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THE LOST LOVE LETTERS OF HELOISE AND ABELARD PERCEPTIONS OF DIALOGUE IN TWELFTH-CENTURY FRANCE

Constant J. Mews

With a translation by

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EX EPISTOLIS DUORUM AMANTIUM

M Amori suo precordiali omnibus aromatibus dulcius redolenti,^a
corde et corpore sua: arescenibus floribus tue juventutis, viridi-
tatem eterne felicitatis.
..... Vale salus^b vite mee.

1

V Singulari gaudio, et lassate mentis unico solamini, ille cuius vita
sine te mors est: quid amplius quam seipsum quantum corpore et
anima valet.
..... Vale lux mea, vale pro qua mori velim.

2

M Purissimo amori suo, et intime fidelitatis digno: per vere dilec-
tionis statum,^a care fidei secretum.
..... Celi regnator sit inter nos mediator, et sit socius fidei nos-
tre.^b Vale, et Christus rex regum, te dulcissimum salvet in evum.
Vale in illo qui cuncta gubernat in mundo.

3

FROM THE LETTERS OF TWO LOVERS

WOMAN To her heart's love, more sweetly scented than any spice,^a
she who is his in heart and body: the freshness of eternal happi-
ness as the flowers fade of your youth.
..... Farewell, well-being^b of my life.

1

MAN To the singular joy and only solace of a weary mind, that per-
son whose life without you is death: what more than himself, in so
far as he is able in body and soul.
..... Farewell, my light, farewell, you for whom I would willingly
die.

2

WOMAN To her love most pure, worthy of inner fidelity: through the
state of true love,^a the secret of tender faith.
..... May the Ruler of Heaven mediate between us and may He
accompany our faith.^b Farewell, and may Christ, King of Kings,
save you, my sweetest, for eternity. Farewell in Him who governs
all things in the world.

3

1. a) cf. Song of Songs 4.10: *pulchriora ubera tua vino et odor unguen-
torum tuorum super omnia aromata*: "Your breasts are more beauti-
ful than wine and the fragrance of your perfumes above all spices."
b) or "salvation" as *salus* embraces both physical and spiritual
senses.

3. a) a punctuation mark after *digno* suggests that *per vere dilectionis
statum* qualifies *secretum* or "hiding place" rather than *digno*. b) M
38b.

4

V De die in diem dulciori et nunc quam maxime dilecte et semper super omnia diligende, singularis eius: eandem et immutabilem sincere fidei constanciam.

..... Vale clarissima stella mea, nobilissima dulcedo mea, et sola consolacio mea. Vale o mea vailitudo.

5

M locunde spei mee: fidem meam, et cum omni devocione meisam quamdiu vivam.

Tocius artis largitor, et humani ingenii largissimus dator, mei pectoris interna philosophie artis impleat pericia, quo te possim dilectissime ita salutare scriptis, ad consensum mee voluntatis. Vale vale, spes juventutis mee.^a

6

V Clarissime stelle sue, cuius nuper radiis delectatus sum: ita indeficienti splendore nitere, ut nulla eam nebula possit offuscare.

Quia tu ita dulcissima domina mea precepisti, vel ut verius dicam, quia ardentissima amoris flamma compellit, se dilectus tuus continere non potuit, quin in vice sue presentie eo quo potest litterarum officio^a te salutet. Ita ergo salva esto, sicut ego tui salute indigeo. Ita vale sicut in tuo meum constat valere. In te spes mea, in te requies mea. Nunquam tam subito evigillo, quin animus meus^b te intra se locatam inveniat.

7

M Hucusque dilecto semperque diligendo:^a tota sua re et affectu, salutem, gaudium totiusque utilitatis ac honestatis profectum.

5. a) Ps. 70.5.

6. a) "the office of letters;" cf. Cicero, *Ep.* 6.6.1 and *17*; see too *HC*, ed. Monfrin, p. 70; ed. Hicks, p. 10; trans. Radice, p. 66. b) *animus* is consistently translated here as "spirit" rather than "mind" to evoke the idea of the seat of human thought.

4

MAN To one who is sweeter from day to day, is loved now as much as possible and is always to be loved more than anything, her only one: the same unchanging constancy of sincere faith.

..... Farewell, my brightest star, my noblest delight, and my only consolation. Farewell, my well-being.

5

WOMAN To my joyful hope: my faith and my very self with all my devotion, as long as I live.

May the Bestower of every art and the most bountiful Giver of human talent fill the depths of my breast with the skill of the art of philosophy, in order that I may greet you in writing, most beloved, in accord with my will. Farewell, farewell, hope of my youth.^a

6

MAN To his brightest star, whose rays I have recently enjoyed: may she shine with such unflinching splendor that no cloud can obscure her.

Because you, my sweetest lady, have so instructed me, or to speak more truly because the burning flame of love compels me, your beloved could not restrain himself from greeting you as he can, through the agency of a letter^a in place of his actual presence. Therefore keep well, just as I need your keeping well. And fare well, just as my faring well depends on your doing so. In you is my hope, in you my rest. Never do I wake so suddenly that my spirit^b does not find you present within itself.

7

WOMAN To one loved thus far and always to be loved:^a with all her being and feeling, good health, joy, and growth in all that is beneficial and honorable.

7. a) A punctuation mark after *diligendo* suggests that *tota sua* is ablative rather than nominative, as in "she who is his in being and dis-position." She here recapitulates his phrase in V 4.

..... Vale vale et tandiu vale quoadusque regnum dei videatur permanere.

8

V Dilectissime domine sue, cuius memoriam nulla intercipere potest oblivio, fidelissimus eius tunc primum tui nominis oblivionem, cum mei nominis memor non ero.

..... Vale, in pace in idipsum dormi et requiesce.^a Dormi dulciter, cuba suaviter, ita firmiter dormias, ut latus non mutes.^b Vale o requies mea, vale et semper vale.^c

9

M Ardenti lucerne, et civitati supra montem posite:^a sic pugnare ut vincat, sic currere ut comprehendat.^b

..... Volo et inhianter cupio ut litteris iuxta preceptum tuum intercurrentibus precordialis inter nos firmetur amicitia, donec illa michi nimium felix dies illucescat, qua votis omnibus desideratam tuam faciem videam.^c Sicut lassus umbram, et siciens desideratam undam, ita te desidero videre.^d ... Nihil unquam erit tam laboriosum corpori meo, nichil tam periculosum anime mee, quod tue non impendam caritati. ... Vale in deo, quo validior est nemo.

10

V Preciosissime gemme sue, suo naturali splendore semper radianti, aurum eius purissimum:^a letissimis amplexibus eandem gemmam circumdare et decenter ornare.
..... Vale que me valere facis.

8. a) Ps. 4.9: the Vulgate phrase *in idipsum* is not translated here. b) "that you do not change sides." c) a play on *vale* as meaning both "farewell" and "may you flourish."

9. a) John 5.35; Matthew 5.14. b) 1 Cor. 9.24. c) cf. Proverbs 7.18: *veni inebriemur uberibus donec illucescat dies et fruamur cupitis amplexibus*: "Come, let us get drunk in abundance until the day dawns and let us enjoy longed for embraces." d) Job 7.12; Psalm 41.2.

10. a) cf. 2 Chronicles 9.1, 9 (the gift of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon) and Ecclesiasticus 32.7.

..... Farewell, farewell, and fare well for as long as the kingdom of God is seen to endure.

8

MAN To his most beloved lady, the memory of whom no forgetting can steal away, her most faithful one: may the first time I forget your name be when I no longer remember my own.

..... Farewell, sleep, and rest in peace.^a Sleep sweetly, lie comfortably, may you sleep so soundly that you do not stir.^b Farewell, my rest. Farewell and fare well always.^c

9

WOMAN To a burning lamp and city set on a hill:^a may he fight in order to conquer, run in order to win.^b

..... I wish and eagerly desire that by exchanging letters according to your bidding, the heartfelt friendship between us may be strengthened until that exceedingly happy day shines on me when I shall see your face,^c the desire of all my prayers. Just as the weary desire shade and the thirsty long for water, so I desire to see you.^d ... Nothing will ever be so laborious for my body, nothing so dangerous for my soul, that I would not expend out of care for you. Farewell in God, than whom no one is more strong.

10

MAN To his most precious jewel, ever radiant with its natural splendor, her purest gold:^a may he surround and fittingly set that same jewel in a joyful embrace.
..... Farewell, you who make me fare well.

11

M Omnium virtutum continentia clarissimo, et super favum mellis iocundo,^a inter omnes eius fidelissima: dimidium anime,^b et seipsum in omni fide.

..... Deum testem habeo, quem neque latet, nec latere potest ulla secreti machinatio, quam pure, quam sincere, cum quanta fide te diligo. Nunc igitur, quia ocium in scribendo non habeo, ut valeas centies clamo, ac milies repeto, tuumque vale nulli sit equale.

12

V Ardentem amate, et ardentius amande,^a pre omnibus fidelis, et ut verius dicam solus fidelis: quicquid sincerissimi amoris regula exigit.

Non opus esse reor dulcissima ut fidem tuam quam factis evidenter exhibes, verbis dilecto tuo commendes. (f. 159v) Si omnes vires meas in tuum servitium contendam, nichil me fecisse putabo, inanem me operam sumpsisse comparacione tuorum meritorum iudicabo. Si quicquid bonorum secularium conferri potest, totum congeratur in unum,^b ut aut hec aut tuam amicitiam eligere debeam, per fidem quam tibi debeo, nullius ea precii reputabo. Certe fecisse iuvat. Vale decus meum,^c que omnibus que dulcia sunt, incomparabiliter dulcior es, et omnia tempora ita leta ducas ut ego tibi cupio, quia non melius opus est.

13

M Grata mentis mee benivolencia, pro se et officio suo tibi semper obnoxia, cum omnes quas vellet salutes expedire non potuit permultas, et iam siluit, ne plures enumerando, offendere sibi

11

WOMAN To one most brilliant in possessing every virtue, more delightful than honey from the comb,^a his most faithful one of all: half her soul^b and her whole self in complete faith.

..... God is my witness, from whom no secret plotting is hidden nor can ever be hidden, how purely, how sincerely and with how much faith I love you. Therefore, because I do not have time for writing now, I cry out a hundred times and repeat a thousand times my wish that you keep well and that your faring well may have no equal.

12

MAN To one loved intensely, and to be loved even more intensely,^a one faithful beyond all others, and to speak more truly, the only faithful one: whatever the rule of sincerest love demands.

I do not think there is any need, sweetest, for you to recommend with words to your beloved the faith that you clearly show through actions. If I were to exert all my strength in your service, I would deem that I had done nothing and would consider that I had undertaken a trifling matter compared with what you deserve. If whatever is of worldly value could be brought together and gathered up in one place^b so that I had to choose between them and your friendship, out of the faith that I owe you I would consider them to be worthless. Certainly I am glad to have done so. Farewell, my beauty,^c you who are incomparably sweeter than all sweet things. May you prolong your years as happily as I wish for you, for nothing better is needed.

13

WOMAN Since the grateful benevolence of my mind, of its own accord and out of duty always bound to you, could not send all the greetings that it wished, it has remained silent up to now over many, lest by listing several it might seem to undermine them all. I think it neither a burden for you nor difficult for me to write to

11. a) Psalm 18.11; Ecclesiasticus 24.27. b) Horace, *Carmina* 1.5.8.

12. a) modeled on her greeting in M 7. b) Cicero, *Tusculan Orations* 5.117. c) cf. Horace, *Carmina*, 1.1.2.

13. a) Marbod, *Rescriptum ad amicum*, ed. Bulst (1984), p. 186: "*In te namque sita mea mors est et mea vita* (For in you is placed my death and my life)."

videretur universas. Sepe me tibi scribere, eadem iterum atque iterum repetere, nec tibi onerosum reor, nec michi est difficile, quippe quem sicut memetipsam diligo, ita te toto cordis conamine diligere non negliigo. Vale carior vita. Scias quod in te mea mors est et vita.^a

14

V Si tabulas tuas dulcissima diutius retinere michi liceret, plurima scriberem sicut plurima occurrerent. Nam si semper scribere possem, ita, ut nichil aliud facerem, sufficientem sine dubio materiam haberem: tuam scilicet probitatem, tua merita que circa me tanta sunt, ut quanta sint estimari non possit. Vale certissima spes mea.

15

V Cordi suo, fidelissimus eius: noctem candidam, et utinam mecum.^a
Vale anima mea,^b quies mea.

16

<V> Signaculo suo, mentis interioribus artus impresso, ille qui eisdem signaculi expressa similitudo est:^a eo tenaciorem affectionem quo in unius nostrum salute res communis indifferenter^b agitur.

Tu o dura, anime tue quomodo immemor esse potuisti? Nam ubi mei oblita es, si ego anima tua sum, anime tue quoque oblita es. Vale dulcissima. Totus tecum sum, et ut verius dicam, totus in te sum.

17

<V> Inexhausto tocius sue dulcedinis vasculo, dilectissimus eius: neglecto celi lumine, te solam indesinenter aspicere.

you often, repeating the same things again and again, for just as I love you as my very self, so I do not neglect to love you with all the effort of my heart. Farewell, dearer than life. Know that in you lies my death and my life.^a

14

MAN If I may be permitted to keep your writing tablets a while longer, sweetest, I would write many things, just as many things would come to mind. For even if I could write to you continuously so that I did nothing else, I would undoubtedly still have enough material: namely your integrity and your merits, which for me are so many that I could not count them all. Farewell, my surest hope.

15

MAN To his heart, her most faithful: an unclouded night—would that it were with me!^a
Farewell, my soul,^b my rest.

16

<MAN> To his seal, imprinted very firmly inside his mind, he who is the visible likeness of that seal:^a affection, the more enduring as the well-being of each of us is made a shared concern without difference.^b

How could you, unfeeling woman, forget your soul? For whenever you forget me, if I am indeed your soul, you forget your own soul as well. Farewell, sweetest. I am wholly with you, or to speak more truly I am wholly within you.

17

<MAN> To the inexhaustible vessel of all his sweetness, her most beloved: may I gaze endlessly at you alone, having ignored the light of day.

15. a) Ovid, *Heroides* 16.320 (Paris to Helen). b) cf. 1 Samuel (= 1 Regum, Vulgate) 20.17: *sicut animam sua ita diligebat eum*: "For he [David] loved him [Jonathan] as his own soul."

16. a) Song of Songs 8.6; cf. Ezekiel 28.12 b) cf. V 24.

Cum dies in noctem vergeret, ulterius me continere non potui, quin salutandi officium^a ultro arriperem, quod tu tarda distulisti. Vale, et scias quia sine tua valitudine, nec salus nec vita mea consistit.

18

M Par pari, rubenti rose sub immarcido liliorum candore: quidquid amans amanti.

Quamvis sit hiems in tempore, estuat tamen pectus meum amoris fervore. Quid ultra? Plura tibi scriberem, sed sapientem pauca monebunt. Vale, cor et corpus meum, et omnis dilectio mea.

19

V Pauca quidem verba tua sunt, sed ea plura feci sepe relegendo, nec ego penso quantum dicas, sed de quam fecundo corde procedat quod dicis. Vale dulcissima.

20

<V> Stella polum variat, et noctem luna colorat,
versus Sed michi sydus hebet quod me conducere debet.^a

5 Nunc mea si tenebris oriatur stella fugatis,
Mens mea iam tenebras meroris nesciet ullas.
Tu michi Lucifer^b es, que noctem pellere debes.
Te sine lux michi nox,^c tecum nox splendida lux est.

Vale stella mea que splendoris sui damna non patitur. Vale summa spes mea in qua sola michi complaceo,^d quam nunquam reduco ad memoriam, quia nunquam amitto a memoria. Vale.

17. a) V 6.

20. a) cf. Ovid, *Fasti* 3.449; Lucan, *Pharsalia* 1.661–62; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 2.144. In ancient thought, the stars revolve around the north pole; cf. *Carmina burana* no. 169 (*Hebet sidus*). b) the morning star or planet Venus; cf. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 2.723. Lucifer is used in this sense in 2 Peter 1.19 and Job 11.17, without the connotation of a fallen star as in Isaiah 14.12. c) cf. V 38c line 4. d) cf. Matthew 3.17.

Since day was turning into night, I could not contain myself any longer from seizing the duty of greeting you^a of my own accord, something which you, tardy one, have put off. Farewell and know that without your good health, neither well-being nor life exists for me.

18

WOMAN An equal to an equal, to a reddening rose under the spotless whiteness of lilies: whatever a lover gives to a lover.

Although it is wintertime, yet my breast blazes with the fervor of love. What more? I would write more things to you, but a few words instruct a wise man. Farewell, my heart and body, and my total love.

19

MAN Indeed your words are few, but I made them many by re-reading them often. Nor do I measure how much you say, but rather how fertile is the heart from which comes what you say. Farewell, sweetest.

20

<MAN> The star turns around the pole, and the moon colors the night,

5. But that star is fading that should be my guide.^a
Now if through the retreating shadows my own star should appear,
No longer will my mind know the darkness of grief.
You to me are Lucifer,^b who must banish the night.
Without you day is night to me,^c with you night is splendid day.

Farewell, my star, whose splendor never dies. Farewell, my greatest hope, in whom alone I find favor,^d and whom I never bring back to mind since you never slip from mind. Farewell.

21

M Dilecto suo speciali, et ex ipsius experimento rei: esse quod est.^a

Cum mens mea versetur circa plurima rerum negocia, deficit acuto percussa dilectionis hamo. Sicut ignis inextinguibilis acuto percussa materia rerum superabilis, nisi adhibeatur aqua que naturaliter est ei potens medicina, sic omnibus est amor meus insanabilis, tibi autem soli est medicabilis.^b Quo munere te diabo, mens mea anxiatu ignorando.^c O decus juvenum, consors poetarum, quam decorus aspectu, sed prestabilior es affectu; tu mea presens leticia, et est michi meror tui absentia; equipolenter te diligo. Vale.

22

V Gemme sue presenti luce gratiori et lucidiori, ille qui sine te crassis est tenebris obvolutus: quid aliud, nisi ut in tuo naturali fulgore indeficienter glorieris.

Fateri solent physici, quod luna nisi a sole non luceat. Itaque cum hoc lumine privatur, omni calor et splendoris beneficio destituta, orbem suum mortalibus fuscum et pallidum ostendit.^a Huius nimirum rei similitudo inter me et te aperte exprimitur. Tu enim sol meus es, que me vultus tui iocundissimo splendore semper accendis (f. 160r) et illuminas. Ego lumen nisi a te nullum habeo, sine te ebes, obscurus, enervis et mortuus sum. Et ut verum fatear, maius est quod tu michi quam quod sol lunari globo accommodat. Quia luna quo soli propior fit plus obscuratur, ego quo plus tibi admoveor, quo tibi vicinior sum, plus ardeo et in tantum inflammor, ut, sicut ipsa sepe notasti, cum iuxta te sum, totus in ignem transeam, totus medullitus urar.^b

Quid ergo tuis innumerabilibus beneficiis equum reponam? Nihil equidem, quia dulcissima verba tua factorum quantitate tran-

21

WOMAN To her beloved, special from experience of the reality itself: the being which she is.^a

Since my mind is turning with many concerns, it fails me, pierced by the sharp hook of love. Just as fire cannot be extinguished or suppressed by any material, unless water, by nature its powerful remedy, is applied, so my love cannot be cured by any means—only by you can it be healed.^b My mind is bothered by not knowing through what gift I can enrich you.^c Glory of young men, companion of poets, how handsome you are in appearance yet more distinguished in feeling. Your presence is my joy, your absence my sorrow; in either case, I love you. Farewell.

22

MAN To his jewel, more pleasing and more splendid than the present light, that man who without you is shrouded in dense shadow: what else except that you glory unfailingly in your natural brilliance.

Scientists often say that the moon does not shine without the sun, and that when deprived of this light, it is robbed of all benefit of heat and brightness and presents to humans a dark and ashen sphere.^a Surely the similarity of this phenomenon to you and me is very plain to see: for you are my sun, since you always illumine me with the most delightful brightness of your face and make me shine. I have no light that does not come from you and without you I am dull, dark, weak, and dead. But, to tell the truth, what you do for me is even greater than what the sun does for the sphere of the moon. For the moon becomes more obscure the closer it gets to the sun, whereas the nearer I am brought to you and the closer I get, the more on fire I become. So much do I burn for you, that, just as you yourself have often noted, when I am next to you I become completely on fire and am burned right down to the marrow.^b

What then shall I offer in return to equal your innumerable benefits? Nothing, actually, because you transcend your sweetest

21. a) a punctuation mark after *rei* suggests that the woman does not identify herself in this greeting, but offers her own being. b) cf. Ovid, *Heroides* 5.149. c) While Könsigen reads this as one sentence, the MS shows a period here, followed by a new sentence.

22. a) cf. Rhabanus Maurus, *De computo* 1.45, ed. Wesley M. Stevens, CCCM 44 (1979): 257; Bede, *De natura rerum* 20, ed. Charles W. Jones, CCSL 123A (1975): 211. b) cf. Ovid, *Heroides* 18.177; *Metamorphoses* 1.494. c) cf. V 6. d) Horace, *Carmina* 4.1.36.

scendis, ipsa amoris exhibicione transgredieris, ita ut pauperior michi in verbis quam in factis videaris. Inter cetera que pre aliis innumera possides, hoc quoque tenes egregium, ut in amicum plus agas quam dicas, in verbis pauper, in factis copiosa; quod eo tibi est gloriosius, quanto facere quam dicere difficilium.

In pectore meo immortaliter sepulta es, de quo sepulcro me vivente non emerges; ibi cubas, ibi quiescis. Usque ad somnum me comitaris, in somno me non deseris, post somnum statim ut oculos aperio ante ipsum celi lumen te video.^c Ad alios verba, ad te intencionem dirigo. Sepe in verbis cado,^d quia cogitacio mea ab eis extranea est. Quis ergo negare poterit, quin veraciter in me sepulta sis?..... Invidium amori nostro tempus imminet, et tu tamen ita differs quasi ociosi simus. Vale.

23

M Dulcissimo anime sue presidio, et in eius caritatis radice plantato, illa in cuius dilectione firmiter es constitutus, et in cuius^a mellifluo amoris sapore bene fundatus:^b quod ab ira distat et odio.

Cum vellem tibi rescribere, reiecit me impar viribus meis^c rei magnitudo. Volui enim et non potui, incepti et defeci, sustuli et elisis gravitate humeris corruvi. Voluit animi fervens affectus, renuitque aridi defectus ingenii. Horum duorum altercationes plenasque litibus persuasiones sustinui, et perpensa utriusque ratione cui potius cederem^d examinare nequivi. Ait enim animi affectus: "Quid agis ingrata? Quamdiu suspendis me longa et certe indigna taciturnitate? Nonne te excitat dilecti tui liberalis benignitas, et benigna liberalitas? Contexe plenas graciaram littersas, refer abundantanti pietati, quas debes, gracias. Beneficium enim non videtur gratum et acceptum, de quo multum graciaram non fuerit relatum."

Persuasionibus his parendum credidi, et certe parere volui, sed restitit ingenii ariditas temeritatis mee inceptum acri corruptionis flagello^e castigans. "Quo," inquit, "stulta et infirma ruis? Quo te procellis^f inconsiderata intencio festini animi? Incipiesne, cum sis

23. a) cuius (Könsngen) eius MS. b) Expanding on Ephesians 3.17 with three different words for love. c) Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 5.610. d) cederem (Könsngen) celerem MS.

words with the number of your actions and you have so surpassed them by the demonstration of your love that you seem to me poorer in words than in actions. Among other things that you possess in infinite number compared with other people, you have this distinction too, that, poor in words, but rich in actions, you do more for a friend than you say; this is all the more to your glory since it is more difficult to act than to speak.

You are buried inside my breast for eternity, from which tomb you will never emerge as long as I live. There you lie, there you rest. You keep me company right until I fall asleep; while I sleep you never leave me, and after I wake I see you, as soon as I open my eyes, even before the light of day itself.^c To others I address my words, to you my intention. I often stumble over words,^d because my thought is far from them. Who then will be able to deny that you are truly buried in me?..... Envious time looms over our love, and yet you delay as if we were at leisure. Farewell.

23

WOMAN To the sweetest protector of her soul, planted at the root of her caring love, she in whose love you are firmly established and in whose honeyed taste of love you are well founded:^a whatever is far from anger and hate.

Although I wanted to write back to you, the magnitude of the task, being beyond my powers,^b drove me back. Indeed I wanted, to but could not, I began then grew weak, I persisted but collapsed, my shoulders buckling under the weight. The burning feeling of my spirit^c longed to do so but the weakness of my dried-up talent refused. I endured the numerous disputes and litigious arguments of both, and after weighing up rationally to which of the two I would rather yield,^d I was unable to decide. For the feeling of my spirit said: "What are you doing, ungrateful woman? For how long do you keep me in suspense with long and surely undeserved silence? Does not the generous kindness and kind generosity of your beloved stir you? Compose a letter full of thanks, give the thanks which you owe for his abounding integrity. For a kind act does not seem pleasing and welcome when many thanks are not received."

I thought that I ought to heed these arguments, and certainly I wanted to heed them, but the dryness of my talent resisted, rebuking the attempts of my temerity with the harsh whip of reproach,^e saying: "Where are you rushing, you foolish and feeble woman? Where does the unthinking intention of your hasty spirit throw you? Do you begin to speak mighty words, though you are unskilled and have unrefined lips?^f Surely you are no match for

rudis et incircumcisis labiis, grandia loqui?^g Non enim sufficis materie tali et tam magnifice. Quippe qui rem quamlibet assumit laudare, debet tandem in partes distribuere singularumque partium qualitates summa cautione pensare et quamque secundum dignitatem congrue laudis celebratae honorare.^h Alioquin rei laudande iniuriam facit, qui speciosa eius narratione < . . . >, elegantiam enormi narratione detrit.ⁱ Sed unde tibi est hec scribendi copia, ut digne dicas sublimia? Attende te et rem, quam affectas. Multiformia et ampla sunt beneficia, quibus tu litteris tuis gratias referre paras. Quid estuas multis cogitationum procellis? Respice pectus tuum brutum et frigidum, prorsus carens sale sciencie et tantum crassi aeris segnicie turgidum. Contrahe audacie tue vela,^k lintrem qua imperiosum pelagus^l tranare paras, cito nisi caves mensura.”

Hac hortaminis et dehortaminis alternatione suspensam, hucusque debitam graciarrum actionem distuli, parens consiliis, imbecillitatem suam erubescens ingenii. Quod queso abundans in te divine suavitatis excellencia michi non imputet, sed cum sis vere dulcedinis filius, cognita tibi mansuetudinis virtus super me magis abundet.^m Scio quidem et fateor ex philosophie tue divitiis maximam michi fluxisse et fluere copiam gaudiorum, sed ut inoffense loquar, minorem tamen quam me faciat in ea re perfecte beatam. Venio enim sepe aridis faucibus desiderans suavis tui refici nectare, diffusasque in corde tuo divitias sicienter haurire. Quid pluribus opus est verbis? Deo teste profiteor, quia nemo in seculo vitali spirat aura quem te magis amare desiderem. . . . Sit tibi vale dilecto meo, medullas interiores dulciter penetrare.

such matter so distinguished. For anyone who assumes to praise anything at all must in the end divide it into parts and with the utmost care weigh the qualities of each individual part, honoring^g each one according to its merit with a suitable tribute of praise; otherwise he who diminishes its brilliance by < . . . > description, its elegance with outrageous description, harms the object to be praised.ⁱ But from where will you get such ability in writing that you might speak of great things worthily? Look at yourself and at the task you are undertaking. Abundant and various are the benefits for which you are preparing to give thanks in your writing. Why are you tossed about by so many storms of deliberations? Look at you cold and brutish breast, utterly lacking the salt of learning and so inflated with the sluggishness of dense air. Draw in the sails of your audacity,^k the skiff in which you are preparing to cross the imperious ocean,^l quickly, for unless you take heed, you will drown.”

Suspended between this alternating encouragement and discouragement, I have until now deferred the due act of thanks, yielding to the advice of a mental capacity ashamed of its own ineptitude. I pray that the excellence of divine amiability abundant in you will not blame me for this, but rather, since you are the son of true sweetness, may the virtue of mildness familiar to you flow over me even more.^m Indeed I know and admit that from the treasures of your philosophy the greatest amount of joys have flown and still flow over me, but, if I may speak freely, still less than what would make me perfectly happy in this regard. For I often come with parched throat longing to be refreshed by the nectar of your delightful mouth and to drink thirstily the riches scattered in your heart. What need is there for more words? With God as my witness I declare that there is no one in this world breathing life-giving air whom I desire to love more than you. . . . May this farewell, my beloved, sweetly penetrate your inner marrow.

e) cf. Judith 8.27. f) procellit MS propellit Könsgen-Schaller g) cf. Exodus 6.12, 30 about Moses' slowness of speech; Daniel 7.20. h) honorare) conorare MS; Könsgen (p. 64) suggests various interpretations of conorare; here it is taken as a scribal mistake for honorare. i) Könsgen (p. 64) suggests that words have been accidentally omitted between narracione and elegantiam. A possibility which he considers less likely

is that speciosa eius narracione was copied by the scribe from a marginal gloss serving to correct enormi narracione; in this case the phrase translates as "he who diminishes elegance with specious (or superficially attractive) description. . . ." j) Gregory the Great, Liber Pastoralis 1.9. k) cf. Ovid, Tristia 3.4.52; Horace, Carmina 2.10.23. l) Baudri of Bourgueil, Carmina 193.64. m) 1 Thess. 4.1, 4.10.

V Anime qua nec candidius, nec michi carius terra protulit, caro quam eadem anima spirare facit et moveri: quicquid ei debeo per quem spiro et moveor.

Litterarum tuarum copiosa et tamen insufficientis (f. 160v) ubertas, duarum rerum evidentissimum michi testimonium prebet, redundantis scilicet fidei et amoris. Unde dictum est: "Ex abundantia cordis os loquitur."^a Ego autem litteras tuas ita avide suscipio, ut michi semper breves sint quia desiderium meum et saturant et accendunt, ad similitudinem in ardore laborantis, quem potus ipse quo plus reficit, plus accendit. Deum testor quod novo modo cum eas diligentius intueor, novo inquam modo commoveor, quia ipse animus leto horrore concutitur, et corpus in novum habitum gestumque convertitur; et tales littere laudabiles sunt, que sensum audientis quocumque volunt impellunt.

Soles a me querere dulcis anima mea quid amor sit, nec per ignoranciam excusare me possum quasi scilicet de re incognita sim consultus, cum ita me idem amor imperio suo subiecerit, ut non extranea res sed multum familiaris et domestica, immo intestina videatur. Est igitur amor,^b vis quedam anime non per se existens nec seipsa contenta, sed semper cum quodam appetitu et desiderio, se in alterum transfundens, et cum altero idem effici volens ut de abus diversis voluntatibus unum quid indifferenter^c efficiatur.

Scias quia licet res universalis sit amor, ita tamen in angustum contractus est,^d ut audacter affirmem eum in nobis solummodo regnare, in me scilicet et in te domicilium suum fecisse. Nos enim duo amorem integrum, invigilatum, sincerum habemus, quia nichil est dulce, nichil quietum alteri, nisi quod in commune proficit; eque annuimus, eque negamus, idem per omnia sapimus. Quod inde facile probari potest quia tu sepe meas cogitationes anticipas; quod ego scribere concipio, tu prevenis, et si bene memini, tu illud idem de te dixisti. Vale et sicut ego te, ita tu me indefesso amore contuere.

MAN To a soul brighter and dearer to me than anything the earth has produced, the flesh which that same soul causes to breathe and move: whatever I owe her through whom I breathe and move.

The abundant and yet insufficient richness of your letter provides me with the clearest evidence of two things, namely, your overflowing faith and love; hence the saying: "From the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks."^a And yet I receive your letters so eagerly that for me they are always too brief, since they both satisfy and stimulate my desire: like someone who is suffering from fever—the more the drink relieves him, the hotter he feels. God is my witness that I am stirred in a new way when I look at them more carefully; in a new way, I say, because my spirit itself is shaken by a joyful trembling, and my body is transformed into a new manner and posture. So praiseworthy are your letters that they direct my sense of hearing to whatever place they wish.

You often ask me, my sweet soul, what love is—and I cannot excuse myself on grounds of ignorance, as if I had been asked about a subject unfamiliar to me. For that very love has brought me under its own command in such a way that it seems not to be external but very familiar and personal, even visceral. Love is therefore^b a particular force of the soul, existing not for itself nor content by itself, but always pouring itself into another with a certain hunger and desire, wanting to become one with the other, so that from two diverse wills one is produced without difference.^c

Know that although love may be a universal thing, it has nevertheless been condensed into so confined a place^d that I would boldly assert that it reigns in us alone—that is, it has made its very home in me and you. For the two of us have a love that is pure, nurtured, and sincere, since nothing is sweet or carefree for the other unless it has mutual benefit. We say yes equally, we say no equally, we feel the same about everything. This can be easily shown by the way that you often anticipate my thoughts: what I think about writing you write first, and, if I remember well, you have said the same thing about yourself. Farewell, and regard me with unfading love just as I do you.

24. a) Luke 6.45; Matthew 12.34. b) in the margin: *diffinicio*. c) cf. Cicero, *Laelius* (*De amicitia*) 81. d) *Laelius* 20.

25

M Thesaurο suo incomparabili, super omnes delicias seculorum delectabili: beatitudinem sine fine, salutem sine defectione.

Quid sit amor, vel quid possit naturali intuitu ego quoque perspicuens morum nostrorum studiorumque similitudine^a que maxime contrahit amicitias, et conciliat^b perspecta vicissitudinem amandi tibi rependere et in omnibus obedire. . . . Si amor noster tam facili propulsione discedit verus amor non fuit^c; verba mollia et plana que inter nos hactenus contulimus, non fuerunt vera sed amorem simularunt. Amor enim cui semel aculeum infigit, non facile deserit. Nosti o mi amor precordialis, quod tunc veri amoris officia bene persolvuntur quando sine intermissione debentur, ita ut pro amico secundum vires faciamus et super vires velle non desinamus.^d

Hoc ergo vere dilectionis debitum persolvere studebo, sed prohi dolor ad plenum nequeo. At si pro parvitate ingenii in te salutandi officio non sufficit, saltem proficiat apud te meum indesinens velle. Scias enim dilecte mi et vere scias ex quo dilectio tua cordis mei hospiciolum vel tugurium sibi vendicavit, semper grata et de die in diem delectabilior permansit, nec sicut plerumque fieri solet assiduitas familiaritatem, familiaritas fiduciam, fiducia negligenciam, negligencia fastidium peperit.^e Magno quidem studio tempore inter nos nascentis amicitie me appetere cepisti, sed maiori desiderio ut augetur et permaneret dilectio nostra contendisti. Unde sicut res tue se habent, noster variatur animus, ut tuum gaudium, meum deipitem profectum, et tuam adversitatem meam amarissimam defectionem. Non idem michi videtur impleri quod ceperis, et augere quod perfeceris, quia ibi additur quod indest, hic cummulatur quod perfectum est. Et nos licet omnibus integram caritatem exhibeamus, non tamen omnes equaliter diligimus,^f et ita quod omnibus est generale quibusdam efficitur speciale. Aliud est sedere ad mensam principis, aliud eius interesse consilio, et plus est ad amorem trahi quam ad consessum invitari. Non itaque tantum gratie tibi debeo si me non repellas, quantum si obvia manu suscipias. Simpliciter candide menti et purissimo pectori tuo loquar. Non magnum est si te diligo, immo

25

WOMAN To her incomparable treasure, more delightful than all the pleasures of the world: blessedness without end and well-being without weakening.

I too have been considering with innate reflection what love is or what it can be by analogy with our behavior and concerns^a, that which above all forms friendships,^b and, once considered, leads to repaying you with the exchange of love and obeying you in everything. . . . If our love deserted us with so slight a force, then it was not true love.^c The plain and tender words which to date we have exchanged with each other were not real, but only feigned love. For love does not easily forsake those whom it has once stung. You know, my heart's love, that the services of true love are properly fulfilled only when they are continually^c 'ved, in such a way that we act for a friend according to our strength^h and not stop^d wishing to go beyond our strength.

This debt of true love, therefore, I shall endeavor to fulfil, but alas I am unable to do so in full. However, if the duty of greeting you according to my meager talents is not enough, at least my never ending desire to do so may be of some merit in your estimation. For know this, my beloved, and know it truly, that ever since your love claimed for itself the guest chamber—or rather the hovel—of my heart, it has always remained welcome and day after day more delightful, without, as often happens, constant presence leading to familiarity, familiarity to trust, trust to negligence, and negligence to contempt.^e Indeed, you began to desire me with much interest at the very beginning of our friendship, but with greater longing you strove to make our love grow and last. And so our spirit fluctuates according to how your affairs turn out, so that your joy I count as my gain and your misfortune my most bitter loss. But your fulfilling what you have begun does not seem the same to me as your increasing what you have completed, because in one case what is lacking is added, in the other what is completed is added on. And even if we show perfect kindness to everyone, we still do not love^f everyone equally; and what is general for everyone is made particular for certain people. It is one thing to sit at the table of a prince, another to be there in order to advise him, and a greater thing to be drawn out of love, rather than just to be invited to a gathering. So I owe you fewer thanks for not spurning me than for receiving me with open arms. Let me speak plainly to your resplendent mind and heart so pure. It is not a

25. a) cf. Cicero, *De officiis* 1.56. b) cf. Laelius 100. c) cf. Jerome, *Ep.*

3.6, CSEL 54: 18. d) desinamus (Könsngen) desinemus MS. e) Jerome,

Ep. 60.10.3. f) The contrast is between *integram caritatem exhibeamus* and *non tamen omnes diligimus*.

pessimum si unquam tui oblita fuero.^g Ergo care mi tam fideli amice rarus esse noli. Hactenus aliquo modo supportare potui, ast nunc tui presencia dum careo cantibus volucrum, viriditate nemorum permota, amore tuo langueo.^h His omnibus utique congaud-erem si tui colloquio et presencia secundum velle meum perfrui possem. Sicut tibi cupio, ita michi faciat deus. Vale. (f. 161r)

26

V Dilecte sue nondum cognite, sed adhuc interiorius cognoscende, juvenis^a qui tanti boni noticiam intrinsecus ardet perscrutari: in tam abstruso et inexhausto boni fonte semper redundare, et per eum haustu non deficere.

..... O quam fecundum suavitatis pectus tuum, o quam integra venustate prefulges, o corpus succi plenissimum,^b o ineffabilis odor tuus, profer quod latet, revela quod habes absconditum, totus ille copiosissime dulcedinis tue fons ebulliat, amor tuus totus in me suas laxet copias, nichil penitus devotissimum servum totus in me suas laxet copias, nichil penitus devotissimum servum tuum celes, quia nichil actum credo, dum aliquid restare video.^c De hora in horam tibi vicinius astringor, sicut ignis qui ligna comburit, plus eo voracior, quo in alimentis est copiosior.^d Perpetua luce et inextincto fulgore immortaliter coruscas. Vale.

27

M Oculo suo: Bezelieis spiritum,^a trium crinium fortitudinem,^b patris pacis formam,^c Idide profunditatem.^d

g) cf. Psalm 136.5. h) Song of Songs 2.5; 5.8.

26. a) cf. M 1. b) Terence, *Eunuchus* 518. In classical physiology, the female body was considered more moist than the male. c) cf. Lucan, *Pharsalia* 2.657. d) cf. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 8.837-40.

27. a) Exodus 31.2: a skilled craftsman inspired by God. b) Judges 16.13-17 (Samson, normally referred to as having seven locks of hair). c) 2 Samuel 14.25 (Absalom). d) Isidore, *Etymologiae* 7.6.65 (Solomon).

great thing if I love you, but rather a wicked thing if ever I shall forget you.^g Therefore, my dear, do not make yourself so scarce to your faithful friend. So far I have somehow been able to bear it, but now, deprived of your presence and stirred by the songs of birds and the freshness of the woods, I languish for your love.^h Surely I would have rejoiced in all these things if I had been able to enjoy your conversation and presence according to my will.

May God do for me such as I desire for you. Farewell.

26

MAN To his beloved not yet known, and still to be known more intimately, the young man^a who deep within yearns to probe the understanding of such a great good: may you always abound in such a secret and inexhaustible fountain of goodness, and through it never be without refreshment.

..... How fertile with delight is your breast, how you shine with untouched beauty, body so full of moisture,^b indescribable scent of yours! Reveal what is hidden, uncover what you keep concealed, let that whole fountain of your most abundant sweetness bubble forth, let all your love release its abundance in me, and may you keep absolutely nothing from your most devoted servant, because I believe nothing has been done as long as I see something remaining.^c Hour by hour I am bound closer to you, just like fire devouring wood: the more devouring the more plentiful its fuel.^d You glitter with perpetual light and inextinguishable brightness immortally. Farewell.

27

WOMAN To her eye: the spirit of Bezalel,^a the strength of the three locks of hair,^b the beauty of the father of peace,^c the depth of Ididia.^d

28

V Dilecte in eterna memoria tenaciter reconдите: quicquid ad illud esse conducit, cuius plenitudini nichil deficit.

Qui nobis invident, utinam invidendi longa eis materia detur et utinam nostris opimis rebus diu marcescant^a quandoquidem ita volunt. Me a te separare, ipsum si nos mare interluat, non potest; ego te semper amabo, semper in animo gestabo. Nec mirari debes si in nostram tam insignem, tam aptam amicitiam prava emulatio suos obliquat oculos, quia si miseri essemus sine omni profecto livida notacione vivere cum aliis utcumque possemus. Rodant ergo detrahant, mordeant,^b in seipsis liquecant, nostra bona suam amaritudinem faciant; tu tamen mea eris vita, meus spiritus, mea in angustiis recreacio, meum denique perfectum gaudium. Vale que valere me facis.

29

M Omnibus omissis sub alas tuas confugio,^a tue dicioni me suppono obnixē tibi per omnia subsequendo. Dicere vix possum tristia verba. Vale.^b

30

V Deus tibi dulcissima propicius sit. Ego servus tuus sum, in tua iussa promptissimus. Vale.

31

<V> Dulcissime sue in omni egritudine unico remedio suo: nichil unquam molestie sentire, nulla temptari egritudine.

..... Collige quantum ipsa presentia tua fecisset, si tantam vim absens habuisti. Certe si uno saltem intuitu in iocundissimam faciem tuam intendissem, nunquam quicquam doloris sensissem. Manda michi quo in loco fortuna mea sit, quia penes te tota est. Vale, et valere non desine.

28

MAN To his beloved, firmly stored in eternal memory: whatever leads to that state in whose fullness nothing is lacking.

May prolonged cause for envy be given to those who envy us, and may they long pine away for our prosperity,^a since that is what they want. But it is not possible to separate you from me, even if the sea itself should flow between us; I will always love you, I will always carry you in my spirit. Nor should you be surprised that twisted jealousy should turn its eyes towards such a conspicuous and fitting friendship as ours, because if we were miserable, we could undoubtedly live among others however we liked without any malicious attention. Therefore let them backbite, let them drag us down, let them gnaw,^b let them waste away inside, let them derive their bitterness from our good things; you will still be my life, my breath, my restoration in difficulty, and finally my complete joy. Farewell, you who make me fare well.

29

WOMAN Having given up everything, I take refuge under your wings,^a I submit myself to your rule, resolutely following you in everything. I can scarcely speak these sad words: "Farewell."^b

30

MAN May God be gracious to you, sweetest. I am your servant, most ready for your commands. Farewell.

31

<MAN> To his sweetest, his only remedy in every affliction: may you never have worries or be troubled by any affliction.

..... Consider how much you would have achieved by your actual presence if you had such power when absent. Surely if I could have directed my gaze to your most delightful face just once, I would have felt no grief whatsoever. Send me to the place in which lies my destiny, since it is completely within your power. Farewell and never stop faring well.

28. a) Horace, *Epistulae* 1.2.57. b) Ovid, *Tristia* 4.10.123.

29. a) Ruth 2.12. b) Ovid, *Tristia* 1.3.80.

32

M Ut convalescis, neminem me letiorem ipse scis. Crede quidem tibi solem oriri meridianum, tue salutis jocundari concentus avium, te propter eadem,^a dum infirmabar, elementa non rectum servasse ordinem;^b cuius rei testis est aeris temperies hucusque debilitata, que iam, ut te sospitari sensit, tibi congratulando est mutata. Ecce quidem hac modica nive liquata reviviscit omnia, arridebunt sibi tempora nobis quoque per dei gratiam non insolita leticia. Tu tantum sis incolumis, et omnia adiciuntur nobis.^c

33

V Excutienda pigricia est, et cum fervore temporis novus dictandi fervor sumendus. Nisi tu precurras, ego precurram. Vale luna presenti multo lucidior^a et sole cras orituro gratior.

34

M Vale et premeditare quod melius est provida dilacio quam incauta mentis festinatio. Aptum colloquio nostro tempus elige, et michi manda. Vale.

35

V Electe sue dilectus eius: eidem incepto amoris fixis insistere vestigiis.

Ego tibi dilectissima facile condonarem, eciam si grave aliquid in me commisisses, quia nimium durus esset, quem sermo tuus tam mollis, tam suavis emollire non posset. Nunc vero venia tibi opus non est, quia nichil in me peccasti. Vale.

32

WOMAN You yourself know that no one is happier than I that you are getting better. Know indeed that the midday sun has risen for you, that the chorus of birds is rejoicing over your health, and that on your account, while you were sick, those same^a elements did not keep their natural order.^b The proof of this lies in the weather, which till now has been bleak; but when it sensed that you had been kept safe, it changed by congratulating you.

And look too how, now that this slight snow has melted, all things flourish again; the seasons will smile on them, and by the grace of God there will be for us too a not unfamiliar joy. May you just keep well, and all things are provided for us.^c

33

MAN This laziness must be shaken off, and along with the fervor of the season, a new fervor for composition must be taken up. If you do not do so first, I will. Farewell, you who are much brighter than the present moon^a and more welcome than tomorrow's rising sun.

34

WOMAN Farewell and remember that thoughtful delay is better than imprudent haste. Choose a suitable time for our meeting and let me know. Farewell.

35

MAN To his chosen one, her beloved: may you keep with sure step to the same love that has begun.

I would have forgiven you readily, most beloved, even if you had committed some serious act against me, because too hard would he be whom your speech so tender and amiable could not soften. But truly you have no need of forgiveness, because you have not wronged me in any way. Farewell.

32. a) eadem (Könsgen) eadem MS. b) Marbod of Rennes, *Carmina*, PL 171: 1717A; cf. Song of Songs 2.11-12. c) Matthew 6.33; Luke 12.31.

33. a) cf. Song of Songs 6.9.

36

<V> Reverende domine sue, humilis servus eius: devotum servitium.

Sic enim vos appellare iam michi opus est,^a ut non dicam tu, sed vos, non dulcis, non cara, sed domina, quia non sum familiaris ut antea, et vos michi nimis estis extranea.

37

<V> Unice expectationi sue qui expectans expectat:^a ut felix sis, sine me tamen felix esse nolis.

Tuus servus sum, ad te corpus totum, ad te totum animum dirigo. Cum te non video, lumen me videre non judico. Miserere tabescentis dilecti tui, et fere deficientis nisi cito michi succurras. Interroga nuncium quid egi, postquam litteras perscriptis: illico certe in lectum pre impatencia me conieci. Vale. (f. 161v)

38a

<<V>> Ardorem mentis his cogor pandere verbis,
Qui mentem mordet cordis secretaque torret

5 Ut laticesque petit quos^a ardor solis inurit
Tangere sic pectus iam gestio temet^b anhelus
Iam facio finem concludens ista sigillo.

38b

<<M>> Nolis atque velis tibi corde manebo fidelis
Celi regnator sit nobis hic mediator

36. a) This letter hinges on the difference between the intimate address *tu* (the singular form of "you") and the more respectful address *vos* (the plural form). Dronke uses *tu* and *vos* in his translation of this letter, *Women Writers*, p. 94. "Your Ladyship" is employed here to convey the force of *vos*.

37. a) Psalm 39.2.

36

<MAN> To his lady, worthy of respect, her humble servant: his devoted service.

For this is how I must now address your ladyship:^a no longer saying you, but Madam, not "sweet" nor "dear" but "lady" because I am not the confidant I was before and your ladyship is too much a stranger to me.

37

<MAN> To his only longing, he who longs longingly:^a may you be happy, but may you not wish to be happy without me.

I am your servant; my whole body, my whole spirit I direct towards you. When I do not see you, I do not feel that I see daylight. Have pity on your beloved, wasting away and almost fading away, unless you quickly come to help me. Ask the messenger what I did after I wrote this letter: there and then I threw myself onto the bed out of impatience. Farewell.

38a

<<MAN>> With these words I am compelled to disclose the burning of my mind,

5 Which gnaws at my mind and scorches the secrets of my heart,
Just as one parched by the heat of the sun seeks water,^a
So now do I, breathless, long to touch your breast and your very self.^b

Now I shall close, signing this off with a seal.

38b

<<WOMAN>> Whether you wish it or not, in my heart I shall remain faithful to you.

May the Ruler of Heaven mediate here between us.

38a-c. a) quos MS, Könsgen, p. 65. Isidore relates *latex* (pl. *latices*) to water which hides (*lateat*) in the veins of the earth, *Etyimologiae* 13.20.4; cf. V 26 and Psalm 41.2. b) temet Könsgen-Schaller) tumet MS. c) cf. M 3. d) Ovid, *Amores* 1.6.42. e) cf. V 2.

Sit socius fidei^c que constat amore duali
 Hos versus scribo tibi quos carissime dono
 In quis perpendas quod sum tibi corde fidelis
 Namque fides vera repetit bene facta priora.
 His autem demptis datur hec pariter quoque ventis^d
 Ergo quicquid amet hec nobis semper inundet
 Alma dei dextra te protegat intus et extra.

38c

<<V>>
 Vite causa mei, tu clemens esto fideli
 Cuncta mee vite quoniam spes permanet in te.
 Dilligo te tantum non possum dicere quantum
 Hec michi lux nox est, sine te michi vivere mors est^e
 Sic valeas vivas sic cuncta nocentia vincas,
 Ut volo ceu posco ceu totis viribus opto.

39

<<V>> Dilecte sue super mel et favum dulci:^a si quid dulcedinis ac-
 cedere potest ei que plene totam possidet.
 Tu mea vita es, tu meum desiderium es. Vale.

40

<<V>> Amice nobili ac multum amabili: precor mecum sis stabilis,
 ut ego tecum volo.
 Tu mecum esto, meus animus esto, meum gaudium esto. Vale
 ceraso pulcrior et dulcior.

41

<<V>> Soli in quam mens et oculus inreflexos habet intuitus: quic-
 quid meus tota animi et corporis directione valet conatus.

39. a) M I I note a.

5 May He accompany our faith,^c which stands firm in mutual
 love.
 These verses which I give to you, dearest, I write
 So you may perceive that in my heart I am faithful to you,
 For true faith rightly looks back to previous actions.
 But if these are removed, this faith is equally given to the
 winds.^d
 Therefore may whatever faith loves always flow over us,
 And may the nurturing right hand of God protect you within
 and without.

38c

<<MAN>>
 My reason for living: be kind to your faithful one,
 Since all hope in my life resides in you.
 I cannot say how much I love you.
 Without you this light is night to me, and to live is death.^e
 May you be well, live, and overcome all harm
 As much as I wish, ask, and pray with all my strength.

39

<<MAN>> To his beloved, sweeter than honey and the honey-
 comb:^a if anything at all sweet can come close to the one who pos-
 sesses all sweetness in full.
 You are my life, you are my desire. Farewell.

40

<<MAN>> To a noble and very lovable friend: I beg you, be stead-
 fast with me, as I want to be with you.
 Be with me, be my spirit, be my joy. Farewell, sweeter and more
 beautiful than the cherry.

41

<<MAN>> To the only one on whom my mind and my eyes hold
 their undeflected gaze: whatever the effort and application of my
 entire spirit and body can manage.

Ego preceptum in te non habeo, fac quod vis. Aliquid scribe duo saltem verba si potes. Vale.

42

<<V>> Amate et semper amānde^a solitarius in tecto^b merens et curis estuans: salutem quam velim tecum habere, et te sine me non habere.

..... Talis opposicio non amantis est, sed recedere volentis, occasiones frigiditas querentis. Non olim in me talis eras, amicitiam ad calculum non vocabas.^c Ego duricia tecum nequeo contendere, nimis enim in te mollis sum; meas accipe litteras, que tuas michi mittere gravaris. Dic ergo dulcissima quousque torquebor, quousque flammis estuantibus interius ardebo, et nullo dulcissimi sermonis tui refrigerio eas levabo? Multa dicenda supersunt. De die in diem magis in amore tuo ferveo, et tu frigescis. Nil celes, nude dicas. Vale.

43

V Lilio suo, non illi lilio quod marcescit, sed quod odorem mutare nescit, cor eius: quantum tota vi corporis et animi valet.

Sine dubio quicquid est suavitatis, in te natura transfudit, quia quocumque me verto nusquam aliquid suave nisi te solam reperio. Te ergo pre animo habens vivo, sencio, discerno, iocundor, omnium laborum obliviscor, ad omnia sum negocia fortior. In te igitur qui valeo, perpetuam tibi vilitudinem opto vehementer. Vale, in animo me semper habe.

44

<<V>> Integro gaudio suo quo dum careo vere exul et infortunatus sum: feliciter vivere, summe gaudere, si fas est ut sine me gaudeas.

Vale deum testor quod istud vale oculis stillantibus protuli.

42. a) cf. V 12. b) Psalm 101.8: "I stay awake and have been made like a sparrow alone on the roof." c) Cicero, *Laelius* 58.

I have no instructions for you, do what you wish. Write anything, even a couple of words, if you can. Farewell.

42

<<MAN>> To one loved and forever to be loved,^a he "who grieves alone on the roof"^b and is consumed with troubles: well-being, which I want to have with you, and do not want you to have without me.

..... Such contentiousness is not that of a lover, but of one wanting to withdraw, of one looking for opportunities to be cold. Once you were not like this with me, you used not to call friendship to account.^c I cannot contend with you in harshness, for I am too soft towards you. Take my letter, you who are unwilling to send me yours. So tell me, sweetest, for how long shall I be tortured, for how long shall I burn inside with blazing flames and not extinguish them with the refreshment of your sweetest speech? Much still remains to be said. Day after day I burn more for your love, while you grow cold. Conceal nothing and speak openly. Farewell.

43

MAN To his lily, not the lily that withers but one that knows not how to change its scent, her heart: as much as he can manage with all the strength of his body and spirit.

Without doubt, nature has poured into you whatever is delightful, for wherever I turn, I find nothing of delight apart from you alone. And so, holding you before my spirit, I live, I feel, I observe, I enjoy, I forget all toils, and I am stronger in all my affairs. Therefore I who keep well through you, fervently pray for perpetual well-being for you. Farewell, and keep me in your heart always.

44

<MAN> To his entire joy, whose absence truly leaves me an exile and wretched: may you live happily and enjoy fully—if it is right for you to enjoy without me.

Farewell. God is my witness that I expressed this farewell through tear-filled eyes.

45

M Cedrine domui sue,^a eburnea statua, supra quam domus innitur tota:^b nivis albedinem, lune fulgorem, solis candorem, stellarum splendorem, rosarum odorem, lili pulcritudinem, balsamique suavitatem, terre fertilitatem, celi serenitatem, et quicquid in eorum dulcedinis comprehenditur ambitu.

Cithara cum timpano tibi serviat dulciter modulando. Si voluntatem meam amantissime consequeretur effectus, quicquid nunc per litteras, totum tecum per corporalem conferrem presentiam. Te discedente tecum discessi spiritu et mente, nec aliud relictum fuit patrie, nisi corpus stolidum et inutile, et quantum longa tue discessionis absentia me cruciarit, illius solummodo novit scientia qui cuiusque cordis rimatur secreta. Ut enim ardentis tempore Syrii area^c siciens imbrem expectat e celo,^c sic mens mea te desiderat merens et anxia. Nunc sit deo in celis gloria, michique gaudium in terra,^d quod te quem super omnes diligo, vere scio et valere. Nam quociens fortuna deposuit, tue dulcedinis consolacio me restituit. Tu vadis in rotis virtutum,^e ideo michi longe preciosior es super aurum et topazium.^f Non enim me magis possum negare tibi, quam Biblis Cauno, aut Oenone Paridi, vel Briseis Achilli.^g Quid plura? Tot mando tibi gaudia, quot habuit Antiphila recepto suo Clinia.^h Ne tardes venire; quanto cicius veneris, tanto cicius invenies unde gaudebis. Vivas, valeas, ut Helye tempora cernas.ⁱ (f. 162r)

46

V Desideratissime spei et tali bono, quo habito ulterius nichil desiderari possit: opto ut ego illi bono incorporari merear, quod cum tanta desidero impatiencia, quanta vix dici vel credi potest.

45. a) 2 Kings 7.2; 1 Chronicles 17.1 etc. b) cf. Song of Songs 7.4; Judith 16.29. c) area Könsgen, cf. Joel 1.20) ardea MS. d) cf. Luke 2.14. e) Könsgen (p. 23 n.9) suggests an allusion to Jerome, *Ep.* 52.13.3, in which the Ciceronian virtues of prudence, justice, moderation and courage are four wheels of the chariot of Christ. f) Psalm 118.127. g) Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 9.454–665; *Heroides*, 5 and 3. h) Clinia Könsgen (a character with Antiphila in Terence, *Heautontimorumenos*) oluna MS. i) cf. Malachi 4.5; Ecclesiasticus 48.11.

45

WOMAN To the house of cedar,^a the ivory statue on which the whole house rests:^b the whiteness of snow, the gleam of the moon, the brightness of the sun, the splendor of the stars, the scent of roses, the beauty of lilies and the pleasantness of balsam, the fertility of the earth, the serenity of the sky, and whatever sweetness is contained within their compass.

Let the harp be at your service with the sweetly beating tambourine. If the result followed my wish, most beloved, all that I now convey by letter I would discuss with you in person. After you left, I left with you in spirit and mind, and there was nothing left at home, except my stupid and useless body; and just how ex-cruciating your long absence since you left has been for me is known only to the one who looks into the secrets of everyone's heart. For just as the thirsty land^c of Syria longs during summer for rain from the sky, so does my mind, grieving and troubled, desire you. But glory to God in heaven and joy for me on earth,^d for now I know that you whom I love more than any one are alive and well. For every time I am struck down by fortune, the solace of your sweetness restores me. You travel with the wheels of the virtues,^e and for this reason you are far more precious to me than gold or topaz.^f For I cannot deny myself to you any more than Byblis could to Caunus, or Oenone to Paris, or Briseis to Achilles.^g What more? I send you as many joys as Antiphila had when she welcomed back Clinia.^h Do not delay in coming; the quicker you come, the quicker you will find cause for joy. Live and be well, that you may see the time of Elijah.ⁱ

46

MAN To my most desired hope and good so great that, once attained, nothing else can be desired: I pray that I may deserve to be incorporated into that good which I desire with an impatience such as can scarcely be expressed or believed.

Ego anime mi quantum litteris tuis delecter, quanta animi exultatione tuo in me amori velim occurrere, potius opere volo exhibere, quam verbis demonstrare. Videre te nimis desidero, pre desiderio tabesco. Vale anima mea formosa mea,^a omne gaudium meum, qua nulla pulchrior meo iudicio, nulla melior.

47

<V> Anime qua sub celo terra nichil protulit candidius, ille omnium hominum infelicissimus: ita omnem felicitatem sicut ipse qui optat, omni caret felicitate.

O noctem infaustam, o dormitationem odiosam, o execrabilem desidiam meam. Vale sola refectio mea, solus cibus meus, unica quies mea; ubicumque ego sum, tu veraciter es.

48

M Amans amanti: amoris viriditatem.

Nemo debet vivere, nec in bono crescere, qui nescit diligere, et amores regere. Quid pluribus opus est verbis? Igne amoris tui succensa, te diligere volo per secula. Vale unica salus mea, et solum in mundo quod amem.

49

<M> Rose immarcessibili beatudinis flore vernanti illa que te super omnes homines diligit: florendo crescere, et crescendo florere.

Nosti o maxima pars anime mee^a multos multis se ex causis diligere, sed nullam eorum tam firmam fore amicitiam quam que ex probitate atque virtute,^b et ex intima dilectione proveniat. Nam qui ob divicias vel voluptates sese diligere videntur,^c eorum nullo-

46. a) Song of Songs 2.10. There may be a deliberate linking of *animus* (spirit) and *anima* (soul) to describe her.

49. a) Baudri of Bourgueil, *Carmina* 6.16. b) Cicero, *Laelius* 20. c) Cicero, *De officiis* 3.43; *Laelius* 20. d) Boethius, *De Arithmetica*, Praef. 3.8. e) Persius, *Satires* 1.106. The image of "nibbled nails" contrasts with the previous image of someone "learned to his finger-nails." f) Jerome, *Ep.* 48.3 or 125.6. g) cf. Boethius, *Consolation of Philoso-*

Just how much, my spirit, I am gladdened by your letter and with how much exultation of spirit I would like to meet your love for me, I would rather show through action than describe in words. I desire very much to see you and am wasting away because of this desire. Farewell, my soul, my beautiful one,^a my every joy, than whom in my opinion no woman is more beautiful, no woman better.

47

<MAN> To his soul, brighter than anything which the earth has produced under the sun, he who is the unhappiest of all men: as much total happiness as he who makes this wish lacks all happiness.

Unlucky night, hateful sleep, cursed idleness of mine. Farewell, my only restoration, my only food, my one peace; wherever I am, truthfully you are.

48

WOMAN A lover to lover: the freshness of love.

No one ought to live, or grow in good, who does not know how to love, and rule his desires. What need is there for more words? Aflame with the fire of desire for you, I want to love you forever. Farewell, my one salvation and all that I love in the world.

49

<WOMAN> To the rose that does not wither, blooming with the flower of blessedness, she who loves you above all men: may you grow as you flourish and flourish as you grow.

You know, greatest part of my soul,^a that many people love each other for many reasons, but no friendship of theirs will be as constant as that which stems from integrity and virtue,^b and from deep love. For I do not consider the friendship of those who seem to

phy, Proem. 1.2. h) *invenit erga* MS) Könsgen (p. 66) inserts <*inpulit*> before *invenit* and changes *erga* to *ergo*. It is suggested here that *inpulit* should be inserted before *licet* and that it is not necessary to change *erga* to *ergo*. The sentence brings together three different kinds of love (*caritas*, *dilectio*, *amor*), to describe her friendship (*amicicia*) for her teacher. i) Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.253.

modo diuturnam arbitror amicitiam, cum res ipse propter quas diligunt, nullam videantur diuturnitatem habere. Quo fit, divitiis vel voluptate deficientibus eorum eiam deficiat simul et dilectio, qui non propter se res sed se propter res dilexerunt.

Sed mea dilectio, pacto longe tibi alio sociata est. Nec enim me ignava opum pondera, quibus nichil est ad nefas instructus, cum habendi sitis incanduit,^d te diligere compulerunt, sed sola excellentissima virtus, penes quam omnis honestatis, tociusque prosperitatis causa consistit. Illa quidem est que sibi sufficiens, nullius indiga, cupiditates omnes refrenat, amores reprimat, gaudia temperat, dolores extirpat; que cuncta apta, cuncta placenta, cuncta jucundissima sumministrat nichilique se melius reperire valet. Habeo sane repertum in te, unde te diligam, summum scilicet atque omnium prestantissimum bonum. Quod cum constet esse eternum, est michi causa procul dubio, qua eterno maneat in mei dilectione. Crede igitur michi o desiderabilis non opes non dignitates non omnia que sectatores huius seculi concupiscunt, poterunt me a tui dilectione secernere. Non erit vere ulla dies qua mei meminisse valeam, que sine tui memoria possit a me transduci. Quin a te illud idem sperem, nullo me scias scrupulo permoveri.

Magne temeritatis est litteratorie tibi verba dirigere, quia cuique litteratissimo et ad unguem usque perducto, cui omnis dispositio artium per inveterata incrementa affectionum transivit in habitum, non sufficit tam floridum eloquencie vultum depingere, ut iure tanti magistri mereatur conspectui apparere, nedum michi que vix videor disposita ad queque levia, que demorsos ungues non sapient, nec pluteum cadunt:^e magistro inquam tanto, magistro virtutibus, magistro moribus, cui iure cedit francigena cervicositas, et simul assurgit tocius mundi superciliositas, quilibet compositus qui sibi videtur sciolus, suo prorsus iudicio fiet elinguis et mutus.^g

Unde sit michi credula benignitas tua, nisi scirem vere dilectionis indefectam amicitiam tibi insitam esse, impollitas tam rudis stili litteras non tibi mittere presumerem. Sed quia indefective caritatis dulcedinisque stimulus in tue dilectionis amorem me, licet eiam tibi foret ingratum, quod absit <inpulit>, invenit erga^h te mee dilectionis fervens affectio, ut nunquam potest aliqua interveniente molestia perfecta excludi devocio. Qua de re si mea voluntas expleri potuisset, essent profecto isle pluresque littere tibi directe, ut tibi tantum scriberem si sic mea res exigeret, nec una die curarem stilum feriatum habere, quamvis te pigeat michi scribere.

Certe famam meam litterarum tuarum inceptione suscitasti, non pleniter adhuc exsaciasti. Cum enim more meo, intimo amicorum meorum tabescam desiderio, multum dolorem meum re-

love each other for riches and pleasures^c to be durable at all, since the very things on which they base their love seem to have no durability. Consequently, when their riches or pleasure runs out, so too at the same time love may fail, since they loved these things not because of each other but each other because of these things.

But my love is united with you by a completely different pact. And the useless burdens of wealth, more conducive to wrongdoing than anything when the thirst for possession begins to glow,^d did not compel me to love you—only the highest virtue, in which lies the root of all honors and every success. Indeed, it is this virtue which is self-sufficient and in need of nothing else, which restrains passion, keeps desires in check, moderates joys and eradicates sorrows; which provides everything proper, everything pleasing, everything delightful; and than which nothing better can be found. Surely I have discovered in you—and thus I love you—undoubtedly the greatest and most outstanding good of all. Since it is established that this is eternal, it is for me the proof beyond doubt that you will remain in my love for eternity. Therefore believe me, desirable one, that neither wealth, distinctions, nor all the things that devotees of this world just after, will be able to sever me from love for you. Truly there will never be a day in which I would be able to think of myself and let it pass without thinking of you. Know that I am not concerned by any doubt that I may hope the same thing from you.

It is very rash of me to send studied phrases to you, because even someone learned right down to his fingertips, who has transformed every artistic arrangement into habit through long-established practice, would not be capable of painting a portrait of eloquence florid enough to justly deserve being seen by so great a teacher (a teacher so great, I declare, a teacher of virtue, a teacher of character, to whom French pigheadedness rightly yields and for whom at the same time the haughtiness of the whole world rises in respect, that anyone who considers himself even slightly learned^f would be rendered completely speechless and mute^g by his own judgement), much less myself, who hardly seem adept at trifles^h “which neither taste of nibbled nails nor bang the desk.”^e

And so may your generosity trust me: unless I knew the unfailing friendship of true love to be implanted in you, I would not presume to send you inelegant letters of such unrefined style. But because the spur of tireless care and sweetness has driven me into a passion for loving you, although it might be displeasing for you (heaven

frigeres, si eloquio prolixiore usus fuisses. Hoc tamen tantillum caritative salutacionis compendium, accipio quasi angelum, atque per horas singulas legens et relegens. Interdum eciam vice tua deosculans, operam do ut ferventissime aviditati mee satisfaciam. Nichil enim hac in vita michi delectabilius esse existimes quam te loqui, vel scribere, aut audire loquentem. Heret quippe cordi meo illa tue scriptionis mellita (f. 162v) dulcedo, que dum recole a tristitia ad gaudium, a merore vero ad hylaritatem deducit. Quo verius deus scit nichil credi potest. Sed si forte minime credis, erit ut estimo dies illa si deo placuerit, qua nichil verius te audivisse fatebere. Cesset iam exclamacio, quia reddita est ratio, qualiter sit tenenda nostri dilectio.

versus

Sicut in axe poli nil est equabile soli
Sic tibi consimilis meta non clauditur orbis.¹
Dum vivis valeas, post mortem gaudia sumas.

Ne amplius te fatigem sermone impexo, esto cure salvatori altissimo; vale qui in tui recordacione omnes michi molestias abstergis. Vale sine termino.

50

V Soli inter omnes etatis nostre puellas philosophie discipule, soli in quam omnes virtutum multiplicium dotes integre fortuna conclusit, soli speciose, soli graciose, ille qui tuo munere etheriis auris vescitur,^a ille qui tunc solum vivit, cum tue certus est gracie:

50. a) Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.546. b) The man's first use of *dilectio* in the correspondence. c) cf. 1 Corinthians 13.4–5. d) Ovid, *Ponticae* 2.3.10.

forbid), the ardent feeling of my love for you^h finds that complete devotion can never be hindered by any intervening difficulty. Therefore, if my will could have been fulfilled, certainly that letter and more would have been sent to you, so that I would write to you only if my situation demanded, nor would I care to give my pen a single day's holiday, even though it might annoy you to write to me.

At the beginning, you certainly aroused my hunger for your letters, and you have not yet fully satisfied it. For when, as is usual, I pine deep inside with longing for my friends, you could have relieved much sorrow if you had delivered a longer speech. Nevertheless I accept this tiny abridgment of a caring greeting as if it were an angel, reading and re-reading it every single hour. Sometimes even kissing it in place of you, I apply myself to satisfying my intense longing. For you might think that there is nothing in this life more delightful to me than to speak or write to you or to hear you speak—indeed, that honey-like sweetness of your writings clings to my heart and, whenever I think about it, leads me from sorrow to joy and even from grief to cheerfulness. God knows, nothing can be considered more true. Perhaps you scarcely believe it, but I believe the day will come—if it pleases God—when you will admit that you have never heard anything more true. But let my declaration come to an end, for I have given an account of how our love should be maintained.

Just as in the axis of the pole nothing is equal to the sun!ⁱ
So the ends of the earth do not enclose anything like you.
While you live, may you fare well, and after death taste joy.

Lest I wear you out any more with my unkempt words, may you be in the care of the supreme Savior; farewell, you who wipe away all troubles from me whenever I think of you. Farewell without end.

50

MAN To the only disciple of philosophy among all the young women of our age, the only one on whom fortune has completely bestowed all the gifts of the manifold virtues, the only attractive one, the only gracious one, he who through your gift is nourished by the upper air,^a he who lives only when he is sure of your favor:

in ulteriora semper profectum, si proficere potest que ad summum pervenit.

.... Tuum admiror ingenium, que tam subtiliter de amicitie legibus argumentaris ut non Tullium legisse, sed ipsi Tullio precepta dedisse videaris. Ut ergo ad respondendum veniam si responsio jure vocari potest, ubi nichil par redditur, ut meo modo respondeam: verum dicis o omnium mulierum dulcissima, quod veretalis dilectio^b nos non colligavit, qualis solet colligare qui suatum querunt,^c qui amicitiam questum faciunt, quorum fides cum fortuna stat et cadit,^d qui virtutem sui ipsius precium non putant, qui amicitiam ad calculum vocant,^e qui id quod ad se rediturum sit,^f sollicitis articulis supputant,^g quibus demum sine lucro nichil dulce est.^h

Nos vere alio pacto, ne dixerim fortuna, immo deusⁱ coniunxit; ego te inter multa milia^j ob innumeras virtutes tuas elegi: nullum veraciter ob aliud commodum, nisi ut in te quiescerem, nisi ut omnium miseriarum michi lenimen esses, ut de terrenis bonis omnibus, sola tua venustas me reficeret et omnium dolorum oblivisci faceret. Tu michi in fame saturitas, tu in siti refectio, tu in lassitudine quies, tu in frigore calor, tu in calore umbraculum, tu demum in omni intemperie saluberrima michi et vera temperies.

Tu eiam me ob aliquam fortasse bonam opinionem quam de me habuisti, me in tuam noticiam vocare dignata es. Tibi multis modis impar sum, et ut verius dicam omnibus modis impar sum, quia in hoc eiam me excedis, ubi ego videbar excedere. Ingenium tuum, facundia tua, ultra etatem et sexum tuum iam virile in robur se incipit extendere. Quid humilitas, quid omnibus conformis affabilitas tua! Quid in tanta dignitate admirabilis temperancia tua! Nonne te super omnes magnificent, nonne te in excelso collocant? ut inde quasi de candelabro luceas et omnibus spectabilis fias?^k Ego credo et confidenter affirmo quod nemo sit mortaliurn non cognatus non amicus, quem michi anteponas, et ut audacius dicam quem michi conferas. Non enim plumbeus sum,^l non stipes sum, non corneum rostrum^m habeo, ut acute non olfaciam, ubi verus amor sit, et quis me ex corde diligat. Vale que

may you advance ever further—if she who has reached the summit can advance any further.

.... I admire your talent, you who discuss the rules of friendship so subtly that you seem not to have read Tully but to have given those precepts to Tully himself! Therefore, so that I may come to the reply, if it can rightly be called a reply when nothing equal is given back, I shall reply in my own manner. What you say is true, sweetest of all women, that truly such a love^b does not bind us as often binds those who seek only their own interests,^c who make friendship a source of profit, whose loyalty stands firm or collapses with their fortunes,^d who do not consider virtue to be of value for its own sake,^e who call friendship to account,^f those who with busy fingers keep count of what they ought to get back,^g for whom indeed nothing is sweet without profit.^h

Truly we have been joined—I would not say by fortune but rather by Godⁱ—under a different agreement. I chose you among many thousands^j because of your countless virtues: truthfully for no other benefit than that I might rest in you, or that you might lighten all my troubles, or that of all the good things in the world only your charm might restore me and make me forget all sorrows. You are my fill when hungry, my refreshment when thirsty, my rest when weary, my warmth when cold, my shade when hot, indeed in every storm you are my most wholesome and true calm.

Perhaps because of some good report you heard about me, you also thought fit to invite me to make your acquaintance. I am inferior to you in many ways, or to speak more truthfully, I am inferior in every way, because you surpass me even where I seemed to surpass you. Your talent, your command of language, beyond your years and sex, is now beginning to extend itself into manly strength. What humility, what affability you accord to everyone! What admirable moderation with such dignity! Do not people esteem you more than everybody else, do they not set you up on high, so that from there you can shine forth like a lamp and be observed by all?^k

I believe and confidently assert that there is no mortal, no relative, no friend whom you would prefer to me, or to speak more boldly, whom you would compare with me. For I am not leaden,^l I am not a blockhead, I am not so hard-nosed^m that I cannot scent acutely where true love exists and who loves me from the heart. Farewell, you who make me fare well, and in whatever way I stand

e) Cicero, *Laelius* 58. f) Ovid, *Ponticae* 2.13.17–18. g) supputant Könsgen; cf. Ovid, *Ponticae* 2.3.18) suppetant MS. h) Terence, *Heautontimorumenos* 234. i) Matthew 19.6; Mark 10.9. j) Song of Songs 5.10. k) Matthew 5.15. l) Terence, *Heautontimoruenos* 877.

m) Corneum Könsgen) cornicum MS. Literally, "I have no horny beak," meaning that he is not so insensitive that he cannot sense where true love is.

me valere facis, et quomodo in gracia tua sim, certum me fac, quia tua gracia mea sola festivitas est.

51

V Anime sue toti et integro <gaudio>:^a diem hanc felicem, et omne tempus. Manda michi dulcissima quomodo te habeas quia sanus esse non potero, nisi tua valetudo causam michi sanitatis prebeat. Vale feliciter, donec iuga montis amabit aper.^b

52

<V> Lilio ligustrum: florere perpetuum.

Quia mandatum domini non observamus, nisi dilectionem ad invicem habeamus, oportet nos divine scripture obedire.^a Vale, donec tua valetudo michi tedio sit.

53

M Sapientie lumine per nobilitatis insignia mirabiliter prefulgenti,^a candentis lillii et vernantis rose similitudinem pretendenti, tocus corporis juvenili flore vigenti, tocus expers periculis: omnia que prospiciunt ad vere dilectionis profectum.

De favo sapientie si michi stillaret guttula scibilitatis,^b aliqua olenti nectare cum omni mentis conamine, alme dilectioni tue lilterarum notulis conarer depingere. Ergo in omni latinitate non est sermo inventus qui aperte loquatur erga te quam sit animus meus intentus, quia deo teste cum sublimi et precipua dilectione te diligo. Unde non est nec erit res vel sors que tuo amore me separet nisi sola mors. Quapropter quotidianum michi inest desiderium et optio, ut presentie tue reficiar refrigerio, et dies michi mensis, septimana quoque videbitur annus, donec dulcissimus tue dilectionis appareat aspectus. Cordi meo surgit et virescit dolor tam magnus, ut in eius descriptione saltem nec in-

51. a) Könsgen (p. 30) notes that *integro* could be a mistake for *integre*, but opts for adding *gaudio* by analogy with V 2, 89 and 105. b) Virgil, *Eclagues* 5.76.

52. a) John 13.34.

53. a) Wisdom 6.23. b) cf. Abelard, *Dialectica* 1.2.3, ed. De Rijk, p. 85.

in your favor, make me certain, for your favor is my only enjoyment.

51

MAN To his whole soul and undivided joy:^a may this day and every season be happy.

Write to me, sweetest, about how you are, because I shall not be able to be healthy unless your well-being provides a reason for my health. Fare well and be happy, for as long as the wild boar loves the mountain tops.^b

52

<MAN> To the lily, the privet: may you flourish forever.

Given that we do not keep the Lord's commandment unless we love each other, it behoves us to obey divine scripture.^a Farewell, until your well-being becomes tedious to me.

53

WOMAN To one shining wonderfully with the light of wisdom^a through the signs of his nobility, spreading out in the likeness of the radiant lily and the blooming rose, flourishing with the youthful flower of his whole body, she who is totally devoid of skill: all things that provide for the advance of true love.

If a droplet of knowability^b trickled down to me from the honeycomb of wisdom, I would try with every effort of my mind to portray in the jottings of my letter various things with a fragrant nectar for your nourishing love. But throughout all Latinity, no phrase has yet been found that speaks clearly about how intent on you is my spirit, for God is my witness that I love you with a sublime and exceptional love. And so there is not nor ever will be any event or circumstance, except only death, that will separate me from your love. For this reason every day there is in me the desire and wish that I may be restored by your soothing presence, and one day will seem a month to me and a week a year until that sweetest vision of your love appears. So much pain sprouts and thrives in my heart that not even a whole year would suffice for its description.

teger sufficiat annus. Corpus autem meum contristatum est, animus a solita hilaritate mutatus. Vale. (f. 163r)

54

V Dilecte et semper diligende fidelissimus eius: ut amor noster finem non senciatur et semper in melius conualescat.

Si tu o omnium rerum dulcissima de fide singularis^a amici tui dubitares vel si ego de tua dilectione non essem certissimus, tunc ad commendacionem mutui amoris longiores littere querende, plura argumenta in patrociniū vocanda essent. Nunc quia sic amor invaluit, ut per se sine adiumento luceat, verbis minime opus est, quia in rebus abundantes sumus. Verumtamen non absurdum est si aliquando vel sic nos invicem visitemus et corporalis presencie littera locum suppleat, cum edax malorum hominum invidia, nos pro libito nostro iungi non patitur. Quid multa? sicut cum multis suspiriis frequenter exopto, deus omnipotens te michi incolumem diu conservet. Abire permittamus, quos retinere non possumus. Bonum inde consilium erit.

55

M Viventium carissimo, et super vitam diligendo, intime devocionis amica: queque optima ex toto corde et anima.

Non te ignorare credo o meum dulce lumen quod nunquam superpositi cineres suffocant sopitum ignem,^a et si prohibent lucere, tamen non vetabunt semper ardere. Ita nulla extrinsecus accidentia aliqua ratione poterunt obsolere tui memoriale, quod cordi meo adnexi aureo vinculamine. Quid ultra? Deum enim testem habeo, quod vera et sincera dilectione te diligo. Vale maxima dulcedo mea.

56

V Super omne quod desiderari potest desiderabili unanimis amicis: quicquid boni singulariter amantibus servatum est.

My body too is sad, my spirit transformed from its usual cheerfulness. Farewell.

54

MAN To one loved and always to be loved, her most faithful: may our love not know an end and always recover for the better.

If you, sweetest of all things, doubted the faith of your particular^a friend, or if I were not absolutely certain of your love, then a longer letter commending mutual love would be required, and more arguments in its defense called for. But now that our love has grown so strong that it shines forth by itself without help, there is little need for words because we are overflowing with what is real. Nevertheless it is not unreasonable if sometimes or now for example, we alternate between visiting each other and having a letter take the place of physical presence, when the consuming envy of evil men does not allow us to be united according to our desire. What more? Just as I often wish with many sighs, may almighty God keep you safe for me for a long time. Let them go away, those whom we cannot hold back. It will be good advice.

55

WOMAN To the dearest of all living things, to be loved more than life itself, a deeply devoted friend: whatever is best from all my heart and soul.

I believe that you are not unaware, my sweet light, that ashes placed on a sleeping fire never put it out^a and that, even if they prevent it from giving off light, they cannot keep it from burning for ever. And so not for any reason will external events be able to wipe out the thought of you, which I have bound to my heart with a chain of gold. What else? God is my witness that I love you with a true and sincere love. Farewell, my greatest sweetness.

56

MAN To one desirable over everything that can be desired, a friend of one mind with you: whatever good that is reserved specifically for lovers.

54. a) cf. V 2, 4, 56.

55. a) Virgil, *Aeneid* 8.410.

Sermo tuus super mel dulcis^a sincerissime fidei planissime testis est. Quid dicam tibi dubius sum, quia tantum te amo quod amorem exprimere prout se habet non valeo. Ad hoc o summa vite mee requies, ad hoc inquam res devenit, ut excellentissimis meritis tuis nomen invenire non possim. Cum vales, nichil est quod me contristare possit. Cum egrotas, nichil est quod delectare possit. Si ergo vis dilecto tuo integre consulere, sana esto, tunc et ego sanus ero. Scit deus quem nichil latere potest quod cordi meo ita infra es, ut omnis cogitacio mea in te directa sit. Vale dulcissima non mulierum, immo generaliter omnium rerum.

57

M Pulcherrimo ornamento suo, virtute, non forma eius amica: summe suavitatis plenitudinem.

Multum uti ipse nosti iam temporis fluxit, in quo nulla nos prohdolor familiaris confabulacio iunxit; scias tamen, quamvis tua presencia ad libitum meum uti nequeam, tamen nulla re impedi-ente, visibus internis te non cesso respicere, tuamque salutem et prosperitatem diligere. Vale dilectissime, et me meo erga te amore dilige.

58

<M> Amico ut reor, illa olim pre ceteris in verbis dilecta, que im-merito nunc caret amoris privilegio: quod nec oculus visu per-cepit, nec in interiora cordis pertransiit.^a

Valete,^b onus meum propensius alleviate.

56. a) Ecclesiasticus 24.27.

58. a) 1 Cor 2.9. b) *Valete*, the formal plural (as in 56), but never used previously by the woman, who always uses the intimate singular, *Vale*. A serious rift has taken place between letters 57 and 58.

Your speech, sweeter than honey,^a is the clearest proof of your sincerest faith. I am not sure what I should say to you, because I love you so much that I cannot manage to express the extent of my love. The matter has come to such a point, greatest repose of my life, to such a point, I declare, that I cannot even find words for your outstanding virtues. When you are well, there is nothing that can make me sad. When you are ill, there is nothing that can make me happy. If therefore you wish to take full care of your beloved, keep well, and then I shall be well too. God, from whom nothing can be hidden, knows that you are so deep within my heart that my every thought is directed to you. Farewell, sweetest not of all women, but rather of all things in general.

57

WOMAN To her most beautiful ornament, in virtue not appearance, his friend: the fullness of greatest delight.

As you yourself know, much time has passed since we—sad to say—were last joined by any intimate conversation. Yet know that even though I am unable to enjoy your company as much as I would like, nothing can stop me from constantly seeing you with my mind's eye and yearning for your health and prosperity. Farewell, most beloved, and love me with the love I have for you.

58

<WOMAN> To a friend, so I believe, she who was once loved above all others with words, now unjustly deprived of the privilege of love: that which neither the eye has seen by sight nor has pierced the inside of the heart.^a

Sir, farewell.^b Lighten my burden more readily.

66

- M
versus
- 5
- 10
- 15
- 20
- Omine felici ceptis assis, Clio, nostri,^a
Carmine sis comens tabulas et suavia promens.
Mens vigila queso tali ditata patrono
Organa cuncta Jovis flabris spirare secundis
En lux adventat, nox et discedere temptat
En^b lux adventit, nox et confusa recedit
Ecce manus cleri splendescit luce magistri,
Splendor doctoris noctem fugat <at>que^c prioris.
Muse qua causa laudes date voce sonora.
Concine prima Clio: "flos cleri semper aveto."
Dic post Euterpe: "florens felicia carpe."
Dicque Thalia: "vale, crescunt dum cornua lunc."
Annue Melpomene: "spirant dum frigora brume."
Addeque Tersicore: "felix per secula salve."
Huic quoque Calliope rogo dulcia carmina prome.
Dic Urania simul: "vivat virtutibus auctus."
Moribus hunc ornes et honore Polimnia dones.
Dic et nunc Erato: "felix sit corpore mundo.
Felix sit mundo sed gaudens postque secundo
Quo sibi met grati gaudent sine fine beati."
"Salve, vive, vige," cuncte resonate Camene.
"Gaudia tot retine quot habent guttas maris unde.^c
Quotque virent herbe quot pisces sunt maris amne."
Quid plus, quid dicem, pace fruatur, amen.

Vale spiraculum meum.

66

- WOMAN
- 5
- 10
- 15
- 20
- Clio, assist my undertaking with an auspicious sign,^a
Decorating tablets with song and uttering sweet things.
Mind, endowed by such a patron, please pay attention,
Every instrument, blow with the propitious breezes of Jove.
Lo, day approaches, and night tries to leave,
Lo,^b day has come, and confounded night recedes,
See, the throng of the clergy shines with the light of the
master,
And the teacher's splendor expels^c his predecessor's night.
Therefore, Muses, give praises with sonorous voices.
Sing first, Clio: "Hail, flower of the clergy, forever."
Speak next, Euterpe: "Flourish and gather joys."
Speak, Thalia: "Be strong, for as long as the crescent moon
grows."
Nod in agreement, Melpomene: "For as long as winter
breathes cold."
And join in, Tersicore: "Be well and happy forever."
For this also I ask, Calliope, "Utter sweet songs."
Speak also, Urania: "Let him live enriched with virtues."
Adorn him with courtesy and grant him honor, Polymnia.
And now speak, Erato: "May he be happy bodily in this world."
May he be happy in this world, but rejoicing afterwards in
the next,
Where, each welcome to the other, the blessed rejoice for-
ever.
"Be well, live, and thrive" echo together, Muses all.
"Hold on to as many joys as the waves of the ocean have
drops,
As many as the grasses that grow, as many as the fish in the
waters of the ocean."^d
What more, what shall I compose? Let him enjoy peace.
Amen.

Farewell, my breath.

66. a) On Clio and the other Muses named in this poem, Fulgentius Mythographus, *Mythologiarum* 1.15; see Könsgen, p. 67. Fulgentius explains Clio as the thought of knowledge to be gained, Euterpe as seeking knowledge, Thalia as capacity or of planting shoots,

Melpomene as making meditation last, Tersicore as delighting in instruction, Calliope as of the best voice, Urania as heavenly, Polymnia as making deep memory, Erato as what is similar. b) En Könsgen) Et MS c) fugat <at>que Könsgen) fugatque MS d) Ovid, *Ponticae* 2.7.28.

67

V Vale dulcissima mea, et tuam licenciam dilecto tuo concede.
Vale et sencias de me, quod de te ipsa. Tu semper es meta ad
quam tendo, tu cursus mei terminus et requies. Vale super omne
quod dici potest amabile.

68

V Dulcissime dulcissimus: quicquid dulcius excogitari potest.
Vale omnibus dulcior que dulcia esse noscuntur. Precor te ob-
nix ut michi mandes quomodo te habeas, quia tua prosperitas,
est mea summa voluptas. Manda michi quando venire possim.
Vale. (f. 164r)

69

M Littera vade meas et amico ferte querelas,
versus Dans ex parte mei verba salutis ei.
Tu licet invitum converte precamur amicuum
Dic, quia pro merito non meritum capio,^a
Eius sermonis credula facta dolis.
Sit memor illarum michi quas fudit lacrimarum
Cum michi dicebat quod mortuus erat,
Si tam formose non perfrueretur amore
Et tunc laudavit, quod modo vile facit.
10 Dic ubi ploratus, ubi sint inquire, rogatus,
Et pignus fidei quod dedit ultro michi.
Cur tam raro venit? mea cur precordia ledit?
Ah! Sic deludi non ego digna fui.
15 Hos rogo ne versus oculus legat invidiosus
Hosque sciant nolo pectora plena dolo.

Qua dictaminis dulcedine te alloquar dilectissime mentis mee
excedit valenciam, quia sicut cor humanum in medio sanguine
principalem sedem elegit exultationis, ita mens mea te sibi sum-
mum desiderium in omni genere proposuit dilectionis.

69. a) Könsigen judges a line or lines to be missing in the transcription be-
tween lines four and five. The fourth line is here translated as a con-
tinuation of the imperative verbs in lines one and three. b) Matthew
11.21. c) Jeremiah 14.17. d) cf. Psalm 44.6; Isaiah 5.28 etc.

67

MAN Farewell, my sweetest, and give your permission to your
beloved. Farewell, and may you feel about me as you do about
yourself. You are always the goal at which I aim, the end and re-
pose of my journey. Farewell, more lovable than anything that can
be named.

68

MAN To his sweetest, her sweetest: whatever sweeter thing that can
be imagined.
Farewell, sweeter than everything known to be sweet. I
earnestly beg you to tell me how you are, because your good for-
tune is my greatest pleasure. Tell me when I may come. Farewell.

69

WOMAN Go, letter, and take my complaints to a friend,
Giving him words of greeting on my behalf.
Change this friend, I beg you, even if he be unwilling,
5 Speak, because I do not receive my just reward,^a
I came to believe in the guile of his speech.
May he remember those tears, which he shed for me,
When he told me that he would die
10 If he could not enjoy the love of one so beautiful.
Then he praised what he now deems worthless.
Say to him, where is the weeping? Ask him, where are the
pleas
And the pledge of faith which he gave me of his own accord?
Why does he come so rarely? why does he break my heart?
15 Ah! I did not deserve to be so deceived.
Let not jealous eyes read these verses, I ask:
I do not want hearts full of guile to know them.

With what sweetness of composition might I appeal to you,
most beloved? It goes beyond the capacity of my mind, for just as
the human heart chose the principal seat of its exultation at the
center of the bloodstream, so my mind has set you up as its high-
est desire in every kind of love.

72

V Irate, et in ira misericordiam non deserenti, receptus in gratiam: ut tamdiu feliciter vivas, donec ego gracia tua carere velim.

Sic amor noster immortalis erit si uterque nostrum felici et amabili concertacione preire laboret alterum, et neutri nostrum constet se ab altero superatum esse. Fit siquidem ut amicus in amando languescat, si se ab amico minus amari videat quam ipse promereatur. Nunquam ergo dixisse velim quod plus te amem, quam me amari sentiam, quia talis vox stulta est, et discidium parit. Immo hoc multo melius dictum recolligo, quod in mutuo amore inferior esse nolo, et uter nostrum alterum vincat dubito. Quidam cum spinam pulcherrimos de se flores proferentem videret, "talis est" inquit "domina mea, qua nulla spina est asperior cum irascitur, nullus flos gravior vel nitidior cum placatur." Vale et ut neminem mortalium michi compares, diligenter observa, quia ego in eadem circa te intencione tenaciter perseverabo. Salve dilectissima, et me semper tuum in memoria habe.

73

M Salve et tu dilectissime, omni dulcedine digne.

Flos juvenilis^a ave, lux et decus imperiale,
Imperiale decus, flos juvenilis ave.
Cum te plasmavit, sat te natura beavit:^b
Viribus interius, laudibus exterius.
5 Forme splendorem, tantum dedit atque decorem,
Quantum vel nequeo dicere, vel stupeo.
Plurima narrarem de te si crederet ullus,
Quod mea mens sentit de probitate tua.
Nunc faciam finem licet et plus dicere possem:
10 Vivere gaudere, volo te minimeque dolere.
Quot celo stelle, quot sunt et in orbe puelle,^c
Quot maris undisone, tot tibi dico vale.

72

MAN To one angered but not forsaking compassion in her anger, he who is restored to favor: may you live happily until such time as I might wish to be without your favor.

In this way will our love be immortal: if each of us strives to outdo the other in a friendly and loving contest and if neither of us agreed to be outdone by the other. Indeed, it happens that a friend may grow weary of love if he sees himself loved by a friend less than he deserves. Therefore I would never want to say that I love you more than I feel loved, because such a statement is foolish and invites division. On the contrary, I hold this assertion to be much better: that in a mutual love, I do not want to be the lesser, and which of us surpasses the other, I do not know. Someone once said on seeing a thorn sprouting very beautiful flowers from itself: "Such is my lady: no thorn is sharper when she is angry, no flower more delightful or beautiful when she is pleased." Farewell, and make sure that you compare no mortal with me, for I will tenaciously persist with the same intention towards you. Greetings, my most beloved, and keep me in your memory as forever yours.

73

WOMAN Greetings to you too, most beloved, worthy of every delight!

Flower of youth,^a hail, light, and imperial glory,
Imperial glory, flower of youth, hail.
When she formed you, nature blessed you well enough:^b
Internally with strength, externally with acclaim.
5 To your form she gave such splendor and beauty
That either I cannot describe or am struck dumb.
Much more could I say of you, if anyone would believe
What my mind feels about your worth.
Now I shall end, although I could still say more:
10 I want you to live, enjoy and suffer little.
As many as the stars in the sky, as young women in the world,^c
As roaring waves over the sea—so many times do I bid you
farewell.

73. a) cf. M 1, 5, 21, 53. b) Marbod, *Carmen* 24, PL 171: 1660. c) Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 1.56–59.

86

M Inepotabili fonti dulcedinis, pars anime eius individua: post sollicitudinem Marthe, et fecunditatem Lie, possidere optimam partem Marie.^a

Immensa vis tui amoris, indesinenter, incessanter, indubitanter, inenarrabiliter permanens in statu sui tenoris, secundum posse meum ac nosse, me cogit pauca ad te dilectissimum scribere. Sed quid potissimum eloquar prorsus ignoro; tocicis me verbis tuis dulcissimis prevenis, tocicens michi tue intime, et sincere dilectionis affectum ostendis, ut absque omni ambiguitate amor et desiderium tui semper in me ardescat, et nunquam refrigescat.

O si nutu dei acciperem volucris speciem quantocius volando te visitarem.^b Id enim quod nunc optavi, si salva gracia dei posset fieri: deo teste cui difficile est verba dare fallacie, nichil est in omni orbe terrarum quod maius optarem. Impinguat me affectus tuus, sed non potest me implere amor tuus. In tua vita est salus mea, tu es totum desiderium meum, et omne bonum meum. Vale cordis dimidium, et tocicus leticie ac amoris incendium.

87

- V
Et brevis et longus presens michi transiit annus
Ex quo cara tuus me sibi vinxit amor.
Nam repetendo tue decus insaciabile forme
Et bonitatis opus familiare tibi
5 Noticie brevis una tue, vix hora videtur
Sic semper votis es nova cura meis.
At repetens quam rara tuo contingis amanti,
Annos innumeros estimo preteritos.
10 Queibet una dies ter denos continet annos
Quam sine te cogor ducere dulcis amor
Sole carens fluit illa dies, et lucis honore,
Qua tua ceu michi sol non oritur facies.
Sol certe meus est vultus tuus, et mea lux est,
Contingit faciem quando videre tuam.
15 Sidera si queras, duo sunt mea, nescio plura.
Sidereos oculos hec ego dico tuos.

86. a) Genesis 29.31-35; Luke 10.41-42. On the Mary/Martha theme, see Giles Constable, "The Interpretation of Mary and Martha" in his *Three Studies in Medieval and Religious Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 1-142, especially 74-75. b) Psalm 54.7.

86

WOMAN To the inexhaustible fount of sweetness, the indivisible part of his soul: after the worries of Martha and the fertility of Lia, may you possess the best part, that of Mary.^a

The immense strength of my love for you, unceasingly, incessantly, unquestioningly and indescribably holding its own course, impels me to write a few words to you, most beloved, as best I can or know. But I have no idea at all what is the most important thing I should say: every time you anticipate me with your sweetest words, you show me the affection of your innermost and sincere love, so that passion and desire for you always burn in me without any uncertainty and never grows cold.

If only with a nod from God I could take the form of a bird, I would fly to visit you as soon as possible.^b If it could be done with the saving grace of God, there is nothing in the whole world which I could wish for more than that which I just wished for, as God, to whom it is difficult to give deceitful words, is my witness. I may grow fat with your affection but your love cannot fill me. My well-being is in your life, you are my complete desire and all my good. Farewell, half of my heart and fire of all my happiness and love.

87

- MAN
Both short and long has this year seemed to me,
Since, my dear, your love bound me to itself.
For when I recall the insatiable glory of your form
And the work of goodness present within you,
5 It seems barely one short hour since we met:
So you are always a fresh concern for my desires.
But recalling how rarely you happen upon your lover,
I consider countless years to have gone by.
10 Any single day I am forced to spend without you,
Sweet love, seems like three decades.
A day without your face rising like the sun over me,
Goes by without sun or the gift of its light.
Certainly your visage is my sun and my light,
Whenever it happens that I see your face.
15 My stars, if you should ask, are two. I know no others:
I declare them to be those starry eyes of yours.

Montes et nemora, silvarumque omnia respondent umbrosa,^b
et quomodo michi gloria difficilis esset rescribendi? Fallit enim
labor laborantem,^c animus dum se voluntarius expedit ad rem.
Immo nil difficile quod ex voluntate.

Raro quenquam invenimus in hoc salo tam composite felicitatis, tam perfecte virtutis, quin corpus eius non bene politum, deesse sibi peniteat multum, nisi tu solus, qui per omnia et in omnibus extas virtuosus. Igitur cordi meo firmiter infixus semper adheres, et adherebis, nec saltem horam unam dormiendo neque vigiliando inde recedis neque recedes.^d

Non est nec unquam erit dilectio firma, que tam cito flectitur fallacia. Quicquid unquam michi iniurie intulisti, a memoria actenus non recessit cordis mei, sed nunc pure ac sincere et plenter tibi condonabo omnia, eo tenore ut deinceps a te tali non movear iniuria. Tecum permanebo fida, stabilis, immutabilis, et non flexibilis, et si omnes homines capiendos in unicos scirem, nunquam a te nisi vi coacta, et penitus expulsa, recederem. Non sum harundo vento agitata,^e neque me a te movebit asperitas ulla, nec alicuius rei mollicia. (f. 166rb)

Ignis enim amoris tui semper in me renovabitur et grescet, altius inardescit et non refrigescit, et quanto interiorius plus absconditur, et servatur, tanto magis augetur et multiplicatur. Et licet tocians, ut velim, ut optem, ut desiderem, oculis corporeis a me non videaris, tamen ab intencione mentis non labescis. Facilius enim ignis servatur, si caute cineribus sepelitur, nec fumus inde generatur; ita et nos invicem diligamus.^f Vale interminabili gaudio letare.

89

V Unico gaudio suo: salutem si tibi dare possum, quod nisi a te non habeo.^a

Si verba que mitto, aliquantulum pauciora desiderio tuo esse videntur, non verba consule, sed mittentis voluntatem. Inopem me copia facit. Volunt siquidem multa simul erumpere, et ita se in-

The mountains and shady groves of the forests reply:^b so how can the glory of writing back be difficult for me? For work leads the worker astray^c while the spirit willingly frees itself for the task. Indeed nothing is difficult which comes from the will.

It is rare to find on these high seas anyone with such composed happiness and such complete virtue that he does not have cause to regret greatly the failing of his unrefined body—apart from you who stand out as virtuous through everything and in everything. Therefore, you cling and will always cling firmly attached to my heart; not even for one hour, whether I am asleep or awake, do you leave or will you ever leave me.^d

There does not exist nor will there ever be a firm love that is turned away by deceit so quickly. Whatever injuries you inflicted on me have not yet gone from the memory of my heart, but I shall now genuinely and sincerely and fully forgive you for everything connected with them, so that I shall not be upset by such injuries from you again. I shall remain faithful to you, stable, unchangeable and unwavering, and, even if I knew all men as individuals, I would never leave you unless compelled to by force and completely expelled. I am not a reed shaken by the wind,^e nor shall any severity or weakness of any kind take me from you.

For the fire of love for you will always be renewed and grow within me; it burns deeper and does not grow cold, and the more it is hidden and kept inside, the more it enlarges and multiplies. And even if you are not seen by me with corporeal eyes as often as I wish, hope and desire, nevertheless you do not slip from the intention of my mind. For a fire is kept going more easily if it is carefully buried under ashes and smoke is not produced from it. Let us love each other like this.^f Farewell, enjoy unending happiness.

89

MAN To his only joy: well-being, if I can give you that which I do not have except from you.^a

If the words that I send seem to be somewhat fewer than you desire, consider not the words but the will of the sender. Abundance makes me poor: indeed, many words want to pour out all

b) Virgil, *Eclagues* 10.8-9. c) Horace, *Satires* 2.2.12; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 6.60. d) cf. V 6, 22. e) Matthew 11.7; Luke 7.24. f) 1 John 4.7.

89. a) cf. V 51.

et eum quem te amare testaris, lingua eciam tacente, factis sufficienter loqueris. (f. 167r)

106

<<V>> Nichil insipiente fortunato gravius est.^a Nunc primum ante actam fortunam recognosco, nunc leta tempora respexisse vacat, quia spes recedit nescio an unquam recuperanda. Ego precium ob stulticiam fero, quia bonum illud quod retinere sicut decuit nescivi, quo utique indignus fui, illud inquam bonum perdo, alio avolat, me relinquit, quia me sua possessione indignum recognoscit. Vale.

107

M Cuius animus dividitur in multa, minus valet ad singula. Vidi michi assistere mulierem, etate senem, aspectu decoram, et per omnes compages membrorum ultra humanum modum elegantem, que me torvis oculis inspiciens, iustaque increpatione has voces proferens inquit:^a "Cur tam negligenter agis? Nonne vides quod nullum nobilitas generis, nec forma decoris, nec aspectus pulcritudinis juvat, nisi quem spiritus sancti gracia prevenit, diviciasque sapientie et sciencie in se recipit ut his munitus secularibus caliditatibus possit resistere salvus?" Reducto in vires animo, hoc eam allocuta sum responso.....etc. Vale, quot folia queque gerunt arbores, tot mando prosperitates.

108

V
Sol meus atque serena dies mea lux mea salve.
versus Tu mea dulcedo, te sine dulce nichil
Si queris quis verba tibi tam dulcia mittat
5 Vita manes cuius hoc facit ille tuus
Cui potus lacrimae te discedente fuere
Cui dolor et gemitus mixta fuere cibus.

106. a) Cicero, *Laelius* 54.
107. a) cf. Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy* 1.1.

words; and you speak through deeds sufficiently of the one whom you assert you love even with a silent tongue.

106

<<MAN>> There is nothing worse than a foolish man blessed by fortune.^a Now for the first time I realize the good fortune I previously enjoyed, now I have the opportunity to look back on happy times, for hope is fading—I do not know whether ever to be recovered. I am paying the price for stupidity, because I am losing that good thing of which I have been completely unworthy, that good thing which I have not known how to keep as I ought. It is flying elsewhere, forsaking me, because it realizes that I am not worthy of having it. Farewell.

107

WOMAN A spirit divided over many things is less effective on individual matters. I saw a woman standing near me, advanced in years, graceful in appearance and in every part of her body elegant beyond human measure. Looking at me with stern eyes and speaking these words in rightful reproach,^a she said: "Why do you act so negligently? Do you not see that neither nobility of birth nor attractive form nor beautiful appearance helps anyone for whom the grace of the Holy Spirit does not come first and who does not draw in the riches of wisdom and knowledge, so that, protected by these, worldly cunning can be safely resisted?" My spirit having been restored to strength, I spoke to her with this response. etc. Farewell. As many as the leaves borne by every tree, so many prayers do I send for your prosperity.

108

MAN
My sun and my serene day, my light, greetings.
You are my sweetness, without you nothing is sweet,
If you should ask who sends words so sweet to you:
5 He who is yours does so, whose life you remain,
Whose drink has been tears with you away,
Whose food has been mixed with grief and sighs.^a

108. a) Isaiah 35.10. b) Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy* 3 m.1.7;
Lucan, *Pharsalia* 8.159–60. c) Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 2.272.

Vita gravis mors suavis erat, hanc sepe precabar
 Nam nec leta dies, nec michi grata quies
 Sepe sequi dominam votum fuit, ire parabam,
 10 Sed pudor atque metus continuere viam.
 Fama tui reditus simul est audita, reversus,
 Spiritus est cari dulcis amica tui.
 Incalui totus, horror ferit intima letus,
 Erigor, et mea vix gaudia percipio,
 15 Nec mirum reduci tibi me dilecta favere,
 Namque favent letis tempora blanditiis
 Gratius astra nitent, sol clarior exercit orbem,^b
 Blanditur tellus floribus alma suis.^c
 In laudes natura tuas se preparat omnis
 20 Cuncta tuas laudes o mea vita canunt.

109

M Quia uterque nostrum alter alterius conspectui modo in momento presentari valet, littere nostre salutacione non indigent. Cupio te tamen esse salvum, virtutum decore indutum, sophie gemmis circumtectum, morum honestate preditum, omnisque compositionis ornatu decoratum. Vale, fons refrigerii. Vale flos odoris gratissimi. Vale memoria leticie, oblivio tristicie.

110

V Unice sue: gaudium quod nulla egritudo corrumpat.
 Deo teste dilectissima quotiens tuas legere litteras incipio, tanta interiorius suavitate perfundor, ut litteram quam legi sepe cogar repetere, quia attentionem michi magnitudo aufert leticie. Facile ergo perpendere potes quam iocunda michi sit ipsius gratissime persone tue presencia et quantum in se ponderis habeant viva verba tua, cum tantum me vox eminus missa letificet. Vale.

111

<<V>> Lucida nox tua sit, preter me nil tibi desit
 <versus> Dum me pulcra cares defore cuncta putes.
 Me sopita vide, me dum vigilas meditare,
 Et velut ipse tuus sum, michi sis animus.

Life was difficult, death sweet and often prayed for;
 Day was not joyful nor sleep pleasing to me.
 10 I often wished to follow my lady, and was preparing to go,
 But shame and fear blocked the way.
 As soon as news of your return was heard, sweet friend,
 The breath of your dear one was restored.
 I became hot all over, joyous trembling pounded inside,
 I am revived and scarcely grasp my joys.
 15 Nor is it any wonder that I favor your return,
 Beloved, for the season favors delightful joys.
 The stars shine more pleasingly, the sun shows its orb more
 brightly,^b
 Mother Earth delights with its flowers.^c
 All Nature prepares itself for your praises,
 20 Everything, my life, sings your praises.

109

Woman Since each of us is able to see the other in a moment now, our letters do not need a greeting. Nevertheless I want you to be well, clothed with the grace of the virtues, covered with the jewels of wisdom, endowed with honesty of behavior, and decorated with the adornment of complete composure. Farewell, font of refreshment. Farewell, flower of the most pleasing scent. Farewell, memory of joy, end of sadness.

110

Man To his only one: joy which no sickness can destroy.
 God is my witness, most beloved, that every time I begin to read your letters, I am flooded with so much delight inside that I am often forced to go back over the letter I have read, because the extent of my happiness takes my attention away. So you can easily imagine how joyful for me is the very presence of your so pleasing person, and how important are your living words, when just a word sent from afar makes me happy. Farewell.

111

<<MAN>> May your night be clear, may you lack nothing but me.
 And lacking me, beautiful woman, may you feel deprived of everything.
 Imagine me when you sleep, think of me while awake,
 And just as I am yours, be my spirit for me.

113

<<V>>

Urget amor sua castra sequi^a sua jura vereri
Et quod non didici discere cogit amor.^b
Non homo sed lapis est quem non tua forma movebit.^c
Credo quod moveor, nec lapis esse queo.
Cura fuit Veneris effingere membra poetis^d
.....

Sed tibi num finxere pares? Non estimo certe
Exuperat veras nam tua forma deas.^e

10

Eloquar an sileam?^f Si sit tua gracia dicam.
Dicam nam verbis proditor omnis abest

Qualia sunt que veste tegis? Vix mente quiesco.
Que palpasse volo cum subeunt animo.

Sed fortuna pudorque meis dulcissima votis
Obstant et populi murmura que timeo.

15

Ut quociens opto te possim cara videre
(Quod ter quaque die posse velim fieri)^g
.....

Candidior medio nox foret illa die.^h

20

Da veniam quia dictat amor que scribere cogor
Da veniam fasso, non patienter amo.ⁱ

Tu me vicisti, potuit quem vincere nulla.
Fortius hinc uror, est quia primus amor.^j

Nam non ante meas penetravit flamma medullas.^k
Si quis amor fuerat ante fui tepidus.

25

Facundum me sola facis,^l hec gloria nulli
Contigit, ut fuerit carmine digna meo.

Tu nulli similis, in qua natura locavit^m

Quicquid precipuum mundus habere potest
Forma genus mores per que pariuntur honores

30

Urbi te nostre conspicuam faciunt.

Ergo quid est mirum si me nitor attrahit horum?
Si tibi succumbo, victus amore tuo?

113

<<MAN>>

Love urges me to enlist in its service,^a to respect its laws,
And what I had not learnt, love forces me to learn.^b
No man but stone is he whom your beauty does not move.^c
I believe that I am moved, nor can I be stone.
Poets have tried hard to portray the body of Venus,^d
.....

But did they ever produce anyone equal to you? Certainly I
think not.

For your beauty surpasses even the goddesses themselves.^e

Should I go on or be silent?^f By your grace, I will speak.

I will speak, for a traitor is devoid of words.

What are they like, what you conceal with clothing? My mind
can scarcely rest.

I want to stroke them, when they come to mind.

But fortune and shame and, that which I fear, sweetest,

The murmuring of people, obstruct my desires.

If I could see you, my dear, as often as I wished

(Three times a day I would want it to be)^g
.....

That night would be brighter than the middle of day.^h

Forgive me, since love dictates what I am forced to write.

Forgive me, for I admit that I do not love patiently.ⁱ

You have conquered me, whom no woman could conquer.

Thus I burn more strongly, this being my first love.^j

For never before has that flame penetrated my marrow.^k

If ever there was love before, I was only lukewarm.

You alone make me eloquent;^l such glory has happened to

No one, that she be worthy of my song.

You are like no one else, you in whom nature has placed^m

Whatever excellence the world can have:

Beauty, noble birth, character—through which honor is begot-
ten—

30

All make you outstanding in our city.

So is it then surprising if I am lured by their brilliance,

If I succumb to you, conquered by your love?ⁿ

113. a) Ovid, *Amores* 1.2.17–18, 1.9.1, 3.8.26; *Ars amatoria* 3.559. b) Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 9.515. c) Terence, *Hecuba* 214; Statius, *Silvaid* 2.1.139. d) Könsngen conjectures from the meter a missing line at this point: the scribe indicates an ellipse. e) Ovid, *Heroides* 18.68. f) Virgil, *Aeneid* 3.39. g) Scribal ellipse indicated, although there is no major lapse in sense. h) Ovid, *Heroides* 16.320. i) Ovid, *Heroides* 19.4; cf. *Ponticae* 1.7.22, 4.2.23. j) Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.452. k) Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 14.351. l) Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 6.469. m) cf. 43, 73. n) Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.619; *Heroides* 15.176.