine disiecta, nudo sudoque luminis proprii splendore candebat.

8 Ecce pompae magnae paulatim praecedunt anteludia votivis¹ cuiusque studiis exornata pulcherrime. Hic incinctus balteo militem gerebat, illum succinctum chlamyde crepides et venabula venatorem fecerant, alius soccis obauratis inductus serica veste mundoque pretioso et attextis capite crinibus incessu perfluo feminam mentiebatur. Porro alium ocreis scuto galea ferroque insignem e ludo putares gladiatorio procedere. Nec ille deerat qui magistratum fascibus² purpuraque luderet, nec qui pallio baculoque et baxeis et hircino barbitio philosophum fingeret, nec qui diversis harundinibus alter aucupem cum visco, alter piscatorem cum hamis induceret. Vidi et ursam mansuem, quae³ cultu matronali sella vehebatur, et simiam pilleo textili crocotisque Phrygiis Catamiti pastoris specie aureum gestantem poculum, et asinum pinnis agglutinatis adambulantem cuidam seni debili, ut illum quidem Bellerophontem, hunc autem diceres

¹ F *votibus*.

² F *facibus*.

³ F omits *quae*.

¹ See note at I 12.

roar of the tempests was stilled and the boisterous swelling of waves subdued; the sea, now calm, lapped quietly against the shore. The sky too, its cloudy darkness dispersed, shone bare and clear with the brilliance of its own true light.

8 And now the prelude to the great procession gradually began to march by, everyone beautifully attired in fancy dress according to his own choice and desire. One had strapped on a sword-belt and was playing the soldier; another, wearing a tucked-up cloak, was marked by his boots and spears as a huntsman; another, dressed in gilt slippers, a silk dress, and precious ornaments, had fastened a wig of curls to his head, and with a swirling gait was pretending to be a woman. Still another was distinguished by greaves, shield, helmet, and sword: you would think he had come from a school of gladiators. There was someone playing at being a magistrate, with rods and a purple toga; and someone with a long cloak, a staff, wicker sandals, and a goatee beard, pretending to be a philosopher; and a pair carrying two different kinds of rods, the one with bird-lime representing a fowler, the other with hooks a fisherman. I also saw a tame bear who was dressed like a Roman matron and carried in a sedan chair, and a monkey with a Phrygian woven cap and saffron dress, looking like the shepherd-boy Ganymede, carrying a golden cup¹; and an ass with wings glued on his back, walking beside a decrepit old man, so that you would call the one Bellerophon

Pegasum, tamen rideres utrumque.

- 9 Inter has oblectationes ludicras popularium, quae passim vagabantur, iam sospitatrix deae peculiaris pompa moliebatur. Mulieres candido splendentibus amicimine, vario laetantes gestamine, verno florentes coronamine, quae de gremio per viam qua sacer incedebat comitatus solum sternebant flosculis; aliae quae nitentibus speculis pone tergum reversis venienti deae obvium commonstrarent obsequium, et quae pectines eburnos ferentes gestu brachiorum flexuque digitorum ornatum atque oppexum crinium regalium fingerent; illae etiam quae ceteris unguentis et geniali balsamo guttatim excusso conspargabant plateas; magnus praeterea sexus utriusque numerus lucernis, taedis, cereis, et alio genere facticii luminis¹ siderum caelestium stirpem propitiantes. Symphoniae dehinc suaves, fistulae tibiaeque modulibus dulcissimis personabant. Eas amoenus lectissimae iuventutis veste nivea et cataclista praenitens sequebatur chorus, carmen venustum iterantes, quod Camenarum favore sollers poeta modulatus edixerat, quod argumentum referebat interim maiorum antecantamenta votorum. Ibant et dicati magno Sarapi tibicines, qui per obliquum

¹ F *facuum lumine*.

¹ See note at VI 30.

² This probably refers specifically to the prayers described below in chapter 17.

and the other Pegasus,¹ but laugh at both.

- 9 In the midst of these joyful, crowd-pleasing pageants, which wandered all over the place, the special procession of the saviour goddess was now getting under way. There were women gleaming with white vestments, rejoicing in their varied insignia, garlanded with flowers of spring; they strewed the flowers in their arms along the path where the sacred company would pass. Others had shining mirrors reversed behind their backs, to show homage to the goddess as she passed; or carried ivory combs, and moving their arms and curving their fingers pretended to shape and comb the royal tresses. Still others shook out drops of delightful balsam and other ointments to sprinkle the streets. Besides these, a great throng of both sexes carried lamps, torches, candles, and other sorts of artificial light to honour the source of the heavenly stars. Next a lovely orchestra of pipes and flutes played sweet melodies. They were followed by a beautiful chorus of picked youths, brightly shining in their snow-white holiday garb, repeating a charming hymn composed and set to music by a talented poet with the Muses' help; the text gave interim preludes to the "Greater Vows."² There also came pipers dedicated to mighty Sarapis,³ who, on

³ A Hellenised Egyptian god (usually spelled *Serapis* in Latin) whose cult was instituted at Alexandria in the late fourth century B.C. He was frequently worshipped together with Isis, and identified with her husband Osiris.

calamum ad aurem porrectum dexteram familiarem templi dei que modulum frequentabant, prae-
ciaeque¹ qui facilem sacris viam dari praedicarent.

10 Tunc influunt turbae sacris divinis initiatae, viri feminaeque omnis dignitatis et omnis aetatis, lin-
teae vestis candore puro luminosi, illae limpido teg-
mine crines madidos obvolutae, hi capillum derasi
funditus verticem praenitentes — magnae religionis
terrena sidera — aereis et argenteis, immo vero
aureis etiam sistris argutum tinnitum con-
strepentes; et antistites sacrorum proceres illi, qui
candido linteamine cinctum pectoralem adusque
vestigia strictim iniecti potentissimorum deum pro-
ferebant insignes exuvias. Quorum primus lucer-
nam claro praemicantem porrigebat lumine, non
adeo nostris illis consimilem quae vespertinas
iluminant epulas, sed aureum cymbium medio sui
patore flammulam suscitans largiorem. Secundus
vestitum quidem similis, sed manibus ambabus
gerebat altaria, id est auxilia, quibus nomen dedit
proprium deae summatis auxiliaris providentia.
Ibat tertius attollens palmam auro subtiliter folia-
tam nec non Mercuriale etiam caduceum. Quartus
aequitatis ostendebat indicium deformatam manum

¹ *F et plerique.*

¹ The Egyptian god Anubis, described in the next chapter, shared characteristics with Mercury (Greek
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transverse pipes held close to the right ear, repeated
the traditional melody of the god and his temple;
and public heralds who kept warning the people to
clear the way for the holy procession.

10 Then the crowds of those initiated into the divine
mysteries came pouring in, men and women of every
rank and age. They shone with the pure radiance of
their linen robes; the women's hair was anointed
and wrapped in a transparent covering, while the
men's heads were completely shaven and their
skulls gleamed brightly — earthly stars of the great
religion. All together made a shrill ringing sound
with their sistrums of bronze and silver, and even
gold. Next came the foremost high priests of the
cult, tightly garbed in white linen cinctured at the
breast and reaching to their feet. They carried
before them the distinctive attributes of the most
powerful gods. The first held out a brightly shining
lamp, not at all resembling our lamps which provide
light for night banquets, but a golden boat which
kindled a rather large flame in an opening at its
centre. The second was similarly clad, but carried
with both hands an altar, that is, "a source of help",
whose special name was derived from the helping
providence of the supreme goddess. Then came the
third, holding aloft a palm branch made of fine gold
leaves, and also a caduceus like Mercury's.¹ The
fourth showed as a symbol of justice a deformed left
Hermes), especially as the guide of the dead from this
world to the afterlife.

sinistram porrecta palmula, quae genuina pigritia, nulla calliditate nulla sollertia praedita, videbatur aequitati magis aptior quam dextera; idem gerebat et aureum vasculum in modum papillae rotundatum, de quo lacte libabat. Quintus auream vannum aureis congestam ramulis, sextus¹ ferebat amphoram.

11 Nec mora cum dei dignati pedibus humanis incedere prodeunt, hic horrendus² ille superum commemorator et inferum, nunc atra, nunc aurea facie sublimis, attollens canis cervices arduas, Anubis, laeva caduceum gerens, dextera palmam virentem quaerens. Huius vestigium continuum sequebatur bos in erectum levata statum, bos, omniparentis³ deae fecundum simulacrum, quod residens umeris suis proferebat unus e ministerio beato gressu gestuosus. Ferebatur ab alio cista secretorum capax penitus celans operta magnificae religionis. Gerebat alius felici suo gremio summi numinis venerandam effigiem, non pecoris, non avis, non ferae, ac ne hominis quidem ipsius consimilem, sed sollerti repertu etiam ipsa novitate reverendam, altioris utcumque et magno silentio tegendae⁴ religionis argumentum ineffabile, sed ad istum plane modum fulgente auro figuratum: urnula faberrime cavata,

¹ F *et alius*.

² F *horrendum*.

³ F *omnia parentis*.

⁴ F *tegente*.

hand with palm extended, which, because of its natural slowness and lack of cleverness or dexterity, seemed more appropriate for justice than a right hand; he was also carrying a small golden vessel rounded like a breast, from which he poured libations with milk. The fifth carried a golden winnowing-fan woven from golden twigs; and the sixth carried an amphora.

11 Immediately thereafter came the gods, deigning to walk with human feet. First that awesome messenger between the gods above and those below the earth, with a face now black and now gold, tall, raising high his dog's neck: Anubis, carrying a caduceus in his left hand and brandishing a green palm-branch in his right. Immediately in his footsteps followed a cow reared to an upright posture, a cow, the fertile symbol of the divine mother of all, which, supported on his shoulders, one of the priesthood carried with proud and rhythmic steps. Another carried a basket containing secret attributes, concealing hidden objects of magnificent sanctity inside. Another carried in his happy arms the venerable image of the supreme deity. This did not resemble any domestic animal, or bird, or wild beast, or even the human form itself, but by an ingenious discovery inspired reverence by its very strangeness, an ineffable symbol of a somehow deeper sanctity which must be cloaked in great silence. But it was formed of flashing gold in exactly this manner: it was a small urn, skilfully hollowed

fundo quam rotundo, miris extrinsecus simulacris Aegyptiorum effigiata; eius orificium non altiuscule levatum in canalem porrectum longo rivulo prominēbat; ex alia vero parte multum recedens spatiosa dilatione adhaerebat ansa, quam contorto nodulo supersedebat aspis squameae cervicis striato tumore sublimis.

12 Et ecce praesentissimi numinis promissa nobis accedunt beneficia, et fata salutemque ipsam meam gerens sacerdos appropinquat, ad ipsum praescriptum divinae promissionis ornatum dextera proferens sistrum deae, mihi coronam, et hercules coronam consequenter, quod tot ac tantis exanclatis laboribus, tot emensis periculis, deae maximae providentia alluctantem mihi saevissime Fortunam superarem. Nec tamen gaudio subitario commotus inclementi me cursu proripui, verens scilicet ne repentino quadripedis impetu religionis quietus turbaretur ordo, sed placido ac prorsus humano gradu cunctabundus paulatim obliquato corpore, sane divinitus decedente populo, sensim irrepo.

13 At sacerdos, ut reapse cognoscere potui, nocturni commonefactus oraculi miratusque congruentiam

out, perfectly round at the bottom, its outer surface engraved with strange Egyptian images. Its mouth was raised only a little and stretched out into a beak, projecting in a long spout. To the opposite side was attached a handle extending far back in a wide curve; on top of the handle sat an asp in a coiled knot, rearing high the striped swelling of its scaly neck.

12 And now drew near the promised blessings of the ever-benign goddess, and there approached the priest who carried my destiny and my very salvation. In his right hand he held, decorated exactly according to the prescription of the divine promise, a sistrum for the goddess, a crown for me; and it was fitting that it should be a crown of victory, by Hercules, since now, after enduring so many great toils and passing through so many perils, by the providence of the great and mighty goddess I would overcome Fortune, who was so savagely battering me. I did not, however, dash forward in an unrestrained rush under the influence of my sudden joy, because, obviously, I was afraid lest the peaceful progression of the rites be upset by the sudden rush of a four-footed beast. Instead, with calm and almost human steps, I slowly edged my body little by little through the crowd, which doubtless by divine guidance made way, and crept gently inward.

13 But the priest, who, as I could tell from the facts, remembering the oracle he had received in his dream and marvelling at the coincidence with the

mandati muneris, confestim restitit et ultro por-
recta dextera ob os ipsum meum coronam exhibuit.
Tunc ego trepidans, assiduo pulsu micanti corde,
coronam, quae rosis amoenis intexta fulgurabat,
avidō ore susceptam cupidus promissi cupidissime¹
devoravi. Nec me fefellit caeleste promissum: pro-
tinus mihi delabatur deformis et ferina facies. Ac
primo quidem squalens pilus defluit, ac dehinc cutis
crassa tenuatur, venter obesus residet, pedum plan-
tae per ungulas in digitos exeunt, manus non iam
pedes sunt sed in erecta porriguntur officia, cervix
procera cohibetur, os et caput rotundatur, aures
enormes repetunt pristinam parvitatem, dentes
saxeī redeunt ad humanam minutiem, et, quae me
potissimum cruciabat ante, cauda nusquam.

Populi mirantur, religiosi venerantur tam evi-
dentem maximi numinis potentiam et consimilem
nocturnis imaginibus magnificentiam et facilitatem
reformationis, claraque et consona voce, caelo
manus attendentes, testantur tam illustre deae
beneficium.

14 At ego stupore nimio defixus tacitus haerebam,
animo meo tam repentinum tamque magnum non
capiente gaudium, quid potissimum praefarer pri-

¹ *cupidissime* added conjecturally; there are signs of
omission in F.

instructions he had received, stopped at once and
spontaneously stretched out his hand and held the
wreath of roses right in front of my face. I trembled,
my heart jumped and beat rapidly, and the wreath,
which gleamed with the lovely roses woven into it, I
took up with greedy mouth and, eager for the pro-
mised results, most eagerly devoured. The heavenly
promise did not fail me: at once my ugly animal
form slipped from me. First my coarse bristles
disappeared, then my thick hide thinned, my fat
belly contracted, and the soles of my feet grew out
through their hoofs into toes; my hands were no
longer feet, but were extended for their upright
functions; my long neck shrank, my face and head
rounded, and my enormous ears returned to their
original smallness; my rock-like teeth went back to
their minute human scale; and the thing which had
tortured me most of all before, my tail, no longer
existed.

The crowd was amazed, and the devout paid
homage to this clear manifestation of the power of
the mighty deity, to her grandeur which exactly
matched my dream revelations, and to the ease of
my transformation. With one clear voice, stretching
their hands toward heaven, they bore witness to the
marvellous beneficence of the goddess.

14 As for me, I was completely dumbfounded and
stood speechless, rooted to the spot. My mind could
not comprehend this great and sudden joy. I did not
know what would be most appropriate to say first,

mariam, unde novae vocis exordium caperem, quo sermone nunc renata lingua felicius auspicarer, quibus quantisque verbis tantae deae gratias agerem. Sed sacerdos utcumque divino monitu cognitis ab origine cunctis cladibus meis, quamquam et ipse insigni permotus miraculo, nutu significato prius praecipit tegendo mihi linream dari laciniam.¹ Nam me cum primum nefasto tegmine despoliaverat asinus, compressis in artum² feminibus et superstrictis accurate manibus, quantum nudo licebat velamento me naturali probe muniveram. Tunc e cohorte religionis unus impigre superiorem exutus tunicam supertexit me celerrime. Quo facto sacerdos vultu geniali et hercules inhumano in aspectum meum attonitus sic effatur:

- 15 “Multis et variis exanclatis laboribus magnisque Fortunae tempestatibus et maximis actus procellis, ad portum Quietis et aram Misericordiae tandem, Luci, venisti. Nec tibi natales ac ne dignitas quidem, vel ipsa qua flores usquam doctrina profuit, sed lubrico virentis aetatae ad serviles delapsus voluptates, curiositatis improsperae sinistrum praemium reportasti. Sed utcumque Fortunae caecitas, dum te pessimis periculis discruciat, ad reli-

¹ F *liciniam*.

² F *altum*.

where to find opening words for my new-found voice, what speech to use in making an auspicious inaugural of my tongue now born anew, or with what grand words to express my gratitude to so great a goddess. But the priest had somehow by divine revelation learned of all my troubles from the beginning, and, though he himself was much affected by the extraordinary miracle, he quickly gave a nod as a signal ordering me to be given a piece of linen cloth to cover myself. For as soon as the ass had stripped me of his abominable coat, I pressed my thighs tightly together and placed my hands carefully in front of me so as to protect myself properly with natural covering, as much as a naked man could. Then one of the faithful quickly took off his outer tunic and hastily covered me. After this the priest, staring in astonishment at me with a kindly and — by Hercules — more than human expression on his face, addressed me as follows:

- 15 “You have endured many different toils and been driven by Fortune’s great tempests and mighty stormwinds; but finally, Lucius, you have reached the harbour of Peace and the altar of Mercy. Not your birth, nor even your position, nor even your fine education has been of any help whatever to you; but on the slippery path of headstrong youth you plunged into slavish pleasures and reaped the perverse reward of your ill-starred curiosity. Nevertheless the blindness of Fortune, while torturing you with the worst of perils, has brought you in its ran-

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giosam istam beatitudinem improvida produxit malitia. Eat nunc et summo furore saeviat et crudelitati suae materiem quaerat aliam; nam in eos quorum sibi vitas in¹ servitium deae nostrae maiestas vindicavit non habet locum casus infestus. Quid latrones, quid ferae, quid servitium, quid asperrimorum itinerum ambages reciprocae, quid metus mortis cotidianaef nefariae Fortunae profuit? In tutelam iam receptus es Fortunae, sed videntis, quae suae lucis splendore ceteros etiam deos illuminat. Sume iam vultum laetiozem candido isto habitu tuo congruentem. Comitare pompam deae sospitatricis inovanti² gradu. Videant irreligiosi, videant et errorem suum recognoscant. En ecce pristinis aerumnis absolutus Isidis magnae providentia³ gaudens Lucius de sua Fortuna triumphat. Quo tamen tutior sis atque munitior, da nomen sanctae huic militiae, cuius non olim sacramento etiam rogabaris, teque iam nunc obsequio religionis nostrae dedica et ministerii iugum subi voluntarium. Nam cum coeperis deae servire, tunc magis senties fructum tuae libertatis.”

16 Ad istum modum vaticinatus sacerdos egregius fatigatos anhelitus trahens conticuit. Exin permixtus agmini religioso procedens comitabar sacrarium totae civitati notus ac conspicuus, digitis

¹ F omits *in*.

² F *innovandi*.

³ F *prudencia*.

METAMORPHOSES XI

dom wickedness to this holy state of happiness. Let her begone now! Let her rage in all her fury and hunt some other object for her cruelty, for hostile chance has no opportunity against those whose lives the majesty of our goddess has emancipated into her own servitude. Robbers, wild animals, slavery, the twists and turns of the harshest journeys that end where they begin, the daily fear of death—what benefit were all these to wicked Fortune? But now you have been taken under the protection of a Fortune who can see, and who with the brilliance of her own light illumines all the other gods as well. Put on a happier countenance now, to match the white garment you are wearing. Join the procession of the saviour goddess with triumphant step. Let the unbelievers see; let them see and recognise their errant ways. Behold! Lucius, set free from his tribulations of old and rejoicing in the providence of great Isis, triumphs over his Fortune. But to be safer and better protected, enlist in this holy army, to whose oath of allegiance you were summoned not long ago. Dedicate yourself today to obedience to our cult and take on the voluntary yoke of her service; for as soon as you become the goddess’s slave you will experience more fully the fruit of your freedom.”

16 The good priest, breathing laboriously after this prophetic utterance, fell silent. At once I joined the ceremonial line of march and walked along in attendance on the shrine. The whole city knew about me

hominum nutibusque notabilis. Omnes in me populi fabulabantur: "Hunc omnipotentis hodie deae numen augustum reformavit ad homines. Felix hercules et ter beatus, qui vitae scilicet praecedentis innocentia fideque meruerit tam praeclarum de caelo patrocinium, ut renatus quodam modo statim sacrorum obsequio desponderetur."

Inter haec et festorum votorum tumultum paulatim progressi iam ripam maris proximamus atque ad ipsum illum locum quo pridie meus stabulaverat asinus pervenimus. Ibi deum simulacris rite dispositis, navem faberrime factam picturis miris Aegyptiorum circumsecus variegatam¹ summus sacerdos taeda lucida et ovo et sulphure, sollemnissimas preces de casto praefatus ore, quam purissime purificatam deae nuncupavit dedicavitque. Huius felicitatis alvei nitens carbasus litteras auro intextas² progerebat. Eae litterae votum instaurabant de novi commeatus prospera navigatione. Iam malus insurgit pinus rotunda, splendore sublimis, insigni³ carchesio conspicua, et puppis intorta chenisco, bracteis aureis vestita fulgebat, omnisque prorsus

¹ F *circumsectus varie grecam.*

² F *littere votum ingestas.*

³ F *insignis.*

and I was the centre of attention as people pointed their fingers and nodded at me. Everyone was talking about me: "He is the one who was transformed back into a human being today by the majestic force of the all-powerful goddess. How fortunate he is, by Hercules, and thrice blessed! It is doubtless because of the innocence and faithfulness of his past life that he has earned such remarkable patronage from heaven that he was in a manner reborn and immediately engaged to the service of her cult."

In the meantime, amid the tumult of festive invocations, we had slowly advanced and were now approaching the seashore. We arrived at the very spot where as an ass I had stabled the day before. There, after the images of the gods had been set in their proper places, the chief priest consecrated a ship, which was constructed with fine craftsmanship and decorated all over with marvellous Egyptian pictures. He took a lighted torch, an egg, and sulphur, uttered prayers of great solemnity with reverent lips, and purified the ship thoroughly, naming it and dedicating it to the goddess. The gleaming sail of this holy barque bore an inscription woven in letters of gold, whose text renewed the prayer for prosperous navigation during the new sailing season. Now rose the mast, a round pine, high and resplendent, visible from far off with its conspicuous masthead. The stern curved in a goose-neck and flashed light from its coating of gold-leaf, and the entire hull bloomed with highly

carina citro limpido perpolita florebat. Tunc cuncti populi tam religiosi quam profani vannos onustas aromatis et huiusce modi suppliciiis certatim congerunt et insuper fluctus libant intritum lacte confectum, donec muneribus largis et devotionibus faustis completa navis, absoluta strophiiis ancoralibus, peculiari serenoque flatu pelago redderetur. Quae postquam cursus spatio prospectum sui nobis incertat, sacrorum geruli, sumptis rursum quae quisque detulerant, alacres ad fanum reditum capessunt simili structu¹ pompae decori.

17 At cum ad ipsum iam templum pervenimus, sacerdos maximus quique divinas effigies progerebant et qui venerandis penetralibus pridem fuerant initiati, intra cubiculum deae recepti, disponunt rite simulacra spirantia. Tunc ex his unus, quem cuncti grammatea dicebant, pro foribus assistens coetu pastophorum — quod sacrosancti collegii nomen est — velut in contionem vocato, indidem de sublimi suggestu de libro de litteris² fausta vota praefatus principi magno senatuique et equiti totoque Romano populo, nauticis, navibusque, quae³ sub imperio mundi nostratis reguntur, renuntiat ser-

¹ F *strictu*.

² Either *de libro* or *de litteris* should perhaps be deleted.

³ F *navibus quaeque*.

¹ "Shrine-bearers," in spite of Apuleius a minor grade of priest.

polished, pale citron-wood. Then all the people, worshippers and uninitiated alike, outdid one another in loading the ship with baskets heaped with spices and similar offerings, and on the waves they poured libations of grain-mash made with milk. When the ship was laden with generous gifts and auspicious sacrifices, it was untied from its anchor-ropes and offered to the sea, as a mild breeze arose especially for it. After its course had taken it so far that we could no longer clearly make it out, the bearers of the sacred objects took up again what each had brought and joyfully set out on the way back to the shrine, preserving the order and fine appearance of their procession.

17 When we arrived at the temple itself, the chief priest and those who carried the divine images and those who had already been initiated into the awesome inner sanctuary were admitted into the goddess's private chamber, where they arranged the breathing effigies in their prescribed places. Then one of this group, whom everyone called the scribe, stationed himself before the door and summoned the company of the *pastophori*¹ — the name of a consecrated college — as if calling them to an assembly. Then from a lofty platform he read aloud from a book verbatim, first pronouncing prayers for the prosperity of the great Emperor, the Senate, the knights, and the entire Roman people, for the sailors and ships under the rule of our world-wide empire. Then he proclaimed, in the Greek language

mone rituque Graeciensi τὰ πλοιαφέσια.¹ Quam vocem feliciter cunctis evenire signavit populi clamor insecutus. Exin gaudio delibuti populares thallos, verbenas, corollas ferentes, exosculatis vestigiis deae, quae gradibus haerebat argento formata, ad suos discedunt lares. Nec tamen me sinebat animus ungue latius indidem digredi sed intentus in² deae specimen pristinos casus meos recordabar.

18 Nec tamen Fama volucris pigra pinnarum tarditate cessaverat, sed protinus in patria deae providentis adorabile beneficium meamque ipsius fortunam memorabilem narraverat passim. Confestim denique familiares ac vernulae quique mihi proximo nexu sanguinis cohaerebant, luctu deposito quem de meae mortis falso nuntio susceperant, repentino laetati gaudio varie quisque munerabundi ad meum festinant ilico diurnum reducemque ab inferis conspectum. Quorum desperata ipse etiam facie recreatus oblationes honestas aequi bonique facio, quippe cum mihi familiares, quo ad cultum sumptumque largiter succederet, deferre prospicue curassent.

¹ The Greek is somewhat garbled in F.

² *in* is an editorial addition.

and with Greek ritual, the opening of the navigation season.¹ The crowd's acclamation which followed confirmed that his words had been auspicious to all. Then, steeped in joy, the people brought forward boughs and branches and garlands and kissed the feet of the goddess, who stood on the steps, fashioned of silver. They then dispersed to their own homes. For my part, my heart would not let me go a nail's breadth away from that spot, but I continued to concentrate on the goddess's image as I pondered my former misfortunes.

18 Swift Rumour, however, had not held back through any slowness of wing,² but speedily in my own country she had told the story everywhere of the provident goddess's praiseworthy blessing and my own noteworthy fortune. At once my friends, my household slaves, and those who were related to me by the closest ties of blood dropped the mourning they had taken up at the false report of my death, and in their delight at this unexpected joy, they all brought various gifts and straightway hurried to see me restored to the daylight from the dead. I too was renewed by seeing those whom I had given up hope of seeing, and accepted their kind offerings gratefully, since my friends had thoughtfully taken care to bring me enough to relieve my living expenses in a generous manner.

² A mock-epic touch, reminiscent of Virgil's personification (*Aeneid* IV 173 ff.).

¹ The literal meaning of the Greek word is "ship-launching."

19 Affatis itaque ex officio singulis narratisque meis propere¹ et pristinis aerumnis et praesentibus gaudiis, me rursum ad deae gratissimum mihi refero conspectum, aedibusque conductis intra consaep-tum templi larem temporarium mihi constituo, deae ministeriis adhuc privatis appositus con-tuberniisque sacerdotum individuus et numinis magni cultor inseparabilis. Nec fuit nox una vel quies aliqua visu deae monituque ieiuna,² sed crebris imperiis sacris suis me, iam dudum destina-tum, nunc saltem censebat initiari. At ego quam-quam cupienti voluntate praeditus, tamen religiosa formidine retardabar, quod enim sedulo percon-taveram difficile religionis obsequium et casti-moniorum abstinentiam satis arduam, cautoque circumspectu vitam, quae multis casibus subiacet, esse muniendam. Haec identidem mecum reputans nescio quo modo quamquam festinans differebam.

20 Nocte quadam plenum gremium suum visus est mihi summus sacerdos offerre, ac requirenti quid utique istud respondisse partes illas de Thessalia mihi missas, servum etiam meum indidem super-venisse nomine Candidum. Hanc experrectus ima-ginem diu diuque apud cogitationes meas revol-vebam quid rei portenderet, praesertim cum nullum

¹ F *pro*.

² F *ieiuna*.

¹ Possibly shares of an inheritance are meant.

19 And so I dutifully spoke to each of them and rapidly described both my former sufferings and my present joys; and then I returned again to the con-templation of the goddess, which was my greatest delight. I rented a house within the temple precinct and set up a temporary home there. Attached to the service of the goddess in a lay capacity as yet, I was an inseparable companion of the priests and a con-stant worshipper of the great deity. Not a night passed, not even a nap, devoid of a vision of admoni-tion from the goddess. With repeated commands she urged me now at last to be initiated, since I had long been destined for her rites. But although I was eagerly willing I was held back by a conscientious fear; for I had learned from thorough investigation that the obligations of her cult were difficult, that the abstinence required by the rules of chastity was quite strenuous, and how necessary it was to guard with caution and circumspection a life subject to countless vicissitudes. I pondered these matters again and again, and somehow kept delaying, despite my sense of urgency.

20 One night the chief priest appeared to me in a dream, with his arms full of gifts, which he offered me. When I asked what this meant, he answered that these were shares¹ sent me from Thessaly, and that a slave of mine named Candidus had also arrived from there. When I woke up I turned this vision over in my mind for a long, long time, wondering what event it portended, especially since

umquam habuisse me servum isto nomine nuncupatum certus essem. Utut¹ tamen sese praesagium somni porrigeret, lucrum certum modis omnibus significari partium oblatione credebam. Sic anxius et in proventum prosperiorem attonitus templi matutinas apertiones opperiebar. Ac dum, velis candentibus reductis in diversum, deae venerabilem conspectum apprecamur, et per dispositas aras circumiens sacerdos, rem divinam procurans supplicamentis sollemnibus, de penetrali fontem² petitem spondeo libat. Rebus iam rite consummatis incohaetae lucis salutationibus religiosi primam nuntiantes horam perstrepunt. Et ecce superveniunt Hypata³ quos ibi reliqueram famulos, cum me Photis⁴ malis incapistrasset erroribus, cognitis scilicet fabulis⁵ meis, nec non et equum quoque illum meum reducentes, quem diverse distractum notae dorsualis agnitione recuperaverant. Quare sollertiam somnium mirabar vel maxime, quod praeter congruentiam lucrosae pollicitationis argumento servi Candidi equum mihi reddidisset colore candidum.

21 Quo facto idem sollicitus⁶ sedulum colendi frequentabam ministerium, spe futura beneficii

¹ *F ut.*

² *F deae penetrali fonte.*

³ *F de patrio.*

⁴ *F fotidis.*

⁵ *F famulis.*

⁶ *F sollicitus.*

I was sure that I had never had any slave called by that name. However the dream's prediction might develop, I believed that in any event some sure profit was indicated by the offering of the shares; and so I was anxiously excited about this fortunate outcome as I awaited the morning opening of the temple. Then the gleaming white curtains were drawn apart and we prayed to the venerable vision of the goddess, while a priest made the rounds of the altars arranged about the temple, performing the ritual with the appointed prayers and sprinkling water from a libation-vessel filled from within the sanctuary. The rites had been duly consummated and the worshippers were loudly announcing the first hour of the day as they greeted the dawning light, when suddenly there arrived from Hypata the servants whom I had left behind there when Photis had entangled me in my sorry wanderings. They had evidently heard of my adventures, and even brought me back my horse, who had been sold off to various buyers but whom they had recovered when they recognised the mark on his back. Then it was that I particularly marvelled at the prophetic nature of the dream, for, besides having its promise of gain confirmed, it foretold under the symbol of a slave Candidus (which means white) the recovery of my white horse.

21 After this event I became even more eagerly attentive in my constant ministry of service, in the belief that my present blessings were a guarantee of

praesentibus pignerata. Nec minus in dies mihi magis magisque accipiendorum sacrorum cupido gliscebatur, summisque precibus primum sacerdotem saepissime conveneram, petens ut me noctis sacratae tandem arcanis initiaret. At ille, vir alioquin gravis et sobriae religionis observatione famosus, clementer ac comiter et ut solent parentes immaturis liberorum desideriis modificari, meam differens instantiam, spei melioris solaciis alioquin anxium mihi permulcebat animum: nam et diem quo quisque possit initiari deae nutu demonstrari, et sacerdotem qui sacra debeat ministrare eiusdem providentia deligi, sumptus etiam caerimoniarum necessarios simili praecepto destinari. Quae cuncta nos quoque observabili patientia sustinere censebat, quippe cum aviditati contumaciaeque summe cavere et utramque culpam vitare ac neque vocatus morari nec non iussus festinare deberem. Nec tamen esse quemquam de suo numero tam perditae mentis vel immo destinatae mortis qui, non sibi quoque seorsum iubente domina, temerarium atque sacrilegum audeat ministerium subire noxamque letalem contrahere. Nam et inferum claustra et salutis tutelam in deae manu posita, ipsamque traditionem ad instar voluntariae mortis et precariae

future expectations. Furthermore, day by day my desire to receive the rites of initiation grew greater and greater, and I approached the high priest time and time again with urgent entreaties, asking him to initiate me at long last into the mysteries of the holy night. But he, being a serious man famous for his observance of austere religious discipline, gently and kindly put off my insistence, as parents try to restrain the premature desires of their children, and he soothed my natural anxiety with the comfort of hope for better things. He told me that the day on which each person can be initiated was marked by a nod from the goddess, and that the priest who ought to administer the rites was likewise chosen by her providence, and that even the expenses required for the ceremony were determined by a similar command. He advised me too to endure all these regulations with respectful patience, since I ought to guard most carefully against overeagerness or obstinacy and avoid both faults, neither delaying when I was summoned nor hastening unbidden. Besides, he said, there was no one in his company of priests of such corrupt character—or rather so determined to die—that he would dare to undertake this office thoughtlessly and sacrilegiously, without specific orders from the goddess, and thus incur fatal guilt. For, he said, both the gates of death and the guardianship of life were in the goddess's hands, and the act of initiation was performed in the manner of voluntary death and salva-

salutis celebrari, quippe cum transactis vitae temporibus iam in ipso finitae lucis limine¹ constitutos, quis tamen tuto possint magna religionis committi silentia, numen deae soleat elicere² et sua providentia quodam modo renatos ad novae reponere rursus salutis curricula. Ergo igitur me quoque oportere caeleste sustinere praeceptum, quamquam perspicua evidentique magni numinis dignatione iam dudum felici ministerio nuncupatum destinatumque; nec secus quam cultores ceteri cibus profanis ac nefariis iam nunc temperare, quo rectius ad arcana purissimae religionis secreta pervaderem.

22 Dixerat sacerdos, nec impatientia corrumpebatur obsequium meum, sed intentus miti quiete et probabili taciturnitate sedulum quot³ dies obibam culturae sacrorum ministerium. Nec me fefellit vel longi temporis prolatione cruciavit deae potentis benignitas salutaris, sed noctis obscurae non obscuris imperiis evidenter monuit advenisse diem mihi semper optabilem, quo me maximi voti compotiret,⁴ quantoque sumptu deberem procurare supplicamentis, ipsumque Mithram illum suum

¹ F *lumine*.

² Some editors emend to *eligere* "selected".

³ F *quod*.

⁴ F *competeret*.

¹ The priest is called after the Persian divinity Mithras,

tion obtained by favour. In fact, those who had finished their life's span and were already standing on the very threshold of light's end, if only they could safely be trusted with the great unspoken mysteries of the cult, were frequently drawn forth by the goddess's power and in a manner reborn through her providence and set once more upon the course of renewed life. Therefore I too, he advised, ought to submit to the heavenly ordinance, even though I had been long since announced and destined for the blessed ministry by a clearly visible and manifest mark of approval from the great deity. Also, like the other worshippers, I ought already to begin to abstain from unholy and unlawful foods, in order that I might more properly penetrate to the hidden mysteries of the purest faith.

22 The priest had made his pronouncement. My obedience was not marred by impatience, but attentively, in peaceful calm and commendable silence, I diligently performed my service every day at the celebration of the sacred rites. The powerful goddess's saving kindness did not fail me, or torture me with a long waiting period. One dark night with lucid commands she plainly declared that the day I had always hoped for had come, the day on which she would grant me my greatest wish. She also informed me how much I must spend on the ceremonies, and decreed that Mithras¹ himself, her whose cult was popular in the Greco-Roman world in the second and third centuries.

sacerdotem praecipuum, divino quodam stellarum consortio ut aiebat mihi coniunctum, sacrorum ministrum decernit.

Quis et ceteris benivolis praeceptis summatis deae recreatus animi, necdum satis luce lucida discussa quiete protinus ad receptaculum sacerdotis contendo atque eum cubiculo suo commodum prodeuntem continatus saluto. Solito constantius destinaveram iam velut debitum sacris obsequium flagitare. At ille statim ut me conspexit, prior "O" inquit "Luci, te felicem, te beatum, quem propitia voluntate numen augustum tantopere dignatur." Et "Quid" inquit "iam nunc stas otiosus teque ipsum demoraris? Adest tibi dies votis assiduis exoptatus, quo deae multinominis divinis imperiis per istas meas manus piissimis sacrorum arcanis insinueris."

Et iniecta dextera senex comissimus ducit me protinus ad ipsas fores aedis amplissimae, rituque sollemni apertionis celebrato ministerio ac matutino peracto sacrificio, de opertis adyti profert quosdam libros litteris ignorabilibus praenotatos, partim figuris cuiusce modi animalium concepti sermonis compendiosa verba suggerentes, partim nodosis et

high priest, who, as she explained, was joined to me by a divine conjunction of stars, would administer the rites.

My spirit was revived by these and all the other kind instructions from the supreme goddess, and before the day was even fully light I shook off my slumber and hurried at once to the priest's apartment. I met and greeted him just as he was coming out of his room. I had determined to demand participation in the rites more insistently than usual, on the grounds that it was now my due. The moment he caught sight of me, however, he anticipated me, saying, "O Lucius, how fortunate you are, how blessed, that the hallowed deity so greatly favours you with her benevolent will. Why," he added, "are you still standing around doing nothing, causing your own delay? Your day has come, the day that you have been praying for with ceaseless desire, the day on which, at the divine command of the goddess of many names, you will be introduced by these very hands of mine into the holiest secrets of our cult."

Then that kindest of men took me by the hand and led me straight up to the entrance of the great temple. After the ceremony of opening had been celebrated with the prescribed ritual and the morning sacrifice had been completed, he brought out from the secret part of the sanctuary some books inscribed with unknown characters. Some used the shapes of all sorts of animals to represent abridged expressions of liturgical language; in others, the

in modum rotae tortuosis capreolatimque condensis apicibus a curiositate profanorum lectione munita. Indidem mihi praedicat quae forent ad usum teletae necessario praeparanda.

23 Ea protinus naviter et aliquanto liberalius partim ipse, partim per meos socios coemenda procuro. Iamque tempore, ut aiebat sacerdos, id postulante, stipatum me religiosa cohorte deducit ad proximas balneas et prius sueto lavacro traditum, praefatus deum veniam, purissime circumrorans abluit, rursumque ad templum reductum, iam duabus diei partibus transactis, ante ipsa deae vestigia constituit, secretoque mandatis quibusdam, quae voce meliora sunt, illud plane cunctis arbitris praecipit: decem continuis illis diebus cibariam¹ voluptatem coercerem, neque ullum animal essem et invinius essem.

Quis venerabili continentia rite servatis, iam dies aderat divino destinatus vadimonio, et Sol curvatus intrahebat vesperam. Tum ecce confluunt undique turbae sacrorum² ritu vetusto variis quisque me muneribus honorantes. Tunc semotis procul profanis omnibus, linteo rudique me contectum amicimine arrepta manu sacerdos deducit ad ipsius sacrarii penetralia.

¹ F *cibarias*.

² Brant emends to *sacrorum* "crowds of initiates."

ends of the letters were knotted and curved like wheels or interwoven like vine-tendrils to protect their meaning from the curiosity of the uninitiated. From these books he read out to me the preparations which had to be made for the initiation.

23 Forthwith I eagerly and rather extravagantly set about buying these things myself or having them bought by friends. Then, since the occasion demanded it, as the priest said, he escorted me to the baths nearby, surrounded by an escort of devotees. When I had taken the customary bath, he began by asking the gods' favour and then cleansed me with purificatory sprinkling. He took me back to the temple, with two-thirds of the day now past, and put me right in front of the goddess's feet. Secretly he gave me certain instructions too holy for utterance, and then openly, with all the company as witnesses, he ordered me to restrain my pleasure in food for the next ten days, not to partake of animal food, and to go without wine.

I duly observed these restrictions with reverent continence. Now it was the day appointed for my appearance before the gods, and the Sun was on its downward curve, drawing in the dusk. Suddenly crowds flowed in from every direction, in accordance with the ancient practice of the mysteries, to honour me with their various gifts. Then all the uninitiated were dismissed, I was wrapped in an unused linen robe, and the priest took me by the hand and led me to the innermost part of the sanctuary.

Quaeras forsitan satis anxie, studiose lector, quid deinde dictum, quid factum. Dicerem si dicere liceret, cognosceres si liceret audire. Sed parem noxam contraherent et¹ aures et lingua, ista impiae loquacitatis,² illae temerariae curiositatis. Nec te tamen desiderio forsitan religioso suspensum angore diutino cruciabo. Igitur audi, sed crede, quae vera sunt. Accessi confinium mortis et, calcato Proserpinae limine, per omnia vectus elementa remeavi; nocte media vidi solem candido coruscantem lumine; deos inferos et deos superos accessi coram et adoravi de proximo. Ecce tibi rettuli quae, quamvis audita, ignores tamen necesse est. Ergo quod solum potest sine piaculo ad profanorum intelligentias enuntiari referam.

24 Mane factum est, et perfectis sollemnibus processu duodecim sacratus stolis, habitu quidem religioso satis, sed effari de eo nullo vinculo prohibeor, quippe quod tunc temporis videre praesentes plurimi. Namque in ipso aedis sacrae meditullio ante deae simulacrum constitutum tribunal ligneum iussus superstiti, byssina quidem, sed floride depicta veste conspicuus. Et umeris dependebat pone

¹ F *contrahent* followed by one or two erased letters.

² F has *linguae*, and omits *ista impiae loquacitatis*.

Perhaps, my zealous reader, you are eager to learn what was said and done next. I would tell if it were permitted to tell; you would learn if it were permitted to hear. But both ears and tongue would incur equal guilt, the latter from its unholy talkativeness, the former from their unbridled curiosity. Since your suspense, however, is perhaps a matter of religious longing, I will not continue to torture you and keep you in anguish. Therefore listen, but believe: these things are true. I came to the boundary of death and, having trodden the threshold of Proserpina, I travelled through all the elements and returned. In the middle of the night I saw the sun flashing with bright light. I came face to face with the gods below and the gods above and paid reverence to them from close at hand. Behold, I have told you things which perforce you may not know, although you have heard them. Therefore I shall relate only what can be expounded to the minds of the uninitiated without atonement.

24 When morning came and the ceremonies were completed, I came forth wearing twelve robes as a sign of consecration. This is a very holy attire, but no obligation prevents me from talking about it, since at that time a great many people were present and saw it. Following instructions I stood on a wooden platform set up in the very centre of the holy shrine in front of the goddess's statue, the focus of attention because of my garment, which was only linen, but elaborately embroidered. An expensive

tergum talorum tenuis pretiosa chlamyda. Quaquam tamen viseres, colore vario circumnotatis insignibus animalibus; hinc dracones Indici, inde grypes Hyperborei, quos in speciem pinnatae alitis generat mundus alter. Hanc Olympiacam stolam sacrati nuncupant. At manu dextera gerebam flammis adultam facem, et caput decore corona cinxerat palmarum candidarum foliis in modum radorum prosistentibus. Sic ad instar Solis exornato me¹ et in vicem simulacri constituto, repente velis reductis in aspectum populus errabat. Exhinc festissimum celebravi natalem sacrorum, et suaves epulae et faceta convivium. Dies etiam tertius pari caerimoniarum ritu celebratus, et ientaculum religiosum et teletae legitima consummatio.

Paucis dehinc ibidem commoratus diebus, inexplicabili voluptate simulacri divini perfruebar, irremunerabili quippe beneficio pigneratus. Sed tandem deae monitu, licet non plene, tamen pro meo modulo supplicae gratis persolutis, tardam satisfactionem comparo, vix equidem abruptis ardentissimi desiderii retinaculis. Provolutus denique ante conspectum deae et facie mea diu detersis

¹ F *exornatum*.

¹ Referring to a legendary region in the far north.

² Almost a synonym for "celestial," since it refers to Mount Olympus, the home of the sky-gods in Greek mythology.

cloak hung down my back from my shoulders all the way to my heels. Moreover, from whichever direction you looked I was conspicuously marked all round with vari-coloured animals: on one side were Indian dragons and on the other Hyperborean¹ gryphons which look like winged birds and are produced in another world. Initiates call this garment the Olympian² stole. In my right hand I carried a torch alight with flames, and my head was beautifully bound with a crown made of leaves of shining palm, jutting out like rays of light. After I had thus been decorated in the likeness of the Sun and set up in the guise of a statue, the curtains were suddenly opened and the people wandered round to view me. Next I celebrated my birth into the mysteries, a most festive occasion: a delicious banquet and a cheerful party. The third day was also celebrated with a similar ceremonial ritual: a sacred breakfast and the official conclusion of the initiation.

Afterwards I remained there for a few days, enjoying the ineffable pleasure of the holy image, pledged to her by her unrepayable favour. Finally, however, on the goddess's instructions I discharged my debt of gratitude — if not in full, at least humbly, in accordance with my small means — and began preparations for my tardy return home, since it was only with great difficulty that I had broken the bonds of my fervent yearning for her. Finally I prostrated myself before the goddess and wiped her feet

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vestigiis eius, lacrimis obortis, singultu crebro sermonem interficiens et verba devorans aio:

25 “Tu quidem, sancta et humani generis sospitatrix perpetua, semper fovendis mortalibus munifica, dulcem matris affectionem miserorum casibus tribuis. Nec dies nec quies ulla ac ne momentum quidem tenue tuis transcurrit beneficiis otiosum, quin mari terraque protegas homines et depulsis vitae procellis salutarem porrigas dexteram, qua fatorum etiam inextricabiliter contorta retractas licia et Fortunae tempestates mitigas et stellarum noxios meatus cohibes. Te superi colunt, observant inferi. Tu rotas orbem, lumnas solem, regis mundum, calcas Tartarum. Tibi respondent sidera, redeunt tempora, gaudent numina, serviunt elementa. Tuo nutu spirant flamina, nutriunt nubila, germinant semina, crescunt germina. Tuam maiestatem perhorrescunt aves caelo meantes, ferae montibus errantes, serpentes solo latentes, beluae ponto natantes. At ego referendis laudibus tuis exilis ingenio et adhibendis sacrificiis tenuis patrimonio; nec mihi vocis ubertas ad dicenda quae de tua maiestate sentio sufficit, nec ora mille linguaeque totidem vel indefessi sermonis aeterna series. Ergo

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for a long time with my face. Tears welled up in me. My voice broke with frequent sobs and I gulped my words as I spoke to her.

25 “O holy and eternal saviour of mankind, you who ever bountifully nurture mortals, you apply the sweet affection of a mother to the misfortunes of the wretched. Neither a day nor a night nor even a tiny moment passes empty of your blessings: you protect men on sea and land, and you drive away the storm-winds of life and stretch forth your rescuing hand, with which you unwind the threads of the Fates even when they are inextricably twisted, you calm the storms of Fortune, and you repress harmful motions of the stars. The spirits above revere you, the spirits below pay you homage. You rotate the earth, light the sun, rule the universe, and tread Tartarus beneath your heel. The stars obey you, the seasons return at your will, deities rejoice in you, and the elements are your slaves. At your nod breezes breathe, clouds give nourishment, seeds sprout, and seedlings grow. Your majesty awes the birds travelling in the sky, the beasts wandering upon the mountains, the snakes lurking in the ground, and the monsters that swim in the deep. But my talent is too feeble to speak your praises and my inheritance too meagre to bring you sacrifices. The fullness of my voice is inadequate to express what I feel about your majesty; a thousand mouths and as many tongues would not be enough, nor even an endless flow of inexhaustible speech. I shall

quod solum potest religiosus quidem, sed pauper alioquin, efficere curabo: divinos tuos vultus numenque sanctissimum intra pectoris mei secreta conditum perpetuo custodiens imaginabor.”

Ad istum modum deprecato summo numine, complexus Mithram sacerdotem et meum iam parentem, colloque eius multis osculis inhaerens, veniam postulabam quod eum¹ condigne tantis beneficiis munerari nequirem. Diu denique gratiarum gerendarum sermone prolixo commoratus, tandem digredior et recta patrium larem revisurus meum post aliquam multum temporis contendo. Paucisque post diebus deae potentis instinctu raptim constrictis sarcinulis, nave conscensa, Romam versus profectionem dirigo, tutusque prosperitate ventorum ferentium Augusti portum celerrime pervenio,² ac dehinc carpento pervolavi, vesperaque quam dies insequeretur Iduum Decembrium sacrosanctam istam civitatem accedo. Nec ullum tam praecipuum mihi exinde studium fuit quam cotidie supplicare summo numini reginae Isis, quae de templi situ sumpto nomine Campensis summa cum veneratione propitiatur. Eram cultor denique assiduus, fani quidem advena, religionis autem indigena.

¹ *F deum.*

² *F lacks pervenio.*

¹ The port of rome, a harbour built by Claudius near the mouth of the Tiber.

therefore take care to do the only thing that a devout but poor man can: I shall store your divine countenance and sacred godhead in the secret places of my heart, forever guarding it and picturing it to myself.”

When I had finished this prayer to the highest divinity, I embraced the priest Mithras, who was now also a father to me. Clinging to his neck and kissing him many times, I asked his pardon because I was unable to reward him as he deserved for his great favours to me. Then, after a long delay for lengthy expressions of gratitude, I finally departed and hurried straight to visit my ancestral hearth again after a long time away. After a few days there, at the powerful goddess's urging I hastily gathered my luggage together, boarded a ship, and set out toward Rome. Safely driven by favouring winds, I arrived very quickly at the Port of Augustus,¹ and hurried on from there by carriage. On the eve of the Ides of December² I reached the holy, inviolate city. Thereafter I had no more important occupation than praying daily to the supreme divinity of Queen Isis, who was worshipped with the greatest reverence under the name Campensis, derived from the site of her temple.³ Thenceforth I was a constant attendant there, a newcomer to the shrine but a native of the cult.

² December 12.

³ A temple of Isis had been built in the Campus Martius in Rome.

Ecce transcurso signifero circulo Sol magnus annum compleverat, et quietem meam rursus interpellat numinis benefici cura pervigilis, et rursus teletae, rursus sacrorum commonet. Mirabar quid rei temptaret, quid pronuntiaret futurum. Quidni? 27 Plenissime iam dudum videbar initiatus. Ac dum religiosum scrupulum partim apud meum sensum disputo, partim sacratorum consiliis examino, novum mirumque plane comperior: deae quidem me tantum sacris imbutum, at magni dei deumque summi parentis, invicti Osiris, necdum sacris illustratum; quamquam enim conexa, immo vero unita¹ ratio numinis religionisque esset, tamen teletae discrimen interesse maximum; prohinc me quoque peti magno etiam deo famulum sentire deberem.

Nec diu res in ambiguo stetit. Nam proxima nocte vidi quendam de sacratis linteis iniectum, qui thyrsos et hederas et tacenda quaedam gerens ad ipsos meos lares collocaret, et occupato sedili meo religionis amplae denuntiaret epulas. Is, ut agnitionem mihi scilicet certo aliquo sui signo sumministraret, sinistri pedis talo paululum reflexo, cunctabundo clementer incedebat vestigio. Sublata est

¹ *F munita.*

¹ Osiris was the husband of Isis, whom she restored to life after his murder and dismemberment by his brother Seth. He is sometimes identified with Sarapis (see XI 9 and note) and frequently worshipped together with Isis.

Now when the great Sun had run through the circle of the zodiac and completed a year, the ever-wakeful concern of the beneficent deity once again interrupted my sleep, and spoke to me again of initiation, again of rites. I wondered what business she was initiating, what event she was foretelling: naturally, since I thought that I had already been 27 fully initiated for a long time. But while I was both debating my conscientious doubt in my own mind and also examining it with the help of advice from initiates, I made an amazing new discovery. I had been steeped in the mysteries of the goddess, but I had not yet been enlightened by the mysteries of the great god and supreme parent of the gods, Osiris the unconquered.¹ Although the nature of his deity and cult was connected, even unified, with that of Isis, there was still a very great distinction in the rites of initiation. Therefore I ought to perceive that I was also being sought as a servant of the great god as well.

The matter did not remain long in doubt, for on the next night I had a vision of one of the initiates dressed in linen robes, carrying thyrsi and ivy and certain objects that must not be named. He placed these at my household altar and, seating himself on my bench, announced a banquet of great sanctity. Evidently to assist me in recognising him by some definite identifying token, the heel of his left foot was slightly twisted and he walked gently with a hesitant step. My dark cloud of doubt was com-

ergo post tam manifestam deum voluntatem ambiguitatis tota caligo, et ilico deae matutinis perfectis salutationibus summo studio percontabar singulos equi¹ vestigium similis ut somnium. Nec fides² auit. Nam de pastophoris unum conspexi statim praeter indicium pedis cetero etiam statu atque habitu examussim nocturnae imagini congruentem, quem Asinium Marcellum vocitari cognovi postea, reformationis meae minime³ alienum nomen. Nec moratus conveni protinus eum, sane nec ipsum futuri sermonis ignarum, quippe iam dudum consimili praecepto sacrorum ministrandorum comonefactum. Nam sibi visus est quiete proxima, dum magno deo coronas exaptaret,⁴ de eius ore, quo singulorum fata⁵ dictat, audisse mitti sibi Madaurensem sed admodum pauperem, cui statim sua sacra deberet ministrare; nam et illi studiorum gloriam et ipsi grande compendium sua comparari providentia.

28 Ad istum modum desponsus sacris, sumptuum tenuitate contra votum meum retardabar. Nam et

¹ F *et qui*.

² F *fide*.

³ F lacks *minime*.

⁴ F *exaptat et*.

⁵ F *facta*.

¹ See XI 17 and note.

² *asinus* is Latin for "ass." Asinius was a relatively common Roman family-name.

pletely lifted, therefore, after this clear manifestation of the gods' will, and immediately after the morning salutations to the goddess were finished I began enquiring of everybody with the utmost eagerness whether there was anyone with the same gait as my dream. Nor did confirmation fail to appear, for I instantly caught sight of one of the *pastophori*¹ who, besides the evidence of his foot, precisely fitted my dream apparition in physical appearance and dress. I learned later that he was called Asinius Marcellus, a name not at all inappropriate to my metamorphosis.² Without a moment's delay I went up to him. Indeed he was not unaware of our approaching conversation, since he had already been advised by similar instructions to administer the initiation. He had had a dream on the preceding night: while he was arranging garlands for the great god, he heard from the god's own mouth, with which he pronounces each person's fate, that a man from Madauros³ was being sent to him; the man was quite poor, but it behoved the priest to administer the god's initiation rites to him at once, since by the god's providence the man would acquire fame for his studies and the priest himself ample recompense.

28 Although I was thus pledged to be initiated, I was delayed against my wishes by the meagreness of my

³ Apuleius was probably a native of Madauros, a Romanised city in North Africa.

viriculas patrimonii peregrinationis attriverant impensae, et erogationes urbanae pristinis illis provincialibus antistabant plurimum. Ergo duritia paupertatis intercedente, quod ait vetus proverbium, inter sacrum ego et saxum¹ positus cruciabar; nec setius tamen identidem numinis premebar instantia. Iamque saepicule non sine magna turbatione stimulatus, postremo iussus, veste ipsa mea quamvis parvula distracta, sufficientem corrasi summulam. Et id ipsum praeceptum fuerat specialiter: “An tu,” inquit “si quam rem voluptati struendae moliris, laciniis tuis nequaquam parceres; nunc tantas caerimonias aditurus impaenitendae te pauperiei cunctaris committere?”

Ergo igitur cunctis affatim praeparatis, decem rursus diebus inanimis contentus cibus, insuper etiam deraso capite,² principalis dei nocturnis orgiis illustratus, plena iam fiducia germanae religionis obsequium divinum frequentabam. Quae res summum peregrinationi meae tribuebat solacium nec minus etiam victum uberiolem sumministrabat—quidni?—spiritu faventis Eventus quaesticulo forensi nutrito per patrocina sermonis Romani.

¹ F *sacruetosaxum*.

² F *deras capi*.

¹ The proverb, which occurs in Plautus, *Captivi* 617, signifies being caught in a dilemma (cf. “between the devil and the deep sea”), no doubt referring to the altar-block and the flintstone knife of the sacrificer.

funds. The cost of my travelling had used up my modest inheritance, and living expenses in the city were much greater than my former expenses in the provinces. Hindered, therefore, by the harshness of poverty, I was being tortured “between the altar and the knife,” as the old proverb has it.¹ Nonetheless I was being pressed again and again by the god’s insistence. After I had been, to my great discomfort, frequently goaded, and finally commanded, I sold my clothing, little as it was, and scraped together a sufficient sum. This had been my specific instruction: “Surely,” he said, “if you were intent on some object for the production of pleasure, you would not spare your rags; now when you are on the verge of such important ceremonies, do you hesitate to entrust yourself to a poverty which you will have no cause to regret?”

Therefore I made all the necessary preparations and once again restricted myself for ten days to meatless food. Furthermore I also shaved my head. Then I was illumined by the nocturnal mysteries of the foremost god, and in full confidence practised the holy service of this kindred religion. This afforded the greatest comfort for my stay abroad in Rome, and furthermore it even provided a richer livelihood—not surprisingly, since my small profits from pleading at law in the Roman language were nourished by the breeze of favouring Success.²

² Cf. IV 2 and note.

29 Et ecce post pauculum tempus inopinatis et usquequaque mirificis imperiis deum rursus interpellor et cogor tertiam quoque teletam sustinere.¹ Nec levi cura sollicitus, sed oppido suspensus animi mecum ipse cogitationes exercitius agitabam,² quorsus nova haec et inaudita se caelestium porrigeret intentio, quid subsicivum quamvis iteratae iam traditioni remansisset. "Nimirum perperam vel minus plene consuluerunt in me sacerdos uterque." Et hercules iam de fide quoque eorum opinari coeptabam sequius. Quo me cogitationis aestu fluctuantem ad instar insaniae percitum sic instruxit nocturna divinatione clemens imago.

"Nihil est" inquit "quod numerosa serie religionis, quasi quicquam sit prius omissum, terreare. Quin assidua ista numinum dignatione laetus³ capesse gaudium, et potius exsulta ter futurus quod alii vel semel vix conceditur, teque de isto numero merito praesume semper beatum. Ceterum futura tibi sacrorum traditio pernecessaria est, si tecum nunc saltem reputaveris exuvias deae quas in provincia sumpsisti in eodem fano depositas perseverare, nec te Romae diebus sollempnibus vel supplicare iis vel, cum praeceptum fuerit, felici illo

¹ F *suscitare*.

² F *cogitabam*.

³ F *laetum*.

29 After a very short time I was suddenly accosted again by unexpected and thoroughly astonishing commands from the gods and compelled to undergo yet a third initiation. I was troubled with serious concern and extremely perplexed, as I anxiously pondered these questions in my mind. What was the aim of this new and unheard-of design of the gods? What element remained to make my initiation complete, despite its already having been performed twice? "Doubtless," I thought, "both priests calculated wrongly, or at least incompletely, in my case." And, by Hercules, I even began to have misgivings about their good faith. While I was tossed on this tide of speculation, excited to the point of madness, I was given the following instructions in a nocturnal prophecy by a kindly apparition.

"There is no reason," it said, "to be afraid of this long series of rituals, as if something had been omitted before. Rejoice and be happy instead, because the deities continually deem you worthy. Exult, rather, in the fact that you will experience three times what is scarcely permitted to others even once, and from that number you should rightly consider yourself to be forever blessed. Besides, a third initiation is absolutely necessary in your case, if you just consider the fact that the goddess's garments you assumed in the province remain in storage there in that temple. In Rome you cannot worship in them on holy days, nor be illumined by that blessed robe when you are commanded. So now may

amictu illustrari posse. Quod felix itaque ac faustum salutareque tibi sit, animo gaudiali rursum sacris initiare deis magnis auctoribus.”

30 Hactenus divini somnii suada maiestas quod usus foret pronuntiavit. Nec deinceps postposito vel in supinam procrastinationem reiecto negotio, statim sacerdoti meo relatis quae videram, inanimae protinus castimoniae iugum subeo et lege perpetua praescriptis illis decem diebus spontali sobrietate multiplicatis instructum teletae comparo largitus, omnibus¹ ex studio pietatis magis quam mensura rerum mearum collatis.² Nec hercules laborum me sumptuumque quidquam tamen paenituit — quidni? — liberali deum providentia iam stipendiis forensibus bellule fotum.

Denique post dies admodum pauculos deus deum magnorum potior et maiorum summus et summorum maximus et maximorum regnator, Osiris, non in³ alienam quampiam personam reformatus, sed coram suo illo venerando me dignatus affamine per quietem recipere visus est: quae⁴ nunc incunctanter gloriosa in foro redderem patrocina, nec extimescerem malevolorum disseminationes, quas studiorum meorum laboriosa doctrina ibidem exciebat.⁵ Ac ne sacris suis gregi cetero permixtus

¹ *omnibus* is an editorial addition.

² F *mensurarum colatis*.

³ *in* is an editorial addition.

⁴ F *quam*.

⁵ F *ibi deserviebat*.

this be favourable, auspicious, and salutary for you: with joy in your heart be initiated once again at the behest of the great gods.”¹

30 Thus the persuasive majesty of the god-sent dream proclaimed what was required. I neither postponed the business nor set it aside in sluggish procrastination, but instantly reported my vision to my priest. I immediately submitted to the yoke of abstention from meatless food, multiplying out of voluntary continence those ten days prescribed by everlasting law. I procured the equipment for my initiation without stint, meeting the expenses more in accordance with religious zeal than with the measure of my assets. Yet, by Hercules, I felt no regret for my toil and expense: after all, through the bountiful care of heaven I was comfortably provided for by the income I earned as a lawyer.

Finally, after just a few days, he that is mightiest of the great gods, the highest of the mightiest, the loftiest of the highest, and the sovereign of the loftiest, Osiris, appeared to me in a dream. He had not transformed himself into a semblance other than his own, but deigned to welcome me face to face with his own venerable utterance, bidding me unhesitatingly to continue as now to win fame in the courts as an advocate and not fear the slanders of detractors which my industrious pursuit of legal studies had aroused in Rome. Furthermore, to avoid my serving

¹ Compare Lucius' words at II 6.

APULEIUS

deservirem, in collegium me pastophorum suorum,
immo inter ipsos decurionum quinquennales allegit.
Rursus denique quaqua raso¹ capillo collegii vetus-
tissimi et sub illis Sullae temporibus conditi munia,
non obumbrato vel obtecto calvitio, sed quoquo-
versus obvio, gaudens obibam.

¹ F *qua raro*.

METAMORPHOSES XI

his mysteries as an undistinguished member of the faithful, he elected me to the college of his *pastophori*, and even made me a member of the quinquennial board of directors. Then, once more shaving my head completely, neither covering up nor hiding my baldness, but displaying it wherever I went, I joyfully carried out the duties of that ancient priesthood, founded in the days of Sulla.¹

¹ I.e. in the early first century B.C.

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