

Heroides 11: Class notes

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Canace to (brother/lover) Macareus. Macareus had got father to agree to sibling marriage but failed to get right lot; father also discovered child > sent sword to Canace for her suicide.

Timing > dramatic irony: through knowledge of Euripides' *Aeolus*, reader knows that while Canace complaining of cruel father/how she will die, Macareus successfully pleading with her father > comes back too late (if letter had been longer would she have been saved??) and so kills himself. Child probably survives (and this letter tells of parentage by Macareus which will help; Fulkerson images *Aeolus* as reader)

Intertexts: sources largely lost and must be reconstructed. Euripides' play *Aeolus* (which first identified Canace as daughter of *Aeolus*, wind-god): fragmentary but see fragmentary hypothesis *Pap. Oxy.* 2457. See Knox commentary, Williams 1992, Fulkerson. See Stobaeus for Macareus' two approaches: one to get brothers/sisters marrying and one to plead for Canace's life after sword sent (unclear if in the Euripides play), which would seem to have been successful.

"[Ovid] sets the time of 'writing' only moments before her suicide, the irony of the situation being thus deepened by the reader's awareness that Macareus is already rushing to her to countermand her father's orders" (Knox p258).

Within the collection, compare *Her.* 4 (*Phaedra*); cf. also incestuous *Byblis* in *Metamorphoses* 9. Fulkerson 2005 argues that *Hypermestra* (*Her.* 14) may have read Canace's letter and used it to her advantage; suggests rgar Canace's letter saves *Hypermestra's* life.

1 abrupt, emotional opening; *caecis ...lituris*: "illegible smears" (Knox)- caused by blood on fresh ink; *errabunt*: "are unclear" (Knox).

1-2: cf. *Prop.* 4.3.4-3 (but here blood); 3.3. Draws attention to fictionality.

2 *dominae*: evokes elegiac mistress too?

3ff: Canace visualizes scene: absence/distance underlined.

3 *calamum*: reed pen i.e. papyrus (cf *charta*) letter, not wax tablet (closer to *libellus* we are reading?). As Knox observes, this suggests preparation. *ferrum*: sword is drawn, suggesting suicide close.

4 *in gremio*: "on my knees" (Knox); Reeson suggests erotic pose, papyrus is unfastened (*soluta*): ready for writing.

5: Canace identified: daughter of *Aeolus* (Macareus first named at 21); "brother": important as cause.

6 *sic*: referring to suicide; *uideor ... posse placere patri*: "I imagine that I can satisfy my father" (Knox); paradoxical that father would be satisfied by causing death of child; *durus* nods to stock stern father of comedy; also elegy (cf. *Rem.* 563-4).

7 *spectator*: predicative "to witness" (Knox); Knox suggests echo of *Aen.* 10.443 (*Turnus* taunting *Pallas*) *cuperem ipse parens spectator adesset*. Ominous as suggest death. Cf. 114 n. Williams suggests parallels evoked (premature death when security provided by dependence on paternal protection removed). Casali suggests that unlike *Turnus'* killing of *Pallas*, Canace's death avoidable and needless; Casali also notes that her father couldn't watch her- he is at that time agreeing to save her

8 *auctorisque oculis exigeretur opus*: “the work were examined by the eyes of the one who caused it” (Knox, who suggests as if suicide work of art); Reeson translates “the works were accomplished for the eyes...”

9ff parallels with winds' ferocity- but also nb fickleness...

9 *ut ferus est*: “cruel as he is” (Knox).

9 *truculentior*: appropriate of people and elements, aptly for wind-god.

10 *spectasset*: picks up *spectator*; see Knox on “epistolary” tense, i.e. from point of view of recipient, C already dead; *siccis* ... *genis*: “with dry eyes” (Knox).

11 *est aliquid*: “it has some effect” (Knox); understatement.

12 *populi*: i.e. winds.

13 *Sithonio*: Thracian; see Knox for metrical style. 5th foot hiatus and final tertrasyllable graecizing features: used with only wind that doesn't get its Greek name.

14 *proterue*: Knox argues it suggests capricious violence.

15 *tumidus* suits wind and rage; no command over passion: Stoic overtones. Contrast *aen.* 1.56f. where Aeolus checks winds (inc. *temperat irae*).

16 postponed *et*.

17-20: cf. Prop. 4.11.11-13 *quid mihi coniugium Paulli, quid currus auorum / profuit aut famae pignora tanta meae? / non minus immitis habuit Cornelia Parcas*; recalling Eur. Fr 22 Nauck “don't speak to me of the nobility of our lineage from the gods, father; this ranks with possessions, don't pride yourself on it”. In Euripides' play, Zeus>Hellen>Aeolus> Canace. Variety of genealogical traditions.

17: *me* missing; *admotam* “promoted” (Knox).

18: relationship with Jupiter not made clear here: “O's text probably reflects some Euripidean or Hellenistic genealogical gerrymandering” (Knox). See Casali on Jupiter: precedent for incestuous relationship (cf. 4.133-4, used by Phaedra). Fulkerson suggests Canace wondering because she has familiarity with other epistles which detail such things.

19 *munera*: gift as sent by father; *funebria* (“fatal”) points up warped nature of gift. Reeson notes meaning “funereal” and common usage of *manus* (offering to dead): “the sword is Aeolus; funeral gift to his daughter, but one given before, not after, her death, and to be its cause rather than its propitiation” (Reeson ad loc)

20: male sword (weapon: *tela*); female should handle loom (*tela, ae* (f)).

21ff: incestuous relationship: see Casali 1998 for Ovidian innovation in having Canace fall in love, rather than be seduced or raped. 21-6 beginnings of the relationship; 27-32 symptoms of love sickness such as pallor, loss of appetite (particularly noticeable given Hom. 10.8-9 of daughters/sons of Aeolus: “they always banquet with their dear father and their loving mother; unending quantities of food are set before them”: Casali 1998).

21 *commisit in unum*: “joined us as one” (Knox).

25 *quoque*: suggests Macareus initiated the relationship (NB rejects tradition that Canace was raped by him).

26 Reeson prints *tremente*.

28 *coacta* “forced [to eat]” (Knox) (probably by herself).

29 *nec somni faciles*: “and my sleep was difficult” (Knox); *nox erat annua* “the night seemed like a year” (Knox): due to loneliness.

31 *reddere causam*: “give an account” (Knox).

32 *quid amans esset* “what it was to be in love” (Knox).

33-4 nurse: Knox gives parallels for involvement of nurse; esp. tragic. Euripidean hypothesis attests nurse figure. Nurses in tragedy and old women in comedy and elegy can be love experts.

33 *praesensit*: “had a presentiment” (Knox).

35 *gremioque pudor deiecit ocellos*: “and in my shame I cast my eyes down to my bosom” (Knox)

36 *in tacita*: as Knox says, literally “in the case of one who was silent”> I.e. “though I said nothing” (Knox).

37-8: Casali notes surprising: physical love symptoms – we now realize she was also pregnant

(symptoms of early pregnancy?); had already consummated relationship. Drugs offered by nurse not for healing lovesickness but for procuring abortion. Casali suggests that in romantic version Canace is mitigating reality of deflowering (37) and questions whether she is really in love. Note that in Eur. *Aeolus* 25-6 “she became pregnant and hid the birth by pretending to be ill”.

37 *uitiati*: “deflowered” (Knox): explicit, blunt term. May hint at violence of Macareus or may see language as coloured by Canace's feelings/desire to make Macareus feel guilty.

38 *aegra*: proleptic (“weighed down my limbs and weakened them” Knox); *furtium*: illicit/hidden relationship > hidden pregnancy.

39-44 Canace fails to procure abortion (and child may not die in tradition once born: cf. 43): probably Ovidian addition (nb procedure socially stigmatized in Ovid's Rome).

41 *penitus* “from within” (Knox).

42 *excuteretur*: according to Knox, apparently the medical term for abortin gfoetus

43 *nimum uiuax*: “too tenacious of life” (Knox); possible military image in admotis (used of moving up seige engines), carried on by *tutus* and *hoste* in 44,

44 failure of abortion viewed from perspective of child, to whom outside world hidden and those who tried are enemies.

45-64: birth possibly represented in Eur. difficulties of hiding birth; appearance of brother helps give her the will to deliver.

45 Diana.

46 *mouebat*: “was driving” (Knox).

48 *rudis*: in military jargon, of novice recruit; suggestive of lack of sophistication and inexperience. *noua miles*: feminine... Warfare of childbirth also in Ovid's elegy (perhaps looking ultimately to Eur. *Med.* 250f).

51 *quid faciam?*: deliberative subjunctive.

52: nurse physically restrains her, fear and shame metaphorically restrain her (syllepsis).

53 *elapsaque uerba rependo*: “I try to restrain the words which escaped me” (Knox).

54 *lacrimas combibere*: “to swallow my tears” (Knox).

55 *mors*: death now too looms.

56 “and if I had died, death too would have been a serious indictment of my character” (Knox).

57ff.: Macareus' physicality stressed, hints of passion.

59 *soror*: but erotic relationship... (though context is approval of marriages from father).

60: familiar elegiac conceit: see Knox ad loc; context points to unborn child? Does Macareus mean himself and Canace? (he will commit suicide following her death).

61: Knox suggests evokes invocation of the deity *Spes*.

63 “though dead, yet I revived at your words” (Knox).

64 *crimen onusque*: “the criminal burden” (Knox) – hendiadys; cf. 66 *crimina*.

65-92: discovery of child; unclear if in Euripides. Why does C relate to Macareus? Trying to show her grief/make him feel guilty?

66 i.e. after drawing of lots. Child clearly not legitimate.

67-74: Knox suggests that lack of detail of procession may suggest familiar, perhaps from Euripides' *Aeolus*.

70 *dat ... uiam*: “give way” (Knox); take with each clause.

71 *patrias*: we are reminded of the sibling bond.

73 *reuelat*: “lifts the veil from” (Knox).

74 presumably angry at Canace's loss of honour, made clear by birth; father not clear at this point.

75-8: Knox compares *Am.* 1.7.53-6 *exanimis artus et membra trementia uidi, / ut com populeas uentilat aura comas, / ut leni Zephyro gracilis uibratur harundo / summae cum tepido stringitur unda Noto*.

75 *tenui cum stringitur aura*: “when it is ruffled by a light breeze” (Knox).

76 *quatitur tepido fraxinus icta Noto*: “the ash-tree trembles when shaken by the warm south wind” (Knox); Knox adopts Palmer's emendation of the text.

78 *ab imposito corpore*: “by my body as I lay there” (Knox).

79 *irruit*: referring to Aeolus; vivid use of present tense.

81-2: Canace says nothing: perhaps she should have done (father persuaded by Macareus, too late)

83-6: description of Aeolus' orders to expose illegitimate infant; Knox suggests 85-6 might be felt as a temporal clause "he had given the orders when the child began to wail".

83-90: Casali suggests that Aeolus' softening as regards mother also likely with regards child: horrible death won't materialize (though parents will die).

85 *sensisse putares*: "you would have thought that he understood" (Knox).

86 *quaque ... poterat uoce*: "with such voice as he could" (Knox).

87 *quid mihi tunc animi?*: "What do you think my state of mind was then?" (Knox); *germane*: used of one born from same parents (Knox).

88 *potes ex animo colligere*: "you can infer from your own state of mind" (Knox).

91-2 "he had left the room, when at last..." (Knox).

93-106: description of messenger with sword; Knox argues probably scene featured in Euripides

93 *patrius ... satellites*: "my father's attendant" (Knox).

94 *indignos edidit ore sonos*: "he uttered these shameful words" (Knox).

96 *ex merito scire*: "judge from your action" (Knox); *quid iste uelit*: "what its purpose is" (Knox).

97 plural: Canace would take as "I" but readers may think of suicide of both.

98: "gift" not but gift one would expect from a father...

100 Casali 1998: 710 sees paradoxical overtones: no need for dowry as marrying within family.

101: as Knox remarks, Canace feels cheated out of marriage because right lot did not fall to her

102 house of Aeolus at fault because Aeolus causing deaths of daughter/grandchild.

103 common wedding/funeral torch play.

104 cf. Tib. 1.16 (where positive) *dum meus assiduo luceat igne focus*.

106 *amissae memores ... est mei*: "remember me when I am gone" (Knox).

107-20: for tragic colouring, see Knox ad loc. C.'s suicide linked to wish to follow baby in death (but possibly dramatic irony if tradition that the baby survived).

107 *tam paucis editus horis*: "born so few hours ago" (Knox).

108 *uix bene*: "scarcely" (Knox).

109-110 "if it is possible for him to deserve death, let him be thought to have deserved it; but the poor child is wrongly implicated in my crime [admisso]" (Knox).

111 possibly echoing Eur. *Aeolus*: cf. Pseudo-Eur. *Rhesus* 896-7.

111 Knox reads *rabidarum*.

113 *parum fausti*: "ill-starred" (Knox).

114 *haec tibi prima dies, haec tibi summa fuit*: possibly not true; cf (with Casali) *Aen.* 10.508 (lamentation for Pallas' death) *haec te prima dies bello dedit, haec eadem aufert*.

119 *cum uulnere prosequar*: "I shall escort him as I strike the wound" (Knox).

120 *fuero dicta*: for *dicta ero*.

121ff: M. won't be able to as kills himself.

121 *sperate*: "longed for" (Knox).

125 urges Macareus to live mindful of her but he will go on to kill himself with same sword.

126 *neue reformida corpus*: "and do not recoil from the body" (Knox).