

"Double-Speak: Gender and Genre in Ovid's (Double) *Heroides*"

"Mirror, Mirror on Jason's Wall:

The "Double" Epistles of Medea and Hypsipyle in Ovid's *Heroides*"

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30 December 1997

1. *Heroides* 6.41-44

*heus, ubi pacta fides? ubi conubialia iura?
faxque sub arsuos dignior ire rogos?
non ego sum furto tibi cognita. pronuba Iuno
affuit et sertis tempora vinctus Hymen.*

Alas! Where is the promised faith? Where are the marriage vows and the torch more worthy to go beneath pyres about to burn? I was not your lover in secret; Juno was present as bridesmaid and Hymen bound as to his temples with garlands.

2.a. *Heroides* 6.19 and 6.81

barbara narratur venisse venefica tecum

The story goes that a barbarian sorceress has come with you

. . . nocuit mihi barbara paelex!

A barbarian concubine brought me harm!

b. *Heroides* 6.85-88 and 6.97-98

*illa reluctantem cursu deducere lunam
nititur et tenebris abdere solis equos;
illa refrenat aquas obliquaque flumina sistit,
illa loco silvas vivaque saxa movet.*

She strives to lead down the struggling moon from its course and to hide the horses of the sun with shadows. She holds back waters and stops sloping rivers. She moves forests and living stones from their place.

*scilicet ut tauros, ita te iuga ferre coegit:
quaque feros angues te quoque mulcet ope.*

Certainly she compelled you, as she compelled the bulls, to bear the yoke, and by what means she subdues fierce snakes, she subdues you also.

c. *Heroides* 6.89-92

*per tumulos errat passis discincta capillis
certaque de tepidis colligit ossa rogis.
devovet absentes simulacraque cerea fingit
et miserum tenues in iecur urget acus --*

She wanders through tombs with her dress untied, and with her hair in disarray, and she collects specific bones from pyres which are still warm. She curses those who are absent and fashions waxen images, and presses thin needles into the wretched liver.

3. *Heroides* 6.133-137

*turpiter illa virum cognovit adultera virgo,
me tibi teque mihi taeda pudica dedit.
prodidit illa patrem -- rapui de caede Thoanta.
deseruit Colchos -- me mea Lemnos habet.*

Disgracefully that adulterous maiden knew my husband -- a chaste torch gave me to you and you to me. That woman betrayed her father -- I seized Thoas from the slaughter. She abandoned Colchis -- my Lemnos holds me.

4. *Heroides* 6.126-128

*sed tenuit coeptas saeva noverca vias.
Medeam timui -- plus est Medea noverca --
Medeae faciunt ad scelus omne manus.*

But a savage step-mother held back my plans as I began to put them into action. I feared Medea. Medea is more than a step-mother. The hands of Medea are fitted for every crime.

5.a. *Heroides* 6.162

erret inops, exspes, caede cruenta sua!

May she wander poor, without hope, bloody with the slaughter she has perpetrated.

b. *Heroides* 6.91

devovet absentes . . .

She curses those who are absent . . .

6. *Heroides* 6.147-151

*ipse quidem per me tutus sospesque fuisses,
non quia tu dignus, sed quia mitis ego.
paelicis ipsa meos implessem sanguine vultus,
quosque veneficiis abstulit illa suis.
Medeae Medea forem.*

Indeed you yourself would have been safe and unharmed as far as I was concerned -- not because you deserve it, but because I am gentle. I myself would have filled with the blood of your concubine my face and your face which she took away through her poisons. I would become Medea to Medea.

7.a. *Heroides* 12.109-111

*flammea subdixi medicato lumina somno,
et tibi quae raperes vellera tuta dedi.
proditus est genitor, regnum patriamque reliqui;*

I closed the flaming eyes with a drugged sleep and I gave to you safe the fleece which you stole. My father was betrayed; I left my kingdom and my homeland.

b. *Heroides* 12.161-162

*Laese pater, gaude! Colchi gaudete relict!
inferias umbrae fratris habete mei!*

Injured father, rejoice! Rejoice abandoned Colchians! Shade of my brother, receive your funeral sacrifices!

c. *Heroides* 12.131-132

*Quid referam Peliae natas pietate nocentes
caesaque virginea membra paterna manu?*

Why should I recall the daughters of Pelias who inflict harm because of piety and the paternal limbs slaughtered by virginal hands?

8.a. *Heroides* 12.183-184

*dum ferrum flammaeque aderunt sucusque veneni,
hostis Medae nullus inultus erit!*

While sword, flames and the juices of poison are at hand, no enemy of Medea will escape revenge!

b. *Heroides* 12.210-211

*. . . ingentes parturit ira minas.
quo feret ira sequar!*

My anger gives birth to great threats -- I shall follow where my anger leads me!

c. *Heroides* 12.214

nescio quid certe mens mea maius agit!

Surely my mind conjures up something greater!

9. *Heroides* 12.115-117

*at non te fugiens sine me, germane, reliqui.
deficit hoc uno littera nostra loco:
quod facere ausa mea est, non audet scribere dextra.*

But in my flight I did not leave you, brother, without me. In this one place my letter is lacking. What my right hand dared to do, it does not dare to write.

10.a. *Heroides* 12.35-36

*et vidi et perii! nec notis ignibus arsi,
ardet ut ad magnos pinea taeda deos.*

I saw and I perished! I burned with unknown fires as a pine torch burns for the great gods.

b. *Heroides* 12.137-138

*iussa domo cessi natis comitata duobus
et, qui me sequitur semper, amore tui.*

Bidden, I left my house, accompanied by my two sons and by my love for you, which always follows me.

c. *Heroides* 12.169-170

*ipsi me cantus herbaeque artesque relinquunt;
nil dea, nil Hecates sacra potentis agunt.*

Spells and herbs and skills themselves desert me. The goddess, the sacred rites of powerful Hecate are worth nothing.