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“It Wasn’t Rape-Rape”: Roman Attitudes Toward the Sexual Availability of *Mimae*

1. Whoopi Goldberg, “The View,” September 29, 2009

“I know it wasn’t rape-rape. It was something else but I don’t believe it was rape-rape. He went to jail and when they let him out he was like, ‘You know what, this guy’s going to give me a hundred years in jail. I’m not staying.’ So that’s why he left.”

1. Valerius Maximus 2.10.8

eodem ludos Florales, quos Messius aedilis faciebat, spectante populus ut mimae nudarentur postulare erubuit. quod cum ex Favonio amicissimo sibi una sedente cognosset, discessit e theatro, ne praesentia sua spectaculi consuetudine impediret.

In the same place the people were watching the Floralia, which Messius was producing as aedile, but they blushed to demand that the mime actresses strip. When [Cato] learned this from his good friend Favonius, who was sitting with him, he left the theater so that his presence would not prevent the customary show.

1. Cicero, *Pro Plancio* 30

“Raptam esse mimulam.” Quod dicitur Atinae factum a iuventute, vetere quodam in scenicos iure maximeque oppidano. O adolescentiam traductam eleganter! cui quidem cum, quod licuerit, obiiciatur, tamen id ipsum falsum reperiatur.

“A little mime-actress is said to have been raped.” It’s said that this was done at Atina by a group of youths, using a certain old custom allowed at the scenic games, especially in country towns. What an honorably-conducted young manhood! He is reproached with something he was permitted to do, and yet that very reproach is found to be baseless.

1. *CIL* 6.10096

Eucharis Linciniae

docta erodita omnes artes virgo vixit an XIIII

heus oculo errante quei aspicis leti domus

morare gressum et titulum nostrum perlege

amor parentis quem dedit natae suae 5

ubei se reliquiae conlocarent corporis

heic viridis aetas cum floreret artibus

crescent et aevo gloriam conscenderet

properavit hora tristis fatalis mea

et denegavit ultra veitae spiritum 10

docta erodita paene musarum manu

quae modo nobilium ludos decoravi choro

et Graeca in scaenica prima populo apparui

en hoc in tumulo cinerem nostri corporis

infistae parcae deposierunt carmine 15

studium patronae cura amor laudes decus

silent ambusto corpore et leto tacent

reliqui fletum nata genitori meo

et antecessi genita post leti diem

bis hic septeni mecum natales dies 20

tenebris tenentur ditis aeterna domu

rogo ut discedens terram mihi dicas levem

Eucharis Liciniae

Educated and trained in all the arts; a girl who lived 14 years

You there, as you look upon the house of death with a wandering eye,

slow your step and carefully read our inscription

which a father’s love gave to his daughter 5

where the remains of her body are buried.

Just as my young life was blossoming and my skills

were growing and in time was ascending to glory,

the mournful ordained hour rushed upon me

and denied me any further breath of life. 10

I was educated and trained almost as if by the hand of the Muses.

I adorned the games of the nobles with my dancing,

and I first appeared before the people in a Greek play.

But now in this tomb the hostile Fates

have placed the ashes of my body along with a poem. 15

Devotion to a female patron, effort, love, praise, beauty

are silenced by my burned body and stilled by my death.

A daughter, I left behind weeping for my father,

and I preceded him in the day of my death, although born after him.

Now my fourteenth birthday is observed here 20

in the shadows, in the ageless house of Death.

I ask that upon departing you tell the earth to lie lightly upon me.

1. *CIL* 6.10111

Luria privata

mima v a XIX

Luria, a private

mime actress, lived 19 years

1. *CIL* 6.10110

Eclogae

regis Iubae

mimae quae

v a XVIII

Ecloga

mime actress of

King Juba

who lived 18 years

1. Cicero, *Ad Att.* 10.16.5

hoc quidem melius quam conlega noster Antonius, cuius inter lictores lectica mima portatur.

This, at any rate, is better than our colleague Antonius, whose mime-actress is carried about on a litter among lictors.

1. Cicero, *2 Verr*. 5.31

huc Tertia illa perducta per dolum atque insidias ab Rhodio tibicine maximas in istius castris effecisse dicitur turbas, cum indigne pateretur uxor Cleomenis Syracusani, nobilis mulier, itemque uxor Aeschrionis, honesto loco nata, in conventum suum mimi Isidori filiam venisse. iste autem Hannibal, qui in suis castris virtute putaret oportere non genere certari, sic hanc Tertiam dilexit ut eam secum ex provincia deportaret.

That Tertia, having been led on by a trick and by the greatest plots away from her Rhodian flute-player, is said to have created a great disturbance in that camp, as the wife of Cleomenes the Syracusan, a woman of noble birth, and the wife of Aeschrio, born to high rank, endured it with outrage that the daughter of Isidorus the mime had come into their company. But that Hannibal now, who thought that in his army there ought to be a competition of excellence, not birth, so loved this Tertia, that he transported her with him out of the province.

1. Cicero, *Ad Att*. 4.15.6

quaeris nunc de Arbuscula; valde placuit.

Now you ask about Arbuscula; she had a great success.

1. Horace, *Satires* 1.10.76-77

nam satis est equitem mihi plaudere, ut audax,

contemptis aliis, explosa Arbuscula dixit

It is enough for me to please a knight, just as the bold

Arbuscula said, having been hissed by the despicable crowd.

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