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Maidenhood and Kinslaying

Medea's Suicidal Ideation in Apollonius Rhodius and Valerius Flaccus

No.	Greek or Latin Text ¹	English Translation
1	αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν αὐτῆμαρ, ὄτ' ἐξανύσειεν ἄεθλον, τεθναίνην, ἢ λαιμὸν ἀναρτήσασα μελάθρω ἢ καὶ πασσαμένη ραιστήρια φάρμακα θυμοῦ. (Ap. 3.788-90)	But for my part, when he has accomplished his labor, may I die, having either attached my neck to a roof-beam or eaten the drugs destructive of the heart.
2	“ἢ τ' ἂν πολὺ κέρδιον εἴη τῆδ' αὐτῆ ἐν νυκτὶ λιπεῖν βίον ἐν θαλάμοισιν, πότημω ἀνωίστω κάκ' ἐλέγχεα πάντα φυγοῦσαν, πρὶν τάδε λωβήεντα καὶ οὐκ ὄνομαστὰ τελέσσαι.” ... ἴετο δ' ἦγε φάρμακα λέξασθαι θυμοφθόρα, τόφρα πάσαιτο· ἦδη καὶ δεσμοὺς ἀνελύετο φωριαμοῖο ἐξελέειν μεμαῦσα, δυσάμμορος· (Ap. 3. 798-801, 806-9)	“It would be much more profitable to leave life by night in the bedroom, escaping all evil and dishonorable things by an unexpected death, before accomplishing these outrageous and unspeakable deeds...” She desired to choose the heart-destroying drugs and swallow them; already the wretched girl was unlocking the clasps of the chest, desiring to remove the drugs.
3	κούρην δ' ἐξ ἀχέων ἀδινὸς κατελώφεεν ὑπνος λέκτρῳ ἀνακλινθεῖσαν. ἄφαρ δέ μιν ἠπεροπῆες, οἷά τ' ἀκηχεμένην, ὀλοοὶ ἐρέθεσκον ὄνειροι· τὸν ξεῖνον δ' ἐδόκησεν ὑφεςτάμεναι τὸν ἄεθλον, οὐ τι μάλ' ὀρμαίνοντα δέρος κριοῖο κομίσσαι, οὐδέ τι τοῖο ἔκητι μετὰ πτόλιν Αἰήταο ἐλθέμεν, ὄφρα δέ μιν σφέτερον δόμον εἰσαγάγοιτο κουριδίην παράκοιτιν. οἷετο δ' ἀμφὶ βόεσσιν αὐτῆ ἀεθλεύουσα μάλ' εὐμαρέως πονέεσθαι·	Deep sleep was giving rest from troubles to the maiden lying on the bed. Then at once deceptive and destructive dreams disquieted her as happens to a distressed girl ; it seemed that the stranger accepted the labor, not to carry off the ram's fleece nor did he come to the city of Aetes for the sake of such a thing, but to lead her to his own home as his wedded wife. She dreamed that she herself struggled against the oxen and quite easily completed the work, but her parents reneged on their promise, because they had not challenged their daughter to yoke the oxen, but the man himself. Therefore a contentious quarrel arose between her father and the strangers; and both sides turned the

¹ Text of the Greek *Argonautica* is taken from Mooney, text of Hippocrates' *Diseases of Young Girls* is taken from Fleming and Hanson, and text of the Latin *Argonautica* is taken from Mozely. All translations are my own.

	<p>σφωιτέρους δὲ τοκῆας ὑποσχεσίης ἀθερίζειν, οὔνεκεν οὐ κούρη ζεῦξαι βόας, ἀλλὰ οἱ αὐτῶ προύθεσαν· ἐκ δ' ἄρα τοῦ νεῖκος πέλεν ἀμφήριστον πατρί τε καὶ ξείνοις· αὐτῇ δ' ἐπιέτρεπον ἄμφω τῶς ἔμεν, ὥς κεν ἐῆσι μετὰ φρεσὶν ἰθύσειεν· ἢ δ' ἄφνω τὸν ξεῖνον, ἀφειδήσασα τοκῆων, εἶλετο· τοὺς δ' ἀμέγαρτον ἄχος λάβεν, ἐκ δ' ἐβόησαν χωόμενοι· τὴν δ' ὕπνος ἅμα κλαγγῇ μεθέηκεν. (Ap. 3.616-32)</p>	<p>decision over to her to be as she desired in her own mind. And she immediately chose the stranger with no regard for her parents. Measureless grief seized them, and enraged they cried out. At their cry, sleep released her.</p>
4	<p>ὑπὸ δὲ τῆς περὶ τὴν καρδίην πιέξιος ἀγχόνας κραίνουσιν... ἕτερον δὲ καὶ φοβερὰ ὀνομάζει· καὶ κελεύουσιν ἄλλεσθαι καὶ καταπίπτειν ἐς φρέατα ἢ ἄγγεσθαι, ἅτε ἀμείονά τε ἐόντα καὶ χρεῖην ἔχοντα παντοίην. (Hp. DYG 31-36)</p>	<p>Because of the pressure around the heart, they desire strangulation... She names strange and frightening things; and they urge her to leap and hurl herself into a well or hang herself, as being better and completely advantageous.</p>
5	<p>κελεύω δὴ τὰς παρθένους, ὀκόταν τοιοῦτο πάσχωσι, ὥς τάχιστα συνοικῆσαι ἀνδράσιν· ἦν γὰρ κηῖσωσιν, ὑγιέες γίνονται (Hp. DYG 41-3)</p>	<p>So I command maidens, whenever they suffer such things, to marry a man as quickly as possible; for if they become pregnant, they become healthy.</p>
6	<p>pulsat humum manibusque immurmurat uncis noctis eram Ditemque ciens, succurrere tandem morte velint ipsumque simul demittere leto, quem propter furit. (V. Fl. 7.312-15)</p>	<p>She beats the ground with clenched fists and whispers, beseeching the mistress of night and Dis that they wish to help her at last with death and at the same time to send to death him for whom she is mad.</p>
7	<p>haec dicens, qua non velocior ulla pestis erat, toto nequiquam lumine lustrat cunctaturque super morituraque colligit iras. (V. Fl. 7.333-5)</p>	<p>Saying these things, she casts her gaze in vain upon the magic poison (there is none faster acting) and she lingers upon it and collects her wrath, intending to die.</p>
8	<p>filia prima trucis vocem mirata tyranni haesit et ad iuvenem pallentia rettulit ora contremuitque metu... (V. Fl. 7.78-80)</p>	<p>First the daughter – marveling at the words of the tyrant – was transfixed and turned her pale face back to the youth and trembled in fear...</p>
9	<p>cur tibi fallaces placuit coniungere dextras tunc, pater, atque istis iuvenem non perdere monstros protinus? (V. Fl. 7.344-6)</p>	<p>“Why, father, did it please you to make a treacherous alliance and not destroy the youth right away with your monsters?”</p>
10	<p>quaenam aligeris secat anguibus auras caede madens? quos ense ferit? miser eripe parvos</p>	<p>“Who cuts the air with winged serpents, bloodstained? Whom does she strike with a sword? Poor Jason, take the little ones away! Lo, I see bridal chambers burning!”</p>

	Aesonide. cerno en thalamos ardere iugales. (V. Fl. 1.224-6)	
11	<p>dixerat haec stratoque graves proiecerat artus, si veniat miserata quies, cum saevior ipse turbat agitque sopor: supplex hinc sternitur hospes, hinc pater. illa nova rumpit formidine somnos erigiturque toro; famulas carosque penates agnoscit, modo Thessalicas raptata per urbes; turbidus ut Poenis caecisque pavoribus ensem corripit et saevae ferit agmina matris Orestes; ipsum angues, ipsum horisoni quatit ira flagelli; atque iterum incestae se fervere caede Lacaenae credit agens, falsaque redit de strage dearum fessus et in miserae collabitur ora sororis. (V. Fl. 7.141-152)</p>	<p>She had said these things and thrown her heavy limbs upon the bed (if pitiable rest would come), when sleep itself, more savage, disturbs and riles her: here is laid out the suppliant guest, there the father. She breaks sleep with newfound dread and is raised from the bed. She who was just dragged off through the cities of Thessaly recognizes her slave girls and beloved <i>penates</i>; just as Orestes, distressed by the Furies and invisible fears, grabs his sword and strikes the companions of his savage mother; him the serpents strike, him the wrath of the dreadful-sounding lash; and again he believes himself to be burning with the murder of the unchaste Spartan, driving her, and he returns exhausted from the false slaughter of the goddesses and he falls upon the neck of his poor sister.</p>
12	<p>saevus Echionia ceu Pentheia Bacchus in aula deserit infectis per roscida cornua vittis, cum tenet ille deum, pudibundaque tegmina matris tympanaque et mollem subito miser accipit hastam: haud aliter deserta pavet perque omnia circum fert oculos tectisque negat procedere virgo. (V. Fl. 7.301-6)</p>	<p>Just as savage Bacchus – his fillets stained by his wet horns – leaves Pentheus in the halls of Echion while he holds the god, and suddenly the poor man grabs his mother’s shameful dress and tambourine and unmanly spear; in no way otherwise Medea, deserted, fears and casts her eyes all around and refuses to leave the rooms.</p>
13	<p>utque procul magicis spirantia tecta venenis et saevae patuere fores oblataque contra omnia, quae ponto, quae manibus eruit imis et quae sanguineo lunae destrinxit ab ore... (V. Fl. 7.327-30)</p>	<p>And when from afar the room breathing with magic poison and the savage doors opened, and everything was presented facing her, all the things which she had taken from the sea, which she had taken from the spirits below, and which she had stripped from the blood-red face of the moon...</p>

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