

TRANSLATIONS

“Fas et nefas ambulant”

Right and Wrong walk together,
almost in step with one another;
the prodigal does not redeem
the vice of the avaricious one.

The virtue of self-control
is a unique middle-ground
between two opposing poles of vice.

If you remember the reading
of the Ethics of Cato
in which is read
"walk with good men,"
then, when to the glory of giving
your soul is disposed,
above all else first consider this:
Who is worthy of your gifts?

With a smile and a kind word
greet everyone equally.
However, one command:
If you wish to gain glory through giving,
first discern
the grain among the straw:
to whom to give and when.

Inappropriate giving is not a virtue,
according to what is good;
it is not absolute.

You can give properly
and earn renown for your generosity
if you learn from me
inside and out.

If you prudently separate
the wheat from the straw,
you purchase glory with your gift.
But when you give,
beware of spilling the oil of largess.
In your glory,
more like Codrus than Codrus himself,
you abound in all.

“Clauso Cronos et serato”

Spring is released from the closed, barred prison of Cronos;
Jove's smile unlocks as his face is uncovered.
With heavenly gleaming hair, the Cynthian god sweeps the sky
and the air is full of earthly fertile life.

When the meadow is purple with flowers, Spring holds court,
reborn from Winter's gleaming silver frost.
Now fragrant Flora has covered Rhea in a cloak;
she frolics and laughs in flowering beauty.

Spring blossoms with pleasant thyme, roses, and lilies.
Among them jump the swallow, bee-eater, and nightingale.

Satyrs become aroused and dryads dance,
the valley nymphs are excited by rekindled fires.
Cupid is roused by this, Love's power is renewed;
with this my composure is lost and I am worried.

I stoke a silent flame; I love, but against my own will
for there is no option; my desire is forbidden.
What I deserve by prayers, Venus renders fruitless;
she drives me into my undoing when I thought I was deserving.

If any lover by loving deserves to be loved,
surely Cupid could be willing to heal me by granting blessings!
The plentiful simple remedies I see that can be given to me
are matched by endless barren complaints I expend without relief.

The result of this blazing fire is imminent;
death grips my bones from the marrow deep within.
This wasted flesh predicts its fate;
yet, though shattered, it demands for itself that very fate.

When I feel ill—the worst of ills, a wounded heart full of rage—
I strive to expel the seeds of love.
But Venus uses wicked tactics as she cleverly disguises
the rough with the smooth;
with curved claws she attracts all things to herself.

Give mercy to the pious, Cyprian goddess, and
spare me from agony;
Lay aside your arms, for I am beaten;
Show yourself as a Dione to those to whom you are a Venus!

“Meravilhar no.s devo pas las gens”

Marvel not at the mortality and
famine that we witness,
for evil thoughts and deceit are among us,
Infecting the air,
such that the air, heavily infected,
corrupts people; death is all around,
and food and goods become corrupted also,
and in short supply in every region.

These are brutal and disordered times;
in the whole world there is great poverty.
But we pray to God that we may have
swift healing from our failings.

“Ha! Me non fai chantar foille ni flor”

Ah! I am not led to sing by leaf or flower,
nor the birds’ songs, nor the nightingale in May,
but by the best one of all the best ones
and the most noble of all the people I know.
I am led to sing by the valor that comes to me from her;
because of her I pray to make good songs.
And so I will, since it pleases her,
for I do nothing except that which she wants.
So much she is worthy, wise, and elegant.

Beautiful lady, I am in need of a little rescue
from your perfect, joyous personage;
and since your magnificent merit is so great,
may you alleviate a little of the evil from which I suffer.
Suffering because I love, I will sing
beautifully and pleasantly, like a perfect lover;
while a song without joy can hardly have value,
hardly can a perfect lover please
if Love does not move him to gaiety and song.

Since I recognize that it is a great folly to ask your love—
because it is not proper for me to enter into
such rich pleasure,
but to beseech you is such a great honor to me
that from now on I will not stop loving you—
for mercy, I beg you, because I have no other comfort.

“Atressi com lo leos”

Like the lion that
is so wild in its grief
for its cub,
stillborn and unbreathing,
and then brings it back to life and movement with its
voice when it cries out to it,
so Love and my lady
could do for me
and cure me of my sorrow.

All the cheerful seasons
come, April and then May
— you’d think a good outcome could come now too, for
me.
Love has fallen asleep when she shouldn’t, who granted
me the capacity to love without the courage to woo.
Ah, timidity and fear
have robbed me of such great wealth!

The reward would be splendid,
and very fine and true, enough
to make the burden [of waiting] agreeable, as long as
she does not forget to show me favor. Like from a
shipwreck
that there is no escape from
except by dint of swimming,
so I could be rescued,
lady, with a little help.

She keeps me wretched and joyful
— now singing, now distressed,
now losing weight, now gaining it —
for in this way Love is divided in me,
for wretched and joyful,
laughing and playing,
then yearning and melancholy,
she reveals her rich worth to me between laughter and
sobbing.

All the fine ways of the world are united in you, lady,
and more, for nothing good is lacking,
you are perfect in worth of all kinds.
If you were bold in love
there would be no room for improvement, apart from
that you are peerless,
the citadel of honor
and the flower of beauty.

Lady, God save and watch over you,
for there is no way to improve
your true excellence,
but Love is killing me on your account.

I see my heart and my soul in her body
— though it doesn’t appear so —
for I know no other wealth or citadel
could hold me.

“Ensement com la panthere”

Just like the panther
that emits such a sweet scent
and whose coat is such a lovely color
that there is no wild beast,
however dangerous or ferocious
in strength or aggression,
that from however far away it sees it
does not go and die beside it
– in just the same way
Love holds me in the balance,
causing me to follow what I cannot have,
and so I follow my downfall to do her pleasure.

Yet I shall never complain
of any pain of love,
but hold the suffering as joy
that comes to me from her fair person;
but even if, in her heart, she had
the mercy that is not yet there ,
I could not be cured
or find reward for my suffering
except in her simple demeanor
and the pleasure of her company
for there is such beauty at her command
that I cannot prevent myself from looking at her.

– Sarah Kay

“L’amours dont sui espris”

The love that’s captured me
commands me now to sing,
I am as one dismayed
who lacks the least defense,
and yet I’ve won enough
that I may freely boast
that long ago I learned
how to love honestly.
In her is all my thought,
And it shall ever be;
I’ll not draw it away.

Fairer none ever saw
in body or in face.
Nature has never put
more beauty in one place.
For her I’ll imitate
Paris and Eneas,
Tristan and Pyramus,
lovers in olden times.
Now I’ll her wooer be.
Now I pray God above
that, like them, I’ll be loved.

– Robert Cook

“Quant l’erbe muert”

When the grass fails, and when the wind brings down
the leaves that just before were on the trees,
and thus the sweet singing of summer birds
is ended and they know their tunes no more,
then is the time to give my heart to love,
yet elsewhere I did wrongly turn my mind.

Great are the strength and power that love holds.
Against its onslaughts no man can abide,
save if he lose his willingness through greed:
his services are shameful to accept.
Whoever does not wish the joys of love
should know in truth his joys cannot be great.

I love the noblest one that’s to be found;
my heart should prosper, for it wills it so.
I pity any man abased by love;
he wastes his tears in loving pointlessly.

– Robert Cook

“Quant voi la flour boutener”

When I see the budding flower,
when the riverbanks turn bright,
and I hear the skylark sing
that pleasant weather’s come again,
alas, there’s no help for me,
for love wills my despair.
Love makes me think upon
her who is so harsh to me.
Ah, [true love,]
I’ll die, it seems to me;
I’ll not escape alive;
I’m overcome.

– Robert Cook

“Bulla fulminante”

The papal bull fulminates in thunderous judgement.
The accused appeals the false verdict weighing on him.
Truth is oppressed, picked apart and sold,
and justice becomes a whore.
We go and appeal to the Pope’s Curia,
but with no success—until our last penny is spent.

If you're seeking favors, first adjust your lifestyle:
don't offend the judges with morality!
It's useless to be well qualified.
You'll wait many months while others pass you by.
Though, a nice bribe
will get you noticed immediately.

The gatekeepers of the pope are more deaf than Cerberus.
You can wail in vain hoping that something will change,
but even Orpheus, who moved Pluto, god of the
underworld, would fall on deaf ears.
But, if you knock with a hammer made of silver,
they would sing a different tune.