

WS 2024/25 Lat. Lektüre: Plautus, *Epidicus* Translation 8 (Karanasiou)

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0100%3Aact%3D2>

**APAECIDES**

Who knows for certain that this has been done?

**EPIDICUS**

I say that it has been done.

**PERIPHIANES**

Are you sure of that?

**EPIDICUS**

I am sure of it.

**PERIPHIANES**

Why are you sure of it?

**EPIDICUS**

Because I've seen the soldiers marching through the streets in shoals. They are bringing back their arms and their baggage-horses.

**PERIPHIANES**

Very good indeed!

**EPIDICUS**

Then, what prisoners they've got with them! boys, girls, in twos and threes; another one has got five; there's a crowd in the streets; they are looking out each for his son.

**PERIPHIANES**

I' troth, a business very well managed!

**EPIDICUS**

Then, filly as many of the courtesans as there are in the whole city were going decked out each to meet her lover; they were going to trap them; that's the fact, inasmuch as I gave especial attention to it; several of these had with them nets beneath their garments. When I came to the harbour, forthwith I espied her waiting there, and with her were four music-girls.

**PERIPHIANES**

With whom, Epidicus?

**EPIDICUS**

With her whom your son has been loving and doting on for years, with whom he's making all haste to ruin credit, property, himself, and yourself. She was on the lookout for him at the harbour.

**PERIPHIANES**

Just see the sorceress now!

**EPIDICUS**

But decked out, sparkling with gold, and adorned so splendidly! so nicely! so fashionably!

**PERIPHIANES**

What was she drest in? Was it a royal robe, or was it a plain dress?

**EPIDICUS**

A skylight one<sup>1</sup>, according as these women coin names for garments.

**PERIPHIANES**

What! was she dressed in a skylight?

**EPIDICUS**

What's there wonderful in that? As though many women didn't go through the streets decked out with farms upon them. But when the tax is demanded, they declare it cannot be paid<sup>2</sup>; while to these hussies, to whom a larger tax is paid, it can be paid. Why, what new names every year these women are finding for their clothing- the thin tunic, the thick tunic, your fulled linen cloth, chemises, bordered shifts' the marigold or saffron-coloured dress, the under-petticoat or else the light vermilion dress, the hood, the royal or the foreign robe, the wave pattern<sup>3</sup> or the feather-pattern, the wax or the apple-tint. The greatest nonsense! From dogs, too, do they even take the names.

**PERIPHIANES**

How so?

**EPIDICUS**

They call one the Laconian<sup>4</sup>. These names compel men to make auctions.

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1. **A skylight one:** "Impluviatam." Echard's Note to this passage is much to the purpose. "The word 'impluvium' signifies a square open place which the Romans had in their houses to receive rain for their use; or a square courtyard, that received the rain at four water-spouts; from whence a habit they had, made with four sides or four pieces, was called 'vestimentum impluviatum.' Here Epidicus takes occasion from this to admire at a woman's being able to wear a courtyard on her back. Periphanes, carrying on the humour, tells him 'tis no wonder, since they frequently wear whole houses and lands, meaning the value of them." The word "impluvium" has been previously rendered "skylight," in the present Translation. See the Notes to the Miles Gloriosus, l. 159, where Periplecomenus complains of Sceledrus looking down his "impluvium" from the top of the house. The garment may, however, not improbably have been called "impluviatum," from its being of a greyish, or rain colour.
  2. **They declare it cannot be paid:** He means that their dupes or lovers cannot pay their taxes.
  3. **The wave pattern:** "Cumatile," from the Greek κῶμα, "a wave." These dresses were so called, probably, from their being undulated, or, as we call it, "watered." Ovid, in the Art of Love, B. 8, l. 177, speaks of dresses called "undulatae," "resembling the waves;" as also does Varro. Some Commentators think that "undulatae" means "sea-green," and Schmiieder takes "cumatile" to mean the same. From its juxtaposition with "plumatile," "feather-pattern," it

would seem that the pattern rather than the colour is alluded to. "Plumatile" is considered by some simply to mean embroidered; and "plumata" is clearly used in that sense by Lucan in the *Pharsalia*, B. 10, l. 125. For a list of the Roman ladies' dresses, see the *Aulularia*, l. 463, et seq.

- 4. The Laconian:** Probably the garments had their name from their resemblance to the colour of this breed of dogs. They were imported from Laconia, and hence called "Laconici." From an expression in the *Epodes* of Horace, Ode VI., l. 5-6, they appear to have been used as shepherds' dogs; but Warner in a Note to his Translation, supposes them to have been of the greyhound species, So, in Shakspeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*. **Act IV., Sc. 1**, Theseus says: "My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind, So flewed, so, sanded"