

Landesbibliothek Oldenburg

Digitalisierung von Drucken

A Collection Of Poems In Six Volumes. By Several Hands

Dodsley, Robert

London, 1758

Epilogue design'd for Sophonisba. And to have been spoken by Mrs.
Oldfield. By the Same.

urn:nbn:de:gbv:45:1-1993

EPILOGUE design'd for SOPHONISBA,

And to have been spoken by Mrs. OLDFIELD.

By the Same.

BEFORE you sign poor Sophonisba's doom,
 In her behalf petitioner I come;
 Not but our author knows, whate'er I say,
 That I could find objections to his play.
 This double marriage for her country's good,
 I told him never would be understood,
 And that ye all would say, 'twas flesh and blood.
 Had Carthage only been in madam's head,
 Her champion never had been in her—bed:
 For could the ideot think a husband's name
 Would make him quit his interest, friends and fame;
 That he would risque a kingdom for a wife,
 And act dependent in a place for life?
 Yet what stern Cato shall condemn the fair,
 Whilst publick good she thunder'd in your ear,
 If private interest had a *little* share.
 You know, she acted not against the laws
 Of those old-fashioned times; that in her cause



Old Syphax could no longer make a stand,
 And Massinissa woo'd her sword in hand.
 But did not take the way to whet that sword?
 Heroes fight coldly when wives give the word.
 She should have kept him keen, employ'd her charms
 Not as a bribe, but to reward his arms;
 Have told him when Rome yielded she would yield,
 And sent him fresh, not yawning, to the field.
 She talk'd it well to rouse him to the fight,
 But like Penelope, when out of sight,
 All she had done by day, undid by night.
 Is this your wily Carthaginian kind?
 No English woman had been half so kind.
 What from a husband's hand could she expect
 But ratbane, or that common fate, neglect?
 Perhaps some languishing soft fair may say,
 Poyson's so shocking—but consider pray,
 She fear'd the Roman, he the marriage chain;
 All other means to free them both were vain.
 Let none then Massinissa's conduct blame,
 He first his love consulted, then his fame.
 And if the fair one with too little art,
 Whilst seemingly she play'd a patriot-part,
 Was secretly the dupe of her own heart;
 Forgive a fault she strove so well to hide,
 Nor be compassion to her fate deny'd,
 Who liv'd unhappily, and greatly dy'd.