EPITOME OF BOOK LXII

LXI 1 Ἡμὶν ἐκ τῆς Μάρκου Σαλομώνος Ὀθην, διὰ αὐτὴς τῶν ἀμαρτημάτων τῷ Νέρωνι φίλιστος ὡστε καὶ εἰπὼν ποτὲ πρὸς αὐτὸν "οὖν μὲ Καίσαρα ἔσον," πούρε ἥμισε τὸ πάντα κακὸν ἔσοθεν, ἀλλὰ τοσοῦτον μάλιν ἀντίκειον ὅτι "οὐδὲ ἐπατόν ἐστε ἢγουμαι," τούτῳ τῷ Σαβίναν, εἰς ἐπιτρέπαν ὄσον, ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἀποστασίας ἔστηκε, καὶ ἡ αὐτῇ αμφιτετεροὶ ἄμα ἐχώρησεν. ὑποδείξας αὐτῷ ἡ Ἀγριππίνα μὲ γέμματα τῷ Νέρωνι (κεκυνοὶ γὰρ ἤδη αὐτῆς ἤδη ἤρχατα), ἔργον ἀοιδοκοπῶν ἐποίησας ὄπειρα γὰρ ὢν αὐτῶν ὑπὸ ἔργα ἔστη 

καὶ τὰ ἡμετέρα τὰς τῶν δεξιοτήτων καὶ τῶν βλεμμάτων καὶ τῶν φιλαρμών ὑπηγέτος, ἐπεχίρησεν καὶ 

τῷ Νέρωνι ὄμοιος καταδυναστεία, ἀλλ′ ἐκάνων μὲν εἰς Ἀγριππίνην ἡμίτοιο εἴτε τῆς τῶν δεξιόν αὐτῶν ἐκλιθεῖν ὡς αἰσθή 

καὶ εἰ δὴ τρίς πάντων ὑμολόγησαν λέγει, ὅτι ἐταλαγόν τινὰ τῇ Ἀγριππίνῃ ὄμοιον ὁ Νέρων ἐν αὐτῷ τάσσον ἡμῖν τὸ 

μεταξὺ ἡγήσατο, καὶ αὐτῇ τῇ ἐκάνων προστασίαν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἐκδικοκομοῦν ξέρει ὅτι καὶ 

ὑπὸ ἄλλου ὑμοί 

12 Μαθοῦσα δὲ ταῦτα ἡ Σαβίνα ἀνέπεσε τῶν

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1 ὅπερ supplied by H. Steph.
2 αὐτής H. Steph., aucta VC.
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rid of his mother, alleging that she was plotting against him. He was invited likewise by Seneca (or so many trustworthy men have stated), whether from a desire to hush the complaint against his own name, or from his willingness to lead Nero on to a career of unholy blood-guiltiness that should bring about most speedily his destruction by gods and men alike. But they shrank from doing the deed openly and, on the other hand, were unable to put her out of the way secretly by means of poison, since she took extreme precautions against any such possibility. One day they saw in the theatre a ship that automatically parted asunder, let out some beasts, and then came together again so as to be once more seaworthy; and they at once caused another to be built like it. By the time the ship was finished Agrippina had been quite won over by Nero's attentions, for he exhibited devotion to her in every way, to make sure that she should suspect nothing and be off her guard. He did not dare to do anything in Rome, however, for fear the crime should become generally known. Hence he went off to a distance, even to Campania, accompanied by his mother, making the voyage on this very ship, which was adorned in most brilliant fashion, in the hope of inspiring in her a desire to use the vessel constantly.

When they reached Baall, he gave for several days most costly dinners, at which he entertained his mother with every show of friendliness. If she were absent he feigned to miss her sorely, and if she were present he was lavish of caresses. He bade her ask whatever she desired and bestowed many gifts without her asking. When matters had
reached this stage, he embraced her at the close of the dinner at midnight, and straining her to his breast, kissed her eyes and hands, exclaiming: 

"Strength and good health to you," mother. For you I live and because of you I rule." He then gave her in charge of Anicetus, a freedman, ostensibly to convey her home on the ship that he had prepared. But the sea would not endure the tragedy that was to be enacted on it, nor would it submit to be liable to the false charge of having committed the abominable deed; and so, though the ship parted asunder and Agrippina fell into the water, she did not perish. Notwithstanding that it was dark and that she was glutted with strong drink and that the sailors used their oars against her with such force that they killed Aeceronia Polla, her companion on the trip, she nevertheless got safely to shore. When she reached home, she affected not to realize that it was a plot and kept it quiet, but speedily sent to her son a report of the occurrence, calling it an accident, and conveyed to him the good news (as she assumed it to be) that she was safe. Upon hearing this Nero could not restrain himself, but punished the messenger as if he had come to assassinate him and at once despatched Anicetus with the sailors against his mother; for he would not trust the Praetorians to slay her. When she saw them, she knew for what they had come, and leaping up from her bed she tore open her clothing.

1 Both verbs used in the Greek were common formulas of leave-taking.

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exposing her abdomen, and cried out; "Strike here, Anicius, strike here, for this bore Nero."

Thus was Agrippina, daughter of Germanicus, grand-daughter of Agrippa, and descendant of Augustus, slain by the very son to whom she had given the sovereignty and for whose sake she had killed her uncle and others. Nero, when informed that she was dead, would not believe it, since the deed was so monstrous that he was overwhelmed by incredulity; he therefore desired to behold the victim of his crime with his own eyes. So he laid bare her body, looked her all over and inspected her wounds, finally uttering a remark far more abominable even than the murder. His words were: "I did not know I had so beautiful a mother." To the Praetorians he gave money, evidently to inspire in them the hope that many such crimes would be committed; and to the senate he sent a letter in which he enumerated the offences of which he knew she was guilty; and charged also that she had plotted against him and on being detected had committed suicide. Yet in spite of what he told the senate his own conscience was so disturbed at night that he would leap suddenly from his bed, and by day, when he merely heard the blare of trumpets sounding forth some stirring martial strain from the region where lay Agrippina's bones,1 he would be terror-stricken. He therefore kept changing his residence; and when he had the same experience in the new place also, he would move in utter fright elsewhere.

Since Nero did not hear a word of truth from anybody and saw none but those who approved of his

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1 Near her villa at Baalul.
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µένα ὠρᾶν, λανθάνει τε ἐκ' ἀρχαῖας ἢ καὶ ὀρθὸς αὐτὰ πτυχανέμειν ἐνόμος, κὰκ τοῦτον πολὺ χεῖρον καὶ ἐν τὰ ἄλλα ἐγένετο. πιάτα τε τε χάρη διὰ ἄλτῳ ποιεῖν, καὶ πᾶλι ἄριστο εἶναι, καὶ τῶν φύλλω τῇ ἡ κολακία αὐτῶν λέγωμεν ἢ καὶ πάνω ἀκριβεῖον προσέχειν. τέκνων μὲν γὰρ φόβως καὶ θρόνος αναισθητον εἰτε δὲ οἱ πράξεις τολλα καὶ θεομυθείες αὐτῶν ἀποκαλεῖσθαι, ἀνεθαρώσεις—Ex. Val. 240 (p. 690).

15 Οἱ δὲ ἐν τῇ Ρώμῃ άνθρωποι ἀκούσαντες ταῦτα, καίπερ ἄφθονοι, ἔχαιρον νομίζοντες αὐτῶν ἐκ τοῦτον γι' ἄλλους ἀπολείπειαν. τῶν δὲ βοηθείαν οἱ μὲν ἄλλοι πάντες προσεκαίνουσα χαλεύειν ἐπὶ τῶν γεγονότων, καὶ συνελήλυθεν τῇ Νέρωτι, καὶ ἐφηβόζοι τολλά οἷς όντος αὐτῶν χαρίει. 2 οὖν οἱ Παπλωιοὶ δὲ δὴ Θρακίαν Παύκος ἤθελεν μὲν ἐκ τοῦ αὐτῶν καὶ τῆς ἐπιστολῆς ἐπιθυμοῦν ἀπαγορεύσεις δε αὐτὴν ἐπικαθέντα τε εὐθὺς πρὸ καὶ ὡς ἀποφιλεῖσθαι καὶ ἐξεβίβασθαι διότι ἄ μὴ ἤθελεν 3 εἰπεῖν οὐκ ἔσωσθαι, δι' ἐκ νόμων. ε ν δὲ τῷ αὐτῇ φέροντι καὶ τὰ ἄλλα πάντα δύσταν ξύλεα γὰρ ὤτι. 4 εἰ μὲν ἔχειν δὲ τοὺς άλλους ἀπειροκόλληται ἀπὸ τῶν σοφῶν ἀντισκυδίων πολλοὺς τῶν μὲν ἀνθρώπων δοαὶ καὶ ἀπόλεσε, τί χρῆ μάλιν ἄρχομαι δοιλετρομενοι θαρρωμεν, εἴριν δια

1 καὶ applied by BK.
2 θειαρ BK, θειαρ VC.
3 αὐτος Ἰνθ., αὐτο VC.

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actions, he thought that his past deeds had not all been found out, or even, perhaps, that there was nothing wrong in them. Hence he became much worse in other respects also. He came to believe that anything that it was in his power to do was right, and gave heed to those whose words were inspired by fear or flattery, as if they were utterly sincere in what they said. So, although for a time he was subject to fears and disturbances, yet after the envos had made to him a number of pleasing speeches he regained his courage.

The people of Rome, on hearing of these occurrences, rejoiced in spite of their disapproval of them, thinking that now at last his destruction was assured. As for the senators, all but Publius Thraseas Pactus pretended to rejoice at what had taken place and ostensibly shared in Nero's satisfaction therein, voting many measures by which they thought to win his favour. Thrasea, like the rest, attended the meeting of the senate and listened to the letter, but when the roding was ended, he at once rose from his seat and without a word left the chamber, inasmuch as he could not say what he would and would not say what he could. And indeed this was always his way of acting on other occasions. He used to say, for example: "If I were the only one that Nero was going to put to death, I could easily pardon the rest who lead him with flatteries. But since even among those who praise him to exceed there are many whom he has either already disposed of or will yet destroy, why should one degrade oneself to no purpose and then perish like a slave, when one may pay the debt to nature like a freeman? As for me, men will talk
of me hereafter, but of them never, except only Ann. 29 to record the fact that they were put to death.1

Such was the man that Thrasea showed himself to be; and he was always saying to himself: "Nero

can kill me, but he cannot harm me."

When Nero entered Rome after the murder of his mother, people paid him reverence in public, but in private, so long at least as any could speak their minds with safety, they tore his character to shreds. For one thing, they hung a leather bag by night on one of his statues to signify that he himself ought to be thrown into one.2 Again, they cast into the Forum a baby to which was fastened a tag bearing the words: "I will not rear you up, lest you slay your mother."

At Nero's entrance into Rome they pulled down the statues of Agrrippa. But there was one that they did not cut loose soon enough, and so they threw over it a garment which gave it the appearance of being reeled. Thereupon somebody at once composed and affixed to the statue this inscription: "I am abashed and thou art unashamed."

In many places alike one could read the inscription:

"Orestes, Nero, Alcmeon, all murderers."

And people could even be heard saying in so many words that Nero had put his mother out of the way; for information that certain persons had talked to this effect was lodged by many men whose

1 A reference to the well-known punishment prescribed for peripatetes. The criminal was sewed up in a leather bag together with a dog, a cook, a viper and an ape, and thrown into the water to drown.
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purpose was not so much to destroy the others as to bring reproach on Nero. Hence he would not admit no suit brought on such a charge, either because he did not wish that the rumour should thereby gain greater currency, or because he by this time felt contempt for anything people said. Nevertheless, in the midst of the sacrifices that were offered in Agrippina's honour in pursuance of a decree, the sun suffered a total eclipse and the stars could be seen. Also the elephants which drew the chariot of Augustus, when they had entered the Circus and proceeded as far as the senators' seats, stopped at that point and refused to go any farther. And there was another incident in which one might surely have recognized the hand of Heaven. I refer to the thunderbolt that descended upon Nero's dinner and consumed it all as it was being brought to him, like some harpy snatching away his food.

He also poisoned his aunt Domitia, whom he likewise claimed to revere like a mother. He would not even wait a few days for her to die a natural death of old age, but was eager to destroy her also. His haste to do this was inspired by her estates at Nicaea and in the neighbourhood of Ravenna, on which he promptly erected magnificent gymnasia that are flourishing still.

In honour of his mother he celebrated a most magnificent and costly festival, the events taking place for several days in five or six theatres at once. It was on this occasion that an elephant was led up...
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