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HPLA 7004
Non-Assessed Assignment 2
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Translation, *Heroides* 6. 113-26

113 *si te nobilitas generosaque nomina tangunt:*
en ego Minoos nata Thoante feror!
115 [*Bacchus avus: Bacchi coniunx redimita corona*
prae-radiat stellis signa minora suis.]
117 *dos tibi Lemnos erit, terra ingeniosa colenti;*
me quoque dotalis inter habere potes.
119 *Nunc etiam peperit; gratare ambobus, Iason.*
dulce mihi gravidæ fecerat auctor onus.
121 *felix in numero quoque sum prolemque gemellam,*
pignora Lucina bina favente, dedi.
123 *si quaeris, cui sint similes, cognosceris illis;*
fallere non norunt; cetera patris habent.
125 *legatos quos paene dedi pro matre ferendos;*
sed tenuit coeptas saeva noverca vias.

113-4 If noble birth and highborn titles move you, see I am spoken of as the daughter of
Minoan Thoas!

115-6 [Grandfather was Bacchus; wife of Bacchus crowned with a garland whose stars
outshines the lesser constellations.]

117-8 Lemnos, a land suitable for cultivation, will be my dowry for you;
you may have me also among the dotal slaves

119-20 Now I also have brought forth; be grateful for us both, Jason.
The father had made me delightfully full with a child.

121-2 I have had a lucky throw, too, and have made my stake with twin offspring by Lucina's
favour.

123-4 If you ask to whom are they similar, you will be recognised in them;

They have learned how not to be deceived; the rest they have of their father.

125-6 I nearly gave them up to be sent as ambassadors of their mother; but their mad stepmother began to guard the roads.

Commentary. *Heroides* 7.127-45

127-8 *Medeam timui; plus est Medea noverca:
Medeae faciunt ad scelus omne manus.*
129-30 *spargere quae fratris potuit lacerata per agros
corpora, pignoribus parceret illa meis?*
131-2 *hanc, tamen, o demens Colchisque ablate uenenis,
diceris Hypsipyles praeposuisse toro?*
133-4 *turpiter illa uirum cognovit adultera uirgo;
me tibi teque mihi taeda pudica dedit.*
135-6 *prodidit illa patrem; rapui de caede Thoanta.
deseruit Colchos; me mea Lemnos habet.*
137-8 *quid refert, scelerata piam si vincit et ipso
crimine dotata est emeruitque uirum.*
139-40 *[Lemniadum facinus culpo, non miror, Iason;
quamlibet ignauis iste dat arma dolor.]*
141-2 *dic age, si uentis ut oportuit, actus iniquis
intrasses portus tuque comesque meos,*
143-4 *obuiaque exissem fetu comitante gemello
(hiscere nempe tibi terra roganda fuit)*
145 *quo uultu natos, quo me scelerate uideres?*

In Ovid's sixth epistle, *Hypsipyle Iasoni*, Hypsipyle is writing to her now estranged lover, Jason who has left her on Lemnos. The letter is written following Jason's success in obtaining the Golden Fleece from Colchis, his uniting with the sorceress Medea, and their killing of Medea's brother.

At line 127-8, Hypsipyle departs from her previous method of referring to Medea in the sarcastic, "that one" or "this one" (*illa, haec*) or as a foreign sorceress (*barbara uenefica*), and begins writing her name in a series of repetitions, '*Medeam...Medea...Medeae.*' Ovid may be

demonstrating a shift in Hypsipyle's emotions here, possibly becoming more poignant as she writes the name of her nemesis. But she reverts back again with *hanc* at line 131.

In allusions to Apollonius' *Argonautica*, Ovid's Hypsipyle seems to have an unusual knowledge of events that have taken place since Jason met Medea. She refers to Medea's hands as fitted for any (or all manner) of evil deeds (*faciunt ad scelus omne*). Knox points out that Ovid has used this same description several times in the *Ars Amatoria* and *Tristia*.¹ The example of such crimes given by Hypsipyle is the murder of Medea's own brother. But Hypsipyle changes one of the facts from the allusion to Apollonius. In the *Argonautica*, Medea's brother was an adult, but here he seems to be a boy.²

Ovid uses several interesting adaptations of words in this epistle. Among them is the use of the word *pignoribus* at line 130 (*pignoribus parceret illa meis?*). Whereas this would usually have meant a pledge or a mortgage, Ovid uses it here as Hypsipyle's reference to her own children.

Hypsipyle also knows of Medea's persona as a sorceress, referring in line 131 to the potions or drugs that Medea has used to influence Jason, and referring to Jason by the adjective '*demens*' for demented, mad or insane.

¹ Knox 1995: 197.

² Knox 1995: 197.