

READING

Collections of stories, fables, anecdotes, and moral examples were popular in medieval Latin literature. The *Gesta Rōmānōrum*, probably compiled in the late thirteenth and early fourteen centuries CE, is such a collection and contains stories about the ancient Romans and other peoples.

The following fictitious tale purports to be about the emperor Theodosius and his daughters. Reliable historical sources report that the Roman emperor known as Theodosius the Great, who ruled from 379 to 395 CE, was the last to rule both the eastern and western halves of the Roman Empire. Theodosius II (408–450 CE) ruled only in the eastern half of the empire. But the *Gesta Rōmānōrum* does not even mention these facts; instead, it tells a story that may have provided the basis for Shakespeare's tragedy *King Lear*. The *Gesta Rōmānōrum* had a significant influence on later literature, and appears to have inspired tales related by Chaucer, Boccaccio, and Shakespeare.

DĒ THEODOSIŌ IMPERĀTŌRE

- 1 Theodosius imperātor Rōmānus clārissimus trēs filiās pulcherrimās habuit. Quōdam diē filiam nātū maximam rogāvit quantum patrem dīligeret. Tunc filia, “Tē,” inquit, “vehementius dīligō quam mē.” Haec verba imperātōrī vehementissimē placuērunt et filiam rēgī omnium
- 5 praeclearissimō dedit, ut rēx eam in mātirimōnium dūceret.
Post haec imperātor ad filiam secundam vēnit et eam rogāvit quantum patrem dīligeret. Tunc filia secunda, “Tantum,” inquit, “tē dīligō quantum mē.” Haec verba imperātōrī satis bene placuērunt, et filiam secundam cuidam ducī dedit, ut dux eam in mātirimōnium dūceret.
- 10 Tandem imperātor ad filiam nātū minimam vēnit et eam rogāvit quantum patrem dīligeret. Tunc filia tertia, “Tantum,” inquit, “tē dīligō quantum merēris.” Haec verba imperātōrī nōn valdē placuērunt, et filiam tertiam cuidam equitī dedit, ut eques eam in mātirimōnium dūceret.
Paulō posteā Theodosius imperātor in bellō est victus, et imperātōrī
- 15 ē terrīs suīs fugere necesse erat. Itaque imperātor ad filiam nātū maximam scripsit, ut auxilium ab eā peteret. Filia autem nātū maxima tantum quīnque mīlitēs ex exercitū marītī ad patrem mīsīt. Imperātor valdē dolēbat et “Nēmō,” inquit, “est miserior quam ego. Crēdēbam filiam meam p̄rimam magnum auxilium ad mē missūram esse.”
- 20 Tunc imperātor ad filiam secundam statim scripsit, quae respondit

patrem posse apud sē et maritum habitare et cibum et vestimenta habere. Sed nihil aliud prōmisit. Imperator tunc erat valdē trīstis et “Duābus,” inquit, “filiābus sum dēceptus.”

- Tunc imperator ad filiam tertiam statim scripsit, quae inopiam patris
- 25 intellēxit. Filia nātū minima auxilium maritū petivit, et hī duo exercitum magnum parāvērunt, quem contrā hostēs imperatoris dūxērunt. Postquam hostēs sunt victi, filia tertia et maritus imperatorem in imperium restituērunt. Pater igitur filiam tertiam vehementer laudāvit, quae fuerat fidēlior quam aliae filiae. Haec filia hērēs
- 30 imperatoris facta est, et post patris mortem summam imperiū multōs annōs in pāce tenēbat.

READING VOCABULARY

clārissimus, a, um – most distinguished

cuidam (*dative singular*) – to a certain

***dēcipiō, ere, dēcēpi, dēceptum** – to deceive

***diligō, ere, dilēxi, dilēctum** – to love, esteem highly

***duo, duae, duo** – two

dux, ducis, m. – leader, duke‡

eques, equitis, m. – knight‡

***exercitus, exercitūs, m.** – army

***fidēlior** – more loyal

gesta, ōrum, n. pl. – deeds (*from the perfect participle of gerō*)

***hērēs, hērēdis, m./f.** – heir

***imperium, ī, n.** – rule, power, empire

***inopia, ae, f.** – want, helplessness

maximus, a, um – greatest

***laudō, āre, āvi, ātum** – to praise

merēris – you deserve‡

minimus, a, um – least

miserior – more wretched

multōs annōs – for many years

nātū maxima/minima – oldest/youngest

***neesse est + dative + infinitive** – it is necessary for someone to do something

***nēmō, m.** – no one‡

***pater, patris, m.** – father

***paulō** (*adv.*) – a little bit, to a small extent

praeclārissimus, a, um omnium – most excellent, renowned of all

pulcherrimus, a, um – most beautiful, very beautiful

***quam** (*adv.*) – than (*with comparative words*)

***quantum** (*adv.*) – how much, to what extent

quīnque (*indeclinable*) – five

quōdam diē – on a certain day

***restituō, ere, restitui, restitutum** – to restore

***satis** (*adv.*) – enough, sufficiently

***secundus, a, um** – second

summa, ae, f. – high point, sum total

summa imperiū – pinnacle of power

tantum . . . quantum . . . – as much . . . as . . .

***tertius, a, um** – third

Theodosius, ī, m. – Theodosius

***trēs, tria** – three

***trīstis, trīste** – sad

***vehementer** (*adv.*) – vehemently, strongly

vehementissimē – most/very vehemently, most/very strongly

vehementius – more vehemently, more strongly

*Words marked with an asterisk will need to be memorized later in the chapter.

‡Additional information about the words marked with the double dagger will be in the **Take Note** section that follows the Reading Vocabulary.



TAKE NOTE

dux In medieval Latin *dux* typically means “duke.”

duo The forms of the declension of *duo*, *duae*, *duo* can be seen on p. 113.

eques Ancient Roman authors used *eques* with the same sense of meaning, “knight,” as did the medieval writers. In the Roman world, however, the knight held a much higher position.

merēris This verb form comes from *mereor* which belongs to a class of verbs called deponents, which have passive forms but active meanings. Deponent verbs will be introduced in a later chapter.

nēmō The forms of *nēmō* are *nullius* in the genitive, *nēminī* in the dative, *nēminem* in the accusative, and *nūllō* in the ablative.

trēs The forms of the declension of *trēs*, *tria* can be seen on p. 113.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. By what standard did the emperor in this tale decide on the rank of his daughters’ husbands?
2. Which daughters let the emperor down, and why?
3. What was the reward for the third daughter who helped her father in need?



Filia nātū minima auxilium maritī petīvit, et hī duo exercitum magnum parāvērunt, quem contrā hostēs imperātōris dūxērunt. NB: This modern reenactment participant wears an amalgam of armor styled from the late thirteenth century onward.