

Teichoskopia: Female Figures Looking on Battles

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1. Horace, *carm.* 3.2.1-16

*Angustam amice pauperiem pati
robustus acri militia puer
condiscat et Parthos ferocis
vexet eques metuendus hasta
vitamque sub divo et trepidis agat* 5
*in rebus. Illum ex moenibus hosticis
matrona bellantis tyranni
prospiciens et adulta virgo
suspiret, eheu, ne rudis agminum
sponsus lacessat regius asperum* 10
*tactu leonem, quem cruenta
per medias rapit ira caedes.*
*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori:
mors et fugacem persequitur virum ...*

The boy must be toughened by hard campaigning
and learn to endure poverty happily,
riding against fierce Parthians,
spreading terror with his sword,
and living in danger under open sky.
When the mother of a warring king and the maiden
grown to womanhood gaze at him
from the walls of the enemy city,
let them sigh their sighs from the royal bridegroom
new to the ranks, in case he rouse the lion
it is death to touch, whose anger whirls him
in blood through the thick of slaughter.
Sweet it is and honourable to die for one's native land.
Death hunts down even the man who runs away ...
(transl. West [2002])

2. Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica* 6.503-6

*... ast illae murorum extrema capessunt
defixaeque virum lituumque fragoribus horrent,
quales instanti nimborum frigore maestae* 505
succedunt ramis haerentque pavore volucres

But they made for the edge of the walls and, struck
motionless, they shudder at the crashes of men and
trumpets, just as birds sad at the pressing cold of the
clouds perch on branches and stick there in fear.
(transl. Lovatt [2006] 68)

3. 6.575-82

Ecce autem muris residens Medea paternis 575
*singula dum magni lustrat certamina belli
atque hos ipsa procul densa in caligine reges
agnoscit quaeritque alios Iunone magistra,
conspicit Aesonium longe caput ac simul acres
huc oculos sensusque refert animumque faventem,
nunc quo se raperet, nunc quo diversus abiret* 581
ante videns ...

From up on the wall, Medea, perched on her bench, looks
down at these various scenes of combat, picking out those
princes she knows and can recognize, but at Juno's
prompting, she spots the splendid stranger, Jason, whose
actions she follows, gazing with eager eyes as he runs this
way and that. ... (transl. Slavitt [1999] 126)

4. 6.657-8 and 663

*at regina virum (neque enim deus amovet ignem)
persequitur lustrans oculisque ardentibus haeret.*
...
... et saevae trahitur dulcedine flammae.

From the top of the wall, the princess' bright eyes follow the
hero in whom the fire of Juno is raging hotter than ever ...
She feels herself yielding to delicious fancies that
shimmer in the tongues of her heart's flame.
(transl. Slavitt [1999] 128)

5. 6.681-2

*imminet e celsis audentius improba muris
virgo nec ablatam sequitur quaeritve sororem.*

But Medea does not think to follow her sister. More boldly
she leans out over the wall.
(transl. Slavitt [1999] 129)

6. 6.717-20

*haud secus ante urbem Myraces atque ipsius ante
virginis ora cadit. sed non magis illa movetur
unius aegra metu quam te, Meleagre, furentem,
quam Talaum videt aut pugnas miratur Acasti.* 720

No differently [than other heroes] did Myraces fall before the
city and before the face of the girl herself. But sick with fear
for one man she is not moved any more than if she saw you
in your madness, Meleager, or Talaus, or wondered at the
battles of Acastus.
(transl. Lovatt [2006] 76)

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