

## Patrologia Latina 171

### MARBODI REDONENSIS EPISCOPI CARMINA VARIA, I

[Translated from the Latin by Kenneth Baxter Wolf and the students of his “Medieval Latin Translation” course (Fall 2021): Anne Bai, Ethan Collins, Nate Hodgson-Walker, Maddie Jones, Liam MacDonald, Millie Mince, Tyler Vold, and Jasmine Zhou]

Marbod (c. 1035-1122) was an archdeacon and schoolmaster at Angers before assuming the episcopacy of Rennes in 1096. He is best known for his poetry. Here are a selection of poems pertaining to Mary Magdalene, the Virgin Mary, dedicated virgins, virtues, and love, including same-sex love.

#### HYMNS ABOUT MARY MAGDALENE

*Mary Magdalene is mentioned twelve times in the gospels, more than most of the apostles and more than any other woman with the exception of the Virgin Mary. The name "Magdalene" seems to relate to Magdala, a village on Sea of Galilee. She is introduced as one of a group of female followers of Jesus, who having been exorcized by him, thereafter provided support for him and the apostles (Luke 8:1-3). She was one of the women who witnessed the crucifixion and the burial of Christ (Matthew 27:55-56; 61). The gospels agree that Mary Magdalene was one of the first to discover the empty tomb, where she interacted with the resurrected Christ (e.g., Mark 16:9-10, John 20:11-18). By the time of Gregory I (590-604), Mary Magdalene had been conflated with Mary of Bethany (the sister of Matha and Lazarus), who sat in rapt attention to Jesus' words while Martha busied herself serving him and the other guests (Luke 10:39). Mary Magdalene was also identified with the unnamed "sinful woman" who bathed Jesus' feet with her tears and then anointed them (Luke 7:36-50). Marbod did not question these dubious connections between Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany, and anonymous sinner.*

#### I. Hymnus primus de Magdalena

##### I. The first hymn concerning [Mary] Magdalene

Maria mater Domini, Maria soror Lazari

Mary, the mother of the Lord, and Mary, the sister of Lazarus.

Duae patronae coelitus collatae sunt fidelibus.

Two patronesses bestowed on the faithful from heaven.

Impar ancilla dominae, sed pari fulgens nomine.

The handmaid unequal to the lady, yet shining with the same name.

Haec forma poenitentiae, at illa mater veniae.

This one the model of penance, and that one the mother of pardon.

Est illa virgo virginum, sanctorum princeps omnium;

That one is the virgin of virgins, the foremost of all saints,

Haec peccatorum conscia, et criminosis commoda.

While this one is an ally of sinners, accommodating to the shameful.

Maria pedes genuit, quos illa plorans tenuit.

Mary gave birth to the feet that the other one held as she cried.

Quia dilexit nimium purgatur labe criminum,

Because she loved beyond measure she is purged of the dishonor of her sins,

Haerens humi miserrima complectitur vestigia,

Adhering to the earth, that most wretched woman embraces the feet,

Undas quas fudit oculis piis desiccet osculis;

With kisses she dries up the tears she sheds from her pious eyes;

Accessit ejus merito mirabilis dignatio:

Her wonderful reputation approaches her merit:

Unguento nardi pistici perfudit caput Domini,

She bathes the head of the Lord with an unguent of genuine nard,<sup>1</sup>

Aequalis mundi terminis laus hujus vivet operis,

Appropriate praise for her deed will live to the ends of the earth,

Concurrans Evangelio, ipso testante Domino.

Rushing alongside the gospel, with the Lord himself bearing witness.

Huic se resurgens Dominus manifestavit primitus,

Rising up [from the dead], the Lord made himself visible to her first,

Infamem quondam feminam constituens apostolam,

Establishing a formerly disreputable woman as an apostle,

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<sup>1</sup> Nard or Spikenard is an aromatic amber-colored essential oil derived from a plant in the honeysuckle family that is native to the Himalayas.

Sit Patri laus ingenito, et ejus Unigenito,  
Praise be to the unbegotten Father and to his only begotten [Son]  
Cum Spiritu Paraclito, nec nato, nec ingenito.  
With the Comforting [Holy] Spirit, neither born, nor begotten.

## II. Hymnus secundus de eadem

II. The second hymn concerning the same  
Omnes immundi currite, fons patet indulgentiae.  
Run, all unclean ones, for the font of forgiveness is open.  
Nullus desperet veniam qui servat poenitentiam.  
May no one who does penance despair of indulgence.  
Exemplum Dei Filius ostendit peccatoribus  
The Son of God has provided an example to sinners,  
Mariam vas spurcitiae septeno plenam dedecore,  
[the example of] Mary, a vessel of filth, filled with the seventh disgrace,<sup>2</sup>  
Qua quondam nulla turpior, qua nunc vix ulla sanctior,  
There was at one time no one more shameful than her, and now there is scarcely anyone holier,  
Quae Christi pedes abluit, sed mox et caput inunxit.  
She washed the feet of Christ, but shortly thereafter after she anointed his head.<sup>3</sup>  
Abhorret Christus neminem, Deus non spernit hominem.  
Christ abhors no one, God spurns no man.  
Agamus illi gratias pias fundendo lacrymas;  
Let us give thanks to him by shedding pious tears;  
Pedes quos nudat Dominus tergamus nostris crinibus;  
Let us dry with our hair the feet that the Lord bared;  
Superfluis ex opibus ministremus pauperibus.  
Let us minister to the poor out of our overflowing wealth.  
Augebit nobis gratiam qui praestat indulgentiam,  
He who grants forgiveness will increase grace for us,  
Ut nostra ex fragrantia redoleat Ecclesia.  
So that the church may be fragrant with our perfume.  
Peccatrix haec sanctissima nostra propulset crimina,  
May this most holy sinner ward off our sins,  
Ejus nobis oratio sit virtutum largitio.  
May her prayer be for us a lavish gift of virtues.  
Sit Patri laus ingenito, etc.  
Praise be to the unbegotten Father, etc.

## III. Hymnus tertius de eadem

III. The third hymn concerning the same  
Peccatrix quaedam femina Ecclesiae novissima  
A certain sinner, a certain woman very new to the church  
Exuta carnis onere coelos ascendit hodie;  
Stripped of the burden of the flesh, ascends to heaven today;<sup>4</sup>  
Cujus qui colunt exitum recenseant introitum,  
May those who venerate her exit, reexamine her entrance,  
Ad laudem summi Domini qui tantum praestat homini.  
To the praise of the highest Lord who provided mankind with such an example.  
Sedebat apud Simonem Deus indutus hominem,  
The incarnate God sat in the presence of the man Simon<sup>5</sup>  
Accessit moerens, languida, ad medici vestigia.  
Grieving and listless, she approached the feet of the physician.

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<sup>2</sup> "Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery" was the seventh commandment. Exodus 20:14.

<sup>3</sup> A reference to Mary of Bethany anointing Jesus' head with expensive oil. Matthew 26:6-13

<sup>4</sup> Clearly this hymn was meant to be sung on the feast day of Mary Magdalene, July 22.

<sup>5</sup> The Pharisee hosting Jesus, as described in Luke 7:36-50.

Ex magno desiderio processit haec praesumptio,  
This presumption proceeded from her great longing,  
Ut attrectaret meretrix quem tulit Virgo genitrix.  
That this harlot might lay hands on the one whom the Virgin mother bore!  
Quid vellet voce tacuit, sed lacrymis exposuit,  
She left her desire unspoken, but she revealed it with her tears,  
Et osculis et crinibus oravit pro criminibus.  
And she prayed with her kisses and with her hair on account of her sins.<sup>6</sup>  
Interpellavit unguine cum non est ausa famine,  
She interrupted<sup>7</sup> with an unguent—she did not dare to do so with words—  
Dans Pharisaeo scandalum, sed Deo sacrificium.  
Giving embarrassment to the Pharisee, but a sacrifice to God.  
Ob hoc recessit omnium soluta nexu criminum,  
On account of this she left, freed of the bonds of all her sins,  
Ipsa ferente veniam, qui protulit sententiam.  
With the same one bearing forgiveness, who pronounced the sentence.<sup>8</sup>  
Sit Patri laus, etc.  
Praise be to the Father, etc.

## VII. *Oratio ad sanctam Mariam*

### VII. Prayer to holy Mary

O sancta Virgo virginum! quae genuisti Dominum  
O holy Virgin of virgins, who gave birth to the Lord,  
Triumphatorem zabuli, reparatorem saeculi,  
Conqueror of the devil, reviver of the world,  
Ego peccator nimium a te peto remedium;  
I, a sinner, ask too much from you in requesting a cure;  
Esto patrona misero, et salus, et defensio.  
Be patroness for this wretch, be my salvation and protection.  
Incumbunt hostes undique, mortem quaerentes animae,  
Enemies attack everywhere, seeking the death of my soul,  
Perversi foris homines, intus maligni daemones;  
Perverse men outside and evil demons inside;  
Jam mihi multa vulnera inflictata sunt, o Domina!  
Already many wounds have been inflicted on me, O Lady,  
Quae nisi tu curaveris sunt mihi causa funeris;  
Which, unless you cure me, will be the cause of my death.  
Consensi suadentibus mortale crimen hostibus,  
I consented to the enemies proposing mortal sin,  
Et ob hoc reus teneor, culpam meam confiteor;  
And as a result I am held to be guilty, I confess my sin.  
Nam quinque sensus corporis effecti portae criminis:  
For the five senses of my body were made the gates of sin:  
Pulchra videndo cupiens, lene tangendo diligens,  
Desiring beautiful things to see, singling out something smooth to touch,  
Audi libens turpia, narravi gaudens frivola,  
Willing, I heard shameful things, rejoicing, I recounted silly things,  
Nares replevi saepius illicitis odoribus,  
Often I filled my nostrils with illicit aromas,  
Esu potuque dulcium sum delectatus nimium.  
I was delighted beyond measure with the eating and drinking of delectable things.  
Peccavi per superbiam, et per inanem gloriam,  
I sinned through pride, through empty glory,

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<sup>6</sup> She prayed “with her hair” when she used it to wipe of Jesus’ feet.

<sup>7</sup> Presumably interrupting the conversation between Jesus and his host, Simon.

<sup>8</sup> Here the sense seems to be that Mary received forgiveness from the God who would have otherwise condemned her as a sinner.

Pollutus sum perjurio, contaminatus otio,  
 I was polluted with perjury, contaminated with sloth,  
 Per iniquum mendacium fefelli [saepe] proximum,  
 I often deceived my neighbor by means of wicked lying,  
 Et de rapinis pauperum collegi lucrum pessimum;  
 And I collected the worst kind of lucre from the plundering of the poor;  
 Irae vel avaritiae servivi quasi dominae.  
 I did service to anger and avarice as if they were my lady.  
 In corpore vel anima commisi cuncta scelera,  
 I committed every sin in body and soul,  
 Nam corpus quod non potuit, mens perpetrare voluit.  
 For the mind wished to carry out what the body could not.  
 Me turpis cogitatio, me pestilens locutio,  
 Indecent thought, unwholesome speech  
 Me culpa damnat operum, me nequitas consciorum;  
 The error of my works and the wickedness of my accomplices damn me;  
 Haec tibi nunc confiteor, o cunctis sanctis sanctior!  
 Now I confess these things to you, O you, who are holier than all the saints!  
 Tu causam meam suscipe, tu dignum poenis eripe;  
 Take up my cause, snatch away my worthiness for punishment,  
 Exora tuum filium ut mihi det remedium;  
 Persuade your son to give me a cure;  
 Ex tua carne genitus favebit tuis precibus,  
 The one born of your flesh will support your prayers,  
 Et matri quae se peperit negare nihil poterit.  
 He will not be able to deny the one who bore him.  
 Per ejus natalitium, per ipsius jejunium,  
 By virtue of his being born and through fasting of the same,  
 Per asperas injurias, flagella, sputa, alapas,  
 By virtue of the harsh injuries, whippings, spittings, and blows,  
 Quas sponte sua pertulit qui se pro nobis obtulit,  
 Which he bore of his own free will, he who offered himself on our behalf,  
 Et per vestem coccineam, et per coronam spineam.  
 By virtue of the scarlet robe and the crown of thorns.  
 Per clavos, per patibulum, per cicatrices vulnorum,  
 The nails, the cross, the injuries of his wounds,  
 Per aperturam lateris, per rivum sacri sanguinis,  
 The opening on the side, the stream of sacred blood,  
 Per sanctam eucharistiam, et per baptismi gratiam,  
 By virtue of the holy eucharist and the grace of baptism,  
 Per sacramenta fidei quam corde credens didici,  
 The sacraments of the faith that I, a believer, learned by heart,  
 Imploro te, piissima, pro impetranda venia  
 I implore you, most pious one, for the sake of a pardon to be granted  
 Ut mihi Christi passio culparum sit remissio,  
 That the passion of Christ be for me a remission of sins,  
 Et ejus resurrectio virtutum augmentatio. Amen.  
 And his resurrection an augmentation of my virtues. Amen.

### ***XIII. Commendatio virtutum per comparisonem.***

XIII. A commendation of the virtues through comparison  
 Virginitas flos est, et virginis aurea dos est;  
 Virginity is a flower, and the dowry of a virgin is gold;  
 Concubitus faex est, merces sua pessima nex est;  
 Sexual intercourse is the dregs, its reward is the worst of deaths;  
 Ebrietas fax est, lymphae potatio pax est;  
 Intoxication is a fire, a drink of water is peace

Ira leo trux est, patientia praevia lux est;  
Anger is a fierce lion, patience is the light that leads the way;  
Livor edax crux est, et ad impia tartara dux est;  
Devouring envy is a torture, a guide to the wicked underworld;  
Vera fides nix est, fraus et deceptio pix est;  
True faith is snow-white, fraud and deception is pitch-black;  
Mens humilis thus est, inflata superbia pus est.  
The humble mind is frankincense, inflated pride is pus.

#### ***XIV. Ad Virginem Deo dicatam.***

XIV. To the virgin dedicated to God  
Pro corruptibili plenoque dolore cubili,  
In place of that bed, corruptible and full of pain,  
Quo maculat nuptas brevis et culpanda voluptas,  
On which that brief and blame-worthy pleasure stains brides,  
Nec moderata satis per amorem posteritatis,  
[A pleasure] not adequately tempered by love of posterity,  
Quoque dies partus cruciatos dissipat artus,  
[A bed] on which the day of delivery tears the tortured organs,  
Es sortita torum, quem nec pressura dolorum,  
You have chosen a bed, which no affliction of any pains  
Nec timor infestat, nec sordida culpa molestat:  
Nor fear disturbs, nor sordid guilt bothers:  
In quo Rex regum jacet, et sua gloria tecum  
[A bed] on which the King of kings, and his glory, lies with you,  
Cujus ad amplexus non est corruptio sexus,  
In whose embrace there is no corruption of sex,  
Qui te fecundat cujus te gratia mundat,  
[A King] who makes you fertile and whose grace cleanses you,  
De quo, quando paris, nova gaudia, non cruciaris,  
By whom, when you give birth to new joys, you are not tortured,  
Germina virtutis generans mercede salutis.  
Generating [instead] buds of virtue with the mercy of salvation.  
Qui senium nescit, cui lux collata nigrescit,  
He, to whom light grows dark by comparison, does not know any gloom,  
Quem sol miratur, quem luna pavens veneratur,  
The sun admires him, whom the trembling moon venerates  
Qui coelum fecit, terrae fundamina jecit,  
Who made heaven and laid the foundations of the earth,  
Cujus figmentum magni maris est elementum,  
Whose imagination is the origin of the great sea,  
Imperio cujus nitor exstitit aeris hujus.  
At whose command the brilliance of his sky arises.  
O nimium felix! si nosceris esse fidelis  
O happy beyond measure! If you are found to be faithful  
Connubio tanto, cujus praeconia canto.  
In such a marriage, whose praises I sing.  
Debeo non quantum, sed quantum suppeto tantum,  
I don't owe as much, but I am as available as possible,  
Obsecro te, nolis pariturae gaudia prolis;  
I beseech you: do not refuse the joys of giving birth to such offspring;  
Nec sponsum speres cui non sit forsitan haeres,  
Do not hope for a bridegroom to whom perchance there may be no heir,  
Cujus vel cari possis de morte gravari,  
Or with regard to the death of such a dear one you may be able to be burdened,  
Vel non dilecti vita ceu funere plecti.  
Or not be as buffeted by the life of a loved one as by his death.  
Castis juncta choris nunc diceris aula pudoris,

Now joined to the chaste choirs, may you be dedicated to the hall of modesty

Angelicus coetus servat tibi munera laetus,

This happy angelic society stores gifts for you,

Coeli virtutes cupiunt tibi ferre salutes.

The virtues of heaven long to convey greetings to you.

Sponsam mirantur quotquot sponso famulantur;

They marvel at the bride as much as they attend to the bridegroom;

Ipsa parens Christi, quam sponte secuta fuisti,

The parent of Christ herself, whom you willingly followed,

Te contemplatur, te diligit et veneratur.

Contemplates you, loves and venerates you.

Hiscine [f. Disce ne] contemptis tradas tua praemia ventis;

Learn, lest you surrender your rewards to contemptible winds,

At de regina (sed sit procul ista ruina)

And, [falling] from [the status of] a queen (may this ruin be far away!)

Inter spurcitas carnales concuba fias (concuba = concubine)

You be made a concubine amidst carnal filths,

Vilis personae sub tristi conditione;

In the sad condition of a vile person;

An fieri malis praedatio daemonialis

Lest you become the prey of demonic evils,

Quam pretio morum mercari regna polorum?

Rather than buy the kingdom of heaven for the price of good behavior!

### ***XV. Ad virginem devotam.***

XV. To the devoted virgin

Splendidior stella, simplex et munda puella,

More glittering than a star, this simple and pure girl,

Quam Deus elegit, quam nulla libido subegit,

Whom God chose, whom no wantonness overcame,

Fac ut coepisti quod mundo displicet isti,

Do as you began, do that which is displeasing to this world,

Sperne leves curas, et res attende futuras,

Spurn trivial concerns, and attend to those matters that are to come,

Disce placere Deo summo, potitura trophaeo;

Learn to be pleasing to the highest God, [you who are] about to gain possession of the trophy;

Nil de praesenti castae sit amabile menti,

May nothing with regard to the present be pleasing to the chaste mind,

Nec tibi sit durum quidquam cito periturum.

May anything that is about to perish quickly not be a hardship to you.

Rebus in humanis labor exercetur inanis,

Vain effort is exerted in human matters,

Nec longum gaudet qui spe quod improbus audet.

He does not rejoice for long, who with hope dares what a wicked person dares

Quod modo blanditur, per id ad loca tetra venitur;

One arrives at foul places by means of that which flatters now

Quod modo contristat a fletu postmodo distat.

That which saddens now is far from the wailing later.

O miserum risum quo perdit homo paradisum!

O wretched laughter by which man loses paradise!

O lacrymas laetas quas longa remunerat aetas!

O happy the tears which that boundless age remunerates!

### ***XVI. Dissuasio amoris Venerei.***

XVI. Advising against sexual love

Egregium vultum modica pinguedine fultum,

An outstanding face, framed by a bit of fleshiness,

Plus nive candentem, plusquam rosa verna rubentem,

Shining more than snow, and blushing more than a spring rose,  
 Sidereum visum, spondentem mollia risum,  
 A heavenly sight, a laugh promising tender things,  
 Flammea labrorum libamina subtumidorum,  
 The burning offerings of slightly puffy lips,  
 Dentes candentes modicos seriemque tenentes,  
 Small shining teeth holding to their rows,  
 Membraque cum succo, moresque bonos sine fuco;  
 Limbs with vitality, and good manners without pretense,  
 Illa puella gerit quae se mihi jungere quaerit.  
 That girl wishing to join herself to me bears all the above.  
 Hanc puer insignis, cujus decor est meus ignis,  
 The remarkable boy, whose beauty is my fire,  
 Diligit hanc, captat, huic se placiturus adaptat;  
 Picks her, takes her, and fits himself to her, about to be satisfied;  
 Quae, puero spreto, me vult, mihi mandat: Aveto;  
 But she, once the boy is spurned, wants me and demands: "crave me!"<sup>9</sup>  
 Et mihi blanditur, quia respuo, pene moritur.  
 And she flatters me, but because I reject her, she nearly dies.  
 Si fecisset idem mihi turpis femina pridem,  
 If that shameful woman had done the same to me in the past,  
 Ad Venerem motus fierem lascivia totus;  
 I would have been totally moved by wantonness in the direction of Venus;  
 Pectore nunc duro, nec verba, nec oscula curo,  
 Now, with a hard heart, I don't care about words or kisses,  
 Oscula plena bonis lascivae perditionis,  
 Kisses that are full of the wantonness of perdition for good men,  
 Illecebris quorum capitur captator amorum [illecebra, ae]  
 By the enticements of such loves the hunter is captured.  
 Verba cor intrantum blandissima dulcia, tantum  
 The most flattering sweet words of those that reach the heart are such  
 Ut flectant mentem silices ferrumque gerentem;  
 That they soften the mind even when it is carrying flints and iron;<sup>10</sup>  
 Sed mea dum crescit flecti vesania nescit;  
 But my mind, while this madness grows, does not know how to be bent,  
 Oscula dum sperno, spernens tamen oscula cerno,  
 As long as I spurn the kisses; but spurning the kisses I discern  
 Verbaque blanda sonis animum motura spadonis,  
 Soft words capable of moving even the soul of a eunuch with their sounds.  
 Quod quamvis cernam, non possum quin ea spernam;  
 Although I understand this, I am unable *not* to spurn them,  
 Durius est ferro telum quo saucius erro.  
 This weapon is harder than the iron by which the wanderer is wounded.  
 Vires alterius vitii [f. vicit] fomes, necat hujus;  
 The power of another vice suppresses the kindling of this one;  
 O res digna nota! dat amor contraria vota;  
 A thing worthy of note: Love bestows contradictory desires;  
 Luxuriae vitio castissimus en ego fio;  
 You see? For by the vice of lust, I am rendered the most chaste;  
 Quod duros mollit, hoc mollitiem mihi tollit.  
 What softens hard things, removes the softness from me.  
 Quid sibi vult, quaeso, quod amoris cuspe laeso  
 What does it mean, I ask you, that, with the sting of love blunted,  
 Displicet ipsa Venus? Quis avarus spernere fenus?

<sup>9</sup> The future imperatives for *amare* are *amato*, in the singular, and *amatote*, in the plural. This isn't a form we differentiate in English. In a sense, English imperatives are future imperatives because the person giving the order is asking that something be done in the near or distant future. *Memento* 'Remember!' is the future imperative of the verb *memini* 'to remember'. *Esto* 'be' is another relatively common Latin future imperative. Its plural is, as predicted, *estote*.

<sup>10</sup> Lucretius, *De rerum natura* 1.571

Venus herself displeases? What greedy person refuses the payment of interest?  
Quis lucra mercator? Quis fruges novit arator?  
Who kind of merchant rejects profits? What kind of farmer examines his crops?  
Versa natura mutantur pristina jura,  
Once nature has been turned upside down, the old rules are changed,  
Si cibus impastum facit, et lascivia castum,  
If food makes one hungry, and wantonness makes one chaste,  
Si metus audacem, si mens secreta fugacem.  
If fear makes one bold, if an untroubled mind makes one flighty.  
Talis multa modi sunt hujus vincula nodi,  
The bonds of this knot are many and of just such a kind,  
Sed regnum Satanae vexat dissensio plane,  
But clearly dissension plagues the kingdom of Satan [i.e., this world],  
Et se divellit dum culpam culpa repellit.  
And tears itself up, as long as one offense repels another.  
Regnum virtutum servat concordia tutum,  
Harmony keeps the kingdom of virtues [i.e., the other world] safe,  
Et solvi nescit dum pace sua coalescit.  
And it does not know how to be dissolved, as long as it comes together in its peace.  
Est igitur satius, ut castris applicer hujus,  
Therefore it is better that I land at the fortresses of that kingdom,  
Quod sua pax munit, quam quod discordia punit,  
The one whose peace safeguards, rather than the one that discord punishes,  
Quod stat mansurum, quam quod titubat ruiturum.  
The one that stands, ready to endure, rather than the one that falters, about to be destroyed.

### ***XVII. Poenitudo lascivi amoris.***

The regret of lustful love  
Strictus eram loris vesani nuper amoris,  
Not long ago I was held tight by leashes of crazy love,  
Captus eram visco, sed nunc pudet, et resipisco;  
I was taken hold by glue, but now it shames me, and I am coming to my senses;  
Deficit ille furor, et jam minus et minus uror,  
That madness fades and now I am burned less and less,  
Mensque colorque redit, pallorque furorque recedit.  
My mind and my color are returning and the pallor and frenzy is receding.  
O bone Salvator! quam decipit omnis amator!  
O good Savior! How every lover deceives himself!  
Turpia pulchra putat, pro nigris candida mutat.  
He thinks shameful things are beautiful and exchanges snow-white things for pitch-black ones.  
Coeni fetorem pigmenti credit odorem;  
He believes the stench of filth to be the aroma of spiced wine;  
Dulcia sicut mel testatur amara velut fel;  
He judges things that are bitter as gall to be sweet as honey;  
Dum comedit lapidem, se pane frui putat idem,  
While he eats a stone, he thinks himself to be enjoying bread,  
Et serpentinum virus potat quasi vinum.  
And he drinks the venom of serpents as if it were wine.  
Dum vitium fovi, non noram quae modo novi;  
While I was fostering vice, I did not know what I know now;  
Caecus eram plane cor habens virtutis inane,  
I was clearly blind, having a heart devoid of virtue,  
Praemia deceptus mihi magna videbar adeptus  
Deceived, I seemed to have secured great things for myself,  
Oscula si quando meruissem pauca rogando,  
Whenever I managed to win a few a few kisses by begging,  
Sicut odor floris sic tunc odor illius oris  
Like the aroma of a flower, so is the aroma of that one's mouth at that time



Esse videbatur, qui nunc secus esse probatur;  
Seemed to be, that one who now is proved to be otherwise;  
Ut rosa candorem miscens simul atque ruborem,  
Like a rose combining whiteness and redness at the same time,  
Sic mihi tunc vultus qui nunc pallore sepultus;  
So to me was that face at that time, the one that is now buried in pallor;  
Non quia mutatus fit odor, vel vultus amatus,  
Not because the odor or the beloved face undergoes any change,  
Sed mutatus ego, quondam mihi chara relego.  
But because I am changed, and so I banish things that were previously dear to me.  
Nam mens errabat mea tunc, reprobumque probabat;  
For back then my mind wandered and it approved of that which is base;  
Errabat mea mens fervore libidinis amens,  
My mind wandered, frantic with the fervor of lust,  
Nec succensa minus quam solvens saxa caminus.  
Ignited no less than a furnace capable of dissolving stones.  
Quid quod pupilla mihi charior ille, vel illa,  
Who is that one, he or she, so dear to my eye,  
Vix vellet fari dum se sentiret amari.  
That he or she may scarcely be willing to speak when he or she senses being loved.  
Si tot vel tantis cor non crucietur amantis,  
If the heart of the loving one is not tortured so many times or by such great things  
Sufficit hic fastus ut malum [f. malim] vivere castus.  
This contempt suffices so that I may opt to live as a chaste man.  
Ergo maneto foris, puer aliger, auctor amoris,  
Therefore remain outside, winged boy, author of love,  
Nullus in aede mea tibi sit locus, O Cytheraea!  
May there be no place in my home for you, O Cytheraea!<sup>11</sup>  
Displicet amplexus utriusque quidem mihi sexus,  
The embrace of either sex is displeasing to me,  
Sed plus me laedit qui plus a jure recedit.  
But he hurts me more who recedes from the law more.  
Omnia sunt foris vitae delicta prioris,  
May all the sins of my prior life be kept outside!  
Omnia nam sprevi, multumque per omnia flevi;  
For I spurned them all, and I wept a great deal for all of them;  
Mutavi vultum, flevisque per omnia multum;  
I changes my face and I wept a great deal for all of them;  
Si repetam spretum vinum, mihi fiat acetum,  
If I should return to that rejected vine, may it be made vinegar for me.  
Et panis coenum, vermis caro, lacque venenum  
And may such bread be made filth, flesh be made a worm, and milk be made venom  
Pro grue bufonem comedam, pro pisce draconem.  
May I eat toad instead of crane, and snake instead of fish.

## MARBODI REDONENSIS EPISCOPI CARMINA VARIA, II

### III. *Ad amicum absentem.* [Col.1717C]

III. To an Absent Friend  
Si quid in urbe colis quod ames, quod perdere nolis,  
If you cherish something in the city, something that you love, that you do not wish to lose,  
Idque colis pure, non sit tibi curia curae.  
And you cherish it purely, may there be no "court of concern" for you.  
Omnes rumpe moras; damnum tibi crescit in horas:  
Break free of all delays; injury grows for you by the hour:  
Hoc autem damnum, quia non reparabile, magnum.

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<sup>11</sup> Cytheraea was another way of referring to Aphrodite among the early Greek poets.

For this injury, one that is irreparable, is great.

Postpones omne quod te facit esse Calonne.

Put off everything that forces you to be in Calonne.<sup>12</sup>

Perdes in hac villa plusquam lucraris in illa:

You will lose more in this town than you will gain in the other one:

Namque quid tanti, quanti puer aequus amanti?

For what matters as much as a boy favorable to the one loving him?

Qui nunc est aequus, fiat mora, fiet iniquus.

Should a delay occur, he who is now well-disposed may become hostile.

Blanditiis siquidem tentatur pluribus idem;

Indeed the same one is being tempted by many enticements

Et qui tentatur, metus est ne decipiatur.

And he who is tempted, there is fear lest he be deceived.

Ergo redi propere, si vis quod amas retinere.

Therefore return quickly, if you wish to retain what you love.

Desine castellum, si vis retinere citellum.

Abandon the citadel, if you wish to retain the city.<sup>13</sup>

#### **IV. Satyra in amatorem puelli sub assumpta persona.**

IV. Satire about a lover of a boy operating under an assumed identity

De puero quodam composuit Horatius Odam,

Horace composed an ode about a certain boy

Qui facie bella possit satis esse puella.

Who had such a pretty face, he could have been a girl.

Undabant illi per eburnea colla capilli.

His hair poured forth over an ivory neck.

Candida frons ut nix, et lumina nigra velut pix,

A forehead white as snow, and eyes black as pitch,

Implumesque genae grata dulcedine plene,

Hairless cheeks filled with a pleasing sweetness,

Cum in candoris vernabant luce ruboris.

While they were blossoming with a light of rosy beauty.

Nasus erat justus, labra flammea, densque venustus.

His nose was even, the lips fiery red, and his teeth pretty.

Effigies menti modulo formata decenti.

A model of a chin, formed with a appropriate measure.

Qui corpus quaeret quod tectum veste lateret,

He who will search after the body that lies hidden covered with clothes,

Tale coaptet ei quod conveniat faciei.

Will find one of a sort that it fits him and agrees with his face.

Haec species oris radians, et plena decoris,

This radiant beauty of a face, full of charm,

Cor spectatoris face succendebat amoris.

Ignited the heart of its observer with the torch of love.

Sed puerum talem, pulchrum nimis et specialem,

But such a boy, so very beautiful and special,

Irritamentum quorumlibet aspicientum,

A provocation for any of those gazing upon him,

Dic [f. Hunc, vel Sic] natura ferum plasmaverat atque severum,

Nature fashioned him cruel and harsh,

Vellet ut ante mori, quam consentiret amori.

Such that he would wish to die before consenting to be loved.

Asper et ingratus, tanquam de tigride natus,

Cruel and unpleasant, as if he were born of a tiger,

Ridebat tantum mollissima verba precantum,

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<sup>12</sup> A town in the northernmost tip of France on the Belgian border.

<sup>13</sup> The sense of this passage alone leads to this translation of *citellum*.

He only laughed at the tenderest words of those imploring him,  
Ridebat curas effectum non habituras,  
He laughed at attentions that were not about to be considered  
Et suspirantis lacrymas ridebat amantis.  
And he laughed at the tears of the sighing lover.  
Illos ridebat quos ipse mori faciebat;  
He laughed at those whom he himself made die.  
Impius ille quidem, crudelis et impius idem,  
That one is certainly impious, cruel and wicked as well,  
Qui vitio morum corpus vetat esse decorum.  
Who, with the vice of morals, forbids a body to be beautiful.  
Bella bonam mentem facies petit, et patientem,  
A beautiful face seeks a mind that is good and patient,  
Et non inffatam, sed ad haec et ad illa paratam.  
And not unspoken, but prapered for these things and for those.  
Flosculus aetatis citus est, nimiae brevitatis.  
The little flower of age passes swiftly, being of great brevity.  
Postquam marcescit, cadit, et revirescere nescit  
After it dries up, it falls, and does not know how to come back to life  
Haec caro tam levis, tam lactea, tam sine naevis,  
This flesh is so smooth, so milky, so devoid of blemishes,  
Tam bona, tam bella, tam lubrica, tamque tenella.  
So good, so beautiful, so smooth, so tender.  
Tempus adhuc veniet, cum turpis et hispida fiet;  
Still the time will come when it will become ugly and rough;  
Cum fiet vilis caro chara caro puerilis.  
When this dear flesh, a boy's flesh, will become vile.  
Ergo dum flores, maturos indue mores.  
Therefore while you are still blossoming, dress yourself with more mature manners.