

The Horatians and the Curiatians (1934)

by Bertolt Brecht

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Characters:

CHORUS OF CURIATIANS

CHORUS OF HORATIANS

THE THREE CURIATIAN GENERALS – *archer, spearman,*
swordsman

THE THREE HORATIAN GENERALS – *archer, spearman,*
swordsman

THE HORATIAN WOMEN

THE CURIATIAN WOMEN

THE MUSTERING

The city of the Horatians and the city of the Curiatians. The cities turn to their Generals.

CHORUS OF CURIATIANS:

Why do we battle among ourselves, Curiatians?

Once more

Winter is over and once again

Within our walls the conflict rages

Over the ownership of land and the ownership of the minepits.

Therefore

We have determined to arm ourselves

And in three armies

To invade the land of the Horatians

And to overthrow them totally

Appropriating all their goods above and below the ground.

They shout to the Horatians:

Submit!

Hand over your huts, farmlands and implements or else

We shall overcome you with such military strength

That none of you shall escape.

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

The robbers come! With an enormous

Military strength they overrun the country.

They will grant us life if we surrender

What we need to live.

But why

Are we more afraid of death than hunger?

We shall not submit!

CHORUS OF CURIATIANS:

We give over troops and weapons

To our Generals.

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

We give over troops and weapons

To our Generals.

Shoulderframes with little flags which indicate divisions of troops are fastened to the shoulders of the Generals and on black-

boards the number of soldiers is written down.

CHORUS OF CURIATIANS:

To you, General,

We give over seven cohorts of archers.

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

To you, General

We give over seven brotherhoods of spearmen.

CHORUS OF CURIATIANS:

To you, General

We give over twelve cohorts of swordsmen.

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

To you, General

We give over seven brotherhoods of archers.

CHORUS OF CURIATIANS:

To you, General

We give over seven cohorts of spearmen.

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

To you, General

We give over twelve brotherhoods of swordsmen.

ALL SIX GENERALS:

Bring the weapons!

Bows, spears, swords and shields are brought.

CHORUS OF CURIATIANS:

Choose

From this rich supply of weapons

The very best.

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

Those are your weapons.

FIRST CURIATIAN:

The bows must be good. Without good bows

I can do no fighting.

He bends the bow but it breaks.

CHORUS OF CURIATIANS:

Throw it away.

He throws it away and bends another, which holds.

FIRST CURIATIAN:

With this bow I am content.

FIRST HORATIAN, *one bow is laid before him. He bends it carefully:*

I can bend it farther but then it will break.

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

Be content with this. We have no others.

FIRST HORATIAN:

But it won't carry far.

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

Then go nearer the foe.

FIRST HORATIAN:

But I run a great risk.

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

Yes.

HORATIAN WOMEN:

If the archer quarrels with his bow

There can be no fighting.

FIRST HORATIAN *quickly*:

I do not quarrel with it.

CHORUS OF HORATIANS *as two spears are brought to the Second Horatian*:

Here is your spear and here

Is a Curiatian spear. You can see

They are equally long and equally heavy.

And you, too

Are a match for your opponent, spearman.

CHORUS OF CURIATIANS:

Bring new spears.

The Second Curiatian is given a much longer spear. Five great shields are brought to the Third Curiatian warrior. He goes from shield to shield and tries to pierce them with his sword.

Three are pierced through. He chooses one of the last two.

THIRD CURIATIAN:

The sword has grown dull.

CHORUS OF CURIATIANS:

Here is a new one.

Third Curiatian pulls a horsehair from his helmet and cuts it with his sword.

THIRD CURIATIAN:

With this sword and shield I am well equipped.

THIRD HORATIAN *as two shields are laid before him — one small, one big*:

I will try this to make sure.

He pierces the big one through and turns to the small one.

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

Wait, you have tried it! The undamaged one
Is made of the same metal. But the first shield
Was held incorrectly.

*A warrior holds the shield aslant while a second warrior thrusts
at it so that the blow glances off.*

THIRD HORATIAN:

I understand. Since it is not proof
Against a straight thrust
I must make sure to receive
Only glancing blows.

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

Shall we mend the big shield for you?

THIRD HORATIAN:

No, I shall take the small one.
It is splendidly light.
He takes it.

I am content with this shield.
I can move faster with it. And I know the sword.
I forged it myself. It is as good
As I could make it.

CURIATIAN AND HORATIAN WOMEN:

Now go. Not all of you
Will come back to us.

CURIATIAN GENERALS:

Do not weep! Prepare the victory wreaths
In advance. We shall return
Laden with much booty.

CURIATIAN WOMEN:

We shall count the days until you come to us.
Your place at the table, your place in bed
Will be empty.

HORATIAN GENERALS:

But how shall the fields be tended
How shall the workshops be kept going without us?

HORATIAN WOMEN:

Do not trouble yourselves.
The fields will be tended. Only make sure

That we reap the harvest.

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

To balk the attack

To avoid the submission and the theft

Of our huts, farmlands and implements

We have determined, O Horatians

To advance with three armies.

We shall fight

Until our opponents are totally overthrown.

I THE BATTLE OF THE ARCHERS

THE HORATIAN:

Yesterday evening

My opponent reached the position

I had planned for.

I have so planned it

That he must come from behind a mountain

In order to attack me. And so

There is little distance between us

As it has to be on account of my bow.

Now I am waiting for the sun.

It must be to my advantage.

THE CURIATIAN:

I await my opponent

Among mountains that are strange to me

And I do not know how near he may be

However, I have no wind against me

And my bow is good.

I wait for the sun.

BOTH CHORUSES:

The archers have reached their positions.

When it is light, the battle begins.

THE WARRIORS:

It is getting light.

The warriors bend their bows. An actor carries in a spotlight on a stick which represents the sun. He carries it very slowly across the stage. His passage from left to right must last as long as the

fight. As the sun rises over the Horatian's mountain, he is in shadow, his opponent in the light.

THE CURIATIAN:

Oh, the sun blinds me!

I cannot aim and my opponent
Remains in darkness. He is covered
By the shadow of the mountain.

First volley of arrows. The blinded Curiatian shoots too high. The Horatian hits him in the knee. The Curiatian draws out the arrow.

I am hit and my opponent
Is not hit.

I had forgotten that the sun not only lights up
But blinds as well.

I needed light to aim
But it came from his direction.

My position is bad.

Since my knee is shattered, my opponent
Can keep me in this bad location.

CHORUS OF CURIATIANS:

What have you lost?

The Curiatian shows how many he has lost by taking two little flags from his shoulderframe and throwing them away. The Chorus of Curiatians speaks to their man as they erase two cohorts from the board.

You have lost two cohorts
Out of your seven.

But your weapon is good.

As always

Time is in our favour.

Take no risks.

In the end

Better weapons will prevail.

THE HORATIAN:

My bow does not carry far enough.

But my opponent is blinded by the sun

And my arrow

Has at least shattered his knee.

My position is good.

CHORUS OF HORATIANS *to their man:*

Why have you stopped fighting? A good position
Does not stay good for ever. We shall be worse off
If we do not better ourselves. Inevitably
The sun moves across the heavens. Irrevocably
Morning becomes midday.

THE HORATIAN:

With a volley of arrows I intended to shoot down
The man with the sun in his face.
But I did not kill him with the first arrow
He is only wounded, and now
Has retreated behind his stone
And fights no more. But the sun travels
And my mountain shadow grows shorter
And I have retreated from the enemy
So that my arrow can no longer reach him.

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

It is too bad
That your bow is a poor one. But we have no better.
Throw it away! Fight with your fists!
You must fight with every means you have.
At least do something!

THE HORATIAN:

I do not agree with you. After all
I have already hindered the enemy
With my bow.
I am an archer, not a prizefighter.
It was already noon
When your message reached me, now
I, too, am in sunlight.
And so I shall shift to a spot
From which I can hit the man
Who is blinded. Now comes
The second volley of arrows.
*The sun has now travelled between the two mountains so that
both warriors are in sunlight.*

THE CURIATIAN:

The sun comes from behind the mountain. The enemy
Has advanced and is now in sunlight. Perhaps

I can hit him now.

THE HORATIAN:

Come out, you robber!
Shoot off your arrow! Oh!

I cannot see! The sun
Blinds me as well.

Second volley of arrows. Both go too high.

THE HORATIAN *and* THE CURIATIAN *each to his own Chorus:*

The second volley is over.
We have both failed to hit.

CHORUS OF CURIATIANS *to their man:*

But you have gained
An advantage.

THE HORATIAN:

Inevitably
The sun travels across the heavens. Irrevocably
Morning becomes midday. Now what shall I do?
If I was blinded when the sun was at high noon
My enemy must also be blinded still.

Then I can advance
As I was advised, and even
Fight with my fists.

He takes a step forward to the left, stops, covering his eyes with his hand. He speaks to his Chorus.

I tried to advance. But now
The sun is already behind the second mountain.
The enemy is in shadow. I
Am wholly in sunlight.
At nightfall I took your advice, forgetting
You gave it at midday.

The sun is now behind the second mountain, so that now the Curiatian with his third arrow can deliver the mortal shot.

THE CURIATIAN:

Victory! My last arrow
Has hit!
In the course of a day my disadvantage
Has become an advantage.
Now that I have the advantage
My better bow prevails.

CHORUS OF CURIATIANS:

Victory! A whole army of our opponents
 Is destroyed. Five cohorts of archers
 Are now free for the final battle. After a short rest
 They shall move to the east
 In order to join our other armies.

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

After its last message, that it did not wish
 To engage the enemy again, we have heard nothing
 Of our army. We must conclude
 That it was destroyed.
 It clung to one position
 It clung to one weapon
 And it clung
 To one plan. But inevitably
 The sun travelled across the heavens. Irrevocably
 Morning became midday and midday became nightfall.

To the Wife of the Horatian:

Woman, no more news
 Comes from your husband. But in the city of the enemy
 We hear a victory celebration. We conclude
 The archer has fallen.

The Wife is dressed in widow's weeds.

Erase seven brotherhoods from the number of soldiers!
 Where they were, they are no more.
 The plan, begun with them
 Must be carried out by others.

The seven brotherhoods of archers are erased.

The enemy advances into our valleys.
 In the track of the army
 Travel the overseers.
 Those who shed their blood now pay for it.
 The fruitful farmland
 Now produces no more than a stony waste
 For the enemy carries off the corn.
 The farmer
 Wipes the sweat from his eyes
 But he who has the sword
 Eats the bread.

2 BATTLE OF THE SPEARMEN

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

The enemy marches into our mountains.
 He travels through ravines
 Along a rushing river.
 You must stop him, spearman!

THE HORATIAN:

I have seen him press forward. His spear
 Is enormous. In open fight
 I cannot stop him.
 If you agree to it
 I shall overpower him
 Without running into danger myself. But to do it
 I have a long march before me
 And I have
 But little time.

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

We are agreed that you should
 Spare the army. We have lost
 One already.
 But stop the enemy!

Seven Conversions of a Spear

By a difficult march over the mountains the Horatian approaches the enemy at a spot where the mountains extend to the edge of the road. As he climbs, he leans on his spear.

THE HORATIAN:

I climb the mountain. The spear
 Is my stick. It is my third foot
 The foot that never gets hurt
 The foot that never grows tired.
 One tool has many uses.
He reaches a crevasse in the mountains.
 But how shall I go on? Here is a crevasse.
 When I was a boy, I hung from an oak limb
 And swung over a brook into a garden
 Where there were apples. My spear was once

An oak limb.

In this way I shall cross the crevasse.

One tool has many uses.

He lays it over the crevasse and crosses hand over hand.

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

The enemy falls upon our valleys.

Stop the enemy!

FIRST HORATIAN:

But how shall I go on? I have crossed

The crevasse but here is a snowdrift.

How can I tell how deep it is?

My spear shall be my measuring stick.

One tool has many uses.

He measures the depth of the snowdrift.

But how shall I go on? The snowdrift.

Is too deep for me. And the other cliff edge

Is higher than this one.

Again I look at my spear.

I say it shall be my vaulting pole.

One tool has many uses.

He vaults over.

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

The enemy advances! He drives off

Our herds.

Hasten! Stop the enemy!

THE HORATIAN:

But how can I go on? Here is a ridge.

It is narrower than my foot. All my efforts

Will be in vain if this ridge holds me back.

I shall walk along it. With my spear

I shall keep my balance. Its weight which was often

Too great as I climbed, I now

Make use of and I say

One tool has many uses.

He walks along the ridge, using the spear as a balancing pole.

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

The enemy approaches

Our minepits.

Stop the enemy!

THE HORATIAN:

I have arrived. I lean
 Over the cliff edge. Below me
 Runs the road that my enemy shall march over.
 I shall crush him beneath rock fragments.
 With my spear I can loosen them.
 One tool has many uses.
He loosens rock fragments.
 My spear is my crowbar.
 It holds back the rockpile until my enemy is under it.
 With a pressure of my fingers
 I shall crush my enemy.
 My spear has preserved me.
He prepares a small avalanche.
 My enemy is not yet there.
 And I am tired from running.
He sits down to wait.
 And I lean back, knowing
 I dare not sleep. And I am not too exhausted
 To act, but I am too exhausted to do nothing.
 And I fall asleep.

He sleeps. The Curiatian comes in sight. He marches slowly forward. While the Horatian sleeps, he passes the danger point.

THE HORATIAN:

And I wake up and again
 Lean over the cliff edge
 And looking down I see
 That the enemy has already passed by
 The spot where I intended to strike at him.
 My hurry that brought me to the goal
 Exhausted me. And so
 I cannot carry out the plan.

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

Our spearman has completed a great march
 And overcome all obstacles
 But exhaustion
 Repaid him for all his efforts.
 Worse than a lost battle
 Is wasted effort.

Arise, spearman
 And forget what you have done. Once more
 Throw yourself against the enemy
 But with less hope.

THE HORATIAN:

I can do no more
 I have done my share.

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

What you have done amounts to nothing.
 If you had lain in the grass and counted clouds
 Things would have been no worse for us.
 You have done much
 But you have not stopped the enemy.

THE HORATIAN:

Then was it all wrong?
 All that I did?

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

No. But you have not finished.
 Stop the enemy!
 You, who devised so much
 Think of something new.
 You, who expended so much effort
 Bestir yourself again.
 Stop the enemy!
 All that you have accomplished
 Will add to your fame if you stop the enemy.
 But you shall get no credit
 If you do not stop him.
 Seven labours amount to nothing
 But if you perform the eighth
 And stop the enemy
 You shall be acclaimed for eight labours.

THE HORATIAN:

I agree.
 So I get to my feet once more.
 The way I took to get here
 I take back.
 The fight I thought hopeless
 I shall fight.

As the following chorus is recited, the Horatian descends. He moves the rock fragments back. He withdraws his spear, he measures the snowdrift and vaults it, he crosses the crevasse, hand over hand, he climbs down the mountain. A snowstorm overtakes him and in his great hurry he has losses. He loses one little flag in the snowdrift, another on the ridge, another falls into the crevasse.

Now go back the same way!

You have lost time. Lose no more!

You are weakened. Now do twice as much!

Snowfalls and storm

Add to your discouragement.

The man with victory in sight

Overcomes many difficulties, but it is hard

To encounter the old ones afresh

On the way back. Or after a defeat

With redoubled courage to redouble your cleverness

Only to return to the starting point

Of all your efforts.

Each device leads back, each handhold

Only erases a mistake and yet

Fighting your way back steadily

Is a part

Of the new advance.

THE HORATIAN:

I have succeeded. I have come back

To the starting point. I see only

One chance for me in battle

Since my spear is too short.

The result of my plan is uncertain

To carry it out difficult.

In no other way

Can I stop my foe.

Indeed, for this plan

My spear is too long. Though I cannot

Lengthen it

I can shorten it.

He breaks it in two, throws one half of it away and goes off.

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

But we erase
 Three brotherhoods of archers
 Now lying in the snow and crevasses.
 And we place our hopes
 In the army that has shrunk.

The Ride on the Flood

THE CURIATIAN: I am marching through a river valley. There is a mountain on one side of me and a river on the other. The mountain is insurmountable and the river is impassable since further on there is a mortally dangerous waterfall. And I cannot be attacked from the front because my spear is so long that my enemy cannot reach me.

The Horatian comes down the river on a raft. He is rowing with his spearbutt.

Now I see my enemy on my right hand, coming down the river on a raft. I cannot see that he has any weapons. He is coming down very fast. But I cannot turn my spear around between the rock walls. It is too long. He suddenly raises the raftpole from the water and throws himself upon me.

THE HORATIAN:

And I come travelling down the flood
 Toward the great waterfall.
 And my spear is my raftpole.
 One tool has many uses.
 And now, as I reach my enemy
 It is a spear again
 And I thrust with it.

THE CURIATIAN: And with the full force of the river which he rides like a mighty horse, he thrusts the spearbutt into my body as he glides by. I go down. My opponent is destroyed. The falls must have drowned him. I am badly wounded and lie motionless in the narrow pass. I had forgotten that the river was not impassable but rather passable at the cost of a man's life and so my position was not unassailable but assailable at the cost of a man's life. So my enemy has fallen but I am badly wounded.

CHORUS OF CURIATIANS:

What have you lost?

The Curiatian shows how many he has lost as he takes five of his little flags from his shoulderframe and throws them away.

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

The spearman has fallen.

We erase five brotherhoods from the number of the soldiers.

Where they were, they are no more.

The plan, begun with them

Must be carried out by others.

Five brotherhoods are erased and the Spearman's Wife is dressed in widow's weeds.

WIFE OF THE SPEARMAN:

How did he fight?

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

He stopped the enemy.

He completed two marches

And overcame all obstacles.

At the last he rode on the river and added

The great strength of the river

To his small strength.

But the river that flung him at his enemy

Flung him away again. For a long time

We saw him rowing. As far as the waterfall

He struggled to reach the shore. Then the waterfall

Drowned him at last. He did not kill his enemy

But he left a weakened foe

For his comrades in the fight.

CHORUS OF CURIATIANS *as they erase five cohorts from the board:*

Five cohorts out of seven have fallen.

But we are certain to win. Unconquerable

Our army presses forward. Our opponent

Has been seized by despair. He runs

To meet our arrows and throws himself into the water.

The booty is immense. Cease your quarrelling

Over the ownership of the land and the new minepits,

Curiatians

By tomorrow the final battle will take place

In which we shall have three armies

Against our enemy's one.

HORATIAN WOMEN:

Our men fall like slaughtered cattle.
 When the butcher reaches them, they fall.
 One made good plans but fell. The other
 Showed courage and fell. And we
 We are glad of the plans and the courage and weep.
 We were content that they fought.
 If we weep, it is because they fell
 Not because they fought. Alas, he
 Who returns is the victor
 And when there is no victory, none return.

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

The robbers come!
 The fight still rages and already
 They carry off ore from the minepits.
 With the cries of their warriors
 Stricken to death, are mixed
 The commands of the overseers.

3 THE BATTLE OF THE SWORDSMEN

THE HORATIAN: For two days I have been holding my opponent in check. As he is too heavily armoured, I am waiting until the archer and the spearman can reach me.

The Curiatian throws the broken spearbutt of the second warrior and the bow of the first at his feet.

THE CURIATIAN:

Your brothers are destroyed. Surrender!

THE HORATIAN: I know the spear and I know the bow. My comrades in battle must have been destroyed as the Curiatian says. Then I must attack quickly in spite of his armour or he will be joined by his archer and his spearman.

THE CURIATIAN:

I thought to frighten him out of attacking with the news.
 But now I see I have provoked him to attack.

THE HORATIAN:

I will fall upon his flank.

He steps to one side and sees the other two armies, hitherto hidden behind the Curiatian. They are marching up, the Spearman decked with victory wreaths, the Archer decked with victory wreaths and laden with booty, both of them now armed with swords.

It is too late. They are almost here.

THE CURIATIAN SWORDSMAN *shouts to the Spearman:*

Draw your sword and hasten! The battle begins!

THE CURIATIAN SPEARMAN:

Marching along a river

In a narrow pass, I drowned my enemy.

Seven brotherhoods were overthrown. In spite of my losses

And the disorder of my supply train

I hurry in to the final battle.

He shouts behind him:

The battle begins. Hasten, archer!

THE CURIATIAN ARCHER:

I am coming.

Between two mountains

In unknown territory

At the third volley

I overthrew my enemy.

Before nightfall, his last army

Will be defeated.

THE CURIATIAN SWORDSMAN:

I am stronger than my opponent by seven cohorts.

THE HORATIAN SWORDSMAN:

I cannot attack. I am too heavily outnumbered.

He asks the Chorus:

What shall I do?

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

In spite of the bravery of our armies

Our knowledge of the battleground

And our employment of all means of defence

We have lost two battles. Two armies

Are destroyed. Two out of three women

In our city

Wear widow's weeds.

Your brotherhoods, swordsman

Are our last reserves:
 You have waited for reinforcement.
 Wait no longer. None will come.
 In your hands
 Are our farmlands, herds and workshops.
 Between us and the robbers
 There is no one but you.

THE HORATIAN:

They are moving up
 With their superior numbers
 They will utterly destroy me.
 They come against me with three swords
 A threefold sword arm.
 And how shall I stand my ground?
 My shield is poor.

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

Don't give a foot of ground!
 Your weapons
 Cannot be helped. Now
 Use them. The number of the enemy
 Cannot be reduced. Stand firm.
 Throw yourself upon them. Destroy . . .
 Alas, what are you doing?
The Horatian has begun to run away.

CHORUS OF CURIATIANS:

Victory! The enemy
 Has taken to his heels.
 Pursue him, Curiatians!

THE CURIATIAN SWORDSMAN:

After him! At the sight of our superior numbers
 The enemy has taken to his heels.
 After him or he will escape us!

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

Make a stand! He does not hear us!
 Our last man
 Has given up the fight. Our best defender
 Has been corrupted by the enemy.
*The Horatian Swordsman tries to reassure them with a motion
 of his arm as he runs.*

Don't deny it! Why are you running away?

CHORUS OF CURIATIANS:

Surrender! Hand over the keys of your city!

Don't let him escape, Curiatians.

THE CURIATIAN SPEARMAN *to the Swordsman*:

Don't let him escape!

You can still run!

The three Curiatian armies begin the chase but they cannot all move forward with the same speed. The badly wounded Spearman lags behind. The slightly wounded Archer passes him but still lags.

CHORUS OF CURIATIANS:

How fast he runs!

He cannot save himself but he turns his defeat

Into disgrace.

He has not even enough courage

To merit an elegy

Sung by his own people.

THE HORATIAN SWORDSMAN:

I am glad my shield is light.

I can run better.

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

He mocks us!

THE CURIATIAN SWORDSMAN:

I am running

As fast as I can. My shield

Is heavy.

THE HORATIAN SWORDSMAN:

And I can run

As fast as you can.

Run faster!

Or I shall escape you!

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

Erase his brotherhoods of men!

Where they were, they are no more.

The plan, that depended on them . . .

As the number of swordsmen is half erased, he turns in a little half circle and comes back at the Curiatian. During the chase the pursuers have been separated.

Wait! He has turned around. He is coming back!
He attacks!

CHORUS OF CURIATIANS:

He attacks!
And our swordsman
Is out of breath. His shield
Was heavy. And our archer
Could not catch up!

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

Our archer shattered his knee.
And he is hindered by his boots, his helmet and his knapsack.

CHORUS OF CURIATIANS:

And our spearman also lags behind!

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

Our spearman has torn his side.
The Horatian Swordsman beats the untried Curiatian Swordsman after a short fight. Then he runs back at the Archer.

CHORUS OF CURIATIANS:

The swordsman has fallen.
Erase twelve cohorts
From the number of soldiers
Where they were . . .
The Horatian has reached the Archer, beaten his sword out of his hand and cut him down. Then he runs on.

The archer has fallen as well. And the enemy
Rushes on. The pursuit
Has separated the pursuers. The flight
Was an attack. Only the spearman
Remains, he's badly wounded.
The Horatian has reached the Spearman and brings him down without trouble.

Erase nineteen cohorts! Where they were
They are no more. The plan, that depended on them
Now no one can carry out.
*The three Curiatian Wives are then dressed in widows' weeds.
The nineteen cohorts are erased.*

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

Victory! Your stratagem, swordsman
Divided the enemy and your strength

Overthrew them.

THE HORATIAN SWORDSMAN:

I saw the archer marching along
Laden with booty and the spearman marching along
Without booty. And I saw that the swordsman had no victory
wreath.

I knew, too, that they would throw themselves upon me.
And I saw the swordsman look behind him
Seeing one with a victory wreath, the other laden with booty.
Then I knew that what came upon me like *one* army
Had once been three divisions and could again
Be cut in three. And I saw
How one was strong, one limped
And the third crawled. And I thought
Three can still fight
But only one can run.

CHORUS OF HORATIANS:

The robbers have been beaten back.
Our archer employed unsuccessfully
The great machine of nature
Which is always moving. But our spearman
With the river and the flood and his spearbutt made himself
Into a great projectile.
And our swordsman saw
How a unity can be split up when it is in motion.
His stratagem divided the enemy
And his strength overthrew him.
Our archer weakened his enemy.
Our spearman wounded him badly.
And our swordsman completed the victory.