

PHILEMON AND BAUCIS*Met. VIII. 616–724*

obstipuere omnes nec talia dicta probarunt,
ante omnesque Lelex animo maturus et aevo,
sic ait: “inmensa est finemque potentia caeli
non habet, et quicquid superi voluere, peractum est,
620 quoque minus dubites, tiliae contermina quercus
collibus est Phrygiis modico circumdata muro;



- 616 **obstipescō, -ere, -stipui:** *to be amazed, astonished.* Here, the third person plural perfect active alternate form.
- omnes:** this includes Theseus, the hero of Book VII, and his comrades who had taken shelter from the rains and swollen rivers in the home of the river god Achelous, where they were entertained with food and stories.
- talia:** accusative plural direct object of *probarunt*. The things referred to are the words of doubt (lines 614–15) about the powers of the gods that Pirithous utters (see introduction).
- probō, -āre, -āvī, -ātum:** *to authorize, sanction, approve.* Here, the syncopated third person plural perfect active: *probaverunt*.
- 617 **Lelex:** a participant in the hunt for the Calydonian boar, also recounted in Book VIII. With his companions, he has taken refuge from the storm in Achelous’s house and it is he who will tell the story of Baucis and Philemon in order to prove that the gods possess the power of metamorphosis.
- mātūrus, -a, -um:** *experienced, mature.*
- aevum, -ī (n.):** *lifetime, experience, years of age.*
- 619 **quicquid:** variant form of *quidquid*.
- peragō, -ere, -ēgī, -actum:** *to carry out, perform.*
- 620 **quoque:** *et quo.*
- tilia, -ae (f.):** *a lime (linden) tree.* Here, a dative after *contermina*.
- conterminus, -a, -um:** *nearby, adjacent.* Here, modifies *quercus*. This is the only mention of the types of trees the couple are changed into at the end of the tale.
- quercus, -ūs (f.):** *an oak tree.*
- 621 **Phrygia, -ae (f.):** a region in central Asia Minor.
- modicus, -a, -um:** *moderate in size.*
- circumdō, -are, -edī, -atum:** (+ abl.) *to surround, encircle.*

ipse locum vidi; nam me Pelopeia Pittheus
 misit in arva suo quondam regnata parenti.
 haud procul hinc stagnum est, tellus habitabilis olim,
 625 nunc celebres mergis fulicisque palustribus undae;
 Iuppiter huc specie mortali cumque parente
 venit Atlantiades positis caducifer alis.
 mille domos adiere locum requiemque petentes,
 mille domos clausere serae; tamen una recepit,



- 622 **Pelopēius, -a, -um:** of or pertaining to Pelops, king of Argos, from whom the Peloponnesian peninsula gets its name.
Pittheus, -eī (m.): king of the ancient city Troezen of Argolis on the Peloponnesian peninsula. He was grandfather to Theseus and son of Pelops.
- 623 **arvum, -ī (n.):** *territory, country.*
parens: refers to Pittheus's father, Pelops. Here, a dative of agent with the perfect passive participle *regnata*.
- 624 **stagnum, -ī (n.):** *a pool, standing water.*
tellūs, -ūris (f.): *land, country.*
- 625 **nunc:** immediately following *olim* (624), this adverb sets up an ANTITHESIS to emphasize the change brought about by the metamorphosis.
celeber, -bris, -bre: *crowded, populous.*
mergus, -ī (m.): *a seabird, gull.*
fulica, -ae (f.): *a waterfowl, coot.*
paluster, -tris, -tre: *marshy.*
- 626 **parente:** refers to Jupiter, Mercury's father.
- 627 **venit:** this verb has two subjects, *Iuppiter* (626) and *Atlantiades*, but agrees with only one.
Atlantiadēs, -ae (m.): although this noun may refer to any offspring of Atlas, here it refers specifically to Mercury, whose mother, Maia, was a daughter of Atlas. He carries the caduceus.
positis . . . alis: these had to be set aside in order for the god to assume a human guise.
- 628 **adiere:** third person plural perfect active alternate form.
locum requiemque: HENDIADYS.
- 629 **mille domos:** the ANAPHORA emphasizes the rejection of the gods at all the houses in the neighborhood thereby setting off their welcome into the humble cottage of Baucis and Philemon.
sera, -ae (f.): *a crossbar for locking a door.*

- 630 parva quidem, stipulis et canna tecta palustri,
 sed pia Baucis anus parilique aetate Philemon
 illa sunt annis iuncti iuvenalibus, illa
 consenuere casa paupertatemque fatendo
 effecere levem nec iniqua mente ferendo;
 635 nec refert, dominos illic famulosne requiras:
 tota domus duo sunt, idem parentque iubentque.



- 630 **parva, tecta:** modify a missing *domus* or anticipate the *casa* of line 633.
 Ovid here stresses the simplicity and humble state of the couple's house.
stipula, -ae (f.): *stubble*.
canna, -ae (f.): *a small reed*.
 631 **Baucis, -idis (f.):** *Baucis*, wife of Philemon.
anus, -ūs (f.): *old woman*.
parilis, -e: *similar, like*.
Philēmōn, -ōnis (m.): *Philemon*, husband of Baucis.
 632 **illa:** ablative of place where modifying *casa* (633), as does the final *illa* in this line. Note the slowed rhythm of this heavily SPONDAIC line, the ASSONANCE of *i* and *a*, and the balance created from the repetition of *illa*. The first occurrence refers to their youth spent in this house, the second to their old age.
iuvenālis, -e: *youthful*.
 633 **consenescō, -ere, -senūī:** *to grow old*.
fateor, -ērī, fassus: *to profess, agree, acknowledge*.
 634 **effecere:** third person plural perfect active alternate form.
nec iniqua: LITOTES.
inīquus, -a, -um: *discontented, resentful*.
ferendo: its near repetition of *fatendo* in the same position in the line above graphically accentuates their humility.
 635 **rēfert, -ferre, -tulit:** *it is of importance*.
illic (adv.): *there, in that place*.
famulus, -ī (m.): *servant, attendant*.
-ne: *or*; introduces the second alternative only in a double question.
requiras: a present subjunctive in a substantive clause with *refert*. The second person address reminds us of the original setting in which this story is being told and of the audience listening.
 636 **sunt:** the story now shifts into the historical present, drawing in the reader as a part of the audience too.

- ergo ubi caelicolae parvos tetigere penates
 summissoque humiles intrarunt vertice postes,
 membra senex posito iussit relevare sedili;
 640 cui superiniecit textum rude sedula Baucis
 inque foco tepidum cinerem dimovit et ignes
 suscitāt hesternos foliisque et cortice sicco
 nutrit et ad flammās anima producit anili
 multifidasque faces ramaliaque arida tecto
 645 detulit et minuit parvoque admovit aeno,



- 637 **caelicola, -ae (m., f.):** *an inhabitant of heaven.*
tetigere: from *tangō*, in the alternate perfect active form.
penātēs, -ium (m. pl.): *the household gods.* Here, a METONYMY for the small cottage.
- 638 **summittō, -ere, -mīsī, -issum:** *to lower.* This is a GOLDEN LINE with the adjective/noun pair in INTERLOCKED WORD ORDER.
humiles: in both the literal (*submisso vertice*) sense because their humble cottage would not have been tall and in the figurative since the couple were poor and of humble origin. The line also suggests that the gods were tall in stature.
intrarunt: third person plural syncopated form of *intraverunt*.
vertex, -icis (m.): *the top of the head.*
- 639 **relevō, -āre, -āvī, -ātum:** *to relieve, ease.*
sedile, -is (n.): *a seat.*
- 640 **superinieciō, -ere, -inieci, -iniectum:** *to throw over the surface.*
sēdulus, -a, -um: *attentive.*
- 641 **focus, -ī (m.):** *fireplace, hearth.*
cinis, -eris (m.): *ashes, embers.*
dīmoveō, -ēre, -mōvī, -mōtum: *to move about.*
- 642 **suscitō, -āre, -āvī, -ātum:** *to rouse, restore.*
hesternus, -a, -um: *yesterday's.*
folium, -ī (n.): *the leaf of a plant.*
cortex, -icis (m.): *the outer bark of a tree.*
- 643 **anima, -ae (f.):** *breath.*
anilis, -e: *of or pertaining to an old woman.*
- 644 **multifidus, -a, -um:** *split, splintered.*
rāmāle, -is (n.): *branches, twigs.*
- 645 **parvoque:** a reminder that everything associated with this couple is small and simple.
aēnum, -ī (n.): *a pot or cauldron made of bronze.*

quodque suus coniunx riguo conlegerat horto,
 truncat holus foliis; furca levat ille bicorni
 sordida terga suis nigro pendentia tigno
 servatoque diu resecat de tergore partem
 650 exiguam sectamque domat ferventibus undis.
 651 interea medias fallunt sermonibus horas
 655 concutiuntque torum de molli fluminis ulva
 inpositum lecto sponda pedibusque salignis.
 vestibus hunc velant, quas non nisi tempore festo



- 646 **riguus, -a, -um:** *irrigated, well-watered.*
- 647 **truncō, -āre, -āvī, -ātum:** *to strip off foliage.*
holus, -eris (n.): *vegetable*—probably cabbage or turnip.
furca, -ae (f.): *a length of wood with a forked end.*
ille: indicates a change of subject to Philemon.
bicornis, -e: *having two prongs.*
- 648 **sūs, suis (m., f.):** *pig, sow.*
tignum, -ī (n.): *timber, rafter.*
- 649 **resecō, -āre, -secuī, -sectum:** *to cut back, trim.*
tergus, -oris (n.): *the back of an animal.*
- 650 **exiguus, -a, -um:** *small, slight.*
secō, -āre, -cuī, -ctum: *to cut.* Here, the perfect participle used as an adjective.
domō, -āre, -āvī, -ātum: *to boil soft.*
fervens, -ntis: *boiling, bubbling.*
- 651 **fallō, -ere, fefellī, falsum:** *to while away, beguile.*
- 652–655a: four lines are of questionable authenticity and are omitted from this text.
- 655 **concutiō, -ere, -cussī, -cussum:** *to shake.*
torus, -ī (m.): *a cushion.*
ulva, -ae (f.): *rush, marsh grass.*
- 656 **sponda, -ae (f.):** *the frame of a bed or couch.* Here, an ablative of description.
salignus, -a, -um: *willow wood.* A simple wood to contrast with the luxurious furnishings of a wealthy Roman household. Modifies both *pedibus* and *sponda*.
- 657 **vēlō, -āre, -āvī, -ātum:** *to cover.*
festus, -a, -um: *suitable for a holiday, festival.*

- sternere consuerant, sed et haec vilisque vetusque
 vestis erat, lecto non indignanda saligno.
 660 adcubuere dei. mensam succincta tremensque
 ponit anus, mensae sed erat pes tertius inpar:
 testa parem fecit; quae postquam subdita clivum
 sustulit, aequatam mentae tersere virentes.
 ponitur hic bicolor sinceræ baca Minervæ
 665 conditaque in liquida corna autumnalia faece
 intibaque et radix et lactis massa coacti



- 658 **sternō, -ere, strāvī, strātum:** *to strew, spread over an area, throw down.*
consuescō, -ere, -suēvī, -suētum: *to be in the habit of, become accustomed to.*
vilis, -e: *worthless, common, ordinary.*
- 659 **non indignanda:** a LITOTES stressing how noble the simple little couch is.
 A gerundive modifying *vestis*.
- 660 **adcumbō, -ere, -cubui, -cubitum:** *to recline at table.*
succinctus, -a, -um: *to have one's clothing bound up with a girdle or belt to allow for freedom of movement.*
- 662 **testa, -ae (f.):** *a fragment of earthenware.*
subditus, -a, -um: *situated beneath.*
clivus, -ī (m.): *slope, incline.*
- 663 **aequō, -āre, -āvī, -ātum:** *to make level.*
menta, -ae (f.): *mint.*
tergeō, -ēre, tersī, tersum: *to wipe clean.*
- 664 **ponitur:** this singular verb has six subjects: *baca* (664), *corna* (665), *intiba*, *radix*, *massa* (666), and *ova* (667).
sincērus, -a, -um: *unblemished.*
bāca, -ae (f.): *olive.*
- 665 **conditus, -a, -um:** *preserved.*
liquida . . . faece: CHIASTIC word order. The preserving liquid surrounds the fruits.
cornum, -ī (n.): *the cornelian cherry.* This comes from the *cornus* tree, more commonly known as the dogwood. The fruit of certain varieties is red and edible.
faex, faecis (f.): *the dregs or sediment of any liquid, particularly of wine; brine.*
- 666 **intibum, -ī (n.):** *chicory or endive.*
rādex, -īcis (f.): *root.* Here, the radish.
lac, lactis (n.): *milk.*
massa, -ae (f.): *heap, lump, mass.*
coactus, -a, -um: *curdled.*

ovaque non acri leviter versata favilla,
 omnia fictilibus. post haec caelatus eodem
 sistitur argento crater fabricataque fago
 670 pocula, qua cava sunt, flaventibus inlita ceris;
 parva mora est, epulasque foci misere calentes,
 nec longae rursus referuntur vina senectae
 dantque locum mensis paulum seducta secundis:
 hic nux, hic mixta est rugosis carica palmis



- 667 **non acri**: here meaning *warm*, but not burning.
favilla, -ae (f.): *ashes from a fire*.
- 668 **fictile, -is (n.)**: *earthenware dish or pottery*. Further proof that this meal consists entirely of items found easily near the cottage. Presumably the object of a missing *in*.
caelō, -āre, -āvī, -ātum: *to engrave, emboss*.
- 669 **sistō, -ere, stetī, statum**: *to set, set down*.
argento: with *eodem* (668). Ovid employs comic **IRONY**—all the previous dishes were of earthenware, not silver.
crātēr, -ēris (m.): *a bowl used for mixing wine*.
fāgus, -ī (f.): *the beech tree*.
- 670 **pōculum, -ī (n.)**: *a cup for drinking*.
flāvens, -entis: *yellow*.
inlinō, -ere, -lēvī, -litum: *to smear, coat*.
- 671 **epulae, -ārum (f.)**: *feast, banquet*.
caleō, -ēre, -uī: *to be hot or warm*.
- 672 **referuntur**: the same wine used for the first course is here used again for the main course, a vulgarity to a wealthy Roman who varied his wine to suit the course.
- 673 **mensis . . . secundis**: the course that followed the main course at a dinner. It usually consisted of fruits, fresh and dried, and nuts.
sēdūcō, -ere, -dūxī, -ductum: *to draw apart, move away*.
- 674 **hic . . . palmis**: the slowed rhythm of **SPONDEES** helps to elaborate this course which, unlike the prior course of boiled cabbage and ham, has a greater variety to it.
nux, nucis (f.): *a nut*.
rūgōsus, -a, -um: *wrinkled*.
cāricus, -a, -um: *carian, a type of fig*.
palma, -ae (f.): *fruit of the date palm, a date*.

- 675 prunaque et in patulis redolentia mala canistris
 et de purpureis conlectae vitibus uvae,
 candidus in medio favus est; super omnia vultus
 accessere boni nec iners pauperque voluntas.
 “Interea totiens haustum cratera repleri
- 680 sponte sua per seque vident succrescere vina:
 attoniti novitate pavent manibusque supinis
 concipiunt Baucisque preces timidusque Philemon
 et veniam dapibus nullisque paratibus orant.
 unicus anser erat, minimae custodia villae:



- 675 **prūnum, -ī (n.):** a plum.
patulus, -a, -um: broad, wide.
redoleō, -ēre: to give off a smell, be fragrant.
mālum, -ī (n.): an apple.
canistrum, -ī (n.): a basket. Ovid varies the rhythm by inserting this line filled with DACTYLS.
- 676 **vītis, vītis (f.):** the grapevine.
- 677 **favus, -ī (m.):** honeycomb.
- 678 **accēdō, -ere, -cessī, -cessum:** to be added.
- 679 **hauriō, -ire, hausī, haustum:** to swallow up, consume. Here, *haustum*, a masculine accusative perfect passive participles modifies a Greek masculine singular *cratera*.
repleō, -ēre, -ēvī, -ētum: to refill, replenish.
- 680 **spons, spontis (f.):** will, volition; here, an idiomatic expression meaning automatically.
succrescō, -ere, succrēvī: to grow up as a replacement, to be supplied anew.
 Note the heavy ALLITERATION of *s* sounds.
- 681 **attonitus, -a, -um:** dazed, astounded, amazed.
novitās, -tātis (f.): novelty, strange phenomenon.
paveō, -ēre: to be frightened.
supīnus, -a, -um: turned palm upwards.
- 682 **concipiō, -ere, -cēpī, -ceptum:** to produce, form.
- 683 **venia, -ae (f.):** justification, excuse, indulgence.
daps, dapis (f.): feast, meal.
nullis: not in the strictly negative sense but rather meaning of no significance, trifling.
- 684 **unicus, -a, -um:** one, only one.
anser, -eris (m.): a goose.

- 685 quem dis hospitibus domini mactare parabant;
 ille celer penna tardos aetate fatigat
 eluditque diu tandemque est visus ad ipsos
 confugisse deos: superi vetuere necari
 ‘di’ que ‘sumus, meritasque luet vicinia poenas
 690 inpia’ dixerunt; ‘vobis immunibus huius
 esse mali dabitur; modo vestra relinquitte tecta
 ac nostros comitate gradus et in ardua montis
 ite simul!’ parent ambo baculisque levati
 nituntur longo vestigia ponere clivo.
 695 tantum aberant summo, quantum semel ire sagitta
 missa potest: flexere oculos et mersa palude



- 685 **dis**: variant form of *deīs*.
domini: i.e., *dominus et domina*, Philemon and Baucis.
mactō, -āre, -āvī, -ātum: *to kill, slay, sacrifice*.
- 686 **penna, -ae (f.)**: *feather, wing*. This line has a nice balance to it—the subject and verb embrace an adjective and noun pair. The SPONDEES slow the line, reflecting the meaning.
- 687 **ēlūdō, -ere, -sī, -sum**: *to elude, avoid capture*.
- 688 **confugiō, -ere, -fūgī**: *to flee to (someone) for safety*.
- 689 **luō, -ere, -ī**: *to pay (as a penalty)*.
- 690 **inpia**: piety was at the very heart of Roman religion and society. It was manifested in the close observance of the rites required for proper balance and relations with the gods. Adherence to these duties promoted cohesion among families and obedience to the state. Conversely, impiety incurred the wrath of the gods and social instability.
inmūnis, -e: *free from, exempt*.
- 692 **comitō, -āre, -āvī, -ātum**: *to follow*.
arduūm, -ī (n.): *high elevation*.
- 694 **nītor, -tī, -sus**: *to strive, move with difficulty, exert oneself*. The heavily SPONDAIC line mimics the plodding exertion of the old couple as they climb the mountain.
vestigium, -ī (n.): *footprint, footstep*.
clīvus, -ī (m.): *slope, incline*.
- 695 **tantum . . . quantum**: *just so far . . . as*.
- 696 **mergō, -ere, mersī, mersum**: *to flood, inundate*; here, the perfect passive participle as an adjective.
palūs, -ūdis (f.): *a swamp*.

- cetera prospiciunt, tantum sua tecta manere,
 dumque ea mirantur, dum deflent fata suorum,
 illa vetus dominis etiam casa parva duobus
 700 vertitur in templum: furcas subiere columnae,
 stramina flavescent aurataque tecta videntur
 caelataeque fores adopertaque marmore tellus.
 talia tum placido Saturnius edidit ore:
 ‘dicite, iuste senex et femina coniuge iusto
 705 digna, quid optetis.’ cum Baucide pauca locutus
 iudicium superis aperit commune Philemon:
 ‘esse sacerdotes delubraque vestra tueri
 poscimus, et quoniam concordēs egimus annos,
 auferat hora duos eadem, nec coniugis umquam



- 698 **suorum**: modifies a missing noun; probably refers to their people, i.e., their friends and neighbors.
- 699 **dominis**: dative with *parva*.
- 700 **subeō, -īre, -ivī, -itum**: *to replace*.
- 701 **strāmen, -inis (n.)**: *straw thatch*.
flāvescō, -ere: *to become golden*.
- 702 **foris, foris (f.)**: *door, double door*.
adoperiō, -īre, -uī, -tum: *to cover over*.
marmor, -oris (n.): *marble*.
- 703 **talia**: *the following*.
Sātūrnīus, -a, -um: a patronymic for Jupiter.
ēdō, -ere, ēdidī, ēditum: *to utter, to deliver a message*. In spite of the harsh punishment he has just levied on the region, Jupiter speaks to the old couple in a calm voice befitting his divine presence.
- 705 **locutus**: perfect participle of a deponent verb, which will have an active meaning in English.
- 706 **aperiō, -īre, -uī, -tum**: *to reveal, disclose*.
- 707 **dēlūbrum, -ī (n.)**: *temple, shrine*. Here, a poetic plural referring to their former cottage.
tueor, -ērī, tuitus: *to observe, watch over, guard*.
- 709 **auferat**: the first of three jussive subjunctives embodying their request. The others are *videam* and *sim tumulandus* (710).

- 710 busta meae videam, neu sim tumulandus ab illa.
vota fides sequitur: templi tutela fuere,
donec vita data est; annis aevoque soluti
ante gradus sacros cum starent forte locique
narrarent casus, frondere Philemona Baucis,
715 Baucida conspexit senior frondere Philemon.
iamque super geminos crescente cacumine vultus
mutua, dum licuit, reddebant dicta 'vale' que
'o coniunx' dixere simul, simul abdita texit
ora frutex: ostendit adhuc Thyneius illic
720 incola de gemino vicinos corpore truncos.
haec mihi non vani (neque erat, cur fallere vellent)



- 710 **bustum, -ī (n.):** *tomb*.
tumulō, -āre, -āvī, -ātum: *to entomb*. Here, a passive periphrastic denoting necessity or obligation.
- 711 **vota . . . sequitur:** i.e., their request is fulfilled.
tūtēla, -ae (f.): *guardian, protection*.
- 712 **solūtus, -a, -um:** *weak*.
- 714 **frondeō, -ēre:** *to grow foliage*.
Philemona: a Greek accusative singular ending.
- 715 **Baucida:** a Greek accusative singular ending.
- 716 **cacūmen, -inis (n.):** *the tip or top of a tree*. With *crescente* creates a strong ALLITERATION.
- 718 **simul, simul:** the immediate repetition of this word emphasizes the extraordinarily close relationship of the elderly couple.
abditus, -a, -um: *hidden, concealed*.
- 719 **frutex, -icis (f.):** *green growth*.
ostendit: with this present tense verb Ovid abruptly brings the reader back to present time and to the banquet scene at Lelex's house where the story is being recounted.
adhuc: with this adverb Ovid establishes the *aition* (origin) for this passage: to this day the inhabitants of the region still point to the twin trees growing side by side.
Thyñēius, -a, -um: the inhabitants of Bithynia, a region in northwestern Asia Minor stretching to the southern coast of the Black Sea. Here, it modifies *incola* (720).
- 720 **gemino . . . truncos:** the INTERLOCKED WORD ORDER here mimics the intertwined tree trunks.
truncus, -ī (m.): *the trunk of a man or tree*.
- 721 **neque . . . vellent:** read *neque erat* [causa] *cur* [me] *fallere vellent*.

narravere senes; equidem pendentia vidi
 serta super ramos ponensque recentia dixi
 ‘cura deum di sint, et, qui coluere, colantur.’”



- 722 **vidi:** Ovid has brought us full circle, back to the banquet hall and to Lelex’s own first words of lines 620–622.
- 723 **serta, -ōrum (n.):** *garlands, wreaths.*
- 724 **cūra, -ae (f.):** *object of concern, beloved person.* Here, a singular noun with plural intent.
- deum di . . . coluere, colantur:** In a double use of POLYPTOTON, Ovid is typically playful here, filling this last line of the tale with variations of these two pairs of words, so essential to the message of the story.
- colō, -ere, -uī, cultum:** *worship*



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