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Io: From Giovanni Boccaccio’s Famous Women: A New Translation, with Text, and Commentary

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Commentaries on Greek and Latin Literature

From Giovanni Boccaccio’s Famous Women

A New Translation, with Text, and Commentary

By E. H. Campbell
### Sigla

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short Form</th>
<th>Full Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>First person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Second person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Third person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>Accusative case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act.</td>
<td>Active voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adv.</td>
<td>Adverb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adj.</td>
<td>Adjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aor.</td>
<td>Aorist tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art.</td>
<td>Article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td>Common, both masculine and feminine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cf.</td>
<td>Confere, compare!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comp.</td>
<td>Comparative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>Dative case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defect.</td>
<td>Defective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ep.</td>
<td>Epic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclam.</td>
<td>Exclamation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fem.</td>
<td>Feminine gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freq.</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>Genitive case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gk.</td>
<td>Greek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hdt.</td>
<td>Herodotus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.e.</td>
<td>Id est, that is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibid.</td>
<td>Ibidem, in the same place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imper.</td>
<td>Imperative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperf.</td>
<td>Imperfect tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ind.</td>
<td>Indicative mood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imper.</td>
<td>Imperative mood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inf.</td>
<td>Infinitive mood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ion.</td>
<td>Ionic dialect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lat.</td>
<td>Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masc.</td>
<td>Masculine gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaph.</td>
<td>Metaphor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid.</td>
<td>Middle voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid./Pass.</td>
<td>Middle/Passive voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neut.</td>
<td>Neuter gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obj.</td>
<td>Object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part.</td>
<td>Participle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partic.</td>
<td>Particle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass.</td>
<td>Passive voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perf.</td>
<td>Perfect tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pl.</td>
<td>Plural number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poet.</td>
<td>Poetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>Preposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pres.</td>
<td>Present tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pron.</td>
<td>Pronoun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proclit.</td>
<td>Proclitic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sing.</td>
<td>Singular number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subst.</td>
<td>Substantive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superl.</td>
<td>Superlative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viz.</td>
<td>Videre licet, or vidlicet, it should be seen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voc.</td>
<td>Vocative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Epitome ¹

Sigla .................................................................................................................................3
Preface ..................................................................................................................................5
    Aeschylus (524 – 455 B.C.) ..........................................................................................6
    Herodotus (484–425 B.C.) ............................................................................................7
    Apollodorus (180 – 120 B.C.) .......................................................................................9
    Diogenes Laertius (3rd Century A.D.) .........................................................................10
    Ancillary Remarks ........................................................................................................11
Acknowlegements ............................................................................................................13
Io .........................................................................................................................................14
Operas Citatas ..................................................................................................................30

Preface

Giovanni Boccaccio was born in 1313 and died in 1375. He was praised as an author and as a man by Edward Hutton (1875-1969). Hutton, among other things, said: “It might seem proper, in England at least, to preface any book dealing frankly with the author of the Decameron with an apology for, and perhaps a defense of, its subject. I shall do nothing of the kind. Indeed, this is not the place, if any be, to undertake the defense of Boccaccio. His life, the facts of his life, his love, his humanity, and his labors, plentifully set forth in this work, will defend him with the simple of the heart more eloquently than I could hope to do.”

I could not but agree.

As it has done for me, your reading of his work, concerning the life of Io, will defend him to you. The place of his birth is not known. The identity of his mother is not known. Boccaccio never wrote about her. He called himself a Florentine Certaldo, and died in that town, but it was not his birthplace. Some say he came from Paris, but his father was a successful banker of humble origin, from Certaldo in Florentine Valdelsa. On account of his remarks concerning Boccaccio’s Latin works, set himself aside from our inquiry into Boccaccio’s life of Io. To us, Giovanni Boccaccio’s De Mulieribus Claris is as timely as it is most intriguing.

About Boccaccio’s Latin works in general, Hutton said: “Let me confess it at once: after laboring with an immense weariness through the whole of these works in Latin, I

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have found but one complete work and two fragments which seem to have been written with any personal conviction."³ About the De Mulieribus Claris in particular, he said: “The earliest among them, as we may think, the De Claris Mulieribus, constitutes as it were the transition from the writings of full imagination and the life in the vulgar tongue⁴ too the works of erudition.⁵ Its chief purpose would seem to be rather to entertain and to amuse women than to write history or biography…it remains for the most part a wretched and awkward piece of work, in which virtue and vice are dealt with and distinguished.”⁶ I could not but disagree. I hardly find matters of vice and virtue, wretched and awkward, or the erudition to women about women amusing, or history and biography, a form of entertainment. I find his metaphorical mixture, erudition and amusing, to be contradictio in adjecto.⁷ To us Boccaccio’s Latin works could hardly be more worthwhile, both historical, biographical, and erudite—De Mulieribus Claris is not fiction. It is, however, a history of women—and for those reasons, Hutton found nothing in it.

**Aeschylus (524 – 455 B.C.)**

In Prometheus Bound, Aeschylus has Io, upon finding Prometheus, chained to the Scythian Rock by Hephaestus—at the command of Power—say, among other things:

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⁴ I.e., ‘in the common language.’
⁵ “The quality of having or showing great knowledge or learning; scholarship; teaching skills.” From the Latin erudio, -ire, to free from roughness; to instruct, teach, educate. Adj., eruditus, -a, -um, instructed, educated, trained. Noun, erudition, -onis, f., teaching, instruction, or knowledge. (Op. Cit., Cassell’s Latin Dictionary).
“What land is this? What people? By what name am I to call him I behold exposed to the tempest in bonds of rock? What offence hast thou committed that for penalty thou art doomed to destruction? Tell me to what region of the Earth I have wandered in my wretchedness? Oh, oh! Again a gadfly, phantom of earth-born Argus, stings me to misery. Keep him aloof, O Earth! I am fearful when I behold that myriad-eyed herdsman. He travels onward with his crafty gaze upon me; nor even in death doth the earth conceal him, but passing from the shades hounds me, the forelorn one, and drives me famished along the sands of the sea-shore.”

Herodotus (484–425 B.C.)

But the Phoenicians in fact

Coming to this Argos

Disposed of their cargo.

[3] And on the fifth or sixth day,

After the day they came,

Having sold off nearly everything to them,

Departed upon the sea

With many other women,

But more importantly,

With the daughter of the King,

---

And they say,

And according to the Hellens themselves,

Her name,

Was Io,

Daughter of Inachus

[4] These women

Down at the stern

Of the ship stood

From them, freight,

Most enthusiastically buying;

And the Pheonicians

Having been orders given

To urge them on.

Most of the women

Indeed fled,

But Io,

With some others along,

Was kidnapped.

And they,

Being into the ship thrown,

To the River Nile,
Departed;

Sailing away.⁹

**Apollodorus (180 – 120 B.C.)**

In his *Library*, Apollodorus explains to us how he understood the story of Io through his study of Hesiod. According to him, Ocean and Tethus had a son names Inachus—the River in Argos having been named for him—he and his half-sister had sons, Phoroneus and Aegialeus. Aegialeus having died left Aegialia to Phoroneus. Phoroneus renamed the place Peloponnese, and fathered Apis and Niobe by the Nymph¹⁰ Teledice. Apis became a tyrant, and was murdered. But Niobe became the first mortal woman to be seduced by Zeus, and bore him a son named Argus.

Argus named the Peloponnese after himself, calling it Argos. He married Evadne, and begat Ecbasus, Piras, Epidaurus, and Criasus. Ecbasus begat Agenor, who begat Argus—the one called the All-Seeing, for it was said that he had eyes all over his body, and was exceedingly strong. He killed a bull and wore its hide, he killed a robber, and he murdered Echidna, daughter of Tartarus and Earth, when she was asleep. He also killed a number of other people. He married Ismene, who bore him a son named Iasus, who fathered Io. But others maintain that she was indeed the daughter of Inachus. Some say she was the daughter of Piren.

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¹⁰ nymphē, -es, f, (Gk., νυμφή), a young woman; or demi-Goddesses who inhabit the seas, the rivers, fountains, woods, trees, and mountains
Zeus seduced her when she was Priestess of Hera. Hera discovered this, and Zeus turned her into a white cow, and feigned ignorance. He gave the cow to Hera because she wanted it, and Hera placed Argus over her as a guardian, who tied her to a tree. Zeus ordered Hermes to steal the cow. Hermes was discovered, but was ultimately victorious having killed Argus by the cast of a stone. Thereafter, Hera infested Io with a gadfly. Thereupon, Io began to wander aimlessly. After she had swum the Gulf Ionian, she journeyed to Illyria, and the Bosphorus—both of which are named for her—and onward to Scythia, and the Cimmerian Lands, having crossed great swaths of land, and having swum wide stretches of the seas, in Europe and Asia, until she found Egypt, where she recovered her original form, and bore a son Epaphus on the banks of the River Nile. Hera had him kidnapped by Curetes, and Zeus killed Curetes for it. Io then besought a child in Syria, and found Epaphus, and married Telegonus, King of Egypt. Io then erected a statue to the Goddess Demeter, who by the Natives was called Isis, and Io took that name.\textsuperscript{12}

\textbf{Diogenes Laertius (3rd Century A.D.)}

In his book \textit{Lives of Eminent Philosophers}, Diogenes Laertius describes the Egyptian philosophy as follows. According to him, they said that matter was the first principle, and that the four elements were derived from matter, and that all living elements were

\textsuperscript{11} Bosporus or Bosphorus, I. m. from the Greek words \textit{Βόσπορος} and \textit{Βόσφορος}—the Strait between Thrace and Asia Minor, i. e. the heifer’s ford, on account of Io’s passage here as a heifer.

derived therefrom. The Sun and the Moon were called Osirus and Isis, they made use of the beetle, the dragon, and the hawk. Diogenes mentions the works of Manetho’s, *Epitome of Physical Doctrines,* and Hecataeus’, *On Egyptian Philosophy.* The Egyptians erected statues and temples to these animals, because they did not know the true form of God. They held that the universe was created and is mortal, that it is spherical in shape, that stars are composed of fire, and that the fire within them influences life on Earth, that the Moon was eclipsed when it fell into the shadow of the Earth, that the soul is immortal, and is incarnated in new bodies, that changes in atmosphere cause rain, they gave physical explanations for all other phenomena, and that they laid down laws of justice they attributed to Hermes. They also claimed to have invented Geometry, Astronomy, and Arithmetic.\textsuperscript{13}

**Ancillary Remarks**

In this document, Ysis has been changed to Isis, Yo to Io, Ynaci to Inachus, and likewise throughout—the very idea that Isis is spelled Ysis, or that Io might be correctly spelled Yo, is absurd on its face, and offensive to the eye. Aside from the overall decline of the Latin language by the time of the Renaissance, the (Y) was otherwise imported into the Latin alphabet to stand in for the Greek upsilon (Υor υ)\textsuperscript{14} where necessary. I have likewise violated the textual critic’s idea of punctuation. He knew he was dealing with poetry, and therefore had the tendency to embrace each concessive idea with a semi-

\textsuperscript{13} Op. Cit., Diogenes Laertius: i.10-11.

\textsuperscript{14} Op. Cit., Cassell’s.
colon. But where I found a *terminus*, I put a *period*. I have had a similar disregard for his commas, and his heretical treatment of the idea of capitalization.

This short biography, differing widely, is intended to supplement the story of the kidnapping of the four women—Io, Europa, Medea, and Helen—at the beginning of the History of Herodotus, which, according to him, led to the initiation of the Trojan War.¹⁵

In the spirit of Herodotus’ historiographical method—i.e., ‘some people say this,’ but ‘others say that,’ on the one hand, but on the other hand, ‘in the opinion of,’ ‘not no one affirms,’ but still, ‘because it is reasonable to follow the majority,’ etc.,—I suggest that the student advance, keeping in mind that Boccaccio had more sources than we have, the principle of generosity, holding this document to be both true and of philosophical value, embrace this story along with the others as a crowd, or, as it were, an armload.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the Perseus Project at Tufts University in Somerville, MA and the Renne Library at Montana State University in Bozeman, MT: Without whom this work would not be possible.
Io

Isis, daughter of the Argive king, Inachus, loved by Jupiter, who out of fear of Juno changed her into a cow; identified with the Egyptian Goddess, Isis. Hence adj. Ionius, masc. gen. sing. of Prometheus, masc. abl. sing., Phorbas, 3rd sing. perf. act. ind. of effluo (ecfluo), 3rd sing. pres. act. ind. of sum, to be.

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16 Io -onis, f., (Gk.Ἰώ), daughter of the Argive king, Inachus, loved by Jupiter, who out of fear of Juno changed her into a cow; identified with the Egyptian Goddess, Isis. Hence adj. Ionius, -a, -um, of the sea between Italy and Greece, across which Io swam: mare Ionium, the Ionian sea.
17 Isis, -is and -idis, f., (Gk., Ἱω), the most revered Egyptian Goddess.
18 Adv., before, earlier.
19 nomen, -inis, n. (nosco), to become acquainted with, get knowledge of, name.
20 superl. neut. sing. of sancio, sancire, sanxi, sanctum (sacer), to consecrate, to make sacred or inviolable by religious act.
21 Adj., neut. sing. of venerabilis, -e, (veneror), worthy of respect, reverend, venerable.
22 nomen, -inis, n., divine will, deity.
23 3rd sing. perf. act. ind. of sum, to be.
24 Adv., notwithstanding, nevertheless, for all that, however, yet, still.
25 3rd sing. pref. act. subj. of sum, ‘she may have been.’
26 neut. abl. pl. of tempus, -oris, period of time.
27 nata or gnata, -ae, f., a daughter.
28 Prep. + acc., on to, unto; with, at, by, near; of one’s feelings, views, judgment, with, in the view or sight of, before.
29 Adj., masc. nom. pl. of illustris, -e, (in + lustro), distinguished, famous, illustrious.
30 masc. nom./acc. pl. of scriptor, -is, (scribe), a writer.
31 3rd sing. pres. pass. ind. of ambigo, -ere, to go about or around; to doubt, hesitate, or be uncertain.
32 Conj., but, on the other hand, on the contrary, however.
33 3rd pl. pres. act. subj. of dico, dicere, dixi, dictum, to indicate; to say, speak, utter, tell.
34 Pron., fem., acc. sing. of ille, illa, illud, that.
35 Inachus, the first king of Argos, father of Io and Phoroneus.
36 masc. gen. sing. of rex, king.
37 3rd sing. pres. act. ind. of consto, -are, to stand together; to agree.
38 perf. act. inf. of impero, -are, to impose a thing upon a person or community, an order.
39 Adj., masc. gen. sing. of Prometheus, -ei and –eos, m., a son of Lapetus and Clymene, brother of Epimetheus, and father of Deucalion. He formed men of clay, and animated them by means of fire brought from heaven. “Now Lapetus took to wife the neat-ankled maid Clymene, daughter of Ocean, and went up with her into one bed. And she bore him a stout-hearted son, Atlas: also she bore very glorious Menoetius and clever Prometheus, full of various wiles.” (Op. Cit., Hes. Th. 510).
40 fem. acc. sing. perf. pass. part. of gigno, gignere, genui, genitum, to beget.
41 3rd pl. pres. act. ind. of adsero, -serui, -sertum, (ad + sero), to maintain, assert, declare.
42 neut. abl. sing. pers. act. part. of regno, -are, to have royal power, be king, rule, reign.
43 masc. abl. sing., Phorbas, -antis, the name of several mythic personages from Φόρβας, ‘giving pasture.’ A son of Methion of Syene, one of the companions of Phinens. (Op. Cit., Smith, Ov. Met. 5.74).
44 Pron., neut., which thing.
45 Adv., long, extended; of time, long, of long duration.
46 Prep. + acc., of time, after, since.
47 primum tempus = neut. acc. sing.
48 3rd sing. perf. act. ind. of effluo (ecfluo), -fluere, -fluxi (ex + fluo), to flow out; to pass away, disappear, vanish; to be forgotten.
Isis,
Whose former name was Io,
Was not only the most famous queen of the Egyptians,
But, ultimately,
Was their most holy and revered Goddess.
Still, in what time,
Or from which parents,
She was born,
In the opinion of the distinguished authors of history,
There is doubt.
There are, on the other hand,
Those who say she is the daughter of Inachus,
First king of the Argives,\textsuperscript{30}
And sister of Phoronus,\textsuperscript{51}
To whom Jacob,
Son of Isaac,
Having ruled at the same time, corresponds;
Others maintain she was begotten of Prometheus
When Argos\textsuperscript{52} was ruled by Phorbas,
A thing which was long after first time flowed.

\textsuperscript{30} Argivi, -orum, m., ‘the Greeks.’
\textsuperscript{51} Phoroneus was the son of Inachus, and the second king of Argos; he began to reign about B.C. 1807. (Op. Cit., Pliny’s Natural History, 7.57 n. 10).
\textsuperscript{52} Argos, n., the capital of Argolis in the Peloponnese.
Non nulli eam\textsuperscript{53} fuisse\textsuperscript{54} temporibus Cycropis, Athenarum regis, affirmant;\textsuperscript{55} et quidam\textsuperscript{56} insuper\textsuperscript{57} aiunt\textsuperscript{58} Lyncei regis Argivorum eam floruisse\textsuperscript{59} temporibus. Que quidem\textsuperscript{60} inter\textsuperscript{61} celebres\textsuperscript{62} viros\textsuperscript{63} varietates\textsuperscript{64} argumento\textsuperscript{65} non carent,\textsuperscript{66} hanc\textsuperscript{67} inter feminas suo evo\textsuperscript{68} egregiam\textsuperscript{69} fuisset et memoratu\textsuperscript{70} dignissimam.\textsuperscript{71} Verum—omissis\textsuperscript{73} scriptorum discordantis—quod\textsuperscript{74} plurimi\textsuperscript{76} arbitruntur\textsuperscript{77} imitari\textsuperscript{78} mens\textsuperscript{79} est, eam scilicet\textsuperscript{80} Inaci regis fuisset\textsuperscript{81} filiam.

\textsuperscript{53} Pron., fem. acc. sing. of is, she.
\textsuperscript{54} perf. act. inf. of sum, to be.
\textsuperscript{55} 3rd pl. pres. act. ind. of adfimo, -are, to strengthen, to give confirmation of the truth of a thing.
\textsuperscript{56} Pron., masc. nom. pl. certain somebodies.
\textsuperscript{57} Adv., above; over and above, in addition, moreover, besides.
\textsuperscript{58} 3rd pl. pres. act. ind. of aio, defective, to say yes, affirm.
\textsuperscript{59} perf. act. inf. of floreo, -ere, -ui, (flos), to bloom, blossom, flower.
\textsuperscript{60} Adv., indeed, even.
\textsuperscript{61} Prep. + acc., between, among, amid.
\textsuperscript{62} Adj., masc. acc. pl. of celeber, -bris, -bre, celebrated, famous, renowned; frequented.
\textsuperscript{63} masc. acc. pl. of vir, viri, man.
\textsuperscript{64} fem. acc. pl. of varietas, -atis, variety, difference, diversity.
\textsuperscript{65} neut. abl. sing. of argumentum, -i, an argument, proof.
\textsuperscript{66} 3rd pl. pres. act. ind. of careo, -ere, -ui, -iturus, to be without.; to do without, abstain from, make no use of.
\textsuperscript{67} Pron., fem. acc. sing. of hic, haec, hoc, this woman.
\textsuperscript{68} aevum, i, n. evo = neut. abl. sing., never ending time, eternity. suo evo = 'from this time.'
\textsuperscript{69} Adj., fem. acc. sing. of egregius, -a, -um, not of the common herd; so admirable, excellent, extraordinary, distinguished.
\textsuperscript{70} Supine, neut. abl. of memoro, -are, (memor) mention, call to mind. The Supine is a verbal noun of the fourth declension, appearing only in the accusative singular (-um) and ablative singular (-u) and limited to two usages. (a). The Supine in -um may be used after verbs of motion to express purpose. (b). The Supine in -u is used with an adjective to express an ablative of respect or specification. (op. Cit., The Latin Library).
\textsuperscript{71} Adj., fem. acc. sing., supurl. of dignus, -a, -um, worthy, deserving, meritorious, deserved, suitable, fitting, becoming, proper.
\textsuperscript{72} Adv., truly, yes; true but; but in fact; but yet, but even; yet, still.
\textsuperscript{73} masc. abl. pl. perf. pass. part. of omittō, -mittere, -misi, -missum, (ob + mitto), to let go, let fall; to pass over, say nothing of, omit.
\textsuperscript{74} masc. acc. pl. pres. act. part. of discordō, -are, (discors), to be at discord, to disagree.
\textsuperscript{75} Conj., because.
\textsuperscript{76} masc. nom. pl. of plurimus, most, very much, very many.
\textsuperscript{77} 3rd pl. pres. pass. ind. of arbitror, -ari, to witness; to decide, judge, think.
\textsuperscript{78} pres. pass. inf. of imitō, -ari, to imitate, copy.
\textsuperscript{79} fem. nom. sing. of mens, mentis, (memini), the mind, understanding, reason.
\textsuperscript{80} Adv., you may know, you may be sure, it is certain, it is obvious.
\textsuperscript{81} perf. act. inf. of sum.
Not no one\(^{82}\) affirms
She was from the times of Cecrops,
King of the Athenians;
And, moreover, say
She flourished
In the times of Lenceus,
King of the Argives.
But indeed, the differences
Between celebrated men
Does not detract
From the argument
That this woman,
Among women from this age,
Is to be distinguished,
And is most worthy to mention.
But still,
Passing over
The quarrels of authors,
Because it is reasonable
To follow the majority,
She is obviously the daughter
Of king Inachus.

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\(^{82}\) The double negative non nulli... affirmant = ‘not no one affirms,’ or ‘some assert.’ “Litotes, or Understatement, is the use of an expression by which more is meant than meets the ear. This is especially common with the Negative.” (Op. Cit., Gildersleeve and Lodge, 700).
Quam eiusmod poete veteres fingant, ob venustatem forme placuisse Io, et eo oppressam, et ad occultandum crim in vaccam transformatam, petentique Iunoni concessam, et Argum custodem a Mercurio cesum, vacceque a Iunone oestrum subpositum, et eam devectam cursu rapido in Egyptum, ibidemque pristinam a se recuperatam formam, et ex Io Isidem appellatam.

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83 Pron., fem. acc. sing. of quo, whom.
84 Conj., even if, although.
85 masc. abl. sing. of poeta, poet, a maker, inventor, workman; composer of a poem, author, a poet.
86 masc. nom. pl. of vetus, old, aged, advanced in years; the ancients, men of a former time, the fathers, ancestors, forefathers.
87 3rd pl. pres. act. subj. of fingo, fingere, finxi, fictum, to shape, fashion, form, mold; to compose poetry.
88 Prep., to, towards.
89 fem. acc. sing. of venustas, lovely, loveliness, beauty, charm, attractiveness.
90 fem. abl. sing. of forma, shape.
91 perf. act. inf. of placeo, to please, to be agreeable to, to be acceptable to.
92 masc. dat. sing. of Iuppiter, Jupiter, Jove, son of Saturn, brother and husband of Juno, chief of the gods, God of the sky.
93 Prep. + abl., a, ab, abs, away from. Ab “denotes motion away from a fixed point.” (Op. Cit., Cassell’s).
94 masc. abl. sing. of is, by him.
95 fem. acc. sing. perf. pass. part. of opprimo, to oppress; to force a woman, commit a rape upon.
96 Gerundive, neut. acc. sing. of occulto, to conceal; to hide, to hide away; to name.
97 gerund for gerund. Instead of the gerund
98 masc. acc. sing. perf. pass. part. of suppono, to put, place, lay under; to subject.
99 masc. acc. sing. perf. pass. part. of vehere, to carry away or down from one place to another.
100 neut. abl. sing. of curro, currere, cucurri, cursum, to run.
101 masc. acc. sing. perf. pass. part. of rapidus, -a, -um, tearing, seizing, impetuous, swift.
102 Adj., fem. acc. sing. of pristinus, former, previous, earlier.
103 masc. acc. sing. perf. pass. part. of appello, to call, to appeal, to call on, to call for again, to regain, recover.
104 fem. acc. sing. perf. pass. part. of appellare, to name.
Whom the Ancients supposed,

Albeit in poetry,

That, because her nice body

Was pleasing to Jove,

And to keep her rape away from himself,

And to conceal the crime,

She was transformed

Into a cow,

And she was sought after by Juno

And handed over to her,

But her guardian Argus

Was killed by Mercury,

And the cow subjected to a gadfly,

And she was driven onward

By running rapidly

To Egypt,

And in the same place,

She, by herself,

Recovered her original form,

And changed her name

From Io to Isis.
Ab historie veritate\textsuperscript{116} non discrepant,\textsuperscript{117} cum\textsuperscript{118} sint\textsuperscript{119} qui asserant\textsuperscript{120} a love\textsuperscript{121} adultero\textsuperscript{122} oppressam virginem,\textsuperscript{123} eamque\textsuperscript{124} ob\textsuperscript{125} perpetratum\textsuperscript{126} scelus\textsuperscript{127} metu\textsuperscript{128} patris\textsuperscript{129} inpulsam,\textsuperscript{130} cum quibusdam\textsuperscript{131} ex\textsuperscript{132} suis\textsuperscript{133} conscendisse\textsuperscript{134} navim,\textsuperscript{135} cui\textsuperscript{136} vacca\textsuperscript{137} esset\textsuperscript{138} insigne.\textsuperscript{139} Et ingenio\textsuperscript{140} plurimo\textsuperscript{141} ac\textsuperscript{142} ingenti\textsuperscript{143} predictam\textsuperscript{144} animo,\textsuperscript{145} regnorum\textsuperscript{146} cupidine\textsuperscript{147} agitatam,\textsuperscript{148} secundo vento\textsuperscript{49} ad Egyptios\textsuperscript{150} transfretasse,\textsuperscript{151} et ibidem, apta\textsuperscript{152} desiderio\textsuperscript{153} regione\textsuperscript{154} comperta,\textsuperscript{155} constitisse.
They do not dispute it as true history,
But it should be,
To whom,
They assert,
Jove,
Through adultery,
Raped a virgin,
But it was because he
Committed a crime
Upon her,
And she,
Out of fear of being beaten
By her father,
Together with some others,
Boarded a ship
For which a cow
Would be the symbol.
And with the utmost character,
And furnished with a great soul,
Being vexed by the desire
For royal power,
A prevailing wind
Transferred her to the Egyptians,
And in the same place,
Having obtained information
About the realm she sought,
Stayed put.
Tandem, cum non habeatur quo pacto obtinuisset Egyptum, sat certum creditur ibi comperisse rudes inertesque populos et humanarum rerum omnium fere ignaros ac ritu brutorum viventes quam hominum. Non absque labore et industria celebri illos docuit terras colere, cultis commictere semina et tandem collectas in tempore fruges in cibum deducere.

157 Adv., at length, at last.
158 of time, simultaneously with. of circumstances or results, with, among, to; of various relations to the complete sense of the verb, esp of dealings with persons. (Op. Cit, Cassell’s).
159 3rd sing. pres. pass. subj. of habeo, -ere, -ei, -itum, to have, hold.
161 neut. abl. sing. of pactum, -i, an agreement, a pact.
162 3rd sing. pluperf. act. subj. of obtineo, -tinere, -tinui, -tentum, to hold, possess; obtain.
163 Adv., satis or sat, enough.
164 certus, -a, -um, settled, resolved, decided.
165 3rd sing. pres. pass. ind. of credo, -dere, -didi, -ditum, to trust.
166 Adv., in that place, there.
167 perf. act. inf. of comperio, -perire, -peri, -pertum, to find out, discover, gain certain information of.
168 Adj., masc./fem. nom./acc. pl. of rudis, -e, rough.
169 Adj., masc./fem. nom./acc. pl. of iners, -ertis, unskilled.
170 populos, -i, people.
171 Adj., fem. gen. pl. of humanus, -a, -um, human.
172 fem. gen. pl. of res, affair.
173 Adj., masc. gen. pl. of celeber, -bris, frequent.
174 masc. abl. sing of ritus, us, a religious custom.
175 Adv., comp., capable.
176 gen. pl. brutus, dull.
177 masc./fem. nom./acc. pl. of vivo, to live.
178 Adv., to what degree.
179 masc./fem. gen. pl. of homo, -inis, a human being.
180 Prep. + abl., without.
181 masc. abl. sing. of labor, -oris, work.
182 fem. abl. sing. of industria, -ae, diligence, activity, assiduity, industry, zeal.
183 Adj., masc./fem./neut. abl. sing. of celeber, -bris, frequent.
184 masc. acc. pl. of ille, illa, illud, that.
185 3rd sing. perf. act. ind. of doceo, docere, docui, doctum, to teach.
186 pres. act. inf. of colo, colere, colui, cultum, to till.
187 neut. dat. pl. perf. pass. part. of colo.
188 commingo, -mingere, -minxi, -mictum, to make water on.
189 neut. pl. of semen, -inis, seed.
190 fem. acc. pl. of collecta, -ae, a contribution of money.
191 neut. abl. sing. of temporpos, -oris, a portion of time, time, period, season, interval.
192 fem. nom. acc. pl. of frux, frugis, pl. fruges, -um, fruits of the earth.
193 masc. acc. sing. of cibus, -i, food.
And, how?

Whereas an agreement with Egypt was not held,

It is not sufficiently resolved,

To be believed.

There, having found

A rough and unskilled people,

And of all human affairs, you might say, were ignorant,

But with religion more capable,

Living more as brutes

Than men.

She did not teach those men,

Without much work

And repeated diligence,

To till the lands,

And to make water on land

For cultivating seeds,

And at last,

Leading them

To the contribution of monies,

And in season,

The fruits of the Earth

As food.
Preterea,198 vagos199 et fere200 silvestres201 in unum se202 redigere203 et dati204 legibus205 civili206 more207 vivere.208 Et, quod longe209 spectabilius210 in muliere211 est, coacto212 in vires ingenio, literarum213 idiomati214 incolarum215 convenientium216 caracteribus217 adinventis218 aptoribus219 ad doctrinam,220 qua lege221 iungerunt222 ostendit.223 Que—ut224 de reliquis225 taceam226 adeo227 mirabilia228 insuetis229 hominis230 visa231 sunt, ut arbitrarentur232 facile233 non ex Grecia venisse234 Isidem, sed e celo235 lapsam236 et ob id spiranti237 adhuc divinos honores instituere238 omnes.

198 Adv., besides, moreover.

199 Adj., masc. acc. pl. of vagus, -a, -um, wandering.

200 Adv., ferus, -a, -um, wild.

201 Adj., masc./fem. acc. pl. of silvistris, -e, belonging to the woods.

202 Pron., themselves.

203 pres. act. inf. of redigo, -igere, -egi, -actum, lead back; to bring or reduce a thing to any condition, circumstance, etc.; to make or render.

204 masc./fem. dat. pl. perf. pass. part. of do, dare, dedi, datum, to give; to cause, bring about.

205 fem. dat. pl. of lex, legis, law.

206 Adj., masc./fem. dat. sing. of civilis, -e, of citizens, civic, civil.

207 masc. abl. sing. of mos, moris, custom.

208 pres. act. inf. of vivo, vivere, vixi, victum, to live.

209 Adv., long, extended.

210 Adj., suprl.. of spectabilis, -e, visible; worth seeing, notable, remarkable.

211 fem. abl. sing. of mulier, -eris, woman.

212 masc./neut. dat./abl. sing. perf. pass. part. of cogo, cogere, coegi, coactum, bring together, collect.

213 fem. gen. pl. of littera, -ae, letter, alphabetical sign.

214 from the Gk. ἱδίωμα, idiom.

215 fem. gen. pl. of incola, -ae, c., an inhabitant.

216 masc./fem./neut. gen. pl. pres. act. part. of convenio, -venire, -veni, -ventum, to meet, to come together, to assemble.

217 characters.

218 ad + invenio, to invent or discover.

219 Adj., comp. masc./fem. dat./abl. pl. of aptus, -a, -um, fitted to, fastened to.

220 fem. acc. sing. of doctrina, -ae, doctrine, teaching.

221 fem. abl. sing. of lex.

222 3rd pl. imperf. pass. subj. of iungo, iungere, umxi, iunctum, to join, connect, unite.

223 3rd sing. pres. act. ind. of ostendo, -tendere, -tendi, -tentum and tensum, to hold out, show, display.

224 Adv., ut or uti, where; that, so that.

225 Adj., neut. abl. pl. of reliquis, -a, -um, left behind, remaining.

226 1st sing. pres. subj. act. of taceo, -ere, -ui, -itum, to be silent.

227 Adv., to designate a limit, to this, thus far, so far, as far; for the purpose of equalizing two things in comparison, followed by ut: in the same degree or measure or proportion . . . in which; or so very, so much, so, to such a degree; to give emphasis to an idea in comparison, so, so much, so very.

228 Adj., neut. pl. of mirabilis, wonderful, marvellous, extraordinary, amazing, admirable, strange, singular.

229 Adj., masc./fem. Dat. pl. of insuetus, -a, -um, (in + suesco) unaccustomed to, not used to.

230 masc./fem. dat. pl. of homo, -inis, a human being,

231 neut. pl. of visum, -i, to see, a sight.

232 3rd pl. imperf. pass. subj. of arbitror, -ari, to witness, perceive; to bear witness; to judge.

233 Adj., neut. sing. of facilis, -e, easy.

234 perf. act. inf. of venio, venire, veni, ventum, to come.

235 neut. dat./abl. sing. of caelum, -i, sky.

236 Adj., fem. acc. sing. perf. pass. part. of labor, fall.

237 masc./fem./neut. sing. pres. act. part. of spiro, -are, breathe.

238 pres. act. inf. of instituto, put in place.
Wanderers and wild forest-dwellers,
Submitted themselves as one,
And brought about a living by moral civil laws.
And what was by far the most spectacular thing
About the woman
Was the gathering together of alphabetical signs
Into a native idiom,
By rearranging the characters,
And inventing the apparatus into a teaching,
Which was used to unite,
Through law came to be.
And, about the things omitted
I should be silent,
There were such extraordinary sights
That for the unaccustomed
It was easier to testify
That Isis did not come from Greece,
But had fallen from the sky, and,
On account of that,
Inspired the future the institution
Of all the divine honors.
Cuius quidem numen, fallente ignaros diabolo in tam grandem ea mortua, atque famosam venerationem evasit, ut Rome, iam rerum domine, illi templum constitueretur pregrande, et egyptiaco ritu quotannis solemnne sacrum institueretur; nec dubium quin ad occiduas usque barbaras nationes hic penetraret error.

239 fem. gen. sing. of quis, anyone, anything.
240 Adv., assuredly, certainly, in fact, indeed.
241 masc. abl. sing. pres. act. part. of fallo, fallere, fefelli, falsum, to deceive.
242 Adj., masc. acc. pl. of ignarus, ignorant.
243 masc. abl. sing. of diabolus, i, a devil.
244 Adv., in such a degree, as much, so, so much.
245 masc./fem. acc. sing. of grandis, -e, great, large.
246 fem. nom./abl. sing. perf. pass. part. of morior, mori, mortuus sum, moritus.
247 Adj., fem. acc. sing. of famous, -a, renown, fame.
248 fem. acc. sing. of veneration, -onis, veneration.
249 3rd sing. perf. act. ind. of evado, -vadere, -vasi, -vasum, to go out.
250 fem. gen. pl. of res, rei, thing, affair, matter.
251 3rd sing. imperf. pass. subj. of constiituere, -stituere, -stitui, -stitutum, to cause to stand.
252 Adj., neut. sing. of praegrandis, -e, huge.
253 Adv., quot, how many?
254 3rd sing. imperf. pass. subj. of instituo, -uire, -ui, -utum, to put in place.
255 masc./neut. nom./acc. sing. of dubius, doubtful.
256 Conj., why not?
257 Adj., fem. acc. pl. of occiduus, -a, -um, western.
258 Adv., through and through.
259 Adj., fem. acc. pl. of barbarus, -ae, barbarian.
260 3rd sing. imperf. act. subj. of penetreo, -are, penetrate.
261 masc. nom. sing. of error, -oris, a wandering about.
It was in fact an assent for her,

But the ignorant

By the Devil

Are deceived

In such a grand way

That in her death

Her venerable fame escaped

So that Rome,

Already a dominant affair,

Founded a huge temple,

And instituted a great many

Solemn sacred Egyptian rituals;

And without a doubt

To the western and barbarian nations

This error

Would penetrate.
Porro huius tam clare femine vir fuit Apis, quem vetustas erronea Iovis et Niobis, Phoronei filie, filium arbitrata est, quem aiunt Egyaleo fratri, Acaye regno concess, cum Argis triginta quinque regnasset annis, secessisse in Egyptum et una cum Iside imperasse, eque deum habitum et Osyrim seu Serapim nuncupatun, esto sint qui dican Isidi Thelegonum quendam fuisse virum et ex ea suscepisse Epaphum; qui Egyptiis postea prefuit et Iovis ex ea filius extimatus est.

263 Adv., at length; henceforth, hereafter, afterwards, in future.
264 Pron., fem. gen. sing. of hic, haec, hoc, here; in this place.
265 Adv., clear, bright, brilliant.
266 masc. nom. sing. of Apis, -is, the ox worshipped as a God by the Egyptians. It stands to reason if Io was a cow, then Apis would have been an ox.
267 Pron., masc. acc. sing. of quis.
268 fem. nom. sing. of vetustas, -atis, ancient.
269 masc. acc. sing. of filius, -i, a son
270 neut. pl. perf. pass. part. of arbitror, -ari.
271 3rd pl. pres. act. ind. of aio,
272 neut. abl. sing. of Achaia, -ae, the province Achaia.
273 neut. abl. sing. of regnum, -i, rule.
274 neut. abl. sing. perf. pass. part. of concedo, -cedere, -cessi, -cessum, to go away.
275 the numeral thirty.
276 the numeral five.
277 3rd sing. pluperf. act. subj. of regno, -avi, -atus, -are, to rule.
278 masc. dat. pl. of annus, -i, year.
279 perf. act. inf. of secede, -cedere, -cessi, -cessum, to go apart, go away, withdraw.
280 perf. act. inf. of impero, -are, to impose a thing on a person, govern, rule.
281 masc. acc. sing. of deus, -i, a God.
282 masc. acc. sing. of habitus, -us, the condition, habit, bearing.
283 Conj., or.
284 masc. acc. sing. perf. pass. part. of nuncupo, -cereo, -cessi, -cessum, to look upwards.
285 3rd sing. fut. act. imper. of sum, esse, fui, to be.
286 3rd pl. pres. act. subj. of sum.
287 3rd pl. pres. act. subj. of dico, dixi, dictus.
288 Pron., masc. acc. sing. of quidam, a certain someone.
289 perf. act. inf. of sum.
290 perf. act. inf. of suspicio, -spicere, -spexi, -spectum, to look upwards.
291 3rd sing. perf. act. ind. of praesum, -fu, -esse, to be before, be set over, preside over, rule, have charge of, command, superintend.
Afterwards,

For this most brilliant woman,

Was the man Apis,

Who, the ancient error is,

Of Jove and Niobe,

Daughter of Phoroneus,

He being thought to be a son,

Whom they say is brother of Aegialeus,

From whom the rule of Achaia passed away,

With Argus having ruled for thirty-five years,

He having gone away to Egypt,

Ruling it with one Isis,

With he himself,

In the manner of a God,

Was called either by the name Osiris,

Or Serapis,

There are others who will say

A certain Telegonus was the husband of Isis,

And a descendant of his was Epaphus,

Who later on governed Egypt,

And came to be a son from she and Jove.
Operas Citatas


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