**Reimagining Hipparchia: Clemenza Ninci’s *Sposalizio d’Iparchia Filosofa***

**Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Hipparchia* (*Lives* 6.7.96)**

Καὶ ἤρα τοῦ Κράτητος καὶ τῶν λόγων καὶ τοῦ βίου, οὐδενὸς τῶν μνηστευομένων ἐπιστρεφομένη, οὐ πλούτου, οὐκ εὐγενείας, οὐ κάλλους: ἀλλὰ πάντ᾽ ἦν Κράτης αὐτῇ. καὶ δὴ καὶ ἠπείλει τοῖς γονεῦσιν ἀναιρήσειν αὑτήν, εἰ μὴ τούτῳ δοθείη. Κράτης μὲν οὖν παρακαλούμενος ὑπὸ τῶν γονέων αὐτῆς ἀποτρέψαι τὴν παῖδα, πάντ᾽ ἐποίει, καὶ τέλος μὴ πείθων, ἀναστὰς καὶ ἀποθέμενος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ σκευὴν ἀντικρὺ αὐτῆς ἔφη, ὁ μὲν νυμφίος οὗτος, ἡ δὲ κτῆσις αὕτη, πρὸς ταῦτα βουλεύου.

[Hipparchia] was enamored of the words and lifestyle of Crates, and did not pay attention to any of her suitors; not their wealth, noble birth, nor their beauty. But Crates was everything to her, and she threatened to her parents that she would kill herself if she was not given to him. Crates, however, being called upon by her parents to change her mind, attempted everything, and finally, not being able to persuade her, got up, took his clothes off, and addressed her directly: “This is your bridegroom, these his possessions. Decide accordingly.”

1. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* VI.96-98.

ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰπόντος αὐτῇ, αὕτη 'στὶν ἡ τὰς παρ᾽ ἱστοῖς ἐκλιποῦσα κερκίδας; ἐγώ, φησίν, εἰμί, Θεόδωρε: ἀλλὰ μὴ κακῶς σοι δοκῶ βεβουλεῦσθαι περὶ αὑτῆς, εἰ, τὸν χρόνον ὃν ἔμελλον ἱστοῖς προσαναλώσειν, τοῦτον εἰς παιδείαν κατεχρησάμην;

“Is this the lady who abandoned her carding combs by the loom?” “It is I, Theodorus,” she said. “And do you think I have made a bad choice for myself, if instead of squandering my time at the loom I have used it for my education?”

1. Apuleius, *Florida* XIV.6

duxit Cynicus in porticum; ibidem, in loco celebri, coram luce clarissima accubuit, coramque uirginem inminuisset paratam pari constantia ni Zeno procinctu palliastri circumstantis coronae obtutum magistri in secreto defendisset.

The Cynic led her into the piazza; and there, in a public place, openly and in broad daylight he lay down, and would have degraded the virgin, who was equally prepared for this, except that Zeno averted the gaze of the crowd by covering them with a ragged cloak.

1. Ninci, *Sposalizio* I.1.24-32.

Solo i libri / apportano al mio sen diletto e gioia,

n’involano la noia, / e finalmente, son di tal virtude

che per mezzo di quei/ ottengo di me stessa ogni vittoria.

Non ambisco del mondo altri piaceri. / Non amo, e poco prezzo esser amata,

ritrovando da savi essere scritto/ amore è di virtù fiero inimico.

Only books bring my mind delight and joy and relieve my boredom, and finally, they are of such virtue that through them I obtain every victory over myself. I desire none of the other pleasures of this world; I do not love, and consider being loved of little worth, finding that wise men have written that love is a fierce enemy of virtue.

1. Ninci, *Sposalizio* I.5.1-10.

Non dei maravigliarti, amico caro, / e molto men turbarti,

se Iparchia gentil’, di te Sorella, / disprezza e tien per vili

e mondani Diletti. / Schiva d’Amor li spassi

e maritali amplessi / poichè ne saggi studi e tanto immersa

che li porge fastidio e gran tormento / quel ch’ad altri daria somno contento.

You shouldn’t wonder, my dear friend, or be very disturbed if your sister the noble Hipparchia scorns earthly delights and considers them vile. She avoids the enjoyments of love and marital embraces because she is so immersed in her wise studies that what gives to others the greatest contentment to her brings trouble and great torment.

1. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* VI.2.71.

καὶ γὰρ αὐτὴ τῆς ἡδονῆς ἡ καταφρόνησις ἡδυτάτη προμελετηθεῖσα, καὶ ὥσπερ οἱ συνεθισθέντες ἡδέως ζῆν, ἀηδῶς ἐπὶ τοὐναντίον μετίασιν, οὕτως οἱ τοὐναντίον ἀσκηθέντες ἥδιον αὐτῶν τῶν ἡδονῶν καταφρονοῦσι.

For even contempt of pleasure is most pleasurable in itself when practiced beforehand; and just as those who are accustomed to live pleasurably feel displeasure when they experience the opposite, so those who practice the opposite find it more pleasing than pleasure itself.

1. Ninci, *Sposalizio* IV.1.22-25.

In questa mortal vita / A me tanto è gradita

La dura prigionia / Quanto la libertade, e signoria.

In this mortal life, this harsh prison is just as pleasing to me as liberty or lordship.

1. Ninci, *Sposalizio* II.6.32-37, 43-44.

Vedete e rimirate / Come pien d’amarezza è questo mondo,

d’ogni gioia in fecondo; / E sono i frutti suoi tormenti e pene...

Eccovi qui l’esempio: io, senza errare, / Hor mi fa incarcerare.

Look and be amazed at how full this world is of bitterness, and of every joy in abundance; and the fruits of this are torments and pain…Look at my example: I, without erring, now find myself in prison.

1. Ninci, *Sposalizio* IV.8.40-43.

Solo il voler divin ne può privare; / di me altro non hanno che invidiare. Ricchezze non posseggo, / e dignità non godo.

Only the will of the gods can deprive me [of virtue]; there is nothing else about me for [anyone] to envy. I do not possess riches, and I enjoy no dignity.

1. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* VI.93

Πρὸς Ἀλέξανδρον πυθόμενον εἰ βούλεται αὐτοῦ τὴν πατρίδα ἀνορθωθῆναι, ἔφη, "καὶ τί δεῖ; πάλιν γὰρ ἴσως Ἀλέξανδρος ἄλλος αὐτὴν κατασκάψει." ἔχειν δὲ πατρίδα ἀδοξίαν καὶ πενίαν ἀνάλωτα τῇ τύχῃ καὶ Διογένους εἶναι πολίτης ἀνεπιβουλεύτου φθόνῳ.

When Alexander inquired whether he wished his native city to be rebuilt, [Crates] said, “Why should it be? For perhaps another Alexander will destroy it.” **He said he considered his homeland to be ill repute and poverty, which could never be taken by Fortune; and that he was a comrade of Diogenes, who could never be subject to plots of envy.**

1. Ninci, *Sposalizio* IV.8. 48-52.

È questa la mercè degl’invidiosi:

cercon di far’oltraggio in mille modi,

con cento astuzie et arti a questo e quello,

spinti e spronati solo

dalla loro invidiosa passione.

This is the wage of the envious: they seek to do outrage in a million ways, with a hundred tricks and artifices to this and that end, compelled and driven only by their envious passion.

1. Ninci, *Sposalizio*,IV.1.44-54.

…e dubitare / L’huomo non dee mai, quando gli occorre / Alcun sinistro evento

Ch’ ordinato non sia / Dalla somma e celeste Providenza,

Cui provede a ciascuno i veri modi / Per salvar l’ alma e gir con lunghi passi

Al sommo Giove, nell’ empireo santo. / Ho rinunziato le ricchezze tutte

Per arrivare a quel; acciò non sieno / Quelle d’ impedimento al mio viaggio.

And man ought never to doubt but that, when some unfortunate event occurs, it was arranged by lofty and heavenly Providence, who provides to all the true paths towards saving the soul, and for going in strides to highest Jupiter in his holy empire. I have renounced all riches in order to arrive at this end, lest they should be something of an impediment to my journey.

**Selected Bibliography**

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