

1521

Laudes Merlini

EIUSDEM MAGISTRI Aquarii Lodolae ad illustrem dominu Pasarinum Scarduarum comitem, de vita et moribus Merlini Cocaii, et de inventione huius voluminis.

Dudum, serenissime princeps adeo meum imbalordasti cervellum, ut tibi de catatione voluminis huius aliquid ispienare velim, quod de memoriae cadastris quasi mattus cascarim.

Quam ob rem ne tantum mihi amplius tribuas impazzum, accipe rem, non quam oreccis, aut naso, audivi, verum his manibus pertoccavi.

Iam pridem nosti quantum ego sim in curiosare, Mundum sollicitus, diversasque rerum proprietates, et hoc herbolattos, dentiumque cavatores, braghirorum conciatores maximamenter condecet. Accidit nos aliquanti Herbolatti Armeniam versus navigabamus, causa retrovandi radices, herbas, lapides, vermiculos et huiusmodi facendas ad conficiendam Tiriacam bisognatissimos.

Erant nobiscum super eandem medesimamque Garavellam, seu Barcam intelligibilius dimandandam Magister Salvanellus bocca torta, Mag. Dimeldeus zucconus, Mag. Ioannes baricocola, Mag. Buttadeus grata roгна, et ego, magister Acquarius Lodola.

Erant praeterea quatuor praticatissimi artis physicae Giudei, Samuel videlicet, Nabaioth, Helcana, Ruch.

Isti omnes insimul aequoris schenam traversando schavezzabamus.

1521

Praises of Merlin

From the same Magister Aquarius Lodola, to the illustrious Lord Passarino, Count of Carp: on the life and customs of Merlin Cocaio, and on the origination of this volume.

1. For a long time now, most serene Prince, you have addled my brain so that I should be willing to explain to you something regarding the discovery of this volume, consequently I have almost fallen mad from the ledgers of my memory.
2. Therefore, lest you should make me any crazier, take this, which I did not hear with my ears, or my nose, but actually touched with my hands.
3. You have known for a while now how keen I am to explore the world, and the various characteristics of things, and this is fitting for herbalists, teeth-pullers and tanners of britches above all.
4. It happened that some of us herbalists were navigating towards Armenia in order to find roots, herbs, stones, worms and these sorts of things utterly essential for concocting treacle.<sup>1</sup>
5. There were among us on that very same caravel (or boat, as it is more intelligibly called) Magister Salvanellus Boccatorta, Mag. Dimeldeus Zucconus, Mag. Johannes Baricocola, Mag. Buttadeus Gratarogna, and I, Magister Aquarius Lodola.<sup>2</sup>
6. In addition there were four Jews, experts in the arts of natural science, namely Samuel, Nabaioth, Helcana and Ruch.
7. All of us were busting our backs together crossing the ocean.<sup>3</sup>

At pluribus exactis giornis, ventorum contrariatio tanta surrexit, et pluviarum discrepantibus ventositatarum fulminibus tanta fluctuatio nos accoiavit, quod ad quandam inhabitatam, et inherbosam Terram nostra tandem Garavella se nolendo inzapellavit. Ibi ergo nescio

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quo portu recepti, anxii, stracchi, affamati, bagnati tandem desmontavimus in sabionigeram littoris spiazam, et aliquanticulum repossati, surreximus ad investigandam loci proprietatem.

Terenus erat primamenter arenosus, unde foltum pignarum intravimus boscamen, insofribilem caldum Phoebus illic sparpagnabat, quapropter tum pro maris balordimento sbalanzantis, tum pro solsticii boimento, ad cuiusdam smisuratae Montagnae cavernam prestiter confugimus.

Quae primo in intramento guardantibus intro, non pocam mentis cagarolam incutiebat.

Verum gaiardos assumentes animos deliberavimus accepta prius victuaria, nec non lanternarum lusoribus, illam finaliter incuriosare.

Facto itaque signo crucis, Magistro Salvanello davantum eunte subintravimus, et caminantes, caminantes semper magis ad bassum andabamus.

Post duorum caminamentum dierum, ecce vetustas cadaverum gambas, testas, brazzos, spallas, variaque diversorum animalium acatavimus ossamina, quibus calcatione pedum trapassatis, antrum spaciosum cum duabus de brunzo portis mirae\* lavoratis ac intertaiatis aspeximus,

8. Yet after many days had gone by, such a conflict of winds arose, and such a fluctuation of windy rains welcomed us with lightning bolts going in every direction that in the end our caravel was forced aground against its will on some uninhabited and barren land.<sup>4</sup>

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9. Therefore, having been taken into I don't know what port, uneasy, tired, starving, drenched, we disembarked at last onto a sandy beach of the coast, and having rested a little bit, we rose up to start investigating the nature of the place.

10. At the outset there was sandy terrain, from there we entered a thick wood of pine trees; Phoebus [Apollo] was spreading insufferable heat there, so, having been discombobulated not only by the wildness of the sea, but also by the boiling of the summer solstice, we hastily fled together into a cavern in an enormous mountain.

11. At first, when we looked inside the entrance, that [cavern] struck us with no small amount of diarrhea of the mind.

12. But adopting brave spirits we decided to explore it after all with lantern lights, after first gathering up provisions.

13. Having made the sign of the cross, with Magister Salvanelus going in front, we went in, and walking, walking, always heading downward we went on.

14. After a two-day hike, behold, we found ancient legs, heads, arms and shoulders of cadavers, and various bones of different animals; having passed over these with the tread of our feet, we beheld a spacious cave with two bronze doors, marvelously worked and carved;

hic dubitativi per horam unam remanivimus,  
quis prius introgredi bastaret animo,  
resembrantes illis sgnavililoquis gattis qui  
concilio facto, consultaverunt Apolinem quis  
Mezeni persuttum prior assaltare deberet, aut  
magis assomiabamur Toppis vel Soricis, qui  
sortem buttarunt, qualis foret attacaturus  
Sonalium adversanti Gatto.

tandem ad guisam pegorarum, unum  
presumptuosiore alii seguitavimus.

Imus hinc inde per illam cerchitantes grottam,  
vidimus incudines, martellos, tenaias,  
scarpellos, et haec similia multum rugine facta,  
vidimus insuper gambas, schincas, testasque  
homininas quanta maravigliatiione  
afficiebamur tu ipse pensato. Ulterius  
proceden-

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tes ecce (mirabile dictu) marmoricias undecim  
adnumeravimus sepulturas, quarum  
granditudinem non meum est calamo  
distorchiare.

Super illas autem porphidina tabula ficcabatur  
pendula qua litterulis antiquis et indoratis hoc  
Epigramma compositum per nostrum  
Merlinum Cocaium poetam mantuanum  
sculpabatur. Lege.

Hos sculpsit tumulos Merlini dextera vatis,  
Magnanimos posuit sub quibus ipse duces.  
Qui phlegethontas superis caedentibus  
umbras,

Lustrarunt, et res, quas egocunque cano.  
Scripsimus exámetro baldensce poema  
cothurno

Non tamen ad metam sors tulit ire suam.

His dudum subtiliter fantasticatis,  
Epigrammata sepulchrorum sigillatim  
perlegere comenzavimus,

15. here we stood for one hour, uncertain  
about who would have the courage to  
enter first -- resembling those meowing  
cats, who, having formed a council,  
consulted Apollo as to who should be first  
to assault half a prosciutto; or rather we  
were similar to rats and mice, who drew  
lots as to which one would attach the bell  
to the enemy cat.

16. Finally, like sheep, one more  
presumptuous than the others, we  
followed.

17. We went here and there searching  
through that grotto: we saw anvils,  
hammers, pliers, chisels and other such  
things covered with rust; in addition, we  
saw human legs, shins and heads: you  
yourself can imagine with what  
wondrousness we were afflicted.

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18. Proceeding further along, lo! (a wonder to  
relate), we counted eleven marble  
sepulchers, whose great size it is not in my  
power to squeeze out with a pen.<sup>5</sup>

19. Above these, in addition, was affixed a  
hanging porphyry tablet, on which this  
epigram was sculpted with antique gilt  
letters composed by Merlin Cocaio, our  
Mantuan poet. Read:

The right hand of Merlin the bard sculpted  
these tombs, under which he placed  
magnanimous leaders. These [leaders],  
having slaughtered those above,  
illuminated Phlegethontic shadows and  
the matters about which I (whoever I am)  
sing. I wrote this Baldine poem in the  
heroic hexameter, yet destiny did not  
allow me to advance to its end.<sup>6</sup>

20. After musing over these things thoroughly  
for some time, we began to read the  
sepulcher's epigrams one by one;

erant (velut dixi) lapides undecim galantiter et  
strafozatae per sculpturam fabricatae.

Quarum in medio formosior aliis sepultura,  
super quattuor leones bronzineos eminebat, et  
in porphidina monumenti bianchitudine talia  
notabantur carmina. Lege.

Baldo nempe gravi sum debilis urna sepulto,  
Quem nihil infernae terruit unda stygis.

Ad manum dexteram ipsius sepulchri  
candidissimus alter Tumulus a quattuor  
bianchezantibus sublevabatur columbis, hoc  
etiam intaliatus metro. Lege.

Semper apud Baldum contempto patre  
Rubinus

Vixit, et a tumulo non procul esse tulit.

Ad sinistram vero eiusdem sepulchri baldenscis  
aliud virgulatum, ac totum discoloribus  
intravaiatum vidimus sepulchrum, in quattuor  
gattis sorianis apostantem, ubi disticon  
subseguitans legebatur.

Vixi praedator Cingar, sed lapsus ad orcum  
Flevi, mens fletus coepit et alta meos.

Apud Rubini marmor talis quoque versus in  
quodam saxo notabatur, ad guisam furni  
fabrica

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to, supraque quattuor grandes et parvas,  
grossas et subtiles trevellas sustentato. Lege:

Captus ab egregio Baldi Philotheus amore  
Dicor, hic ossa petram spiritus astra tenet.

Non procul apud Cingar lapidem hos annotato  
versus in faciem tumuli ab aliis differentiantis,  
(erat enim plus altus quam longus) vidimus,

21. there were (as I said) eleven stones  
elegantly fashioned and constructed by  
sculpture.

22. of which one tomb, more beautiful, stood  
out among the others upon four bronze  
lions, and the following verses were noted  
in porphyry on the white monument.  
Read:

23. "To be sure, I am a frail urn for the  
internment of weighty Baldus whom  
nothing terrified in the Stygian waters of  
hell."

24. On the right side of this sepulcher there  
was another pure white tomb raised up by  
four whitish doves, similarly engraved  
with this couplet. Read:

25. "Rubinus always lived in the presence of  
Baldo despite his father, and he could not  
stand to be far from his tomb."

26. To the left side of this Baldine sepulcher  
we saw another sepulcher, striped and all  
carved with different colors, positioned on  
four Syrian/striped cats, where continuing  
along, this distichon was read. Read:

27. "I, Cingar, lived as a predator, but having  
slipped into hell, I wept and my lofty mind  
started my weeping."

28. On Rubinus' marble [headstone], a verse  
of the following sort was also noticed on a  
rock, like that made in a furnace,

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29. and held up on four beams large and  
small, thick and thin /four large, broad  
beams and four small, narrow ones.  
Read:

30. "Held captivated by remarkable love fo  
Baldo, I am known as Philotheus: here  
my bones occupy this stone, my spirit  
[occupies] the stars."

31. Not far off, near Cingar's stone, we saw  
these verses written on the front of a  
tomb which differed from the others, (i

quem Circes et Medea metalliciae sustentabant anxiositer. Lege.

Si me semicanem fecit natura, quid inde?  
Falchettus vidi tartara, cerno deos.

Quapropter hac pro versifichitudine considerascebamus eundem Falchettum extitisse semimastinum, apud quem pulcherrimum saxum, totum vignarum maderis circumtorchiatum inspeximus, supra duos canes et duos hircos depositum, sic epitaphizatum.

Lege.

Nobilis Hircanus dedit huic sua membra sepulchro,

Cui nutrix mater Cingarum ipsa fuit.

Apud eandem Hircani sepulturam carmen istud haerebat lastrae calcedonii, et pondus marmoris quatuor lincae maculosae obliviosaeque sustentabant.

Infans ut Baldo vixit Moschinus, homoque,  
Si ditem haud secum viderat, astra videt.

Non procul ab ipso monumentum aliud sublime fundabatur super quattuor noctivagos vespertiliones corpore vastos, et hoc signabatur epithaphio. Lege.

Hic Vinmazze lates, Centaurus qui licet esses,  
Non tamen a superis destituere bonis.

Ad aliam vero partem apud Philothei bustum sic in marmore seminigrefacto et semirubefacto carmen habebatur, sub eodemque sepulchro puella illisa et depressa gemebat. Lege.

En ego lironus subiens Acheronta, latroni  
Flens vidi poenam quae mihi danda fuit.

In aliam quoque bandam in urna vel potius in maximo botazzo prosam istam vidimus inscriptam vino, ut ab odoratu pensari poterat.

was in fact taller than it was long), which was held up by metal [statues] of Circes and Medea. Read:

32. If nature made me half-dog, what then I, Falchettus, saw Tartar; now I view the gods.

33. On account of this poetry we figured out that this same Falchettus had been half-mastiff; next to him we observed a most beautiful stone, all entwined with dripping vines, seated on two dogs and two goats, with an epitaph as follows. Read:

34. "Noble Hircanus [Billygoat] gave his limbs to this sepulcher, whose nurse was Cingar's mother."

35. Next to this same tomb of Hircanus was this poem attached to a plate of chalcedony, the weight of marble was held up by four forgotten spotted lynxes:<sup>7</sup>

36. "As an infant Moschinus lived with Baldus, and as a man, if he saw no riches at all for himself, [now] he sees the stars."

37. Not far from this, another monument was found high up on four night-flying bats with huge bodies and stamped with this epitaph. Read:

38. "Here you lie hidden, Virmazzo, although you were a centaur, nonetheless you are not forsaken by the good gods."

39. On the other side next to Philotheus' tomb, there was this poem on the half-blackish and half-reddish marble, and under the same sepulcher a beaten and repressed girl was groaning. Read:

40. "Behold—I, Lirone, am entering Acheron, crying: I see the punishment that is to be given to a thief like me."

41. In another area in an urn or rather in a huge bottle, we saw this writing inscribed with wine, as could be

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Nec in coelo gratia nec in inferno poena datur  
Bofonibus, Hic ergo vivam bocalus.

Obstupefacti pro huiusmodi Epithaphio  
deliberamus evolvere petram instar Cocaii  
stopantem os Urnae, quo facto, cernimus en  
hominem magrefactum, barbatumque usque ac  
umbilicum, et insuper ludentem secum more  
magatellantis cum gallis, bechiris, nonnullisque  
fraschulis.

Quid me, inquit, molestatis, desviatisque?

Ad quem nos, qualis et cuius es tu?

et ille, sum qui fui, sed ero qui non eram, si  
dederitis quod non dedistis.

Nos verbum aenigmatizatum et dignum  
oedipodensci splanatione admirati retulimus, di  
clarius.

Tum ille suspirans, Nulla gratia datur in coelo  
buffonibus, buffonus extiti, quo nec coelum nec  
infernus possunt me suscipere, in vobis tamen  
humanis hoc pendet arbitrium, si boni aliquid  
pro me feceritis, ad coelum pergam, si malum  
imprecabimini, prestiter in infernum  
strassinabor, videte vos.

At nos, quid vis? bonum aut malum?

Et ille, Quod naturaliter homo desiderat.

Quo dicto sic mutus conticuit, ut ab eius  
unquam bucca potuimus nientum ulterius  
accipere.

Itaque frater quidam Gelminus, qui nobiscum  
aderat, psalmos, hymnos, requiem aeternam,  
dona eis, domine et a porta inferi barbottare  
comenzavit.

deemed from the smell:

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42. "Neither favor in heaven nor  
punishment in hell is given to buffoons,  
therefore I, Bocalus, shall live here."

43. Astonished by such an epitaph, we  
decided to roll off the rock stopping the  
mouth of the urn like a cork; having  
done that, lo! we saw a scrawny man  
with a beard down to his navel, up on  
top playing as magicians do with  
acorns, cups and little sticks.<sup>8</sup>

44. "Why," he said, "do you harass me and  
make me go astray?"

45. "What are you, and of what kind?" we  
asked him.

46. And he said, "I am who was, but I will  
be who I was not, if you will grant what  
you did not grant."

47. We drew back astonished at this  
enigmatic saying, worthy of an Oedipal  
explanation -- speak more clearly.

48. Then sighing, he said, "No mercy is  
shown in heaven to buffoons, I was a  
buffoon, and neither heaven nor hell  
can accept me, but this judgment  
depends on you humans: if you will do  
something good for me, I will go to  
heaven, if you pray for something bad,  
then I will be dragged into hell at once;  
you decide."

49. And we asked, "What do you want,  
good or bad?"

50. And he answered, "What a man  
naturally desires."

51. After saying this, he became completel  
silent, so that we were never able to  
get anything further from his mouth.

52. Therefore, a certain Father Gelminus  
who was with us, began to mutter  
psalms and hymns, and "Grant him  
Lord, *requiem aeternam*" and "From

Unde nobis adstantibus ille corpore desligatus  
ad coelum squadras inter aetherias semper  
goditurus passavit.

Nec pochinum imparavimus, homines bufones  
partem nec in coelo nec in inferno tenere, sed  
nostrum est orare pro illis qui nostras  
buffonizando melenconias eripiunt.

Nos perinde transeuntes ulterius ecce maximun  
instar monticelli sepulchrum de saxo vivo  
scarpellatum, supra quattuor ulmi siccos  
troncones apozatum, sic scriptum.  
Fracassus cubitos longus quadraginta, sub orco

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Luciferi ad mundum cornua bina tuli.  
In quibus ereptas quoniam duo mille ferebam  
De poenis animas, pellor ab arce poli.  
Ante fores coeli suplex exoro tonantem  
Ut mihi pro tanto crimine det veniam.  
Iudicis at magni fuit haec sententia, tot stet  
Annos fracassus quot fuerant animae.

His itaque fantasticanter animadversis, huius  
nostri vatis Merlini aliquod quaerebamus  
indicium. Qui de stanciis diabolorum quinque  
libros composuerat.  
Post longam querositatem et investigationem  
vastum quendam cassonem vel dicimus cofinun  
desotteravimus, quo securibus et manarinis  
spezzato eiusdem nostri poetae laureati Merlini  
thesaurum invenimus, videlicet in arte  
Macaronica doctissima volumina, libros,  
librettos, libricolos, librazzos, et mille alios  
scartafacios.

the gate of hell...”

53. Whence with us standing there, freed from his body, he passed happily into heaven amid heavenly hosts.
54. And we learned not a little: men who are buffoons have no part in heaven or in hell, but it is up to us to pray for those who steal away our melancholy by their buffoonery.
55. In the same way passing further along, behold, this writing was carved on a huge sepulcher like a small mountain on rock set atop four dried elm trunks:

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56. “I, Fracassus, forty cubits long, took two horns to earth from down in Lucifer’s hell; I am driven from the celestial vault because I was carrying in them two thousand souls snatched from punishment. A suppliant, thundering before the gates of heaven I beg that I may be forgiven for such a crime. But this was the sentence of the great judge: that Fracassus must stay as many years as there were souls.”
57. Therefore, having observed these things musingly, we searched for a sign of our poet Merlin, who had composed the five books on devils’ country.
58. After a long search and investigation, we unearthed a sort of vast chest or we could say a coffer, in which, after breaking it open with an ax or a hatchet, we found a treasure trove of our poet laureate, Merlin, that is to say extremely learned volumes in the macaronic art: books, small books, little books, big old books and a thousand other scribblings.<sup>9</sup>

Ergo nos magis alegri quam si croesi dinaros catavissemus (quandoquidem nobis philosophis magis scientia quam pecunia granditer agradat) incoepimus quadam animi voluptuositate ac ingorditate, modo hunc modo ilium scartabellare codicem.

Erat autem inter alia volumina liber aliis maior De universis rebus naturalibus tractans, non forsitan inferior Aristotelicis Platonisque sothiezzis.

Erat insuper alter de supernaturalibus, multis in argumentis Platoni contrarius.

Erat volumen de striis et striabus, et hic non pocum contrariabat dominicinis fratribus.

Erat liber intitulatus Bariuth. alter Transbarach. alter Rabaioth. alter Sgnirifot. alter Scaracacol. alter Cracricon. alter Striblafel. alter Argnaficoticon. alter Schinphoniapeliticonicon, et plures alii, quos de mei memoria cascavisse doleo, qui tractabant de fantasiis et argutiis et galantariis tam iocundis, quod homines forsitan eloqui non esset bisognosum, scio quid

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dico quando dico favam.<sup>10</sup> Inter alios hoc magnum volumen De gestis et facendis Baldi recatatum fuit, quod in quandam capsettam unicum faceto libello intitulato Moschea et Zanitonella governavimus, multa insuper epigrammata et epistolas non ante stampatas invidia et rancore poltronis manigoldique Scardaffi, quae omnia (velut credere dignum est sibi attribuere in successu temporis volebat, suas tamen dessoteravimus magagnas, quem totum per orbem vergognavimus, licet quid sit vergogna nunquam villanus, gaioffus, canis

59. Therefore, we began to rifle through this tome with mental delight and voraciousness, happier than if we had found the coins of Croesus (seeing that learning is ever so much more pleasing to us philosophers than money).

60. Among the other volumes there was also one book larger than the others, dealing with all natural phenomena, which was perhaps not inferior in subtlety to Aristotle and Plato.

61. In addition, there was another, about supernatural things, contradictory to Plato in many cases.

62. There was a volume on witches and warlocks, and this was not a little incompatible with the Dominican brothers.

63. There was a book entitled Barrichut, another Transbaruch, another Robaiott another Sgnirifot, another Scharcacacol, another Cracricron, another Striblafel, another Argnaficoticon and many others which I regret have fallen from my memory, which dealt with fantastical things, both clever and elegant, which perhaps it is not necessary for men to speak of; I know what I am saying when I tell a tale.

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64. Among others was found this great volume *On Baldo's Deeds and Doings*, which we kept in the box together with a small humorous book entitled *Moschaea and Zanitonella*; and in addition, many epigrams and epistles not published earlier due to the jealousy and rancor of the worthless and rascally Scardaffus, who planned to one day attribute all the writings to himself, however we unearthed his crime, and shamed him throughout the

mastinus, asinus imparavit.

Ipse magnum volumen Baldi deturpavit, violavit robbavit et castravit, ut supra diximus in epistolium ad medesimum Scardaffum.

Caeteros autem libros abandonantes in eodem capsone, deliberavimus ad barcam hunc transferre, sed aut deus aut diabolus non tulit hoc, nam cum pariter omnes suppositis spallis illum portare sforzaremur, tantus illico terremotus, et ventus, et petrarum incussio sbattere comenzavit, quod relicto cophino scapinare cepimus,\* dubitativi quidem illam nobis montagnam adossum ruinare,

tandem extra cavernam retornati non vento, terremotuque rafinante navim descendentes intravimus et a littore nec bene discostati, vidimus illam miraculose natate terram, et a nostris oculis iam quarantas miliaros longe factam, et apud illam non amplius remedium es appropinquare posse, quoniam si marinari saltem ibi prendere portum minazzant, illico medesimus terremotus cum tonitruationibus, et nivolorum perturbatione movetur.

Ego itaque propriam ad patriam retornatus, nor audebam formidine quadam aperire capsulam illam, qua Baldensce poema, et libros quinque de inferno posueram simul cum Moschaea et Zanitonella. Tandem animatus aperui reperique dum ergo multa secretu-

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dine studerem, ac pocum dormirem super illos, comentariolum meum, et argumenta

world, although he who is a villain, a scoundrel, a mastiff dog, an ass, never learns what shame is.

65. He corrupted, violated, stole and castrated the volume on Baldo, as we said above in the letter to the same Scardaffus.

66. While leaving the other books in the same big box, we decided to transport this to the boat, but either God or the devil did not take it, for at the same time that we were being forced to carry it up on our shoulders, suddenly such a trembling of the earth and wind and a hammering of rocks began to bang about, that we started to run away, quite afraid that that mountain would crash down on us.

67. Having at last come back out of the cavern, with the wind and the earthquake not stopping, going down, we boarded the boat and when still not far from shore we saw that country swim miraculously, and already carried forty miles away from our eyes, and there was no way to ever be able to approach it again, since if sailors so much as threaten to make port there, immediately the same earthquake is roused with thundering and snow storms.

68. Therefore, having returned to my own homeland, out of awe I did not dare to open that chest in which I had placed the poem about Baldo and the five books of hell together with the *Moschaea* and the *Zanitonella*.<sup>11</sup> At last finding courage, I opened and found [them]: then, once I had studied them

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69. with much secrecy and had slept on them for a bit, I wrote a little

cuiuscumque libri composui, univique libros  
infernus cum prioribus Baldi gestis.

Sed meam ob gentilezzam magistrum  
Scardaffum ciroitum duxi, et occulte studiolum  
meum illi palesavi.

Ladronazzus itaque furtim et libros Merlini, et  
mea pariter comentaria sustulit, et inordinatos  
et male castratos imprimere fecit, immo  
confusos, et iam non Merlini libros apparentes.

Verum amicorum favore suffragioque meorum  
suas descoperui falsitates, et per rasonis forzam  
coactus fuit primum et verax volumen edere,  
nec bene tamen limatum, et multa quae in  
primo Scardaffi libruzzo fuerant male dolata  
bene dolavi, primamque in imaginem retornavi.

Et haec denique bastare possunt quantum de  
recatatione huius voluminis.

En itaque, serenissime princeps, tibi modum  
reperitionis huius voluminis diffuse spianavimus  
nec me id somniasse putato, quandoquidem  
plurimos tibi adducere possum testes, maxime  
coherbolattos meos.

Infantasticabile vero nostri poetae sentimentum  
iam menses pene septem adeo sforzatus sum  
distorthiare vel magis crevellare, quod meum  
ingenium quasi (velut aiunt) de birlo cascavit.

Singula tamen brancatissime ad ultimum  
attacavi, tantam philosophiae, astronomiae,  
cosmographiae, musicae, nigromantiae,  
phisicae, alchimiae sparpagnationem et  
doctrinam maravigliatus, ut nihil Pythagoram,  
nihil Platonem, Ptolomeum, Boetium,  
Zoroastrum, Avicennam, Geber fuisse iudicatur  
est.

commentary of my own and argument:  
for each book, and I joined the books o  
hell with the earlier deeds of Baldo.

70. But on account of my kindness, I led the  
surgeon Magister Scardaffus to my  
study and showed it to him covertly.

71. Consequently, that nasty thief took  
Merlin's books furtively, and likewise  
my commentaries, and had them  
printed -- disorganized, and badly  
castrated, indeed jumbled and not even  
appearing now to be Merlin's books.

72. Nevertheless, with the favor and  
goodwill of my friends, I discovered his  
deceptions, and he was compelled by  
the force of reason to publish the first  
and true volume, not well polished  
however, and I retouched many things  
that in Scardaffus' first little book had  
been badly done and I returned it to its  
former appearance.

73. And these things then, can suffice as fo  
the rediscovery of this volume.

74. Behold, therefore, O most serene  
Prince, we have now extensively  
explained the finding of this volume,  
and you should not think that I  
dreamed it, given that I can lead forth  
many witnesses, especially my co-  
herbalists.

75. Incredibly, but truly, I have made an  
effort already for nearly seven months  
to untangle the meaning of our poet, o  
rather to sift it, so that it my mind has  
nearly toppled (as they say) like a  
[spinning] top.

76. Nevertheless, I utterly devoted myself  
fervently to each area: to philosophy,  
astronomy, cosmography, music,  
necromancy, natural science, alchemy -  
I was so astounded at the breadth and  
the doctrine, that [in comparison]  
Pythagoras and Plato, Ptolemy,  
Boethius, Zoroaster, Avicenna, and

Praeterea grandiloquacitationem, sermonisque pinguedinem masticantes, Ciceroni, Vergilioque incagare praesumimus.

Nonne quendam parlandi bravariam et altezzar sua demonstrant carmina?

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Raspantes nequeunt in stroppam stare cavalli,  
Hic nitrit, hic saltat, lassantque sbrocare corezas

Martinulosque rotant curvas flectendo  
balestras,  
Dantque focum schioppis tuf taf sborrante  
balotta.

Hic gnacarae, pifari strepitant, cornaeque  
metalli,  
Celsa fracassatae conturbant sydera lancae,  
Polvificant nebulas pedibus repetando cavalli.

Quid in pulcherrimis comparationibus adeo  
laudare convenit Lucanum?  
Ecce noster Merlinus quid de Baldo scribens ait.

Cum quali furia Taurus sub amore Vedelli,  
Millibus a canibus quum assaltatur in agro,  
Nunc pedibus ferrat, nunc illos cornibus urtat.  
Et spargens sabiam magnos trat in aere calzos,  
Oreque spumigero coelum mugitibus implet.

Iterum,  
Qualis Vilanus cui nuper forza Botazzi  
Creverat, humectat levam dexteramque  
spudazzo,  
Verzelam stringit, fragiles retridat aristas.

Geber should be considered as nothing

77. After that, while chewing over the grandiloquence and the meatiness of the discussions, we presume to give a shit about Cicero and Vergil.
78. Don't his poems demonstrate a certain authority and loftiness of speech?

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79. "The pawing horses cannot stand still in their restraints; this one neighs, this one bucks and they let loose farts." [cf. V 1.239-40]
80. "They turn the windlasses, cocking the curved crossbows."<sup>12</sup> [cf. V 16.41]
81. "They light the fuses on their rifles and bullets are discharged with a toof-taff" [cf. V 4.485]
82. "Here clappers, pipes and metal horns make a ruckus; broken lances disturb the heavenly stars and horses send up clouds of dust with their stamping feet."<sup>13</sup> [cf. V 1.240-41]
83. Why indeed is it fitting to praise Lucan for his most splendid comparisons?
84. Here's what our Merlin says, writing about Baldo:
85. "With what fury a bull in love with a young heifer, when it is assaulted in a field by a thousand dogs, first wounds with its hooves, then gores with its horns; and spreading sand, gives big kicks into the air and fills the sky with howls from its foaming mouth." [cf. V 11.265-68]
86. Again, "As a peasant, whose strength had increased just now from the power of the bottle, moistens his left and right hand with spit, grips the stick and beat: the fragile awns [of grain]."<sup>14</sup> [cf. V 18.76-8]

Si descriptionem alicuius maritimae tempestatis quaeris, quid tuum vadis rumpendo cermisonem circa primum Aeneidos Vergilii dicentis? Una Eurusque, Notusque ruunt, creberque procellis:

Aphricus, en Merlinus ait.  
Iam gridor aetherias hominum concussit  
abyssos,  
Sentiturque ingens cordarum stridor et ipse  
Pontus habet pavidos vultus, mortisque colores  
Nunc Sirocus habet palmae, nunc Borra  
supercciat,  
Irrugit pelagus, tangit quoque fluctibus astra,  
Fulgure flamigero creber lampezat olympus.  
Vela forata micant crebris lacerata balottis,  
Horrendam mortam Nautis ea cuncta minazzant  
Nunc sbalzata Ratis celsum tangebant olympum  
Nunc subit infernam unda sbadachiante  
paludem.

Si moralitatem, laudabilesque auctoritates optas  
quid Juvenalem, Horatium, Terentium ve scar-

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tabellare bisognat? audi Merlinum nostrum,  
Post damnum pentire valet, mihi crede,  
negottam,  
Dum nova plaga tumet ferro est taiandi rasonis,  
Qui nimis indusiat, caldum non mangiat arostun  
Contra fortunam grandis pacia videtur spingere  
navigium.  
Nullus nempe labor dilectos lassat amantes.

87. If you want a description of some tempest at sea why do you go breaking your head about the first book of Vergil's *Aeneid*, saying: "Una Eurusque Notusque ruunt creberque procellis Africus, et vastos volvunt ad litora fluctus (Eastwind and Southwind rush together, and Southwest wind, thick with squalls" [Aeneid, 1.85-6].<sup>15</sup>

88. Behold Merlin says: "By now human cries have shaken the farthest reaches of space and a great whistling of ropes is heard and the sea itself holds faces terrorized and tinged with death. First Sirocco is victorious, then Boreas has the upper hand; the ocean roars and even touches the stars with its waves; Olympus flashes continually with flaming lightning bolts. The perforated sails tremble lacerated by a barrage of bullets and all these things threaten a horrible death for the sailors. Now an upsurge made the ship touch Olympus, now amid pounding waves it went down to the infernal swamp."<sup>16</sup> [cf. V 12.472-6, 483-5]

89. If you want morality, and praiseworthy authors, why do you need to rifle through Horace, Juvenal or Terence?

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90. Listen to our Merlin:  
91. To repent after the crime, believe me, does no good.  
92. A fresh wound should be cut with the blade of reason while it is swelling.  
93. He who arrives late does not eat hot roast.  
94. It is a great folly to propel a ship counter to fate.  
95. No labor ever tires happy lovers.

Sum felix, omnis pro me vult ponere vitam. Sum pauper, nullus pro me vult ponere robbam	96. If I'm well off, they all want to offer their lives for me; if I'm poor, none of them want to offer their stuff to me." [V 4.227-30]
Quas natura negat vires, Amor arte ministrat.	97. What nature denies men, love provides through skill.
Consilium nihil est hoc si quis negligit uti, Consilium male dat, qui non bene suscipit illud.	98. Advice is worth nothing if someone neglects to use it; one gives advice badly who does not receive it well.
Et vulpes etiam vecchiae quandoque trufantur.	99. Even seasoned foxes sometimes get tricked.
Non est ulla fides unquam credenda vilanis.	100. One should never believe in a peasant's good faith.
Perdimus interea propter tardare boconem,	101. Meanwhile by delaying we lost the mouthful. [He who hesitates is lost]
In trapolam tandem vulpecula cascat.	102. Eventually the young fox falls into the trap.
Propter dinarios homines sunt absque pudore.	103. Humans have no shame when it comes to money.
Est villanorum toleranda superbia nunquam.	104. Haughtiness should never be tolerated in a peasant.
Plus Roma parit quam francia Gallos.	105. Rome gives birth to more Gauls [/pox] than does France. <sup>17</sup>
Femina vas sine fundo est,	106. Woman is a bottomless container.
Nam plus vita placet quam centum mille Tesori.	107. For life is more pleasing than a hundred thousand treasures.
Vult nihil ambitio nisi vanos pascere ventos.	108. Ambition wants nothing except to feed on empty winds.
Ambitionem hominem cernens dic esse vilanum	109. When you observe an ambitious man, say he is a knave.
Villanus mazzare virum pro pane patiret.	110. A peasant may be allowed to kill a man for bread.
Qui nimium mangiat, ne creppet, cingula mollat	111. He who eats too much, if he would not burst, must loosen his belt.
Nam qui famescit si parlat tempora perdit.	112. Because one who is starving, wastes time if he speaks.
Candida Virginitas quam* pulchro in corpore prestat	113. How virginity shines forth pure in a beautiful body. [V 17.79]
Femineum est plorare, virum decet esse modestum,	114. It is fitting for a woman to cry, for a man to be modest.
Verum quem nobis patriae est super astra locatur.	115. Truly, our homeland is located beyond the stars.

Est mala grandilitas praeter mangiare figaros,	116. It is greatness to eat apples before figs.*
Sempre difficilis est scortegacio codem.	117. It is always difficult to skin the tail.
Non apud ardentis est paia tenenda facellas.	118. One should not hold burning kindling near straw.
Dissimulare nequit nec fingere quisquis amator.	119. No lover is capable of dissimulating or pretending.
Hic amor ad stuan mandat finaliter omnes.	120. This love delivers every one to the stove/ fire eventually.
Non desperatae plagae medicina catatur.	121. No medicine can be found for a desperate wound.
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Est amor angoscae speties, mentisque venenur	122. Love is a kind of anguish and a poison c the mind.
Heu libertatis venditor omnis amans.	123. Alas, all who love, sell their freedom.
Crede mihi pocum Miles guadagnat honorem qui spoiat poverum decreputumque virum.	124. Believe me, a soldier who strips a poor and decrepit man, earns little honor.
Quisquis est bellus putat esse bruttos	125. Whoever is handsome thinks he is ugly
lugiter altros.	126. And on and on.
Denique totum morale volumen retrovabis.	127. In short, you will find the whole volume concerned with ethics.
Si curiositatem Astronomiae velis, quid tantas metallici Rami sphaeras?	128. If you wish deep knowledge of astronomy, why [do you need] so many metal spheres?
Quid Euclidem conaris intelligere?	129. Why do you try to understand Euclid?
Vide tertiam et quartam decimam Baldi macaronicen, quandoquidem poteris ibi diffusius brancare.	130. See the 13th and 14th Macaronic book of Baldo because there you will be able to fully understand.
Ecce quid de Luna dicitur.	131. Look what is said about the moon:
Cernebam lunam maculosa fronte biancam, Distenebrare maris scoios, terraeque paesos. Hanc servant medici quando medicina malato Dando est, haec faceret quandoque cagare budelas.	132. "I was observing the white Moon with her spotty face dispel shadows from th cliffs of the sea and the lands of the earth. Doctors observe her to know when medicine is to be given to patients and when she would make them shit out their intestines." [cf. V 14.43-4, 54-5]
O eloquentissimum, o peritissimum poetam!	133. O most skillful and excellent poet!

Si quaeris descriptionem battaiarum, rumorem, ordinem squadrarum, denique militiae artem, lege primam, decimam, et decimam nonam, vigesimam primam Macaronicem.  
Si navale bellum, lege quintam decimam.

Si artem magicam, decimam octavam, si musicam et cosmographiam, vigesimam, Si alchimiam, duodecimam.  
Sed nil dicimus de arte poetica, Vide quale principium facit melius assaium quam Vergilius.

Phantasia mihi quaedam fantastica venit.  
Historiam Baldi grossis cantare camaenis,  
Altisonam cuius famam, nomenque gaiardum  
Terra tremit, Bartrumque metu se cagat adossum.

Sed volendo cuncta declarare pulcherrima, totum oporteret adducere volumen in testimonium, Tu, ingeniose princeps, melius quam ispienare velim nosti.

Verum super omnes quae in ipso fuerant virtutes, propheticum habuit spiritum, nam de pontificatu Iulii et Leonis predixit, deque Gonzagarum felicitate, diversorumque nobilium suae civitatis. Tedet me

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hoc nobile volumen ab illo non fuisse recognitum, nam (teste Columella) Terra quo magis lavoratur magis ingrassatur,

Id probatur, quia [(]sicut Vergilius) multa carmina reliquit imperfecta.  
Attamen solertia qua fungor ad melius quo potu primam in formam redigere curavi, Sed Scardaffi et avaritia et perfidia multum honoris detrimentum perpessus sum.

134. If you want a description of battles, of noises, of troop deployment, in short, any military art, read the Macaronic Books 1, 10, 19 and 21.

135. If a naval battle, read Book 15.

136. If the art of magic, read Book 18, if music and cosmography, Book 20; if alchemy, Book 12.

137. But we have said nothing about the poetic arts: Look at how he makes an opening quite a lot better than Vergil does:

138. "A certain fantastic fantasy has come to me, to sing the story of Baldo with the plump muses, whose high sounding fame and noble name make the earth tremble and the abyss beshit itself in fear." [cf. V 1.1-4]

139. But wishing to proclaim all the beauties it would be necessary to bring in the whole book as testimony; you, clever Prince, please understand better than I know how to explain.

140. In truth, beyond all the virtues that were in this, it had a prophetic spirit, for he predicted the pontificates of Julius and Leo, and the happiness of the Gonzaga family, and of their various noble cities. It distresses me

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141. that this noble volume was not reexamined by him for, as Colomella attests, land that is better plowed is more fertile.

142. This is proven (like Vergil) he left many verses imperfect.

143. Nevertheless, I execute the work with skill as well as I was able, I took pains to restore it to its initial form, as well I was able; but due to the greed and perfidy of Scardaffus, I endured much that is

detrimental to my honor.

Scio quod multi admirati sunt quoniam nimis  
indusiavit ad lucem prodire.

144. I know that many people were  
astounded because so much time  
passed bringing it to light.

Incusanda est numorum cupiditas, nam  
temporibus nostris virtus depresso tenetur, et  
avaritia philosophiae preposita est.

145. A lust for money is to be blamed, for in  
our day, virtue is suppressed and greed  
is more important than learning.

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<sup>1</sup> *tiriacam*: early treacle began as an antidote to snake bite (around 350 BCE), by the 16<sup>th</sup> century *teriac* had become a general remedy concocted from 50-100 esoteric ingredients – many Italian cities had their own official recipe; A. Luzio corrects *bisognatissimos* to *bisognatissimas* to agree with *facendas*, *Le maccheronee*, Bari: La Terza, 1928; pp. 276-83.

<sup>2</sup> The names of the professors of “herbology” who make the the voyage of discovery are humorous: Salvanelus Boccatorta could be Little Satyr Twisted-mouth: Gabriele Codifava derives Salvanel from L. selva, and writes, “In Roman mythology the “Silvani” are the equivalent of satyrs in Greek myths... In some Italian legends, of the Dolomites for examples, the Salvanel is an odd character who lives wildly in the forest, often associated with pagan rituals and witches.” Dimeldeus Zucconus, Honeygod/God of honey Pumpkin; Johannes Baricocola, John Balls: *baricocola* are apricots, used figuratively; Buttadeus Gratarogna, Toss-god Scratchmange; Aquarius Lodola, the author of this introductory pamphlet, Waterbearer Lark.

<sup>3</sup> *schenam... schavezzabamus* (breaking our backs): cf. Ital. *scavezzare*, to break, as in “to break ones neck.”

<sup>4</sup> *inzapellavit* – ran aground, from *zapellus*, snag, obstacle, from Massimo Zaggia, *Macaronea minori*, p. 821: “*inciampo, intoppo.*”

<sup>5</sup> *distorchiare*, Luzio defines this as extricate, detangle (cf. *torchio*, press -- for printing books, crushing grapes, etc.).

<sup>6</sup> *egocunque*: the -unque suffix in Latin is translated in English as –ever, as in whoever, whatever; to see “unque” with the first person subject pronoun may be unusual.

<sup>7</sup> *oblivios* – I don’t know why the spotted lynxes are oblivious.

<sup>8</sup> *galla, ae*: the gall-nut, acorn.

<sup>9</sup> *manarina* cf. Ital. *mannara* or *mannaia*,, an ax, like one used in decapitation.

<sup>10</sup> *favam* Lat. faba, bean; short form of Ital. *favola, fiaba*, a fable.

<sup>11</sup> Luzio cites the errata corrige, which substitutes for the five books of hell the “libros tres Zoroastrem” (three books of Zoroaster).

<sup>12</sup> *martinulos*: Ital. *martinetto*, a winch used for loading a large crossbow.

<sup>13</sup> *repetar*: Zaggia, op cit. to kick (citing a *Glossario milanese* by F. Marri), p. 19.

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<sup>14</sup> *verzelam* is perhaps a green stick; cf. L. *virga*.

<sup>15</sup> *cermisonem* means head in Northern Italian dialects.

<sup>16</sup> *sbadachiate*, from Italian *sbatacchiare* is to hit, slam into violently.

<sup>17</sup> Play on words as in 12.354—Gauls and galls, as in sores due to syphilis, supposedly rampant in Rome on account of corrupt clergy.