

## 7. The Sword of Damocles

Hic quidem tyrannus ipse demonstravit<sup>1</sup> quam beatus esset. Nam cum quīdam ex eius assentatoribus,<sup>2</sup> Damocles,<sup>3</sup> commemoraret<sup>4</sup> copias eius, maiestatem<sup>5</sup> dominatūs, rerum abundantiam,<sup>6</sup> negaretque quemquam<sup>7</sup> umquam beatiorem fuisse, Dionysius “Visne igitur,” inquit, “O Damocle, ipse hanc vitam degustare<sup>8</sup> et fortunam meam experiri?” Cum ille se cupere dixisset, hominem in aureo<sup>9</sup> lecto<sup>10</sup> collocari<sup>11</sup> iussit mensasque<sup>12</sup> ornavit<sup>13</sup> argento<sup>14</sup> auroque.<sup>15</sup> Tum pueros bellos iussit cenam exquisitissimam<sup>16</sup> inferre. Fortunatus<sup>17</sup> sibi Damocles videbatur. Eodem autem tempore Dionysius gladium<sup>18</sup> supra<sup>19</sup> caput eius saetā equinā<sup>20</sup> demitti<sup>21</sup> iussit. Damocles, cum gladium vidisset, timens oravit tyrannum ut abire liceret, quod iam “beatus” nollet esse. Satisne Dionysius videtur demonstravisse nihil esse ei beatum cui semper aliqui<sup>22</sup> metus impendat?<sup>23</sup> (*Ibid.* 61-62)

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- <sup>1</sup> **demonstro (1)**, point out, show  
<sup>2</sup> **assentator, -oris**, flatterer, “yes-man”  
<sup>3</sup> **Damocles, -is**  
<sup>4</sup> **commemoro (1)**, mention, recount  
<sup>5</sup> **maiestas, -tatis**, greatness  
<sup>6</sup> **abundantia, -ae**  
<sup>7</sup> **quisquam, quidquam**, anyone, anything  
<sup>8</sup> **degusto (1)**, taste, try  
<sup>9</sup> **aureus, -a, -um**, golden  
<sup>10</sup> **lectus, -i**, couch  
<sup>11</sup> **col-loco**, place  
<sup>12</sup> **mensa, -ae**, table  
<sup>13</sup> **orno (1)**, adorn  
<sup>14</sup> **argentum, -i**, silver  
<sup>15</sup> **aurum, -i**, gold  
<sup>16</sup> **exquisitus, -a, -um: ex-quaesitus**  
<sup>17</sup> **fortunatus, -a, -um**  
<sup>18</sup> **gladius, -ii**, sword  
<sup>19</sup> **supra, adv. and prep. + acc.**, above  
<sup>20</sup> **saetā, equinā**, by a horsehair  
<sup>21</sup> **demitto**, let down  
<sup>22</sup> **aliqui, -qua, -quod, adj. of aliquis**  
<sup>23</sup> **impendeo, -ere**, hang over, threaten