

## WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP: READINGS ON BOUDICA & TOMYRIS

### BOUDICA

#### **Tacitus *Annales* 14.29-37 (1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> centuries CE).**

29 In the consulate of Caesennius Paetus and Petronius Turpilianus, a grave reverse was sustained in Britain; where, as I have mentioned, the legate, Aulus Didius, had done nothing but retain the ground already won, while his successor Veranius, after harrying the Silurians in a few raids of no great significance, was prevented by death from carrying his arms further. Famous, during life, for uncompromising independence, in the closing words of his testament he revealed the courtier; for amid a mass of flattery to Nero he added that, could he have lived for the next two years, he would have laid the province at his feet. For the present, however, Britain was in the charge of Suetonius Paulinus, in military skill and in popular report — which allows no man to lack his rival — a formidable competitor to Corbulo, and anxious to equal the laurels of the recovery of Armenia by crushing a national enemy. He prepared accordingly to attack the island of Mona, which had a considerable population of its own, while serving as a haven for refugees; and, in view of the shallow and variable channel, constructed a flotilla of boats with flat bottoms. By this method the infantry crossed; the cavalry, who followed, did so by fording or, in deeper water, by swimming at the side of their horses.

30 On the beach stood the adverse array, a serried mass of arms and men, with women flitting between the ranks. In the style of Furies, in robes of deathly black and with disheveled hair, they brandished their torches; while a circle of Druids, lifting their hands to heaven and showering imprecations, struck the troops with such an awe at the extraordinary spectacle that, as though their limbs were paralyzed, they exposed their bodies to wounds without an attempt at movement. Then, reassured by their general, and inciting each other never to flinch before a band of females and fanatics, they charged behind the standards, cut down all who met them, and enveloped the enemy in his own flames. The next step was to install a garrison among the conquered population, and to demolish the groves consecrated to their savage cults: for they considered it a duty to consult their deities by means of human entrails. — While he was thus occupied, the sudden revolt of the province was announced to Suetonius.

31 The Icenian king Prasutagus, celebrated for his long prosperity, had named the emperor his heir, together with his two daughters; an act of deference which he thought would place his kingdom and household beyond the risk of injury. The result was contrary — so much so that his kingdom was pillaged by centurions, his household by slaves; as though they had been prizes of war. As a beginning, his wife Boudicca was subjected to the lash and his daughters violated: all the chief men of the Icenians were stripped of their family estates, and the relatives of the king were treated as slaves. Impelled by this outrage and the dread of worse to come — for they had now been reduced to the status of a province — they flew to arms, and incited to rebellion the Trinobantes and others, who, not yet broken by servitude, had entered into a secret and

treasonable compact to resume their independence. The bitterest animosity was felt against the veterans; who, fresh from their settlement in the colony of Camulodunum, were acting as though they had received a free gift of the entire country, driving the natives from their homes, ejecting them from their lands, — they styled them "captives" and "slaves," — and abetted in their fury by the troops, with their similar mode of life and their hopes of equal indulgence. More than this, the temple raised to the deified Claudius continually met the view, like the citadel of an eternal tyranny; while the priests, chosen for its service, were bound under the pretext of religion to pour out their fortunes like water. Nor did there seem any great difficulty in the demolition of a colony unprotected by fortifications — a point too little regarded by our commanders, whose thoughts had run more on the agreeable than on the useful.

32 Meanwhile, for no apparent reason, the statue of Victory at Camulodunum fell, with its back turned as if in retreat from the enemy. Women, converted into maniacs by excitement, cried that destruction was at hand and that alien cries had been heard in the invaders' senate-house: the theatre had rung with shrieks, and in the estuary of the Thames had been seen a vision of the ruined colony. Again, that the Ocean had appeared blood-red and that the ebbing tide had left behind it what looked to be human corpses, were indications read by the Britons with hope and by the veterans with corresponding alarm. However, as Suetonius was far away, they applied for help to the procurator Catus Decianus. He sent not more than two hundred men, without their proper weapons: in addition, there was a small body of troops in the town. Relying on the protection of the temple, and hampered also by covert adherents of the rebellion who interfered with their plans, they neither secured their position by fosse or rampart nor took steps, by removing the women and the aged, to leave only able-bodied men in the place. They were as carelessly guarded as if the world was at peace, when they were enveloped by a great barbarian host. All else was pillaged or fired in the first onrush: only the temple, in which the troops had massed themselves, stood a two days' siege, and was then carried by storm. Turning to meet Petilius Cerialis, commander of the ninth legion, who was arriving to the rescue, the victorious Britons routed the legion and slaughtered the infantry to a man: Cerialis with the cavalry escaped to the camp, and found shelter behind its fortifications. Unnerved by the disaster and the hatred of the province which his rapacity had goaded into war, the procurator Catus crossed to Gaul.

33 Suetonius, on the other hand, with remarkable firmness, marched straight through the midst of the enemy upon London; which, though not distinguished by the title of colony, was none the less a busy center, chiefly through its crowd of merchants and stores. Once there, he felt some doubt whether to choose it as a base of operations; but, on considering the fewness of his troops and the sufficiently severe lesson which had been read to the rashness of Petilius, he determined to save the country as a whole at the cost of one town. The laments and tears of the inhabitants, as they implored his protection, found him inflexible: he gave the signal for departure, and embodied in the column those capable of accompanying the march: all who had been detained by the disabilities of sex, by the lassitude of age, or by local attachment, fell into the hands of

the enemy. A similar catastrophe was reserved for the municipality of Verulamium; as the natives, with their delight in plunder and their distaste for exertion, left the forts and garrison-posts on one side, and made for the point which offered the richest material for the pillager and was unsafe for a defending force. It is established that close upon seventy thousand Roman citizens and allies fell in the places mentioned. For the enemy neither took captive nor sold into captivity; there was none of the other commerce of war; he was hasty with slaughter and the gibbet, with arson and the cross, as though his day of reckoning must come, but only after he had snatched his revenge in the interval.

34 Suetonius had already the fourteenth legion, with a detachment of the twentieth and auxiliaries from the nearest stations, altogether some ten thousand armed men, when he prepared to abandon delay and contest a pitched battle. He chose a position approached by a narrow defile and secured in the rear by a wood, first satisfying himself that there was no trace of an enemy except in his front, and that the plain there was devoid of cover and allowed no suspicion of an ambushade. The legionaries were posted in serried ranks, the light-armed troops on either side, and the cavalry massed on the extreme wings. The British forces, on the other hand, disposed in bands of foot and horse were moving jubilantly in every direction. They were in unprecedented numbers, and confidence ran so high that they brought even their wives to witness the victory and installed them in wagons, which they had stationed just over the extreme fringe of the plain.

35 Boudicca, mounted in a chariot with her daughters before her, rode up to clan after clan and delivered her protest:— It was customary, she knew, with Britons to fight under female captaincy; but now she was avenging, not, as a queen of glorious ancestry, her ravished realm and power, but, as a woman of the people, her liberty lost, her body tortured by the lash, the tarnished honor of her daughters. Roman cupidity had progressed so far that not their very persons, not age itself, nor maidenhood, were left unpolluted. Yet Heaven was on the side of their just revenge: one legion, which ventured battle, had perished; the rest were skulking in their camps, or looking around them for a way of escape. They would never face even the din and roar of those many thousands, far less their onslaught and their swords! — If they considered in their own hearts the forces under arms and the motives of the war, on that field they must conquer or fall. Such was the settled purpose of a woman — the men might live and be slaves!

36 Even Suetonius, in this critical moment, broke silence. In spite of his reliance on the courage of the men, he still blended exhortations and entreaty: "They must treat with contempt the noise and empty menaces of the barbarians: in the ranks opposite, more women than soldiers meet the eye. Unwarlike and unarmed, they would break immediately, when, taught by so many defeats, they recognized once more the steel and the valor of their conquerors. Even in a number of legions, it was but a few men who decided the fate of battles; and it would be an additional glory that they, a handful of troops, were gathering the laurels of an entire army. Only, keeping their order close, and, when their javelins were discharged, employing shield-boss and sword, let them

steadily pile up the dead and forget the thought of plunder: once the victory was gained, all would be their own." Such was the ardor following the general's words — with such alacrity had his veteran troops, with the long experience of battle, prepared themselves in a moment to hurl the pilum — that Suetonius, without a doubt of the issue, gave the signal to engage.

37 At first, the legionaries stood motionless, keeping to the defile as a natural protection: then, when the closer advance of the enemy had enabled them to exhaust their missiles with certitude of aim, they dashed forward in a wedge-like formation. The auxiliaries charged in the same style; and the cavalry, with lances extended, broke a way through any parties of resolute men whom they encountered. The remainder took to flight, although escape was difficult, as the cordon of wagons had blocked the outlets. The troops gave no quarter even to the women: the baggage animals themselves had been speared and added to the pile of bodies. The glory won in the course of the day was remarkable, and equal to that of our older victories: for, by some accounts, little less than eighty thousand Britons fell, at a cost of some four hundred Romans killed and a not much greater number of wounded. Boudicca ended her days by poison; while Poenius Postumus, camp-prefect of the second legion, informed of the exploits of the men of the fourteenth and twentieth, and conscious that he had cheated his own corps of a share in the honors and had violated the rules of the service by ignoring the orders of his commander, ran his sword through his body.

### **Dio Cassius *Histories* 62.1-12 (2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> centuries CE).**

1 While this sort of child's play was going on in Rome, a terrible disaster occurred in Britain. Two cities were sacked, eighty thousand of the Romans and of their allies perished, and the island was lost to Rome. Moreover, all this ruin was brought upon the Romans by a woman, a fact which in itself caused them the greatest shame. Indeed, Heaven gave them indications of the catastrophe beforehand. For at night there was heard to issue from the senate-house foreign jargon mingled with laughter, and from the theatre outcries and lamentations, though no mortal man had uttered the words or the groans; houses were seen under the water in the river Thames, and the ocean between the island and Gaul once grew blood-red at flood tide.

2 An excuse for the war was found in the confiscation of the sums of money that Claudius had given to the foremost Britons; for these sums, as Decianus Catus, the procurator of the island, maintained, were to be paid back. This was one reason for the uprising; another was found in the fact that Seneca, in the hope of receiving a good rate of interest, had lent to the islanders 40,000,000 sesterces that they did not want, and had afterwards called in this loan all at once and had resorted to severe measures in exacting it. But the person who was chiefly instrumental in rousing the natives and persuading them to fight the Romans, the person who was thought worthy to be their leader and who directed the conduct of the entire war, was Buduica, a Briton woman of

the royal family and possessed of greater intelligence than often belongs to women. 3 This woman assembled her army, to the number of some 120,000, and then ascended a tribunal which had been constructed of earth in the Roman fashion. In stature she was very tall, in appearance most terrifying, in the glance of her eye most fierce, and her voice was harsh; 4 a great mass of the tawniest hair fell to her hips; around her neck was a large golden necklace; and she wore a tunic of divers colors over which a thick mantle was fastened with a brooch. This was her invariable attire. She now grasped a spear to aid her in terrifying all beholders and spoke as follows:

3 "You have learned by actual experience how different freedom is from slavery. Hence, although some among you may previously, through ignorance of which was better, have been deceived by the alluring promises of the Romans, yet now that you have tried both, you have learned how great a mistake you made in preferring an imported despotism to your ancestral mode of life, and you have come to realize how much better is poverty with no master than wealth with slavery. For what treatment is there of the most shameful or grievous sort that we have not suffered ever since these men made their appearance in Britain? Have we not been robbed entirely of most of our possessions, and those the greatest, while for those that remain we pay taxes? Besides pasturing and tilling for them all our other possessions, do we not pay a yearly tribute for our very bodies? How much better it would be to have been sold to masters once for all than, possessing empty titles of freedom, to have to ransom ourselves every year! How much better to have been slain and to have perished than to go about with a tax on our heads! Yet why do I mention death? For even dying is not free of cost with them; nay, you know what fees we deposit even for our dead. Among the rest of mankind death frees even those who are in slavery to others; only in the case of the Romans do the very dead remain alive for their profit. Why is it that, though none of us has any money (how, indeed, could we, or where would we get it?), we are stripped and despoiled like a murderer's victims? And why should the Romans be expected to display moderation as time goes on, when they have behaved toward us in this fashion at the very outset, when all men show consideration even for the beasts they have newly captured?

4 "But, to speak the plain truth, it is we who have made ourselves responsible for all these evils, in that we allowed them to set foot on the island in the first place instead of expelling them at once as we did their famous Julius Caesar, — yes, and in that we did not deal with them while they were still far away as we dealt with Augustus and with Gaius Caligula and make even the attempt to sail hither a formidable thing. As a consequence, although we inhabit so large an island, or rather a continent, one might say, that is encircled by the sea, and although we possess a veritable world of our own and are so separated by the ocean from all the rest of mankind that we have been believed to dwell on a different earth and under a different sky, and that some of the outside world, aye, even their wisest men, have not hitherto known for a certainty even by what name we are called, we have, notwithstanding all this, been despised and trampled underfoot by men who know nothing else than how to secure gain. However, even at this late day, though we have not done so before, let us, my countrymen and friends and kinsmen, — for I consider you all kinsmen, seeing that you inhabit a single

island and are called by one common name, — let us, I say, do our duty while we still remember what freedom is, that we may leave to our children not only its appellation but also its reality. For, if we utterly forget the happy state in which we were born and bred, what, pray, will they do, reared in bondage?

5 "All this I say, not with the purpose of inspiring you with a hatred of present conditions, — that hatred you already have, — nor with fear for the future, — that fear you already have, — but of commending you because you now of our own accord choose the requisite course of action, and of thanking you for so readily co-operating with me and with each other. Have no fear whatever of the Romans; for they are superior to us neither in numbers nor in bravery. And here is the proof: they have protected themselves with helmets and breastplates and greaves and yet further provided themselves with palisades and walls and trenches to make sure of suffering no harm by an incursion of their enemies. For they are influenced by their fears when they adopt this kind of fighting in preference to the plan we follow of rough and ready action. Indeed, we enjoy such a surplus of bravery, that we regard our tents as safer than their walls and our shields as affording greater protection than their whole suits of mail. As a consequence, we when victorious capture them, and when overpowered elude them; and if we ever choose to retreat anywhere, we conceal ourselves in swamps and mountains so inaccessible that we can be neither discovered or taken. Our opponents, however, can neither pursue anybody, by reason of their heavy armor, nor yet flee; and if they ever do slip away from us, they take refuge in certain appointed spots, where they shut themselves up as in a trap. But these are not the only respects in which they are vastly inferior to us: there is also the fact that they cannot bear up under hunger, thirst, cold, or heat, as we can. They require shade and covering, they require kneaded bread and wine and oil, and if any of these things fails them, they perish; for us, on the other hand, any grass or root serves as bread, the juice of any plant as oil, any water as wine, any tree as a house. 6 Furthermore, this region is familiar to us and is our ally, but to them it is unknown and hostile. As for the rivers, we swim them naked, whereas they do not across them easily even with boats. Let us, therefore, go against them trusting boldly to good fortune. Let us show them that they are hares and foxes trying to rule over dogs and wolves."

6 When she had finished speaking, she employed a species of divination, letting a hare escape from the fold of her dress; and since it ran on what they considered the auspicious side, the whole multitude shouted with pleasure, and Buduica, raising her hand toward heaven, said: "I thank thee, Andraste, and call upon thee as woman speaking to woman; for I rule over no burden-bearing Egyptians as did Nitocris, nor over trafficking Assyrians as did Semiramis (for we have by now gained thus much learning from the Romans!), much less over the Romans themselves as did Messalina once and afterwards Agrippina and now Nero (who, though in name a man, is in fact a woman, as is proved by his singing, lyre-playing and beautification of his person); nay, those over whom I rule are Britons, men that know not how to till the soil or ply a trade, but are thoroughly versed in the art of war and hold all things in common, even children and wives, so that the latter possess the same valor as the men. 4 As the queen, then, of

such men and of such women, I supplicate and pray thee for victory, preservation of life, and liberty against men insolent, unjust, insatiable, impious, — if, indeed, we ought to term those people men who bathe in warm water, eat artificial dainties, drink unmixed wine, anoint themselves with myrrh, sleep on soft couches with boys for bedfellows, — boys past their prime at that, — and are slaves to a lyre-player and a poor one too. Wherefore may this Mistress Domitia-Nero reign no longer over me or over you men; let the wench sing and lord it over Romans, for they surely deserve to be the slaves of such a woman after having submitted to her so long. But for us, Mistress, be thou alone ever our leader."

7 Having finished an appeal to her people of this general tenor, Buduica led her army against the Romans; for these chanced to be without a leader, inasmuch as Paulinus, their commander, had gone on an expedition to Mona, an island near Britain. This enabled her to sack and plunder two Roman cities, and, as I have said, to wreak indescribable slaughter. Those who were taken captive by the Britons were subjected to every known form of outrage. The worst and most bestial atrocity committed by their captors was the following. They hung up naked the noblest and most distinguished women and then cut off their breasts and sewed them to their mouths, in order to make the victims appear to be eating them; afterwards they impaled the women on sharp skewers run lengthwise through the entire body. All this they did to the accompaniment of sacrifices, banquets, and wanton behavior, not only in all their other sacred places, but particularly in the grove of Andate. This was their name for Victory, and they regarded her with most exceptional reverence.

8 Now it chanced that Paulinus had already brought Mona to terms, and so on learning of the disaster in Britain he at once set sail thither from Mona. However, he was not willing to risk a conflict with the barbarians immediately, as he feared their numbers and their desperation, but was inclined to postpone battle to a more convenient season. But as he grew short of food and the barbarians pressed relentlessly upon him, he was compelled, contrary to his judgment, to engage them. Buduica, at the head of an army of about 230,000 men, rode in a chariot herself and assigned the others to their several stations. Paulinus could not extend his line the whole length of hers, for, even if the men had been drawn up only one deep, they would not have reached far enough, so inferior were they in numbers; nor, on the other hand, did he dare join battle in a single compact force, for fear of being surrounded and cut to pieces. He therefore separated his army into three divisions, in order to fight at several points at one and the same time, and he made each of the divisions so strong that it could not easily be broken through.

9 While ordering and arranging his men he also exhorted them, saying: "Up, fellow-soldiers! Up, Romans! Show these accursed wretches how far we surpass them even in the midst of evil fortune. It would be shameful, indeed, for you to lose ingloriously now what but a short time ago you won by your valor. Many a time, assuredly, have both we ourselves and our fathers, with far fewer numbers than we have at present, conquered far more numerous antagonists. Fear not, then, their numbers or their spirit of rebellion; for their boldness rests on nothing more than

headlong rashness unaided by arms or training. Neither fear them because they have burned a couple of cities; for they did not capture them by force nor after a battle, but one was betrayed and the other abandoned to them. Exact from them now, therefore, the proper penalty for these deeds, and let them learn by actual experience the difference between us, whom they have wronged, and themselves."

10 After addressing these words to one division he came to another and said: "Now is the time, fellow-soldiers, for zeal, now is the time for daring. For if you show yourselves brave men to-day, you will recover all that you have lost; if you overcome these foes, no one else will any longer withstand us. By one such battle you will both make your present possessions secure and subdue whatever remains; for everywhere our soldiers, even though they are in other lands, will emulate you and foes will be terror-stricken. Therefore, since you have it within your power either to rule all mankind without a fear, both the nations that your fathers left to you and those that you yourselves have gained in addition, or else to be deprived of them altogether, choose to be free, to rule, to live in wealth, and to enjoy prosperity, rather than, by avoiding the effort, to suffer the opposite of all this."

11 After making an address of this sort to these men, he went on to the third division, and to them he said: "You have heard what outrages these damnable men have committed against us, nay more, you have even witnessed some of them. Choose, then, whether you wish to suffer the same treatment yourselves as our comrades have suffered and to be driven out of Britain entirely, besides, or else by conquering to avenge those that have perished and at the same time furnish to the rest of mankind an example, not only of benevolent clemency toward the obedient, but also of inevitable severity toward the rebellious. For my part, I hope, above all, that victory will be ours; first, because the gods are our allies (for they almost always side with those who have been wronged); second, because of the courage that is our heritage, since we are Romans and have triumphed over all mankind by our valor; next, because of our experience (for we have defeated and subdued these very men who are now arrayed against us); and lastly, because of our prestige (for those with whom we are about to engage are not antagonists, but our slaves, whom we conquered even when they were free and independent). Yet if the outcome should prove contrary to our hope, — for I will not shrink from mentioning even this possibility, — it would be better for us to fall fighting bravely than to be captured and impaled, to look upon our own entrails cut from our bodies, to be spitted on red-hot skewers, to perish by being melted in boiling water — in a word, to suffer as though we had been thrown to lawless and impious wild beasts. Let us, therefore, either conquer them or die on the spot. Britain will be a noble monument for us, even though all the other Romans here should be driven out; for in any case our bodies shall forever possess this land."

12 After addressing these and like words to them he raised the signal for battle. Thereupon the armies approached each other, the barbarians with much shouting mingled with menacing battle-songs, but the Romans silently and in order until they came within a javelin's throw of the enemy. Then, while their foes were still advancing



against them at a walk, the Romans rushed forward at a signal and charged them at full speed, and when the clash came, easily broke through the opposing ranks; but, as they were surrounded by the great numbers of the enemy, they had to be fighting everywhere at once. Their struggle took many forms. Light-armed troops exchanged missiles with light-armed, heavy-armed were opposed to heavy-armed, cavalry clashed with cavalry, and against the chariots of the barbarians the Roman archers contended. The barbarians would assail the Romans with a rush of their chariots, knocking them helter-skelter, but, since they fought with breastplates, would themselves be repulsed by the arrows. Horseman would overthrow foot-soldiers and foot-soldiers strike down horseman; a group of Romans, forming in close order, would advance to meet the chariots, and others would be scattered by them; a band of Britons would come to close quarters with the archers and rout them, while others were content to dodge their shafts at a distance; and all this was going on not at one spot only, but in all three divisions at once. They contended for a long time, both parties being animated by the same zeal and daring. But finally, late in the day, the Romans prevailed; and they slew many in battle beside the wagons and the forest, and captured many alike. Nevertheless, not a few made their escape and were preparing to fight again. In the meantime, however, Boudica fell sick and died. The Britons mourned her deeply and gave her a costly burial; but, feeling that now at last they were really defeated, they scattered to their homes. So much for affairs in Britain.

## TOMYRIS

### **Herodotus *Histories* 1.201-214 (5<sup>th</sup> century BCE).**

I.201: When Cyrus had achieved the conquest of the Babylonians, he conceived the desire of bringing the Massagetai under his dominion. Now the Massagetai are said to be a great and warlike nation, dwelling eastward, toward the rising of the sun, beyond the river Araxes, and opposite the Issedonians. By many they are regarded as a Scythian race.

I.205: At this time the Massagetai were ruled by a queen, named Tomyris, who at the death of her husband, the late king, had mounted the throne. To her Cyrus sent ambassadors, with instructions to court her on his part, pretending that he wished to take her to wife. Tomyris, however, aware that it was her kingdom, and not herself, that he courted, forbade the men to approach. Cyrus, therefore, finding that he did not advance his designs by this deceit, marched towards the Araxes, and openly displaying his hostile intentions; set to work to construct a bridge on which his army might cross the river, and began building towers upon the boats which were to be used in the passage.

I.206: While the Persian leader was occupied in these labors, Tomyris sent a herald to him, who said, "King of the Medes, cease to press this enterprise, for you cannot know if

what you are doing will be of real advantage to you. Be content to rule in peace your own kingdom, and bear to see us reign over the countries that are ours to govern. As, however, I know you will not choose to hearken to this counsel, since there is nothing you less desirest than peace and quietness, come now, if you are so mightily desirous of meeting the Massagetai in arms, leave your useless toil of bridge-making; let us retire three days' march from the river bank, and do you come across with your soldiers; or, if you like better to give us battle on your side the stream, retire yourself an equal distance." Cyrus, on this offer, called together the chiefs of the Persians, and laid the matter before them, requesting them to advise him what he should do. All the votes were in favor of his letting Tomyris cross the stream, and giving battle on Persian ground.

I.207: But Croesus the Lydian, who was present at the meeting of the chiefs, disapproved of this advice; he therefore rose, and thus delivered his sentiments in opposition to it: "Oh! my king! I promised you long since, that, as Zeus had given me into your hands, I would, to the best of my power, avert impending danger from your house. Alas! my own sufferings, by their very bitterness, have taught me to be keen-sighted of dangers. If you deem yourself an immortal, and your army an army of immortals, my counsel will doubtless be thrown away upon you. But if you feel yourself to be a man, and a ruler of men, lay this first to heart, that there is a wheel on which the affairs of men revolve, and that its movement forbids the same man to be always fortunate.

"Now concerning the matter in hand, my judgment runs counter to the judgment of your other counselors. For if you agree to give the enemy entrance into your country, consider what risk is run! Lose the battle, and therewith your whole kingdom is lost. For, assuredly, the Massagetai, if they win the fight, will not return to their homes, but will push forward against the states of your empire. Or, if you win the battle, why, then you win far less than if you were across the stream, where you might follow up your victory. For against your loss, if they defeat you on your own ground, must be set theirs in like case. Rout their army on the other side of the river, and you may push at once into the heart of their country. Moreover, were it not disgrace intolerable for Cyrus the son of Cambyses to retire before and yield ground to a woman?

"My counsel, therefore, is that we cross the stream, and pushing forward as far as they shall fall back, then seek to get the better of them by stratagem. I am told they are unacquainted with the good things on which the Persians live, and have never tasted the great delights of life. Let us then prepare a feast for them in our camp; let sheep be slaughtered without stint, and the wine cups be filled full of noble liquor, and let all manner of dishes be prepared: then leaving behind us our worst troops, let us fall back towards the river. Unless I very much mistake, when they see the good fare set out, they will forget all else and fall to. Then it will remain for us to do our parts manfully."

I.208: Cyrus, when the two plans were thus placed in contrast before him, changed his mind, and preferring the advice which Croesus had given, returned for answer to

Tomyris that she should retire, and that he would cross the stream. She therefore retired, as she had engaged; and Cyrus, giving Croesus into the care of his son Cambyses (whom he had appointed to succeed him on the throne), with strict charge to pay him all respect and treat him well, if the expedition failed of success; and sending them both back to Persia, crossed the river with his army.

I.209: The first night after the passage, as he slept in the enemy's country, a vision appeared to him. He seemed to see in his sleep the eldest of the sons of Hystaspes, with wings upon his shoulders, shadowing with the one wing Asia, and Europe with the other. Now Hystaspes, the son of Arsames, was of the race of the Achaimenidai, and his eldest son, Darius, was at that time scarce twenty years old; wherefore, not being of age to go to the wars, he had remained behind in Persia. When Cyrus woke from his sleep, and turned the vision over in his mind, it seemed to him no light matter. He therefore sent for Hystaspes, and taking him aside said, "Hystaspes, your son is discovered to be plotting against me and my crown. I will tell you how I know it so certainly. The gods watch over my safety, and warn me beforehand of every danger. Now last night, as I lay in my bed, I saw in a vision the eldest of your sons with wings upon his shoulders, shadowing with the one wing Asia, and Europe with the other. From this it is certain, beyond all possible doubt, that he is engaged in some plot against me. Return you then at once to Persia, and be sure, when I come back from conquering the Massagetai, to have your son ready to produce before me, that I may examine him."

I.210: Thus Cyrus spoke, in the belief that he was plotted against by Darius; but he missed the true meaning of the dream, which was sent by God to forewarn him, that he was to die then and there, and that his kingdom was to fall at last to Darius. Hystaspes made answer to Cyrus in these words: "Heaven forbid, sire, that there should be a Persian living who would plot against you! If such an one there be, may a speedy death overtake him! You found the Persians a race of slaves, you have made them free men: you found them subject to others, you have made them lords of all. If a vision has announced that my son is practicing against you, I resign him into your hands to deal with as you will." Hystaspes, when he had thus answered, recrossed the Araxes and hastened back to Persia, to keep a watch on his son Darius.

I.211: Meanwhile Cyrus, having advanced a day's march from the river, did as Croesus had advised him, and, leaving the worthless portion of his army in the camp, drew off with his good troops towards the river. Soon afterwards, a detachment of the Massagetai, one-third of their entire army, led by Spargapises, son of the queen Tomyris, coming up, fell upon the body which had been left behind by Cyrus, and on their resistance put them to the sword. Then, seeing the banquet prepared, they sat down and began to feast. When they had eaten and drunk their fill, and were now sunk in sleep, the Persians under Cyrus arrived, slaughtered a great multitude, and made even a larger number prisoners. Among these last was Spargapises himself.

I.212: When Tomyris heard what had befallen her son and her army, she sent a herald to Cyrus, who thus addressed the conqueror: "You bloodthirsty Cyrus, pride not yourself

on this poor success: it was the grape-juice---which, when you drink it, makes you so mad, and as you swallow it down brings up to your lips such bold and wicked words---it was this poison by which you ensnared my child, and so overcame him, not in fair open fight. Now hear what I advise, and be sure I advise you for your good. Restore my son to me and get you from the land unharmed, triumphant over a third part of the host of the Massagetai. Refuse, and I swear by the sun, the sovereign lord of the Massagetai, bloodthirsty as you are, I will give you your fill of blood."

I.213: To the words of this message Cyrus paid no manner of regard. As for Spargapises, the son of the queen, when the wine went off, and he saw the extent of his calamity, he made request to Cyrus to release him from his bonds; then, when his prayer was granted, and the fetters were taken from his limbs, as soon as his hands were free, he destroyed himself.

I.214: Tomyris, when she found that Cyrus paid no heed to her advice, collected all the forces of her kingdom, and gave him battle. Of all the combats in which the barbarians have engaged among themselves, I reckon this to have been the fiercest. The following, as I understand, was the manner of it: First, the two armies stood apart and shot their arrows at each other; then, when their quivers were empty, they closed and fought hand-to-hand with lances and daggers; and thus they continued fighting for a length of time, neither choosing to give ground. At length the Massagetai prevailed. The greater part of the army of the Persians was destroyed and Cyrus himself fell, after reigning nine and twenty years. Search was made among the slain by order of the queen for the body of Cyrus, and when it was found she took a skin, and, filling it full of human blood, she dipped the head of Cyrus in the gore, saying, as she thus insulted the corpse, "I live and have conquered you in fight, and yet by you am I ruined, for you took my son with guile; but thus I make good my threat, and give you your fill of blood." Of the many different accounts which are given of the death of Cyrus, this which I have followed appears to me most worthy of credit.