

The Four Dramas of Roswitha  
a Nun of the Tenth Century.  
(Translation from the Latin.)

*Hrotsvit, of Gandersheim*

A Thesis submitted to the  
Faculty of the Graduate School of the

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

by

Sister Eugenia Maginnis

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

June

1917.

UNIVERSITY OF  
MINNESOTA  
LIBRARY

MOM  
M272  
8

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

General Introduction-----	pages (1)-----	(21)
Story of St. Constantia-----	" (21)-----	(25)
Gallicanus, Translation-----	" (25)-----	(59)
Criticism on Gallicanus-----	" (59)-----	(62)
Introductory, Calimachus-----	" (62)-----	(63)
Calimachus, Translation-----	" (63)-----	(86)
Criticism on Calimachus-----	" (86)-----	(88)
Story of Abraham-----	" (88)-----	(92)
Abraham, Translation-----	" (92)-----	(121)
Criticism on Abraham-----	" (121)---	(122)
Story of Sapientia-----	" (122)---	(125)
Sapientia, Translation-----	" (125)---	(162)
Criticism on Sapientia-----	" (162)---	(164)

## INTRODUCTION.

Saxony in the tenth century was distinguished for the higher education of its women. The deeds of the Ottos had given a new impulse to literary activity which had declined since the days of Charlemagne. Side by side with Henry I and Otto I stand the venerable forms of Mathilda and Editha, their pious wives, and the reigns of Otto II and Otto III bear decided traces of the influence which two royal women, Adelheid and Theophania exercised upon the political and intellectual life of their time. Otto II had been brought up among the canons of Hildesheim, and had acquired from them a taste for letters; this was still further increased by his marriage with the Greek princess, Theophania. At this time the court of Constantinople was the center of all that survived of the old imperial civilization and literature. Theophania was as remarkable for her wit and eloquence as for her beauty and talent; she soon infused into the Germans a rage for Greek literature and gave such a brilliant character to the literary coteries of the imperial court, that Gerbert, one of the greatest scholars of the age, who was then residing there, speaks in one of his letters of the 'Socratic conversation' which he found among the learned men who thronged the company of the empress which he says, sufficed to console him amid all his troubles.

- 
- (1) W. Wattenbach, *Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter* p. 255. cf. *Hroswithae Carmen de Gestis Oddonis I. imperatoris* Ed. Pertz. *M.G. SS. IV.* 317-335.
- (2) Kuno Francke, Professor of German Literature in Harvard University, *History of German Literature.* p. 49.
- (3) Drane. *Christian Schools and Scholars* p. 263, G.E. Stechert & Co. New York. cf. *Monumenta Germaniae Historica.* Pertz.

In the schools of the time we are told there were professors of grammar, logic, rhetoric, music, mathematics, physics and astronomy. Horace, Virgil, Terence, Juvenal, Persius and Lucan<sup>(1)</sup> were read by the students, whose ordinary recreation it was to make verses, while great attention was paid to the arts of writing and painting. Two of the most famous convents in Saxony at this time were Quedlinberg and Gandersheim. It was to Matilda abbess of Quedlinberg and one of the most remarkable women of the period that Widukind dedicated the first history of the Saxon<sup>(2)</sup> people. Another well known scholar of the time is Hadwig, Duchess of Swabia, a strong-minded, almost manly woman, who whiled away the loneliness of her widowhood in the study of Greek and Latin and in intercourse with learned men, such as Ekkehard, tutor of the emperor Otto II.<sup>(3)</sup>

-----

1. "Medieval Civilization"-selected studies from European authors translated and edited by Dana Carleton Munro and George Clarke Sellery. Pub. by the Century Co., N.Y., 1910. p.297.

"In every period of the Middle Ages ecclesiastics of the highest repute studied the classics. A volume of examples could easily be collected. -----Passing over the ecclesiastics of the court of Charles the Great as well known, we may cite--- Benzo, bishop of Alba, in a work dedicated to the Emperor Henry III, names Virgil, Lucan, Statius, Pindar, Homer, ---- and Terence with much complacent exhibition of his classical knowledge. ----Gerbert (Pope Sylvester II) taught his students Virgil, Lucan, Terence,---Generally speaking, in the ninth and tenth centuries, which are justly considered the darkest of all the Middle Ages, antiquity was loved and studied, and known much more than is commonly believed."

See also Drane. Christian Schools and Scholars. p. 268.

2. W. Wattenbach, Geschichtsquellen, p. 328.
3. Kuno Francke, History of German Literature, P. 49.

Hadwig and her sister Gerberg were the granddaughters of Henry the Fowler and Saint Matilda, nieces of the then reigning Emperor Otto the Great. Gerberg was Abbess of the monastery of Gandersheim and was likewise famous for her thorough knowledge of the ancient authors. <sup>(1)</sup> To those interested in mediaeval plays it may be pleasing to know that it was Gerberg who induced the Abbot Adso <sup>(2)</sup> to compose his writings about Antichrist. This convent of Gandersheim in the Hartz Mountains was founded in the ninth century by Liodolph, Duke of Saxony, and was important enough to entitle its abbess to a seat in the imperial diet.

That this Gerberg or Gerberga was the teacher of Roswitha, the tenth-century poetess and dramatist, to whose plays this sketch is an introduction, is attested by Roswitha, herself, who says in the preface to her works, that her first teacher was the wise and kind Rickkardis; and that afterwards the Royal Gerberg "who inclined to mildness and clemency" assisted her in her work by suggestions information and encouragement and especially by giving her necessary information concerning the doings of royalty.

Roswitha, or to give the name its Saxon form, Hrotswitha, was born probably between 930 and 940. The interpretation of the name as clamor validus <sup>(3)</sup> contains no doubt a reference to the bearer herself; this accounts for her being called "the mighty voice," and sometimes even "Nightingale of Gandersheim."

- 
1. Kuno Francke. Hist. of Ger. Lit. p. 49.
  2. Wattenbach, Geschichtsquellen. p. 320.
  3. "Unde ego, Clamor validus Ganderisshermensis, non recusavi illum imitari dictando, quem alii colunt legendo" p. 971. vol. 137. Migne.

In all probability she was of aristocratic birth; her name appears on an old wood engraving as "Helena von Rossow." She seems to have been in her earliest youth when she entered the convent of Gandersheim.

This is about all that is known of the external life of the first German poetess; we are far better acquainted with her works than with her personality. The Latin poems and dramas of this unassuming nun have had a curious history. After centuries of neglect, they were rediscovered, as is well known, by the poet laureate Conrad Celtes in the Benedictine monastery of St. Emmeram at Ratisbon. Celtes published the works in 1501, with six beautiful woodcuts by Albert Durer, and frontispiece, in which Celtes presents

---

In the year 1867 a controversy arose in Germany concerning the authenticity of the works attributed to Hroswitha. Professor Aschbach of the Imperial Academy of Vienna, in a paper printed that year in the Acts of the Academy, endeavored to prove them audacious forgeries; and supposed the author of the fraud to have been one Conrad Celtes, a humanist of the fifteenth century. The question was taken up on both sides. Several distinguished writers and their arguments and investigations appear to have successfully vindicated the genuine character of the works, and to have established Hroswitha's claim to be considered their real author. See B. Tenk, *Neber Roswitha, Carmen de Gestis Oddoms*, Leipzig, 1867. R. Koepke, *Ottonesche Studien zur deutschen Geschichte im 10ten Jahrhundert*. II. Hroswitha von Gandersheim (xv. 3314) *Die Aelteste deutsche Dichterin* (xv. 127S) Berlin, 1896. Hroswitha die hellton ende Stimme von Gandersheim. In Westermann's *Illustr. Monatsheften*. 1871. Drane, *Christian Schools*, p. 299.

Roswitha's manuscript to his patron, the Elector of Saxonv.  
Celtcs dedicated his book to the Elector, with the following  
preface:

Most Illustrious Prince:

On a long and arduous journey,  
which somewhat impaired my fortune and my health, I traversed  
through and through the broad realms ruled by you and your brother,  
the archbishop of Magdeburg and Primate of Germany. The hard-  
ships and dangers of that journey I undertook willingly and cheer-  
fully in quest of old manuscripts not yet printed. It was my pur-  
pose to give to the world by means of the art of printing discovered  
by countrymen, any manuscripts which to the advantage of our times  
I might come upon in the Hercine forest, among the Alps and the  
Obnolian mountains, in the vast solitudes of Germany and even its  
swamps, in the mountains and convents of the Druids, so richly  
provided by our Emperors and nobles. In my quest I was animated  
by many honorable motives, nor could I be turned from my enter-  
prise by the carping of some abusive slanderers. For there are  
those who when they see in others powers beyond their own and see  
them achieve what they, through sloth and native slowness and  
stupidity, could not attain, cry out upon the ability to which no  
goal is denied. They even tax with sacrilege those who search  
out old manuscripts and the literature which was introduced  
into Germany from without or which sprang up on our own soil  
under the Constantines, the Charles, and the Arnulphi;

---

J.P. Migne, Patrologiae, Vol. 137, pages 967-968.

the Frédericks and Conrads and Ottos, and cannot read the Greek and Roman manuscripts written in ancient characters. To this class of people I answer quite courteously that it is a very honorable thing for any German, and indeed for the German people at large, if any one through love of country and letters procure and print old Greek and Latin manuscripts obtained by gift or exchange, or loan or purchase, and after they have been printed or transcribed, to send them back with interest as it were to the localities and monasteries to which they belong. And so when I perceive that many splendid manuscripts were being carried off like rich booty, by the Italians to their own country and there printed I made up my mind that it behooved me, a man born in the heart of Germany, and the first who under your guidance and inspiration was adorned with the insignia of literature and crowned with the laurel at the Emperor's hands,--it behooved me, I say, by right of succession and heredity to search for manuscripts lying in obscurity and present them as precious gifts to my countrymen. By means of such manuscripts they would be brought to see and understand what love our fathers and our forefathers bore to literature and religion and what labors they undertook for their sake. While I felt proud of the achievements of our ancestors I was possessed with a feeling of regret inasmuch as what they had written with such labors and watchings when we adopted Latin in place of Greek at the time that we embraced Christianity seven hundred years ago, was, through our inaction and indifference and pursuit of showy vices, not safe from the ravages of the weather and dust, from corruption and decay and--I say it with a sigh--not even from worms. Another motive was my interest in the history of Germany and of neighboring



nations. Such manuscripts as I might find concerning the works and words of our kings and Emperors, whether composed in our language or in a foreign tongue, I fain would publish or embody in "Germany Illustrated" which is now in course of composition, or finally, use as materials for composition. Accordingly, when recently in the course of a journey abroad, I happened to stay at a Benedictine Convent, I came upon a very old manuscript, written in a woman's hand and in almost Gothic characters. It bore the name and inscription of a nun of Saxon descent and contained what is set forth in the title page and index of this volume. I cannot express the astonishment and delight with which I read the prose and verse of a German authoress who wrote six hundred years ago, for such is the span of time since the days of Otto I. Three things excited my astonishment--three things which are the privilege of but very few and which are enumerated in that famous distich of John Dalberg Bishop of Vormat, a man of whom we are justly proud and who was an ornament to letters and to his profession. These are: that the writings are the work of a woman, of a woman in the years of her girlhood, and of a woman reared in a rude land and in the midst of barbarism. I also wondered at the old inflections and forms of words, as *wois* for *sibi*, *tis* for *tibi*, *mis* for *mihi*, and also at the forms and changes of expressions, such as *debruis* for *ebrius*, and many differences of a similar kind. I say nothing of the liberal arts and mathematical sciences in which she showed herself skilled and altogether admirable, as in the tones and music in Paphnutius, and in the meaning and force and nature of numbers in religious literature. And if her style in prose and verse grates on some

people, let them lay the blame on the time, for in those days, on account of the deluge of barbarism, Italy, mistress though she was of letters, knew no other style of speech. Proof of this are the Decretals and all the Clementine epistles and rescripts of that age, the manuscript, and the treatises of Gregory the Great and of other writers of that period in which the style of composition is altogether different from that of the Digests and of Jerome and Augustine in which everything is rhythmically adjusted and sonorously phrased in the middle and the end of the clauses-- what Cicero calls the type of the falling cadence. For the lack of polish the writings of this nun did not please me as much as that Cymbrian authoress of ours, or the famous Velada or Aurinia among the Roman writers who celebrate her singular bravery in war and the power of divining given her from on high. It would be long, my Lord, to recount the virtues of the women of Germany, both of the past age and of our own age. Sappho or Clelia or Jerome's Eustochia or Pauline, or among the Hebrews, Ruth, Judith and Esther I do not rate so highly as our German Anna exquisitely skilled in all instruments of music, or Agnula of Frisia famous for her Sapphic odes and learned in Civil and Canon law, or the charming sister of my host, Vilibald Pyrkheimer, with her fluency in speaking and writing Latin. No sex, no age in any part of the world is debarred from virtue and learning if there only be present talent and industry and the opportunity of an education.

When then, My Lord, I had long mused to whom I should dedicate the work of such an authoress, you at once presented yourself in those days of legislation and election at Neuremberg, and when

I offered the manuscript of our poet you at once ordered it to be printed, providing, moreover, by a ruling of the Imperial Council that for ten years after me and my associates no one under a stated penalty should reproduce copies in the free and imperial cities. Deign to accept, my Lord, the literary offerings of this countrywoman of yours, gifts which as they are more enduring you will prize more highly than any passing and perishable gift I could present. For such is your passion for enduring literature and for the Christian Religion that you by far surpass all other German princes and even many ecclesiastical dignitaries to whom of right the patronage of literature belongs. You truly follow in the footsteps of the famous Otto I, whose entire patrimony and far reaching domains you and your brother Ernest, Archbishop of Magdeburg, possess by hereditary right and title--almost in virtue of descent and affinity of blood. You received your education at the hands of your parents and from Prince Ernest, a man who by his faith, piety, justice, clemency and culture, towered over all the princes of his time. He was peculiarly fortunate in his illustrious spouse, a lady of the highest rank and of a very old Bavarian family, between whom and the Saxons, even before the coming of Christianity, many bonds and ties had been established by marriages. A numerous and distinguished family called her mother. Two of her renowned sons entered Holy Orders and were appointed to two of the wealthiest and most influential Sees in the entire German Church--Magence and Magdeburg--while to you and your brother John was reserved the administration of your hereditary domains and the state at large. In your high office you shine by your

singular prudence, judgement, wisdom and modesty, by your love of peace and harmony--a disposition only too rare among our German princes--by your relentless hostility to dishonesty and breach of faith. It would be difficult to tell what sums you have expended to secure harmony among our own rulers and to bind Italy, Gaul and Germany in the bonds of peace. Nor would it be easy to say how many years you have spent abroad for the same purpose, sojourning in the court of Emperor Frederick in whose hands the Empire now rests, and visiting the invincible King Maximilian. No concern for your own domains nor for your vast administration, no thought of marriage stood between you and your chief concern. All your wealth, all the resources of wisdom and judgment that are yours you place at the service of the Church and Empire and devote to the safeguarding of their majesty--these gifts of mind and body which in a sense are divine, the endowments of your natal stars, you consecrate to this high purpose. Your dignity of mien, your gentleness of manner, and a certain grace all your own win the loyalty of men to you. Wonderful with all your other virtues are your patience and endurance in the midst of hardships and watchings. Whenever you rest from the cares of state and seek relaxation of mind in hunting, singular is your application to literature. New poets, new orators, new historians, new doctors and theologians you listen to or read and find your delight in them; now in mathematical sciences, numbers and measurements, in the study of the stars--their nature and motions--you take pleasure; with gifts and presents you provide and gather together music and painting and the arts which the Greeks and Romans held in highest admiration

and esteem and the distinguished masters of those arts also. You do as Emperor Sigismund did of yore, who gave honors and preferment in his court to those who surpassed their fellows in intellectual endowments and artistic accomplishments. On being asked why he did so, scorning nobility and illustrious descent, he is said to have answered: "Rightly do I esteem and prefer to others those whom God and nature have endowed with singular gifts," adding: "God and nature alone can create such men while it lies in my power to create nobles every hour by means of lands and titles." Wherefore, my Lord, all who are endowed with genius or are distinguished in some art, love and esteem you, and do honor to you and to your illustrious family. Among them I, also, am entirely at your service and at the service of your illustrious brother, the Archbishop and John. Farewell, My Lord, and if you find a respite from cares of state, read and ponder the writings of our German poetess, whose works are inscribed to your name. Again farewell.

#### Roswitha's Literary Works.

Roswitha's writings may be arranged under three heads--Legends, Dramas and Historical Poems. There are eight legends written in Leonine hexameters. These form two groups. The first group contains five legends and the second, three. Each legend is prefaced by a few introductory elegiac verses. And the entire group is preceded by the following prose preface written by Roswitha herself:

(1)

"This little book written without any attempt at perfection or finish but not without much application and diligence, I now offer to the kindly criticism of the learned; only to those, however, who

(1) Migne V. 137-p.1062.

take no pleasure in finding fault with an author but are disposed, rather, to set him right. For I willingly acknowledge that it contains many errors not only against the rules of prosody but even against those of ordinary composition, and in these legends many defects may be found that are worthy of reprehension. But errors when they are acknowledged merit a ready pardon and should meet only with friendly correction. If it be thought amiss that I have taken some of my subjects from books considered by certain persons to be apocryphal, I must explain that when I began my work I was ignorant that these books were of doubtful authority. As soon as I learnt that this was the case, I ceased to use them. For the rest I claim indulgence in proportion as I feel a want of confidence in myself. Deprived of most resources of study, and still young, I have been forced to work in my rustic solitude far from the help of the learned. It has been alone and unaided that I have produced my little work by dint of repeated composition and correction. The main substance I have gathered from the Holy Scriptures, which were taught me in this convent of Gandersheim, first by the wise and blessed mistress, Rickardis, and those who succeeded her in her office; and then by the gentle Gerberga, of royal birth, under whose government I am now living. Younger than I in years, but as befits the imperial niece, more advanced in learning she deigned to form my mind by the reading of good authors. These she herself had learned from wise teachings and taught them to me in turn in the same way in which she had been instructed.

Although the art of making verses is difficult especially for a woman, I have ventured, trusting in the Divine aid, to treat the subjects of this book in heroic verse.

My Only object in this labor has been to prevent the feeble talent committed to my keeping from growing rusty. And I desired by the hammer of devotion, to compel it to give forth sweet sounds to the praise of God. Wherefore, dear reader, if thou thinkest according to God, thou wilt know how to supply what is wanting in this book; and if thou findest anything good in it, refer it to God only and attribute nothing to me byt the faults; without, however, reproaching me for them too severely, but excusing them with that indulgence which a frank avowal deserves."

In the dedication of the first group of legends to her abess, Roswitha begs Gerberga to read them, when she is wearied with various labors and to correct them whenever necessary. To the last of the five is appended a curious and learned Grace before Meals, also in Latin hexameters; which indicates, Kōpke thinks, that the poems were read by permission of the abess in the refectory.

Roswitha's next work was her Dramas. Of these there are six, written between 962 and 967. They are preceded by a preface to the reader and by the following "Letter to some Learned Men, Patrons of this Book."

"To you who are endowed with so much learning and goodness-- not as to those who are indifferent or envious but, as becomes the truly wise, sympathetic and helpful--Roswitha, an unknown author, the possessor of no remarkable gifts or talents, sends greetings, health now and happiness hereafter.

-----

1. Migne.

I cannot sufficiently wonder that you who are so well versed in philosophy should judge the humble work of a simple woman worthy of your commendation. But when in your charity you congratulate me, it is the dispenser of that grace which works in me whom you praise, believing as you do that the little knowledge I possess is superior to the weakness of my sex. Hitherto I have hardly ventured to show my rustic little productions to anyone, but reassured by your opinion, I shall now feel more confidence in writing if God gives me the power. Yet I feel myself drawn by the two opposite sentiments of joy and fear. I rejoice in my heart to see God and his grace praised in me, but I fear lest men should think me greater than I am. I do not mean to deny that aided by Divine Grace, I have attained to a certain knowledge of the arts, for I am a creature capable of instruction as others are, but I confess that left to my own strength I should know nothing. In order therefore that the gifts of God be not neglected through my own fault I have zealously endeavored to adorn my little book with scraps from the garment of Philosophy. Whenever I succeeded in getting hold of a floating thread of her dress I have gladly woven into my little work as a precious ornament.

This therefore--not to appear indifferent to the divine gift--is my only intention in writing, the cause of all my efforts. Consequently it is befitting that you be not less diligent in correcting and amending these plays than I have been in composing them; and when you have rectified and remodeled them according to the rules of approved composition you will return them to me that I may clearly understand wherein are my greatest errors."



Roswitha's prolific career as a poetess closed with two greater epics, the one singing the achievements of Otto I down to the year 962, and the other celebrating the foundation of the monastery of Gandersheim. Quite a romantic touch is given to this last composition by the number of legends which the author has skillfully woven into it. The story as she tells it is of singular beauty and well worth reading. <sup>(1)</sup> On the other hand the eulogy of Otto I is highly prized by historians who find the account given by the poetess of direct assistance in historical work.

In addition to that of Celtes the following are the chief editions of Roswitha's works:

Barack, "Die Werke der Hroswitha" (Nuremberg, 1858)

Schurzfleisch (Wittenberg, 1707) Migne, P.L. Vol. 137,  
939--1196.

Winterfeld, "Hroswithae Opera" (Berlin 1902)

Pertz, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1826.

Magnin, Paris, 1845.

R. A. Koepke--Die Aelteste Deutsche Dichterin Kulturgeschichtliches Bild aus dem zehnten Jahrhundert., 1869.

---

(1) This story is told in Six Mediaeval Women by Alice Kemp-Welch, Macmillan Co.

### Literary Criticism.

Once Roswitha's works were published her fame penetrated into Italy, England and Spain. Toward the end of the sixteenth century an Oxford theologian anxious to claim the poetess for his own country made a desperate attempt to prove her English. From this time on notices and criticisms, almost invariably favorable, are frequent.

(1)

Criticism by W. Wattenbach;--While the language of Widukind does not call forth a favorable opinion of the classical learning of Corvey, the nun of Gandersheim, Roswitha, surprises us by her classical education and by her command of the different forms of expression: her remarkable talent was developed by a careful school-education, first under the guidance of Rickkardis and afterward under that of Gerberga, niece of the Emperor. It is to be regretted that half her work is lost and that of the eventful years of 953-962 only a small fragment is extant.

(2)

Creizenach in his article on Terence says, "Roswitha wrote her six dramas with the express purpose of supplanting the six comedies of the immoral pagan.....Without doubt her resolution was affected by her natural dramatic talent. Far better than the dramatists of the later Middle Ages does she understand how to select the leading motif from the traditional incident."

- 
1. Geschichtequellen im Mittelalter p. 334.
  2. Geschichte des neuen Dramas Vol I. pp. 7-8.

Her dialogue is surprisingly lively and striking and merges with great skill into her rapidly advancing action."

(1)  
Arthur J. Roberts. "Hrotswitha was a really original genius great because original. She stands alone without ancestors and without heirs. Her work is inexplicable, but still significant, for it looks forward and not backward. It is a prophecy which we have seen fulfilled."

(2)  
Augusta Theodosia Drane. "Whilst we are amazed at her learned attainments, her modesty and candour at the same time conquer our hearts...We trust that the nun of Gandersheim may allowed to have shed something of beauty and fragrance over the rugged annals of the Iron Age."

Mabillon gives her a place in his Annals; Leibnitz was responsible for a complete new edition of her writing, part of which was his own actual work. A translation of one of her dramas opens Gottsched's Necessary Material of the History of German Poetry: and Magnin, who published the first fruits of his prolonged labors in this field in the Revue des Deux Mondes, 1839, regarded her as a gloire pour l'Europe entiere.

Roswitha seems in many ways surprisingly modern for her age but is surely somewhat mediaeval in so often referring to herself as a mere mulier or even muliercula, and in constantly begging for merciful criticism on the plea that she is a woman.

-----  
1. Mod. Lang Notes, Vol. 16, p. 482.

2. Christian Schools and Scholars, p. 298.

I do not believe her to have been a perfectly isolated phenomenon. There were hundreds of cultivated women living at that very period of these a few were mentioned at the beginning of this paper. Neither was Roswitha the only woman writer. About this time Hildegard, the abbess of another monastery on the Rhine wrote a text-book on medicine which was the most important document in the history of medicine in this century. This treatise may also be found in Migne's Patrologia and has drawn many praises from historical critics for the amount of information which it contains (1)

But to return to Roswitha and her Dramas and her purpose in writing them--Roswitha evidently believed that she was called to an apostolate. In her preface to her dramas she states her purpose in writing them. These are her words: "There are many Catholics who, beguiled by the elegant diction of the classics, prefer them to the Holy Scriptures, and there are others who hold by the Scriptures and despise what is heathen and yet who peruse the productions of Terence. While delighting in the flow of his language they are polluted by the godless content of his work. While others read him, I shall but imitate him and in the same manner in which he portrays the unbecoming actions of indelicate women, I shall celebrate the chastity of holy virgins."

She thus conceived the bold idea of endeavoring to use in the service of the most beautiful Christian virtue the means that had been used in the service of error and corruption. She is not ignorant of the fact that her attempt will be looked upon as

-----

1. James J. Walsh. M.D. Ph.D. Litt.D. (Education--How old the New)

unparalleled assurance, and she hastens to say that she is much inferior, narrower, and altogether different from Terence. Emboldened by the pious hope that she may induce readers to turn from the "Godless contents of his works to the contemplation of virtuous living," she shrinks from no difficulties or details, particulars which might well have made her hesitate as she knows she will be found fault with for representing the seductions of vice and she again endeavors, in her preface, to explain that in order to exalt the victory the struggle must be shown, so that notwithstanding her artistic temperament and dramatic instinct her plays are the handiwork of the moralist rather than of the artist.

Premising from Roswitha's statement that while others read Terence she would but imitate him, many have understood that Roswitha really did imitate Terence. Dr. Ward says, <sup>-1-</sup> "It was the good fortune of Terence to lead a charmed life in the darkest ages of learning, through the course of which his works survived under the safe guardianship of monastic libraries. Roswitha, however borrowed from Terence merely the general form of his plays without adopting his metre: while she both distinctly and avowed purpose reversed the tendency of his plots. Deficient neither in literary ability nor in occasional pathetic power--- she displays an intensive knowledge of dramatic effect which is under the circumstances singularly remarkable."

-----

-1- English Dramatic Literature. New and Revised edition, London, 1899. Vol. 1, p. 7. cf. Mod. Lang. Notes Vol. 18, p. 35.

(1)

According to Creizenach Rudolf Köpke gives a few specimens which show that Hroswitha borrowed directly from Terence in this way. He shows that as Andrea concludes with a double wedding, Gallicanus ends with a three fold renunciation. In Eunuchus the lover enters the house of his beloved under a black mask. In Dulcitius the blackened and disfigured intruder is disgraced before Christian women. In Phormio, Demipho troubles himself uselessly over his venturesome son while in Abraham the hero goes in search of his adopted daughter. Hecyra, in Terence stands opposite **Sapientia** in Roswitha, as a rightful mother and Magdelina is contrasted with Thais.

Kopke thinks that although Roswitha borrowed from Terence in this way, that she possessed original genius and does not by a single assertion lead us to believe that he considered her a weak imitator of Terence.

(2)

One finds in Hroswitha a considerable variety of personages, but none of them is one of Terence's six or eight stock types of character.

The wit of the Roman poet, his philosophic remarks about men and things, his rhetorical effects--all these Hroswitha might have imitated. They are not difficult to copy. Humor and pathos, apt characterization and dramatic sense, all these are found in Hroswitha. But they are things Hroswitha could not have imitated even if she had found them in Terence. It is impossible to copy them. Terence and Hroswitha both wrote plays, each wrote six and there the similarity ends."

---

1. Gesch. Neueren Dramas 1. p. 18. footnote.

2. Arthur J. Roberts. Colby College, Mod. Lang. Notes.  
Vol. 16, p. 479.

## THE STORY OF ST. CONSTANTIA.

St. Constantia was a daughter of the celebrated Emperor Constantine the Great. She was born and educated in heathenism, but was converted to the Christian faith by the following event: A terrible eruption had broken out all over her body, causing her great pain. The whole imperial court, but more particularly her father, had great sympathy for her, as she was not only very amiable, but also was endowed by nature with many shining qualities. Every means had been exhausted to alleviate her suffering, but without success. Meanwhile, Constantia had several times heard it related, that a great number of sick had sought and found health at the grave of St. Agnes. The desire to be cured of the eruption influenced Constantia to go there and petition for her long-lost health. Although still a heathen, she arrived at the grave of the Saint full of confidence, and knelt upon the ground for some time, sighing and weeping, in prayer. At last, worn out by pain and excitement, slumber closed her eyes. In her sleep St. Agnes appeared to her and said: "Constantia! believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and Saviour of the world. He can release you from your sins and restore your health." When, after some time, Constantia awoke, her pain, as well as the eruption, had vanished, and she felt that health had been restored to her. How fervently she gave thanks to the Almighty for so great a benefit may be readily imagined. She returned joyfully to the imperial palace, determined to become a Christian. This resolution was faithfully kept, and after being instructed in the true faith, Constantia,

with many of her maids and relatives, was baptized. That she might still more please Jesus Christ she also consecrated her virginity to God. The life which she led, after having been baptized was so exemplary, that it not only edified and strengthened the Christians, but also caused the conversion of many of the heathens. Not long after these events, Gallicanus, Commander in chief of the imperial army, entered Rome, triumphantly and with great magnificence. He had won a decisive victory over the Persians, and had re-conquered Syria which they had torn from the empire. As a recompense for his eminent services, he asked of the Emperor the Governorship of Rome, and the hand of the princess Constantia, as his wife had died, leaving two daughters. The Emperor granted his first request without hesitation, but told him that, with regard to the latter, he must confer with his daughter before he could decide. Constantia advised the Emperor to yield to the demand, but with the condition that Gallicanus must first bring back under the imperial sceptre Dacia and Thrace, which also had been taken from the empire. Meanwhile, she would give him, as a sign of her good faith, her two most dutiful servants, John and Paul, who should accompany him to the seat of war; but, in return she expected that Gallicanus should leave his daughters under her care. Gallicanus cheerfully consented to these conditions; gave his two daughters to Constantia; and, accompanied by John and Paul, who were Christians, went away to the field of battle. Constantia now betook herself to earnest prayer, imploring God, not only to open the eyes of Gallicanus and his daughters, who were heathens, to the true faith, but also to guide his mind in such a manner, that he should no longer desire



her hand. Constantia's prayer was kindly accepted by heaven. In a short time she converted the two maidens under her charge, and, after they had been baptized they both made the vow of virginity; while Gallicanus, when the battle was raging, and he was in danger of losing it, being exhorted by John and Paul, called upon the God of the Christians, vowing to receive holy baptism, should he conquer the enemy. Assisted by God, he won the battle against all hope; and not only fulfilled his vow, but made another of perpetual celibacy. When the news of these events reached Constantia, she rejoiced exceedingly, and giving fervent thanks to God, she quietly continued her virtuous life. She passed the few remaining years of her earthly pilgrimage in great devotion, far removed from the court in a small house, adjacent to a magnificent church, which the Emperor, at her request, had built in honor of St. Agnes. The two daughters of Gallicanus, whom her persuasions had converted, were her companions in retirement and devotion. The great Commander-in Chief, who, through Constantia's prayers, had become a follower of Christ, would not be surpassed in virtue by his daughters. He resigned his high office, and after having given the greater part of his wealth to the poor, and for building convents, he went with St. Hilarius to Ostia, at the mouth of the Tiber, and devoted himself entirely to nursing the sick and giving hospitality to strangers. The Roman Martyrology records that, as these facts, became known in the world, people came from far and near, to see how a man of such high rank washed the feet of the poor, served them at table, tenderly assisted the feeble, poured water over their hands, and performed for them many other acts of kindness.

Finally, driven away by the apostate Julian, he went to Alesandria, at which place he was sentenced, by the Judge Rancianus, to die by the sword, on account of his confession of the Christian faith: and thus he ended his life by a glorious martyrdom. Equal happiness fell to the lot of Constantia's two faithful servants, John and Paul, who were both beheaded by order of the godless Julian, as recorded in the Roman Calendar of Saints, June 26th. St. Constantia, however, was called away from this earth to her Heavenly Spouse in the eightieth year of her life, much happier than if she had given her love to an earthy bridegroom, even if she, by so doing, had obtained the riches of the whole world.

Note. This story is taken from Acta Sanctorum. Vol. for Feb. 17.

GALLICANUS.

Conversion of Gallicanus, Commander in  
Chief of the Army.

Gallicanus, on the point of going to war against the Scythians was betrothed to the holy maiden Constantia, daughter of Constantine the emperor; but in the conflict with the enemy in a moment of supreme peril, through the influence of John and Paul, chief secretaries of Constantia, he became converted, and, hastening to receive the sacrament of baptism, he made choice of a life of celibacy. He was afterwards sent into exile by order of Julian the Apostate, and received the crown of martyrdom. Both John and Paul by the same order were put to death and buried in a house secretly. Immediately after, the son of the murderer who had been possessed by a demon, and later, by confessing his father's deed and the goodness of the martyrs, cured near their tombs, was baptized together with his father.

Dramatis Personae.

Constantine, the Emperor.

Gallicanus, Commander in Chief of the Army.

Constantia, daughter of Constantine.

Artemia:

: daughters to Gallicanus.

Abbica :

John :

: Chief secretaries of Constantia.

Paul :

Constantine. I am weary of this delay, Gallicanus, because you are loath to harrass by war the tribe of the Scythians which you know is the only one to disturb the peace of Rome and rashly to disobey our commands, although you are aware that the task of defending the country is being reserved for you because of your capability.

Gallicanus. Most August Constantine, Ever have I endeavored, striving with all my might, to suit the object of my labors to the wishes of your Majesty. Never yet have I shrunk from any task.

Constantine. Why remind me of that. I have always kept it in mind. Hence I have admonished you by encouragement rather than by reproof, that you comply with my wishes.

Gallicanus. To this very thing I shall apply myself at once.

Constantine. I am glad of that.

Gallicanus. Neither can I be drawn from executing your commands by very love of life.

Constantine. This is most pleasing to me. I do much commend your good will toward our person.

Gallicanus. But my very great desire of rendering this service demands an equally great reward.

Constantine. Not without justice.

Gallicanus. For the difficulty of any task is more easily borne if it is lightened by the certain hope of receiving reward.

Constantine. Evidently.

Gallicanus. Wherefore I ask that you now propose to me my reward for the perilous task I am to undertake so that, animated by the hope of receiving it, I may fight more boldly and may not be overcome by the hardships of the combat.

Constantine. The reward which seems most fitting and the most pleasing to the whole senate, I never refused you nor do I now; namely, the boon of my royal favor and the highest place among the dignitaries of the palace.

Gallicanus. That I grant, but not for this do I now strive.

Constantine. If you seek something else, make it known.

Gallicanus. I seek something else.

Constantine. What?

Gallicanus. If I might presume to say.

Constantine. Entirely permissible.

Gallicanus. You will be angry.

Constantine. No, indeed.

Gallicanus. Surely not?

Constantine.        No, certainly not.

Gallicanus.        You will be stirred by indignation.

Constantine.        Do not fear that.

Gallicanus.        Since you have commanded it, I shall speak. I  
love your daughter Constantia.

Constantine.        And rightly. It is fitting that you should  
honorably love my daughter, mistress of my household,  
and honor her with your affection.

Gallicanus.        You interrupt what I have to say.

Constantine.        I shall not do so.

Gallicanus.        If your paternal affection will allow it, I  
passionately desire to espouse this maiden.

Constantine.        (Turning to his son) No light reward does he  
seek, princess, and one which is altogether new to you.

Gallicanus.        Alas, Alas! He scorns my request. I knew it.  
I had a presentiment of this. (To the princes) I beg  
of you unite your prayers with mine.

Princes.            It befits the respect you owe your own dignity,  
great Emperor, on account of the regard you owe him,  
not to refuse this boon.

Constantine.        (Aside) I do not refuse it as far as I am con-  
cerned. (To Gallicanus) I think the matter should  
be considered and that I should first try to discover,

discreetly, whether my daughter will give her approval.

Princes.                    That is logical.

Constantine.                I shall go, if you wish, Gallicanus, and ask her about this matter.

Gallicanus.                If you please.

SCENE II.

(Constantia in her own apartments, Constantine enters.)

Constantia.                My lord Emperor comes more sad than usual.  
What he wishes I much desire to know.

Constantine.                Come to me, my daughter Constantia. I wish a few words with you.

Constantia.                I am here, my lord, command me. What is it that you wish.

Constantine.                Much wearied am I with anxiety of soul and I suffer heavy sadness.

Constantia.                When I saw you come I perceived that you were sad, and although I did not know the cause of your sadness, I was in fear and trepidation.

Constantine.                It is on your account I am depressed.

Constantia.                On my account!

Constantine.                On your account.

Constantia.                I tremble. What is it, my lord?

Constantine. It grieves me much to tell; I fear to sadden you.

Constantia. I shall be much more sad if you will not tell me.

Constantine. Gallicanus, Commander in Chief of the army, whose many victories have acquired for him the first place among the leaders of the state, whose assistance we very often need for the defence of the country----

Constantia. What of him?

Constantine. He desires to have you as his wife.

Constantia. Me?

Constantine. You.

Constantia. I would rather die.

Constantine. I foresaw this.

Constantia. Nor is it to be wondered at, for with you consent, your permission I have vowed my virginity to the service of God.

Constantine. I remember.

Constantia. Nor can any punishment compel me to violate the sacredness of this promise.

Constantine. That is as it should be, but I am much straitened. If, as should be done after the manner of a father, you, with my consent, remain fixed in your determination, I shall suffer severe harm in the state; and if, which



heaven forbid, I should resist that resolve I shall expose myself to the torture of endless punishment.

Constantia. But if I should despair that aid, powerful and divine, should be wanting, how greatly should I grieve.

Constantine. In truth.

Constantia. In truth there is no need of sadness for one who trusts in the goodness of God.

Constantine. How noble are your words, Constantia.

Constantia. If you will deign to listen to my counsel, I shall point out a way by which you may evade both dangers.

Constantine. Oh, that it were so.

Constantia. Pretend that all will be as he wishes. Say that if the enterprise is prudently executed you will render up to him the compensation which he so desires, and that he may believe me in agreement with it, persuade him, as a pledge to strengthen our love, to leave with me, during his absence, his two daughters, Attica and Artemia, and to take with him, on his journey my two servants, John and Paul.

Constantine. But what am I to do if he returns victorious?

Constantia. I believe that we should first call upon Almighty God that he may change the mind of Gallicanus.

Constantine. Oh my child, my child, how have you sweetened

the bitterness of your father's heart by those consoling words, so much so that henceforth I shall have no solicitude concerning this matter.

Constantia.           There is no need.

Constantine.           Now I shall go and circumvent Gallicanus with joyful promise.

constantia.           Go in peace my lord.

SCENE III. Same as Scene I.

Gallicanus.           I shall die of curiosity before I find out what my lord Augustus is doing all this time with his royal daughter.

Princes.              He is persuading her to do as you desire.

Gallicanus.           Oh, if only his persuasion will succeed!

Princes.              Perhaps it will.

Gallicanus.           Hush! be still. His Majesty returns, not as he went with gloomy looks, but with serene and smiling countenance.

Princes.              O Good Omen!

Gallicanus.           If, as is said, the face is mirror of the soul, the serenity of his face, mayhap, betokens a gracious mind.

Princes.              It is so indeed.

SCENE IV. Same.

(Enter Constantine)

Constantine. Gallicanus.

Gallicanus. What did he say?

Princes. Go to him, go to him, he calls you.

Gallicanus. Oh ye gods, be propitious.

Constantine. Go to the war without concern, Gallicanus. On your return you shall receive the reward that you desire.

Gallicanus. Do you sport with me?

Constantine. Sport with you!

Gallicanus. Did I but know one thing I should be very happy.

Constantine. What one thing?

Gallicanus. Her answer.

Constantine. My daughter's?

Gallicanus. Yew.

Constantine. To ask the answer of a coy maiden in such a matter is rather unreasonable, but the issue will prove that she has consented.

Gallicanus. If I were sure of this I should not worry about the answer.

Constantine.            You may put it to the test.

Gallicanus.            I greatly long to do so.

Constantine.            My daughter desires that her chief servants  
John and Paul accompany you on this expedition, and  
that they remain with you even until the day of the  
expousals.

Gallicanus.            why so?

Constantine.            In order that from their conversation you may  
know beforehand of her customs, habits and manner of  
living.

Gallicanus.            A good suggestion, and particularly pleasing to  
me.

Constantine.            Quite naturally she desires in turn that your  
daughters remain with her meanwhile, that through  
their companionship she may become suited to you.

Gallicanus.            Excellent! Excellent! All things are now in  
keeping with my wishes.

Constantine.            (To attendant) See that they are brought here  
quickly.

(Constantia enters)

Gallicanus.            Ho! Soldiers, hasten! Bring my daughters that  
they may pay homage to their lady.

SCENE V.

Soldiers.            Lady Constantia. the illustrious children of Gallicanus are here well suited to your intimacy, because of their manifest beauty, good sense and virtue.

Constantia.        Very good, let them be brought in with all honor.

(Constantia turning aside makes the following prayer)

O Christ, lover of virginity and inspirer of chastity who by the prayer of thy martyr Agnes, hast rescued me equally from taint of body and from the errors of paganism, oh Thou who didst invite me to the virgin couch of thy mother in which Thou are manifest true God born of thy Father from all eternity, and true man born of thy mother in time, suppliantly I beseech Thee, true and eternal wisdom of the Father through whom all things are made and by whose disposition the universe exists and is governed, suppliantly do I pray that you deign to direct by drawing him after thee, Gallicanus who attempts to kill my love for thee by stealing it himself. Do Thou also, as the sweet spouse of their souls, deign to admit his daughters to thy espousals. Instill into their hearts the sweetness of thy affection in such a degree that despising all the joys of life, they may deserve to be admitted into the holy company of thy chaste virgins. Amen.

(Returning she is greeted by Artemia)

Artemia.            Hail, Lady Constantia, Mistress of the royal

household.

Constantia. Greetings, my sisters, Attica and Artemia, stand, stand, do not kneel but give me the kiss of affection.

Artemia. Lady, we come with joyful hearts to your service; with true devotion we submit to your authority to the end that your gracious favor may abound in us.

Constantia. One Lord we have in heaven to whom is due the devotion of our service; in whose faith and love it is fitting we should persevere in guarding the bright flower of virtue, so that at last we may deserve to enter within the halls of our celestial country, bearing with us the palm of virginity.

Artemia. In nothing averse but as attentive hearers we shall endeavor to obey your precepts in all things but particularly in the recognizing of truth and in the resolution to guard our virtue.

Constantia. Your response is most fitting and worthy of your ingenuousness. I doubt not that through the inspiration of divine grace, your minds are turned to the faith.

Artemia. How could it be that serving in the temples of the idols, without the illumination of divine grace we should have the true faith.

Constantia. The firmness of your faith excites hope in my

soul about the possible conversion of Gallicanus.

Artemia. He only needs instruction; without doubt he too will believe.

(John and Paul enter unperceived)

Constantia. (To servants) Let John and Paul be summoned.

John. Lady, we are here at hand for whom you sent.

Constantia. Go at once to Gallicanus. Do not leave him for an instant. Little by little put before him the mysteries of our faith. Perchance through our mediation God may win him over.

John. We shall exhort him frequently. May God grant a good issue of it.

#### SCENE VII.

Gallicanus. John and Paul, your arrival is opportune. I have awaited your coming with anxiety.

John. When we heard the order of our lady we hastened to wait upon you.

Gallicanus. I am much more pleased to have your service than the service of any other.

Paul. Rightly so, for the adage has it; A friend of those we love is a friend of ours.

Gallicanus. It is true.

John.                   The love of the mistress who sends us commends us to your friendship.

Gallicanus.            I do not deny it. Come! Assemble, tribunes, Centurions also, and all the soldiers of my army. Greet John and Paul whose absence kept me from the march.

Tribune.                Attention! Forward!

Gallicanus.            First to the Capitol and the Temple. The gods must be appeased by sacrificial rites that they may prosper the issue of the battle.

Tribune.                It must needs be.

John.                   meanwhile let us withdraw.

Paul.                   It is befitting.

#### SCENE VIII.

John.                   Behold, the general issues forth. Let us mount and present ourselves to him.

Paul.                   And quickly.

Gallicanus.            Whence do you come, Where have you been?

John.                   we have saddled our steeds and sent forward our baggage that we might the more expeditiously accompany you.

Gallicanus.            I am well pleased.



SCENE IX. A plain.

Gallicanus. Oh, tribunes! Oh, Jupiter! I see an army of  
countless legions bristling with arms and weapons.

Tribunes. By Hercules! The Enemy!

Gallicanus. We must meet them boldly and fight bravely.

Tribunes. If a meeting of our army with such a host be of  
any use.

Gallicanus. Ah, what would you have?

Tribune. Bow the neck to the yoke in a surrender.

Gallicanus. Apollo wishes not this.

Tribunes. Pollux! What are we to do! We are surrounded,  
we are wounded, we perish!

Gallicanus. Alas! What can be done. My tribunes spurn me.  
They deliver themselves up to the enemy.

John. Make a vow to the God of heaven that you will  
become a Christian and you will conquer.

Gallicanus. I do make this promise and shall observe it  
faithfully.

(King Bradan appears in the midst of the enemy)

The Enemy. Ho, there! King Bradan, the fortune of hoped-for  
victory deceives us. Our right hands fail us. Our

strength is exhausted. Our wavering spirit too compels us to lay down our arms.

Bradán. I know not what to say; that same feeling which you experience also affects me. There is nothing left but to surrender to their general.

Enemy. In no other way may we escape.

Bradán. General Gallicanus, do not carry your fury to the length of destroying us. Spare us, and use our submission as you wish.

Gallicanus. Fear not. Be not solicitous, Once hostages are given, once you make yourselves tributaries of the Emperor you shall live happily under the peace of Rome.

Enemy. To receive hostages, how many and of what rank, to name the amount of tribute rests entirely with you.

Gallicanus. Cease fighting. Soldiers let no one be killed, no one injured; let us embrace as allies those whom we were but now attacking.

John. How great is the power of ardent prayer in comparison with human presumption.

Gallicanus. Yes, truly.

Paul. How efficacious is divine compassion toward those whom humble devotion commends to God.

Gallicanus.           It is, indeed, evident.

John.                 But what is vowed in time of trial must be paid  
in the day of good fortune.

Gallicanus.           Yes, yes, wherefore as quickly as possible I  
wish for the rites of baptism and I am determined to  
spend the remainder of my life in the service of God.

Paul.                 It is just.

SCENE X. A Street in Rome.

Gallicanus.           Behold, on our entrance into Rome the towns-  
people rush forth bearing marks of honor before us in  
accordance with their custom.

John.                 It is only proper.

Gallicanus.           But neither to us nor to the strength of the  
gods is due the credit for the triumph.

Paul.                 By no means, but to the true God.

Gallicanus.           Hence I think the temples of the gods should be  
passed by.

John.                 You think rightly.

Gallicanus.           But with suppliant acclaim the shrines of the  
Apostles must be sought.

Paul.                 Happy are you in such a disposition, you now,  
indeed, profess yourself a Christian.

SCENE XI. Palace of Constantine.

Constantine. Soldiers, I marvel much why Gallicanus has withdrawn himself from our presence Chamber.

Soldiers. When he entered Rome he most ardently turned his steps toward the shrine of holy Peter, and in gratitude for the great victory secured, prostrate on the earth he poured forth thanks to the most high throne of God.

Constantine. Gallicanus?

Soldiers. Yes, Gallicanus, himself.

Constantine. Incredible!

Soldiers. Yes, here he comes, you can ask himself.

SCENE XII. Garden without the palace.

Constantine and Gallicanus seated in conversation.

Constantine. For a long time Gallicanus I have waited to learn from your own lips the result of the battle with the Scythians.

Gallicanus. I shall tell you of the events just as they took place.

Constantine. I care little about that at first, that you may rather tell me what I desire more.

Gallicanus. What is it?

Constantine. Why on going away did you visit the temples of

the gods and on returning, the shrines of the Apostles?

Gallicanus.           You ask why?

Constantine.          Eagerly.

Gallicanus.           Then I shall explain.

Constantine.          I wish it.

Gallicanus.           I confess, most sacred Emperor, that going out, I, as you say, entered a temple and as a suppliant entrusted myself to gods and demons.

Constantine.          Formerly this was the custom among the Romans.

Gallicanus.           A very bad custom.

Constantine.          The worst possible.

Gallicanus.           When this rite was ended, the tribunes with their legions approached me and as I went forth hedged me about on all sides.

Constantine.          Nothing could surpass the pomp and dignity of your departure.

Gallicanus.           We moved forward, soon met the enemy, joined battle and were conquered.

Constantine.          The Romans conquered?

Gallicanus.           Completely vanquished.

Constantine.          Oh, horrible! unheard of in all ages!

Gallicanus. I, indeed, renewed the abominable sacrifices.

The gods who should have assisted me were wanting.  
As the fight grew fiercer many of our men fell.

Constantine. I am amazed to hear it.

Gallicanus. At length the tribunes deserted me and surrendered themselves to the enemy.

Constantine. To the enemy!

Gallicanus. Yes, to the enemy.

Constantine. Oh, what did you do?

Gallicanus. What could I do unless to seek flight.

Constantine. Nothing.

Gallicanus. Of course. Nothing else.

Constantine. with what dire straits your constancy was beset.

Gallicanus. The direst.

Constantine. How did you escape the enemy?

Gallicanus. My household companions, John and Paul persuaded me to make a vow to the Creator.

Constantine. A most salutary thing.

Gallicanus. I made trial of it, and when I opened my mouth to pronounce my vow, I felt celestial aid.

Constantine. In what way?

Gallicanus. A young man appeared to me, tall of stature and bearing a cross upon his shoulders. He instructed me to follow him with drawn blade.

Constantine. Whatever he was he was sent from heaven.

Gallicanus. I complied. Without delay, there stood about me on the right and on the left armed men whose faces I did not know, proffering their assistance.

Constantine. A celestial band.

Gallicanus. No doubt of it. But I, following the leader, advanced safe through the midst of the enemy's lines, I came to their king, called Bradan, who immediately seized with incredible fear, cast himself at my feet and surrendered himself and his men, offering to pay tribute forever to the Ruler of the Roman empire.

Constantine. Thanks to the Author of all good fortune who does not allow those who trust in him to be confounded.

Gallicanus. So I have learned, having made the trial.

Constantine. I should like to know how the tribunes who deserted acted at this point.

Gallicanus. They hastened to seek a reconciliation.

Constantine. Did you receive them without punishing them?

Gallicanus. I receive without punishment those who had surrendered me to danger and themselves to the enemy!

Constantine. How then?

Gallicanus. I proposed to them the price of winning my pardon.

Constantine. What was it?

Gallicanus. Namely that whoever would select the faith of the Christians should receive his former favor and greater honor, but he who would refuse to do so, would be deprived both of his favor and his rank.

Constantine. A worthy proposition and one befitting your dignity.

Gallicanus. I, indeed, imbued with the waters of baptism have consecrated myself wholly to God in so far that I now renounce the hand of your daughter whom formerly I loved above all things so that refraining from marriage I may be acceptable to the Son of the Virgin.

Constantine. Come near to me, that I may rush to embrace you. Now indeed, am I constrained to reveal to you what for a long time I have been trying to conceal.

Gallicanus. What is that?

Constantine. This---that your two daughters with mine have for some time past favored the same religion which you have chosen.



Gallicanus. I rejoice.

Constantine. And they are burning with such desire to preserve their virginity that neither threats nor allurements can recall them from this determination.

Gallicanus. I hope that they will persevere.

Constantine. Let us enter the palace where they are at present sojourning.

Gallicanus. Proceed, I follow.

Constantine. Behold they run to meet us with the August Helena, my glorious mother. Tears of joy are streaming down their cheeks.

SCENE XIII.

Gallicanus. Live happily, Oh, holy maidens, persevere in the fear of God. Preserve inviolate the beauty of your innocence so that worthily you may receive the embrace of the King of Heaven.

Constantia. We shall persevere the more easily now since we understand that you do not oppose our vow.

Gallicanus. I am not opposed. I do not forbid you.  
(To Constantia) But I gladly yield to your wishes to this extent that I would not compel you to wish other than you have begun to, you, my Constantia, whom I was most eager to buy even at the cost of life itself.

Constantine. This change comes from the right hand of the most High.

Gallicanus. If I were not changed for the better I should never give consent to your promise.

Constantia. May the friend of chastity and the approver of every good wish who has recalled you from an unjust desire and set his seal on my virginity, for this corporal separation, permit that we may be associated some day in eternal joy.

Gallicanus. So be it--So be it.  
(Constantia and daughters withdraw)

Constantine. Since the bond of Christ's love joins us in the same religion it is fitting that as son in law of the Emperor, you should dwell with us in honor within the palace.

Gallicanus. No temptation is more to be avoided than the desire of the eyes.

Constantine. I am unable to gainsay this.

Gallicanus. Whence it is not well that I should too frequently behold the maiden whom you know that I love before parents, before life, before my very soul.

Constantine. As it pleases you.

Gallicanus. Behold, you have now a four fold army through

my labors and the favor of Christ. Allow me henceforth to serve the Master by whose aid I have conquered and to whom I owe the happiness I enjoy.

Constantine. To Him are due praise and thanksgiving. Him every creature should serve.

Gallicanus. Especially to Him who in necessity furnished abundant aid.

Constantine. As you say.

Gallicanus. That part of my possessions which belongs to my daughters I except; a portion for the reception of strangers I reserve to myself; from the remainder of my wealth I wish my own servants, after being given their liberty, should be provided for, and the necessities of the poor supplied.

Constantine. You are making a prudent disposition of your wealth, nor will an eternal reward be wanting to you.

Gallicanus. I desire to present myself to the holy man Hilarius in the city Ostensus and to be associated with him as a private companion that I may have leisure for the rest of my life for praising God and helping the poor.

Constantine. May the Eternal Being to whom all things are possible permit that you succeed in your undertakings according to His will and lead you to eternal joys who liveth and reigneth in unity of the Trinity.

my labors and the favor of Christ. Allow me henceforth to serve the Master by whose aid I have conquered and to whom I owe the happiness I enjoy.

Constantine. To Him are due praise and thanksgiving. Him every creature should serve.

Gallicanus. Especially to Him who in necessity furnished abundant aid.

Constantine. As you say.

Gallicanus. That part of my possessions which belongs to my daughters I except; a portion for the reception of strangers I reserve to myself; from the remainder of my wealth I wish my own servants, after being given their liberty, should be provided for, and the necessities of the poor supplied.

Constantine. You are making a prudent disposition of your wealth, nor will an eternal reward be wanting to you.

Gallicanus. I desire to present myself to the holy man Hilarius in the city Ostensus and to be associated with him as a private companion that I may have leisure for the rest of my life for praising God and helping the poor.

Constantine. May the Eternal Being to whom all things are possible permit that you succeed in your undertakings according to His will and lead you to eternal joys who liveth and reigneth in unity of the Trinity.

Gallicanus.            Amen.

ACT II.

SCENE I. The same Palace, Emperor Julian,  
          Consuls, Soldiers.

Julian.                It has proved very embarrassing to our authority  
                          that the Christians are doing as they please, and  
                          boasting that they ought to follow the laws which  
                          they received from Constantine.

Consuls.              It is disgraceful that you allow such proceed-  
                          ings.

Julian.                I shall not allow them.

Consuls.              That you should not, is proper.

Julian.                Oh, Soldiers, gird yourselves for the work and  
                          strip those Christians of all their possessions by  
                          casting up to them the maxim of their Christ "He who  
                          will not renounce all that he possesses cannot be  
                          my disciple."

Soldiers.              We shall make no delay.

SCENE II. The Same.

Consuls.              Lo, the soldiers have returned.  
                          (Enter Soldiers)

Julian.                Is your return auspicious?

Soldiers.            Yes.

Julian.              And why so soon?

Soldiers.            We shall tell you. The fortress which Gallicanus reserved for himself we determined to enter, that we might gain it for your service; but any man moving a foot from our ranks was either stricken with leprosy or possessed by the devil.

Julian.              Return and tell him either to leave his native land or to sacrifice to idols.

SCENE III. The Fortress of Gallicanus.

Gallicanus.        Do not weary yourselves oh, soldiers, with unavailing arguments. In comparison with eternal life, I value not a straw any earthly possessions. Wherefore I shall leave my country, and as an exile for the sake of Christ, seek Alexandria, hoping there receive the crown of martyrdom.

SCENE IV. The imperial palace.

Soldiers.            Gallicanus, as you ordered, was driven from the country. He then sought Alexandria and there captured by Count Raucianus was put to death by the sword.

Julian.              Oh, well done!

Soldiers.            But John and Paul still despise you.

Julian.                   What do they?

Soldiers.               Wander about at liberty; they are squandering  
the wealth of Constantia.

Julian.                   Let them be summoned.

Soldiers.               Here they are.

SCENE V. Same.

Julian.                   I am well aware John and Paul, that you, from  
your infancy, were committed to the service of the  
Emperors.

John.                    True.

Julian.                   Whence it is befitting that cleaving to my side,  
you should serve in the palace in which you were  
nurtured from boyhood.

Paul.                    We shall not serve you.

Julian.                   Not serve me?

John.                    No.

Julian.                   Am I not Emperor?

Paul.                    Yes, but very different from the former ones.

Julian.                   In what?

John.                    Worth and virtue.

Julian.                   What farther?

Paul. We wish to say that the most glorious and renowned emperors, Constantine, Constans and Constantius, under whose rule we served were most Christian men, and prided themselves on being servants of Jesus Christ.

Julian. I remember, but in that I do not choose to follow them.

Paul. You follow the worse cause. They frequented the churches and throwing aside their crowns, worshipped Jesus Christ.

Julian. You will not compel me to do this.

John. Therefore you are unlike them.

Paul. Because they worshipped the Creator, they shed lustre on the high estate of the House of Augustus, hallowed it with the showing forth of their probity and holiness, and abounded in rich returns to their prayers.

Julian. So do I surely.

John. Not in the same way, because divine love accompanied them.

Julian. Nonsense, I was once simpleton enough to practice these follies. I was even a priest in the church.

John. How does this priest please you, Paul?

Paul. The Devil's Chaplain.



Julian.                    But when I discovered in it no element of usefulness I turned me to the worship of the gods whose favor has advance me to the highest office of the empire.

John.                    You interrupted my discourse lest you might hear the praises of the good.

Julian.                    What is that to me?

Paul.                    Nothing but this much has reference to you; when the world was not worthy of them, they were received among the Angels and the unhappy state has been left to your ruling.

Julian.                    Why unhappy at this time?

John.                    On account of the character of its ruler.

Paul.                    You have left all religion and follow the superstition of idolatry. For this iniquity we withdraw ourselves both from your sight and from your company.

Julian.                    Although I have been dishonored in ways enough, nevertheless pardoning your audacity, I desire to raise you to the highest offices in the palace.

John.                    Do not trouble yourself, for neither by threats nor blandishments shall we be forced to yield.

Julian.                    I shall give you ten days respite, so that coming to your senses at last, you may hasten of your own

accord to be reconciled to our royal favor; but if not I shall no longer be flouted by you.

Paul.               What you are about to do, do now for you will never bring us to pay court to you nor to attend your palace; nor to your cult of the gods, will you ever be able to recall us.

Julian.             Depart, begone, see that you do what I advised.

John.               Let us not care a whit for the proffered respite, but entrust ourselves to heaven, and commend ourselves in prayer and fasting to God.

Paul.               It is meet we do so.

Julian.             Go Terrentianus, take soldiers with you and compel John and Paul to sacrifice to the god Jupiter, but, if with obstinate hearts, they resist, they must die, not openly but very secretly because they were members of the court.

Terrentianus.     The Emperor Julian, whom I serve, sent to you, John and Paul, in his clemency, a golden image of Jupiter to whom you should offer incense of your own free will. If you refuse to do this you must undergo the death sentence.

John.               If Julian is your lord may you have peace with him and enjoy his favor. We have no other lord than Jesus Christ, for whose love we desire to die; that

we may deserve to enjoy eternal life.

**Terrentianus.** Why do you hesitate soldiers? Draw your swords and slay these rebels to the gods and to the Emperor, bury them secretly in a house and see to it that you leave no trace of blood.

**Soldiers.** But what shall we say if we are asked?

**Terrentianus.** Pretend that they have been sent into exile.

**John.** In this hour of trial we invoke thee, O, Christ reigning one God together with the Father and the Holy Spirit. In the hour of death we praise thy name. Do thou receive our souls, for love of thee, freed from this earthly house of clay.

SCENE VIII. Terrentianus - Christians.

**Terrentianus.** Oh alas, alas! Oh Christians what is my only son suffering?

**Christians.** He gnashes his teeth, he foams at the lips, he rolls his frenzied eyes. The demon has full possession of him.

**Terrentianus.** Alas for his father! Where has he been stricken?

**Christians.** Before the tomb of the martyrs John and Paul, rolling on the ground; he admitted that he was tormented in answer to their prayers.

Terrentianus. Mine the fault, mine the crime; for by my exhortation, by my order the unhappy youth laid unholy hands upon those holy martyrs.

Christinas. If by your exhortation, he transgressed, by your repentance he may be freed from punishment.

Terrentianus. I only obeyed the orders of the impious Emperor Julian.

Christians. For that reason, it is indeed, that he was stricken with divine vengeance.

Terrentianus. I know it and for this I fear the more that I do not remember that any one who was an enemy to the servants of God ever escaped with impunity.

Christians. You are right.

Terrentianus. What if I should hasten to prostrate myself before the holy graves in penitence for my sin?

Christians. You will merit pardon provided that you will be cleansed by holy baptism.

Terrentianus. Glorious witnesses of Christ, John and Paul, imitate the example of the master who commanded you to pray for your enemies, pray for the crimes of those who persecuted you. Oh be ye compassionate toward the miseries of a desolate father in his bitter anguish, and pity the wretchedness of his

son, so that we both, bathed in the waters of baptism may forever persevere in the faith of the Holy Trinity.

Christians. Weep no more Terrentianus, dismiss from your anxious heart all care. Behold, your son has recovered his senses, and through the prayers of the martyrs has been made whole.

Terrentianus. Thanks to the Eternal King, who bestows such honor on his faithful soldiers. Not only do their souls rejoice in heaven, in the tomb itself, their mortal remains are made glorious by various miracles in testimony of their sanctity through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ who liveth and reigneth God.

### Criticism on Gallicanus.

Roswitha's most popular work, judging from the numerous transcripts thereof, is the "Gallicanus." The hero is a Roman General sent by Constantine against the Scythians. The scenes are strangely vivid pictures, though the coloring is a tenth-century and not Roman, of an emperor surrounded by his warriors, of noble ladies in their separate apartments, of onset and repulse, and the ups-and-downs of battle. The opening of the piece and the manner in which Constantine begins his speech reveals dramatic talent of a very high order.

Although Roswitha declares that she knows nothing of the rules of dramatic composition and simply follows 'the kind of writing' that she sees in Terence, she either consciously or unconsciously adheres to many of the principal rules that are given at the present time for the writing of the drama. Take for example the rule for characters most suitable to and proper for a drama. "The chief characters of a drama, like those of the epic, should be illustrious, of high rank, thereby dignifying the action of the drama, and giving it magnitude." We certainly find no violation of this rule in any of Roswitha's dramas. All of her principal characters are of lofty rank. To such an extent does she treat of the nobility in her plays and poems that one of her recent critics remarked. "Roswitha has a wonderful idea of the divinity that doth hedge an emperor and radiates from him on all his relatives, and belongs in a lower degree to all of noble rank." A second rule reads, "Dramatic unity demands a single hero as the leading character." Roswitha keeps to this rule as well as do

most dramatists. After all, is it not a question in Othello whether he or Iago is the leading character. A third rule reads "The dramatic artist should so introduce his personages and the incidents relating to them, as to leave upon the audience impressions favorable to virtue and to the administration of Providence." Certainly, Roswitha never violated that rule.

Excepting in the drama called Abraham, Roswitha makes little attempt at psychological development of character. But, as Francke<sup>1</sup> remarks, it is astonishing how well Roswitha understands with a few bold strokes, and with a few strong colors, to bring before us an image of life. Whatever is said or done springs as naturally from the character as light from the sun.

A. Ebert, in *Histoire Generale De La Litterature Du Moyen Age*, criticises quite severely Roswitha's disregard for the unities of time and place, when in the second part of the play Julian sends soldiers to chase the Christians from their possessions they return immediately and declare that they have executed his orders. This should not be wondered at when we remember her models, for according to Köpke she was familiar with Plautus as well as Terence. In "Captivi" Plautus sends Philocrates from Aetolia to Elis, who procures the liberation of Philopolemus, secures a runaway slave, Stalagnus, and returns by sea to Elis---

---

Note 1. See Introduction, page 1, note 2.

all, in a few hours. All of Roswitha's critics that I have read agree that her dialogue is remarkably vivid and spirited. Ebert, quoted above, says of Gallicanus---"The first four scenes are made remarkable by one of the most animated of dialogues which gives a faithful revelation of the sentiments of the different personages. This alone at such a time was truly an astonishing production."



### Introductory Note to the Drama of Calimachus.

This play is said to have had for its ground-work an incident taken from the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles. In the copy of these Acts which is in the University library there is no mention of this incident, unless one accepts what is said in the Acts of the Apostles and Evangelist John, the Theologian,-- that on the same day Saint John raised to life a man and a woman in the palace of Domitian at Rome. The circumstances are in no way similar; there is nothing whatever to suggest any of the characters or incidents of the play. In the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius (3;18) he cites Appolonius of Ephesus, a Greek ecclesiastical writer of the second century as authority that a dead man through the Divine power had been raised to life at Ephesus by John himself. I have no other clew to the story on which this drama is founded.

The persons represented are as follows: Calimachus, a young nobleman of Ephesus, very influential in the state who has many admirable qualities but is possessed of an insane love of Drusiana. Friends of Calimachus, several wealthy young men belonging to the same social circle.

Drusiana, the chaste and beautiful young wife of Count Andronicus.

Andronicus, one of the early Christians converted by St. John, and lord of the state.

Saint John, the Evangelist.

Fortunatus, a wicked, grasping and malicious servant to Count Andronicus.

The scene is laid in Ephesus.

Calimachus.

Resurrection of Drusiana and of Calimachus who loved her inordinately not only while living but, also, through the shameful-ness and blindness of his illicit love, while dead in the Lord. For this cause he was killed by a serpent, but he, together with Drusiana was brought back to life by the prayers of Saint John, the Apostle, and regenerated in Christ.

Scene: Ephesus.

Act. I.

Scene I. Interior.

Calimachus and Friends.

Calimachus: Friends, I wish a few words with you.

Friends: As many as you will, we are at your service.

Calimachus: If you do not take it amiss, I prefer that you should come apart from the company of others.

Friends: Whatever seems best to you we shall do with pleasure.

Calimachus: Let us then go to a more secret place lest anyone might come upon us, and break in upon our conversation.

Friends: As you will.

Scene II. Another place.

Calimachus: For a long time with such anxiety I have endured a heavy sorrow. Of this, I hope, by your advice, to be relieved.

Friends:           It is right that with mutual sympathy we should bear together whatever by the stroke of fortune, befalls either of us.

Calimachus:       Oh, would that you were willing to share my suffering by sympathizing with me.

Friends:           Explain it to us. Tell us what afflicts you, and if the affair admits of it, we shall most truly sympathize with you; if not, we shall, with much solicitude, strive to withdraw your mind entirely from the wretched thing.

Calimachus:       I love.

Friends:           What?

Calimachus:       A thing of beauty, a thing of charm.

Friends:           That does not define an individual nor a class,<sup>(1)</sup> therefore we cannot discern the particular object of your love.

Calimachus:       Woman.

Friends:           When you say woman you include all womankind.

Calimachus:       Not all equally but one particularly.

.....  
1. Atomum--Greek word Atomos means the undivided thing. Hence the individual thing, in Latin, indivisum.  
          individum--atomos--individual.

Friends:           What you say of the subject can only be understood by referring to a particular subject, therefore if you wish us to know the particular individual you must first name the individual.

Calimachus:       Drusiana.

Friends:           The wife of Count Andronicus.

Calimachus:       The very one.

Friends:           You mistake, dear friend, she has already been bedewed with the waters of baptism.

Calimachus:       I care not for that, if I can induce her to love me.

Friends:           You won't be able.

Calimachus:       Why are you so distrustful?

Friends:           Because you seek a thing so difficult.

Calimachus:       I am not the first to try this kind of thing, and am I not encouraged by the examples of others to make the attempt?

.....  
1. Enarithum i.e. atomum, i.e. the individual (ousia).

Friends: Listen, brother, the lady whom you love so ardently, has embraced the doctrine of Saint John, the Apostle, and dedicated herself so complete to God, that <sup>not</sup> even the love of her most Christian lord, Andronicus, can recall her from His sacred service, much less the foolishness of your proposals.

Calimachus: From you I sought consolation, instead, you fill me with despair.

Friends: He who feigns, deceives; and he who flatters, is untruthful.

Calmachus: Because you will not give me any help, I'll go to her and with sweet words persuade her to return my love.

Friends: You will not succeed.

Calimachus: (Ironically) Forsooth the fates forbid. (1)

Friends: We shall see!

Scene III. The House of Andronicus.

Calimachus: My words with Drusiana, are of the heart's best love.

Drusiana: I wonder very much, Calimachus, what you wish to talk to me about.

.....  
1. Virgil's Aeneid. Bk. I. l. 39.

Calimachus: You wonder?

Drusina: Much.

Calimachus: First about love.

Drusiana: What about love.

Calimachus: This, namely, that I love you above all things.

Drusiana: What right of relationship or what manner of lawful claim impells you to love me at all?

Calimachus: Your beauty.

Drusiana: My beauty.

Calimachus: Yes.

Drusiana: What concern is that of yours?

Calimachus: Alas, but little thus far, but I trust it may ere long be my concern.

Drusiana: Depart, depart, wicked panderer, I am deeply ashamed to hold further converse with one who, as I now see, is possessed by a diabolical deception.

Calimachus: My Drusiana, do not repulse one who loves you to the heart's core, return love for love.

Drusiana: I regard little your unholy love; I shrink from your passion, and as to yourself, I scorn you with my whole being.

Calimachus: As yet, I cannot be angry, because perchance you are ashamed to confess what feelings are roused in your heart by my affection.

Drusiana: None, unless indignation.

Calimachus: I believe that you will change your sentiments.

Drusiana: Most certainly, I will not.

Calimachus: Who knows!

Drusiana: Oh foolish and insensate, why do you deceive yourself? Why delude yourself with hope so vain? What madness causes you to think that I should listen to your triflings, who listen not to mine own husband's lawful love?

Calimachus: By men and gods I swear, that if you will not yield never will I cease, never desist until I ensnare you with my wiles.

Scene IV. Drusiana Ill.

Drusiana: Alas, alas, my Lord Jesus Christ, of what advantage is it to have made profession of chastity when this villain is infatuated by my beauty. Regard, oh Lord, my fears. Regard the misery I now endure. I know not what I am to do. If I speak of this, there will be civil discord on my account. If I conceal it, without thy assistance, I cannot thwart devilish snares.

(Enter Andronicus.) Let me die in Thee Oh, Christ  
rather than I should be the ruin of this weak youth.  
(Drusiana dies.)

Andronicus: Woe is me, unhappy that I am! Drusiana is un-  
timely dead. (To servants) Run, bring hither St. John.

Scene V. Interior.

Saint John and Andronicus.

Saint John: Why are you so sad, Andronicus? Why do you weep?

Andronicus: Alas Lord, I am weary of my life.

Saint John: Why do you grieve?

Andronicus: Drusiana, your associate in the faith---

Saint John: Is dead?

Andronicus: Alas, yes.

Saint John: It is not meet that tears should be thus shed for  
those whose souls we believe are happy in the bosom  
of God.

Andronicus: I may not doubt that, as you say, her soul will  
be happy for all eternity, and that her body will  
rise again incorrupt. This however, grieves me such  
that she, in my presence, prayed that death would  
come to her.

Saint John: Do you know the cause?



Andronicus: I do, and shall explain it to you when I recover from this shock.

Saint John: Let us go and perform the last rites with due care.

Andronicus: There is a marble tomb near by; there let her body be placed. The task of watching by it I'll give unto my steward Fortunatus.

Saint John: It is proper that she should be interred with all Honor. May her soul rejoice in the rest of heaven.

Scene VI. Exterior.

Calimachus and Fortunatus.

Calimachus: What will become of me, Fortunatus, since not even her death can free me from my love of Drusiana?

Fortunatus: How deplorable!

Calimachus: I shall die unless you assist me by your efforts.

Fortunatus: In what way can I assist you?

Calimachus: In this, that at least you will let me see her, even though dead.

Fortunatus: The body is still incorrupt owing to the fact, I think, that she was not worn out by a wasting sickness but taken off by a sudden attack as you perceived.

Calimachus: Oh happy, if only I had never so perceived.

Fortunatus: If you'll reward me, I'll surrender the body to you.

Calimachus: (Giving him money) Take what I have at hand, doubt not that very soon you will get much more.

Fortunatus: Let us go quickly.

Calimachus: With me there shall be no delay.

Scene VII.

Fortunatus and Calimachus standing near the dead body of Drusiana.

Fortunatus: Behold the body! The face is not that of the dead neither have the members decayed. Take it, it is yours.

Calimachus: O Drusiana, Drusiana, with what love did I love you! With what sincerity of love I should have held you to my heart! And you! You have always repulsed me! You thwarted all my wishes, but now, at last, you are within my power!

Fortunatus: Horrors! A frightful serpent is upon us! Serpent falls upon Fortunatus. Stings. Fortunatus dies.

Calimachus: Alas! Alas! Fortunatus, why have you thus deceived me, why thus encouraged me in this atrocious

crime. Behold! You die from this envenomed bite and  
I die from very fear.

Scene VIII.

Saint John and Andronicus.

Saint John: Let us hasten, Andronicus, to the tomb of Drusiana  
so that in prayers we may commend her soul to Christ.

Andronicus: It is in keeping with your goodness, not to for-  
get the soul who trusted you.

Saint John: Behold, the invisible God appears to us in visible  
form in the likeness of a most beautiful young man.

The Lord: Tremble.

Saint John: Lord Jesus, why hast Thou deigned to manifest  
thyself to thy servants in this place?

The Lord: I am come for the resurrection of Drusiana and  
for him who lies near her sepulchre, because in them  
my name shall be glorified.

(Vision disappears)

Andronicus: How suddenly he returned to heaven.

Saint John: I do not altogether understand the meaning of this

Andronicus: Let us hasten our steps, perchance on our arrival  
you may come to know what you say you do not under-  
stand.

Scene IX.

The Tomb of Drusiana.

Saint John: In the name of Christ what miracle is this that I see! The tomb unsealed! The body of Drusiana without! Near by two dead bodies, a serpent winding all about them!

Andronicus: I can conjecture what it means. This very Calimachus, while Drusiana lived, loved her illicitly. Unable to endure this, for grief she fell into a fever and prayed that death might come to her.

Saint John: To this her love of chastity urged her.

Andronicus: After death this love sick youth combining the languor arising from an unhappy love and the wariness of sin, denied, began to pine away, and seethed with passion all the more.

Saint John: Most lamentable!

Andronicus: I do not doubt that he induced, by means of gold this wicked servant, Fortunatus, to give him the opportunity of perpetrating this crime.

Saint John: Oh, inexpressible sacrilege!

Andronicus: It is on this account, I think, that both were snatched away by death before their foul purpose could be accomplished.

Saint John:       And justly!

Andronicus:       At this I greatly marvel; why should the resurrection of this man who willed to do wicked thing, rather than that of him, consenting to it merely, be foretold by the Divine Voice unless, perchance, the former, blinded by earthly passion, fell through ignorance, while Fortunatus sinned through malice solely.

Saint John:       By what fine discernment the Supernal Arbiter weighing the deeds of men with delicate balance, proportions to each one, with nicest care, his just reward for good and evil deeds no mortal can surmise; so far does the subtlety of divine judgment surpass the keenness of man's intelligence.

Andronicus:       And so we are lost in wonder at his judgments, because we are not able to discern wisely the cause of what happens.

Saint John:       Often the consequences that follow action teach us to judge those more correctly.

Andronicus:       And now, Most Blessed John, do what you intend to do. Wake Calimachus, who may unravel for us the mystery of this plot<sup>(1)</sup>

.....  
1. Ambiguitatis nodus--ambiguitas (ambiguus)  
ambiguus (ambigo), ambigo, going about, uncertain, wavering.  
nodus, grasp--Germ. knoten. Engl. knot.

Saint John: I think that, first, by the invocation of the name of Christ the serpent should be driven off and then Calimachus resuscitated.

Andronicus: You judge rightly, lest he receive further injury from the bite of the serpent. (Serpent glides away as St. John speaks the following words.)

Saint John: Leave him, cruel snake, for this man will henceforth be a servant unto Christ.

Andronicus: Behold, senseless though this creature be, his ear is not deaf to your words.

Saint John: Not unto me but unto Christ is this obedience.

Andronicus: No sooner did you speak than it fled.

Saint John: O God, unlimited and incomprehensible, simple and inestimable who alone art what thou art, who joining together soul and body dost fashion man, and makest from those separate elements a single being; and this same being disuniting dost again resolve, join, once again, those parts, which have been severed, bring back the breath of life, command Calimachus to rise once more a whole and perfect man as once he was; that all may magnify thy holy name, for thou alone art he who canst perform so great a miracle.

Andronicus: Amen---Behold he breathes again the breath of life, and still he moves not from his stupor.

Saint John: Calimachus, arise, in Christ's name. Tell the manner of this happening. However flagrant by your crimes, in smallest measure let not truth be hid.

Calimachus: It was an evil deed that brought me here. I was unable to control the burnings of my heart and pined away from thoughts that were not good.

Saint John: What madness came upon you, that you, of these most chaste remains, attempted profanation?

Calimachus: My own weak folly abetted by the fraudulence of Fortunatus.

Saint John: Unhappy man, unhappy three times over, did you accomplish the foul wrong that you did purpose?

Calimachus: In nowise did I. Not that the will was wanting, for the fulfillment I had not the power.

Saint John: What hindered you?

Calimachus: When first from Drusiana's face I drew the veil and to her lifeless corpse spoke words most blasphemous, this Fortunatus who has ever been the source and instigator of crime, perished, poisoned by the serpents bite.

Andronicus: Most justly!

Calimachus: At this point there appeared to me a youth of aspect terrible, who first, with reverence, replaced

the veil on that dead form, then from his glowing countenance the scintillating rays of dazzling light flashed o'er the tomb. One of these darts leaped back and struck my face. I heard a voice which said "Calimachus, die that you may live." With these words I expired.

Saint John: That was the work of divine grace which delights not in the sinner's destruction.

Calimachus: You have now heard the misery of my fall; delay not the healing of my wretchedness.

Saint John: I shall not delay it.

Calimachus: My mind is confused, my heart is full of sadness. I grieve, I sigh, I am tortured by the heavy guilt of sin.

Saint John: And not unjustly. Think you that light repentance holds out a remedy for faults so grave?

Calimachus: Oh, were my heart's most secret lurking place unsealed that you might see its bitterness of grief, that you might know I suffer, and knowing, might compassionate me.

Saint John: Rather do I rejoice with you, because I know this grief will bring you blessings.

Calimachus: My former life wearies me, its wicked joys inspire me with disgust.



Saint John: Not without cause.

Calimachus: That I transgressed, I do repent .

Saint John: And justly.

Calimachus: The wrong that I have done frets me so much that I no longer wish to live unless, renewed in Christ, I may deserve to change into a better man.

Saint John: I doubt not that divine grace will be made manifest in you.

Calimachus: Therefore be not slow; delay not to raise the fallen, to refresh the sorrowing with consolation; grant that through your admonition and instruction, I may be changed from a pagan to a Christian, from a braggart and a trifler to one who is chaste and upright. That with you as my guide, I may climb the steep pathway of truth and may live as to merit divine commendation.

Saint John: Praise be unto the only son of God who descended from Heaven to partake of our frail humanity! Who, you, my son, Calimachus, in sparing, killed; and in killing, restored to life.

Andronicus: A most unusual thing and worthy of all one's admiration.

Saint John: So Christ, redeemer of the world, deliverer of our sinful race, what words are there can praise thee

fittingly! I almost fear thy kindly clemency, thy clement patience, who, in a father's way, by timid coaxing, sometimes by love the sinner conquerest, sometimes by just severity dost bring him unto penance.

Andronicus: Praise to his divine Goodness!

Saint John: Who would dare to believe, my God, or who presume to hope that this Calimachus, overtaken by death while contemplating a dreadful deed, should by thy mercy be restored to life and be found worthy to repair his faults. May thy holy name be blessed forever, for thou alone hast power to work so great a miracle.

Andronicus: Come, then, Saint John, delay no longer to give my heart consolation too. My love for my wife, Drusiana, gives me no rest unless I see that she too will be called back from the dead at once.

Saint John: Drusiana, may our Lord Jesus Christ awaken you.

Drusiana: Praise and honor unto thee, Oh Christ, who hast made me again to live.

Calimachus: Thanks to the giver of all life. In joy he waked you from the dead who, to our grief, departed from us.

Drusiana: It becomes thy holiness, Venerable Father John, that as Calimachus, who loved me wrongfully, has been recalled to life, you should call, also, back to life

him who delivered up my dead body.

Calimachus:     Apostle of Christ, deem it not proper to absolve  
                  this criminal, this malefactor from the bonds of  
                  death. A man that confused my mind, deceived my  
                  heart and incited me to dare such an awful deed.

Saint John:     You ought not envy him the grace of divine clem-  
                  ency.

Calimachus:     He who is guilty of his neighbor's fall is not  
                  worthy to be restored to life.

Saint John:     The law of our religion teaches that man should  
                  forgive his debtor if he himself desires forgiveness  
                  (1)  
                  from God.

Andronicus:     It is just.

Saint John:     When even the Son of God, and the first born of  
                  the Virgin, who alone was innocent, alone immaculate,  
                  alone without taint of the ancient blemish, came into  
                  this world, he found all men pressed down under the  
                  heavy yoke of sin.

Andronicus:     In truth yes.

Saint John:     He found no one just, no one that was worthy of  
                  compassion; still, he despised no one, withheld from  
                  .....

1. Math. 6. 12. Et dimitte nobis debita nostra secut et nos  
dimittimus debitoribus nostris.

no one the grace of his mercy, but delivered himself up and gave his dear soul to free us sinners.

Andronisus: If he, being innocent had not died, no one could justly obtain salvation.

Saint John: Therefore he remembered those whom he bought with his precious blood and that any one of them should be lost is not pleasing to him.

Andronicus: Thanks to his kindness.

Saint John: Hence we may not begrudge to others the grace of God which, with little merit on our part, we so plentifully enjoy.

Calimachus: I am confounded by your admonition.

Saint John: That it may not appear that I resist your wishes, however, I shall not myself awaken Fortunatus, but through Drusiana because she has received from God the grace to do this work.

Drusiana: O Divine Being who dost exist, most truly and singularly, without material form, who hast formed  
(1)  
man from dust to thy own likeness and breathed into  
.....

1. Cf. gen. 1. 27 et creavit deus hominen ad imaginem suam.

him the breath of life, command this lifeless body of Fortunatus to be again restored into a living form that we three called back from death to life may conduce to the honor and praise of the Holy Trinity.

Saint John: Amen.

Drusiana: (Taking the dead man's hand) Arise Fortunatus. Shatter the bonds of death. It is the command of Christ.

Fortunatus: (Arising) Who took my hand? Whose voice was it that bade me to arise?

Saint John: Drusiana.

Fortunatus: Drusiana did not call me?

Saint John; The very same.

Fortunatus: Was she not a few days since snatched suddenly away by death?

Saint John: She now lives in Christ.

Fortunatus: And how is it Calimachus stands there with grave and modest look? Does he not longer rave in his accustomed way with love of Drusiana?

Saint John: Because he changed his wretched purpose and has become a follower of Christ.

Fortunatus: I do not believe it.

Saint John: Indeed, 'tis true.

Fortunatus: If Drusiana wakened me from death, as you do say she did, and if Calimachus believes in Christ, then do I give up life and, of my own free will, choose death. I would prefer to die than to see in them the grace of virtues so plentifully abound.

Saint John: Oh most diabolical envy! Behold the ancient  
(1)  
malice of the serpent which for the first man death secured and ever groans at seeing the glory of the just. Inhappy Fortunatus, filled with Satanic bitterness, like to the wicked tree with bitter fruit. Wherefore, thou too shall be cut off and cast out from those that fear God. Let him be flung into the fire of endless punishment.

(Fortunatus dies.)

Andronicus: Behold! The serpent's wounds again are swelling. Once more the poison led to death. His soul had fled before your words died out.

Saint John: Let him die and have his home in hell, him who through envy of the well-being of his fellow man, refuses thus to live.

Andronicus: Terrible!

Saint John: Nothing is more terrible than envy, no crime is worse than pride.

.....  
(1) Protophastis (first-formed), the first man.

Andronicus: Both, lamentable.

Saint John: One and the same person suffers from both, for neither is found without the other.

Andronicus: Explain those words more clearly.

Saint John: He who is proud is envious, he who is envious, proud. Because an envious man cannot endure to hear another praised, and in contrast with himself aims to lower others. He will not honor the more worthy and proudly seeks to be preferred to all his equals.

Andronicus: That is very clear.

Saint John: Hence that unfortunate was wounded to the heart because he could not bear to be inferior to those in whom he did not fail to see the grace of God shining more abundantly.

Andronicus: And now at last, I understand. He was not reckoned among those raised to life because he had to die again so quickly.

Saint John: This man deserved a twofold death, because he heaped up shame upon the corpse entrusted to him and then pursued with unrelenting hate the resurrected bodies.

Andronicus: The unhappy man is dead.

Saint John: Let us go away. Let us leave to the devil his son. To us this day on which Calinachus was so

wondrously converted, on which two persons were called back from death, shall be a day of joy. Let us give thanks to God, the all just judge to whom all secret things are surely known, who looks at all our thoughts and deeds with nicest care, disposing all things well. He knows each one, adjusts with wisdom all rewards and punishments. To him alone be honor and power, strength and victory, praise and jubilation through infinite ages. Amen.



Criticism on Calimachus.

In Calimachus the violence of passion is carried to a threatened profanation of the dead, which, however, is miraculously averted. Here indeed is the boldest situation of all, which reminds one of Goethe's "Braut von Korinth." The raging force of worldly amorous passion and the heavenly bliss of spiritual love have seldom been so sharply contrasted as in this drama.

One cannot read the play without seeing a resemblance to Romeo and Juliet sufficiently strong to suggest the thought that if Roswitha had seen Shakespeare's play she must surely have imitated him. Take a singly passage from act one, scene one of Romeo and Juliet and contrast it with Calimachus' second scene.

Ben. "See where he comes; so please you, step aside; I'll know his grievance or be much denied-----Good morrow, cousin"

Rom. "Is the day so young?"

Ben. "But new struck nine."

Rom. "Ah me! sad hours seem long."-----

Ben. "What sadness lengthens Romeo's hours?"

Rom. "Not having that, which, having, makes them short."

Ben. "In love?"

Rom. "Out"--

Ben. "Of love?"

Rom. "Out of her favour where I am in love."

Ben. -----"Tell me in sadness, who is that you love."

Rom. -----"In sadness, cousin, I do love woman."

Ben. "I aimed so near, when I supposed you loved."

Rom. "Aright good mark-man! and she's fair I love."

Ben. "A right fair mark, fair coz, is soonest hit."

Rom. "Well, in that hit, you miss, she'll not be hit."

With Cupid's arrow, she hath Dian's wit;

And, in strong proof on chastity well armed,

From love's weak childish bow she lives uncharmed."

Comparing this passage with Scene two, Act one, in Calimachus there are the following points of resemblance--the love sick youth; the gently-mocking yet sympathetic friends; the unresponsive young woman; the references to her beauty and chastity; the general trend of the conversation. In the vault scene the comparison may be continued; in both plays the lover visits the grave, and in both he dies near the tomb. A modern writer calls Calimachus the first sketch of this kind of drama of passion, the frenzy of the soul and senses, and Romeo and Juliet the masterpiece of the type.

Story of St. Abraham, a Hermit,  
and his niece, St. Mary, a penitent.  
From his life written by his friend,  
St. Ephraim Op. t. 2, pl. ed. nov. Vatican.  
About the year 360.

St. Abraham was born at Chidana, in Mesopotamia, near Edessa of wealthy and noble parents. Desiring to live and die in the state of holy virginity, he withdrew to a cell two miles from the city Edessa. Here he spent his whole time in adoring and praising God, and imploring his mercy. Except the sackcloth clothes which he wore and a cloak his only possession was a little vessel out of which he both ate and drank. For fifty years he was never wearied with his austere penance and holy exercises, and seemed to draw from them every day fresh vigor. Ten years after he had left the world, by the demise of his parents, he inherited their great estates, but commissioned a friend to distribute the revenues in almsdeeds. Many resorted to him for spiritual advice, whom he exceedingly comforted and edified by his holy discourse.

A large country town in the diocese of Edessa remained till that time addicted to idolatry, and its inhabitants had loaded with injuries and outrages all the holy monks and others who had attempted to preach the gospel to them. The bishop at length cast his eye on Abraham, ordained him priest, though much against his will and sent him to preach the faith to those obstinate, infidels. He wept all the way as he went, and with great earnestness repeated this prayer: "Most merciful God, look down on my

weakness: assist me with thy grace, that thy name may be glorified. Despise not the works of thine own hands." At the sight of the town, reeking with the impious rites of idolatry, he redoubled the torrents of his tears: but found the citizens resolutely determined not to hear him speak. Nevertheless, he continued to pray and weep among them without intermission, and though he was often beaten and ill-treated, and thrice banished by them, he always returned with the same zeal. After three years the infidels were overcome by his meekness and patience, and being touched by an extraordinary grace, all demanded baptism. He staid one year longer with them to instruct them in the faith; and on their being supplied with priests and other ministers, he went back to his cell.

His brother dying soon after his return thither, left an only daughter, called Mary, whom the saint undertook to train up in a religious life. For this purpose he placed her in a cell near his own, where, by the help of his instructions, she became eminent for her piety and penance. At the end of twenty years she was unhappily seduced by a wolf in sheep's clothing, who resorted often to the place under color of receiving advice from her uncle. Hereupon falling into despair, she went to a distant town, where she gave herself up to a life of sin. The saint ceased not for two years to weep and pray for her conversion. Being then informed where she dwelt, he dressed himself like a citizen of that town, and going to the inn where she lived in pursuit of her evil courses desired her company with him at supper. When he saw her alone, he took off his cap which disguised him, and with many tears said to her: "Daughter Mary, don't you know me? What

is now become of your angelical habit, of your tears and watchings in the divine praises?" &c.

Seeing her struck and filled with horror and confusion, he tenderly encouraged her and comforted her, saying that he would take her sins upon himself if she would faithfully follow his advice and that his friend Ephraim also prayed and wept for her. She with many tears returned him her most hearty thanks, and promised to obey in all things his injunctions. He set her on his horse and led the beast himself on foot. In this manner he conducted her back to his desert, and shut her up in a cell behind his own. There she spent the remaining fifteen years of her life in continual tears, and the most perfect practices of penance and other virtues. Almighty God was pleased within three years after her conversion, to favor her with gift of working miracles by her prayers. And as soon as she was dead, "her countenance appeared to us," Says St. Ephrem, "so shining, that we understood that choirs of angels had attended at her passage out of this life into a better." St Abraham died five years before her: at the news of whose sickness almost the whole city and country flocked to receive his benediction. When he had expired, every one strove to procure for himself some part of his clothes, and St. Ephraim, who was an eye-witness, related, that many sick were cured by the touch of these relics. SS. Abraham and Mary were both dead when St. Ephraim wrote, who died himself in 378. St. Abraham is named in the Latin, Greek, and Coptic calendars, and also St. Mary in those of the Greeks.

Dramatis Personae.

Abraham, a holy hermit.

Ephraim, a friend of Abraham.

Mary, Niece of Abraham.

Innkeeper.

Another friend of Abraham.

The scene is laid in Mesopotamia.

Abraham.

The Fall and Conversion of Mary, Niece of Abraham, the Hermit. She, after leading a solitary life in the desert for twenty years, fell from the state of innocence and sought the world. For the space of two years she feared not to dwell in the tents of the wicked. Won back to God by the pleadings of her Uncle who sought her in the guise of a lover, she returned to her desert cell where for twenty years by continuous weeping, fasting, watching and prayer she cleansed away the traces of her sins.

ACT. I.

Scene I. The Hermitage of Ephraim.

Abraham, Ephraim.

Abraham: Ephraim, dear fellow hermit, is the time now opportune for you to hold a conversation, or do you wish to offer first to God the homage of your praise?

Ephraim: Our conversation of itself should be a song of praise to Him who promised to be in our midst when two or three had gathered in His name.<sup>(1)</sup>

Abraham: For nothing else have I approached your cell; I wish to speak of what I know to be in harmony with the divine volition.

.....  
1. Cf. St. Matthew, XVIII, 20. For where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Ephraim:           Wherefore shall I resign myself wholly to your wishes, not for a moment shall I withdraw myself.

Abraham:           Something that I must do, disturbs my thoughts in this matter, I must desire that your views may correspond with my promises.

Ephraim:           Since it is ordered us to have one heart and one  
                    (1)  
mind, we are compelled to wish the same and to condemn the same.

Abraham:           'Tis as regards my niece, a young and tender child deprived of both her parents. Towards her, through deep compassion for her loneliness, I'm drawn by my affection; because of her I'm wearied by solicitude.

Ephraim:           And what have you to do with cares like these--you who have triumphed over worldliness?

Abraham:           In truth I care for this--lest the great brightness of her soul's beauty should be tarnished by the sordidness of the world's polluting touch.

Ephraim:           Care of this kind is not blameworthy.

Abraham:           I hope not.

Ephraim:           How old is the child?

.....  
1. Cf. Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans XII, 16, also XV, 5-6.



Abraham: If you add one year's term to her age, two olympiads<sup>(1)</sup>.

Ephraim: Still a little child.

Abraham: And therefore I am not without care.

Ephraim: Where does she live?

Abraham: In my hermitage. In accordance with the wish of my dying brother I have undertaken her education. Her wealth I have decided to give to the poor.

Ephraim: Contempt of earthly goods befits a soul intent on Heaven.

Abraham: I passionately desire to betroth the little maiden unto Christ and to enrol her in his youthful band.

Ephraim: A most praiseworthy resolution.

Abraham: Her name impels me to make this resolution.

Ephraim: What is her name?

Abraham: Mary.

.....

1. Olympiad. A period of four years, being the interval from one celebration of the Olympic games to another, used by the ancient Greeks in reckoning time.

(1)

Ephraim: Yes, Yes! The wreath of virginity most befits the excellence of that name.

Abraham: Nor do I question that If appealed to by words of sweet encouragement, she will accede most readily to our wishes.

Ephraim: Let us go and visit her. We may be able to instill into her thoughts the happiness of a chaste virgin's life.

Scene II. The Hermitage of Abraham.

Abraham, Ephraim, Mary.

Abraham: Oh Mary, my adopted daughter, part of my soul! Harken to the warnings of a father. Comply with the good arrangements which my brother Ephraim will propose to you, and, above all things, copy her whose name you have the honor to bear, Mary the very queen and author of virginity.

Ephraim: It would be very inharmonious, daughter, that she who through the sacred mystery of her name shines in the firmament of brilliant stars together with the blessed Virgin, Mother, should not strive upward by good works to gain those heights or be content to hold a lower place or mingle with the baser things of earth.

.....  
1. Following the teaching of St. Matthew, XIX, 11,12, and of St. Paul, I Cor, VII, 25-40, the Catholic Church has always taught that virginity or celibacy is preferable in itself to the state of marriage, maintaining that this perfect integrity of body enhanced by a purpose of perpetual chastity produces a special likeness to Jesus Christ.

Mary: I do not know the mystery of the name, and what the meaning is of all your words, I cannot understand.

Ephraim: Mary comes from Maris Stella, the bright Ocean star. About this star the world and all the shining heavens revolve.

Mary: Why is it called the Ocean Star?

Ephraim: Because it never goes to rest as other stars but keeps pointing out the safe way for the sailors.

Mary: But how could such a little thing as I formed from the very dust of earth, climb up to the high place where the mystery of my name is shining?

Ephraim: By perfect holiness of mind and inviolate purity of body.

Mary: To equal the beauty of the radiant stars would be a great honor.

Ephraim: If you remain a virgin, pure and innocent, you will be as the angels are in heaven; to whom, when you have cast aside the heavy burden of the body, you will pass through the air, surmount the pure etherial heights, go through the circle of the Zodiac--at no point pausing in your flight---until within the glorious habitation of his mother, the Virgin's Son will fold you to his heart.

Mary: One who thinks little of such things as these must be quite stupid. Henceforth I shall despise all things of earth. I shall deny myself so that I may deserve to be enrolled with those who share the joys of this great happiness.

Ephraim: Behold, brother, we find in this child's mind the very essence of mature thought.

Abraham: This is in very truth the grace of God.

Ephraim: Who can deny it?

Abraham: But though the grace of God be truly manifest, the child is far too young to use her own discernment.

Ephraim: Very truly so.

Abraham: Therefore shall I, in close proximity to my own hermitage, prepare a little dwelling for her use where through the little window of her cell I'll visit her, and shall instruct her in the holy psalms and other books containing all God's laws.

Ephraim: Very good.

Mary: And also to your prayers, dear Father Ephraim, do I recommend myself.

Ephraim: May your heavenly bride-groom, to whom you consecrate your tender youth, protect you, daughter, from

Abraham: Lamentably! She fell from grace, then secretly fled away.

Ephraim: By what allurements did the wiles of Satan thus ensnare her?

Abraham: An unwise inclination for a miscreant clothed in the garb and semblance of a monk who with pretended piety inflamed her childlike heart untutored as it was for evil such as this---this caused her fall.

Ephraim: Woe! Woe! The very hearing of it makes me tremble.

Abraham: When the unhappy girl perceived that she had fallen, she beat her breast, marred with her hands her face, plucked out her hair and rent apart her garments: then would she cry aloud in deepest anguish.

Ephraim: Justly! So deep a fall must be, with many tears lamented.

Abraham: And thus continuously her cry would be, "I am, alas, no longer what I was."

Ephraim: Poor child!

Abraham: She wept that she had done what was so contrary to our teachings.

Ephraim: So very contrary!

Abraham: She wept that she had lost the merit she derived

the wiles of Satan.

ACT II. SCENE I. The Hermitage of Ephraim. Twenty years later.

Abraham enters.

Abraham: Dear Brother Ephraim, when any chance event occurs of good or evil import, I first betake myself to you, and you alone do I consult. Wherefore, I pray, you will not be displeased at the complaint which I prefer but, rather, help me bear the heavy grief I now endure.

Ephraim: Abraham; Abraham, why are you thus distressed? Why are you thus cast down beyond all measure? It is not right for hermits to be so disturbed. This is the way of worldlings.

Abraham: Unutterable grief has come upon me! Intolerable pain gnaws at my heart.

Ephraim: Do not torment me with these many words but tell at once what troubles you.

Abraham: Mary, my chosen one, my daughter, she whom for twice ten years, instructing her in wisdoms ways, I tended with all diligence!

Ephraim: What of her?

Abraham: Woe is me! She has perished.

Ephraim: In what manner?

from watchings, fasts and many orisons.

Ephraim: If she but persevere in such compunction, it will save her.

Abraham: She did not persevere but heaped instead a greater sin upon the former.

Ephraim: My soul is pierced with grief and all my members are afflicted.

Abraham: For when, in great excess, she had weighed down her soul with these complaints, she headlong fell into the pit of dark despair and desperation.

Ephraim: Alas, how sad!

Abraham: And, therefore, hoping not for pardon, she sought the world of sin and chose to serve it.

Ephraim: Indeed! An equal victory in our hermits life was never won before by evil spirits.

Abraham: But now we have become the prey of demons.

Ephraim: How is it that she went without your knowledge?

Abraham: I was just at that time bewildered from terror of a vision I beheld. Had it not been for that I might have foreseen.

Ephraim: Tell me about this vision.

Abraham: It seemed that as I stood before the door of my enclosure, I saw a mighty dragon, of most offensive odor, advancing rapidly upon a snow-white dove that it spied beside me, nestling. Seizing the shining dove the dragon swallowed it with great voracity, then straightway disappeared.

Ephraim: It seems as though it all took place before my eyes.

Abraham: Then when my mind cleared up, I reconsidered what I saw and feared another persecution of the faith was impending which might drag down some believing soul to error.

Ephraim: You may well fear it.

Abraham: Whence prostrate on my knees, I begged of Him who knows the future to reveal to me the meaning of my dream.

Ephraim: You did well to do so.

Abraham: The third night after that when I had placed my wearied frame in slumber, I saw that self same dragon grovelling at my feet. Behold, quite suddenly, it burst asunder, and that self-same dove, uninjured, darted out.



Ephraim: In hearing this I much rejoice, nor do I doubt that someday Mary will return.

Abraham: Awaking from this sleep, I was consoled; this new dream had assuaged the sadness of the former. I was myself again and then I thought about my foster child. This also I remembered, if my mind was clear, for two days now I had not heard her chants of praise divine to which I am accustomed.

Ephraim: Too late did you remember.

Abraham: This I confess. I then approached and beat the window with my hand and called, by name, my daughter o'er and o'er.

Ephraim: Alack, you called in vain.

Abraham: Still I perceived it not and asked her why she was so negligent in her devotions, but no light tinkling of response came back to my inquiry.

Ephraim: And then, what did you?

Abraham: When finally I realized that she had gone, whom I was seeking, my heart was torn with fear; a sickening dread made all my members tremble.

Ephraim: I wonder not at that for I in hearing it suffer the very same.

Abraham:           Then did my lamentations fill the air--I asked what  
wolf had seized upon my lamb.   What thief had made my  
daughter captive.

Ephraim:           'Twas right that you should seek the lost one whom  
you cherished.

Abraham:           At length there came some friends who knew the truth  
as now I tell thee; they said that she had given herself  
up to vanity and led a sinful life.

Ephraim:           Where does she dwell?

Abraham:           I do not know.

Ephraim:           What can be done?

Abraham:           I have a faithful friend who will not rest, but  
every town and dwelling place will search until he finds  
at last where she has gone.

Ephraim:           What then, if you should find her?

Abraham:           Then will I change my dress and in the semblance  
of a lover seek her to see if she, by any chance, will  
listen to my pleadings, and, after this sad shipwreck of  
her life, will turn, again, back to the haven of her  
early years.

Ephraim:           And if they place before you meat and wine?

Abraham:           I shall not refrain from them lest I be recognized.

Ephraim: Now may you go right on. Make use of this most praiseworthy discretion; relax the reins of strict observance for a time that you may gain an erring soul to Christ.

Abraham: How am I urged to dare this undertaking since you are one with me in heart and mind.

Ephraim: He who can read the secrets of the heart knows well with what intention each particular thing is done, and thinks not to examine critically, or hold him guilty of wrong doing, who from the rigor of grave conversation for a time descends, and takes a part in that which is less serious, so that he may with greater ease recall the wandering heart from sin.

Abraham: Meanwhile, it is for you to help me with your prayer lest by the wiles of Satan I be thwarted in this undertaking.

Ephraim: The highest good, without which there is naught of good, will this effect, that the good<sup>1</sup> deed you wish may be accomplished.

.....  
1. This device of repeating words and phrases for effect is a favorite one with Roswitha, and one that Shakespeare very frequently makes use of. A single instance might be quoted from the Epilogue in As You Like It. "If it be true that good wine needs not a bush, 'tis true that a good play needs no epilogue; yet to good wine they do use good bushes, and good plays prove the better by the help of good epilogues."

Scene II. Before Abraham's Hermitage.

A Friend Coming.

Abraham: Is not this my friend whom, something more than two years since, I sent to seek for Mary? It is he.

Friend: Hail, venerable father.

Abraham: Hail, kindest friend; for many months I trusted you would come, and have but now begun to feel despondent.

Friend: It was for this that I delayed, I did not wish that you should be disturbed by tidings which might prove uncertain; but truth once ascertained, I hastened my return.

Abraham: Have you seen Mary?

Friend: I saw her.

Abraham: Where?

Friend: It is too sad to speak of.

Abraham: Tell me, I implore.

Friend: She has made choice of dwelling in a tavern kept by a certain panderer who cares for her with something of affection, and with good reason, for not a little money thus accrues to him from Mary's lovers.

Abraham: From Mary's lovers!

Friend: Yes.

Abraham: Who are her lovers?

Friend: Many.

Abraham: Woe is me! Oh, good Jesus, what is this monstrous thing I hear! She whom I taught to love and cherish  
Thee alone now follows loves most strange.

Friend: The law of courtesans from ancient times is that  
such loves are pleasing to them.

Abraham: Bring me a splendid steed and soldier's uniform.  
Now shall I leave my holy garb aside and as a suitor  
go to seek the lost one.

Friend: Behold, all things are here at hand.

Abraham: Now bring, I pray, a cap to cover up my tonsure.

Friend: That is a very necessary thing, without it she will  
know you.

Abraham: I have a single gold piece, shall I bring it with  
me for the innkeeper?

Friend: In no other way will you succeed in seeing Mary.

Scene I. A Tavern.

Abraham and the Innkeeper.

Abraham: Hail, good landlord!

Innkeeper: Who speaks? Hail guest.

Abraham: Is not this place an inn where travelers may find shelter for the night?

Innkeeper: Most surely, yes, our little place refuses nobody.

Abraham: That's very good.

Innkeeper: Enter, dinner will be prepared for you at once.

Abraham: Warm thanks I owe you for your kind reception, but something greater still I seek from you.

Innkeeper: State what you wish, it will be granted.

Abraham: (Gives gold)- Take this small sum that I have with me and permit that very pretty girl who tarries here with you, to dine with me.

Innkeeper: Why do you wish to see her?

Abraham: Because an interview with one whose beauty I have heard so praised will make me very happy.

.....  
In the Life of Abraham there is no mention of an innkeeper. This is inferred from the mention of an inn and introduced into the drama by the author.

Innkeeper:      Whoever praised her beauty spoke most truly, for she in elegance and graceful charm outshines all other women.

Abraham:        For this am I consumed with love of her.

Innkeeper:      I wonder much that an infirm old man like you should breathe such sighs as these for a young woman.

Abraham:        Oh, very truly, have I come for this alone that I may see her.

ACT III. SCENE II.

Abraham, Innkeeper and Mary.

Innkeeper:      Come in, Mary, come in, show your beauty to our new proselyte.

Mary:            I am coming.

Abraham:        (Aside) What confidence, oh, my God, what courage must be mine, when I behold her whom I reared within the holy covert of my hermitage, decked in the tawdry trappings of a sinful woman! But this is not the time my countenance should show the sadness that lies hidden in my heart. With firmness must I check those rising tears. My face must feign a joyous mood and thus conceal my overwhelming anguish.

Innkeeper:      Rejoice, most happy girl, not only as before, when those who are the same age as yourself came hither, now

even those worn out by years flock in, attracted by your loveliness.

Mary:           Those who love me, do I love in return, in equal measure.

Abraham:       Come, Mary give me a sweet kiss.

Mary:           ( Secretly attracted ) Not only kisses sweet shall I bestow, but shall with both my arms embrace your dear old neck.

Abraham:       This is what I want.

Mary:           ( While embracing her uncle she, without recognizing him detects a strange perfume which recalls her former unsullied life. They approach a table and begin to eat )

                  What can it be--what is this strange and wondrous thing that gives me pleasure. This fragrant odor recalls to me the fervor of my early innocence.

Abraham:       ( Aside ) Now, now my soul, must I dissemble; now must I venemently play the part of reckless youth with sportive jollity, lest I be recognized, by my gravity and she through shame, fly to her hiding place.

Mary:           Oh, woe! woe is me, unhappy one! Whence have I fallen! How dropped down into this pit of misery.



Abraham:           (Assuming a mirthful air) Away with lamentations.  
Here is no place for melancholy sighs where joyful  
revellers assemble to make merry.

Innkeeper:       Lady Mary, why do you breathe such sighs? Why are  
your eyes all wet with tears? In the two years that  
you have dwelt with me I have not heard such sadness  
in your speech. This is your first complaint.

Mary:             Oh, how I wish that I had died three years ago  
before I came into this deep disgrace.

Abraham:         I am not come to weep with you for your transgres-  
sions but to become a sharer in your love.

Mary:             I was affected by a slight compunction, for this  
I spoke those words; but let us eat and make good cheer  
because as you have warned me, this is no time to spend  
in sad repentance.

SCENE III.

Abraham:         I think we are sufficiently refreshed with meat and  
wine; we have enjoyed, good host, your bounteous repast;  
permit me now to rise from dinner that I may lay my  
wearied frame upon a couch and in sweet sleep again  
restore my strength.

Innkeeper:       Whatever you like.

Mary:             Rise, my lord, rise, I too, desire repose.

Abraham: (Aside) This is what I wish for, I'll never be compelled to leave this place without her.

ACT IV. SCENE I. A Room.

Abraham and Mary.

Mary: See, now, this room--so restful and so well arranged for comfort; and see this bed, no poor material here, but cloth of finest texture. Sit down, let me take off your shoes lest you fatigue yourself in stooping.

Abraham: Make fast the door with bolts lest anyone should intrude upon our privacy.

Mary: Be not solicitous. I'll see to it that nobody has easy access.

Abraham: (Now is the time to cast aside disguise and show her who I am. Throws off his disguise.)  
(1)  
Oh my daughter part of my soul, Mary, do you not recognize the old man who with fatherly love brought you up and betrothed you to the Son of the Heavenly Ruler?

Mary: Woe is me! My father and teacher Abraham it is whom I hear,

Abraham: What is it child?

Mary: Oh, misery!

.....  
1. Kuno Francke, Ph.D. Professor of German Literature in Harvard U. calls the following dialogue worthy of Sardou. His. of Ger. Lit. p. 51.

Abraham: Who has deceived you, who betrayed you?

Mary: He who cast down our first parents.

Abraham: Whither now has flown that sweet Angelic voice which formerly was yours?

Mary: Gone, forever gone!

Abraham: Your maiden purity, your virgin modesty, where are they?

Mary: Lost, irretrievably lost.

Abraham: What reward, for the labor of your fasting, prayers and vigils, unless you repent, is before you? You that plunged willfully from heavenly heights into the depths of hell!

Mary: Oh!

Abraham: Why did you disregard? Why did you leave me? Why did you conceal your misery from me--that I and my dear Ephraim might have prayed and done penance for you?

Mary: After I had fallen a victim to sin I did not dare approach you.

Abraham: Who is there that is free from sin unless the Son of the Virgin.

Mary: No one.

Abraham: To sin is human, to persist in sin is devilish.  
He who stumbles is not to be blamed, only he who neglects  
to rise as quickly as possible.

Mary: (Throwing herself down.)  
Woe is me, miserable one!

Abraham: Why do you throw yourself down? Why do you lie on  
the ground motionless? Arise! Listen to my words.

Mary: I am cast down by fear, nor am I able to endure  
your fatherly admonition.

Abraham: Away with fear. See but my love for you!

Mary: Alas, I cannot.

Abraham: It was for you alone I left the dear delights of my  
enclosure, and set aside the rules of my monastic state.  
It was for you that I, an aged hermit, assumed the part  
of one who gives himself to free indulgence. It was for  
you that I who long have practiced recollected silence  
gave way to jovial freedom in my conversation. Why,  
then look down upon the ground with countenance so sad  
and scorn to answer me.

Mary: I am confounded at the depths of my transgressions;  
for this I do not dare to lift my eyes to heaven, for  
this I dare not answer when you speak.

Abraham:       Mistrust me not, my daughter, nor despair, but strive to rise from this abyss of consternation and fix your hope in God.

Mary:           The measure of my guilt has cast me into the depths of deep despair.

Abraham:       I know it well. Your faults are very great, but greater still the love of God our Father. Withdraw your heart from sadness and allow no slow delay to keep you back from penance for the time that still remains; as soon as sorrow for your evil deeds lays hold of you, God's richest grace will flow into your heart.

Mary:           Oh, could I hope to merit pardon for my sins, in unrelenting penance I should not be wanting.

Abraham:       Oh, pity me who underwent such weariness for you, and lay aside despair. Of all the different kinds of sin we know of nothing greater. He who despairs that God will pardon sins, is he who sins unpardonably. As sparks from flint can never set the sea on fire, the bitter malice of our sins can never change the sweetness of God's love.

Mary:           Never shall I deny the greatness of God's mercy, but when I do reflect upon the awfulness of my particular sins I fear no satisfaction I can make will be considered worthy.

Abraham: My child, I take your sins upon my head; only return with me whence you departed and enter for a second time upon the intercourse with God thus interrupted.

Mary: Never again shall I resist your wishes but your commands, most readily, shall embrace.

Abraham: Now do I see, indeed, my fondly cherished daughter, now shall I love her more than all the rest.

Mary: Something of gold, have I, and raiment, I wait to know what you would have me do with them.

Abraham: Whatever was acquired by sin together with those sins must be abandoned.

Mary: I thought it might be given to the poor or, as an offering, to the holy altars.

Abraham: A gift acquired through sin would not be pleasing to God who is all holy.

Mary: All further care for these shall be forgotten.

Abraham: The morning dawns, let us go home.

Mary: It is for you dear Father--the very image of that Good Shepherd, who having found his lamb, sought once again the fold--to lead the way; your footprints shall I follow and in them place my feet.

Abraham:        Indeed, not thus. I shall proceed on foot and place you on my steed lest the rough stones should hurt your tender feet.

Mary:            Oh, by what name shall I address you? <sup>(1)</sup> How recompense your loving kindness? You who compelled me, not by dread fear but by compassion mild, and tender graciousness, to seek repentance.

Abraham:        Naught do I seek from you than, that you persevere in serving God so long as life remains.

Mary:            I am resolved to cling to God hereafter with all my strength, and to accomplish this, should capability be wanting, my will shall not be wanting.

Abraham:        So let it be. With the same zeal as in the past you ministered to vanity, now be a servant to divine volition.

Mary:            I pray that through your merits it may be, that the divine volition be fulfilled in me.

Abraham:        Let us hasten to return.

Mary:            Let us hasten. I am weary of delay.

.....  
1. Cf. The Aeneid. Book I. 1. 327.

ACT V.

Scene I. The Country near Abraham's Hermitage.

Abraham and Mary approaching.

Mary: How rapidly we mastered the difficulties of the way.

Abraham: Whatever is done with fervor is easily accomplished.  
Behold your desert cell!

Mary: Ah me! It knows my guilt. I fear to enter.

Abraham: Rightly so. The place where the triumph follows  
the vanquished must be avoided.

Mary: And where will you decide that I may be at liberty  
to enter on a course of penance?

Abraham: Enter the inner cell lest the old serpent find a  
way to circumvent still further.

Mary: I do not this resent, but hasten to obey your orders.

SCENE II. Same.

Abraham: I go to visit my friend Ephraim. He, only, shared  
my grief when you were lost and now he will rejoice  
that I have found you.

Mary: It is proper.

SCENE III. Ephraim's Cell.

Ephraim and Abraham.



Ephraim: Bring you good tidings?

Abraham: I do, indeed, the best.

Ephraim: That's good. I doubt not you have found your Mary.

Abraham: To speak right out, I found her and she returned most joyfully to the fold.

Ephraim: I think the grace of God accomplished this.

Abraham: There is no question of it.

Ephraim: I pray you tell me what she plans about the future, how to arrange her life?

Abraham: According to my wishes.

Ephraim: That will be best for her by far.

Abraham: Whatever labor I propose, even though most severe and rigorous, she undertakes at once without resistance.

Ephraim: That is praiseworthy, surely.

Abraham: Clad in rough hair cloth and worn out by fasts and watchings and by her strict observance of the strictest formula, she rules her tender body by the strong power of her spirit.

Ephraim: It is but just that all the sordid stains of impure pleasures should thus be cleansed by austere penitence.

Abraham:       Whoever hears her complaints is touched with sorrow;  
whoever sees her deep repentance, must himself repent.

Ephraim:       This often happens.

Abraham:       For this she strives most earnestly--to be for these  
a model of repentance of whom she had been formerly  
a cause of scandal,

Ephraim:       That is as it should be.

Abraham:       She strives to reach great heights of holiness  
proportionately to her former sinfulness.

Ephraim:       In hearing this, with great and heartfelt joy, do I  
rejoice.

Abraham:       And rightly so, for the angelic choirs, rejoicing,  
praise the Lord when erring souls do penance.

Ephraim:       Nor is this any wonder. The perseverance of the  
good is no more cause for happiness among the blessed  
than the return to goodness of the sinner.

Abraham:       So much the more should she be praised whose fall  
was looked upon as hopeless.

Ephraim:       Rejoicing, let us praise; and praising, glorify,  
the only, beloved son of God so clement and so merciful,  
who wished not that anyone redeemed by his most precious  
blood, should perish.

Abraham:           To Him be honor, glory, praise and jubilation  
                      through ages without end. Amen.

### Criticism on Abraham.

Most persons who have read "Abraham" pronounce it, undeniably the best of the six plays. The two themes which dominate in all of Roswitha's dramas are first, the exaltation of Chastity and second, the glorification of Divine Mercy. "Abraham" treats of the conversion of a sinner, the second of Roswitha's favorite subjects, and tells in a touching manner of a fallen woman's regeneration. While the author keeps close to the text of the story--so much so that at times she merely transcribes--she displays considerable originality in introducing, very cleverly, the author of the life himself, Ephraim, whom she gives to Abraham as a confidant, thus lending much more life to the piece.

In this play Roswitha reveals her artistic instinct by concentrating the essentials, thereby transforming a rather discursive composition of a strictly epic character, into a picture that by its vividness cannot fail to leave an impression on the mind. The scenes follow step by step and the psychological development is natural and surprisingly skilful and delicate. The mildness of Abraham's character and his extreme tenderness to his niece, Mary, make an appeal to the natural emotions.

Story of Sapientia, of St. Sophia

and her three daughters, Faith, Hope, and Charity.

The Roman Martyrology records on August first the names of three holy virgins and martyrs, Faith, Hope, and Charity. Their mother was St. Sophia, a noble Roman matron, whose feast is kept on the 30th of September. All three were accused of being Christians, and by order of the Roman governor, were most cruelly tortured, and at last, beheaded. Faith, only twelve years old, was the first barbarously scourged, after which her body was mutilated, and was cast into a vessel filled with melted tar. As she, however, continued to profess Christ fearlessly and remain unharmed, the tyrant ordered her to be beheaded. Hope, ten years old, looked at the torments which her sister endured, without being influenced by them to forsake her faith. The tyrant ordered her to be beaten with thongs over her whole body, after which she was thrown into a red hot furnace. As she too remained unharmed, they hung her upon a beam and tore her whole body with iron hooks; and when they saw that nothing could induce her to renounce Christ, they beheaded her. The same was done with the third sister, Charity who had hardly reached nine years. They put her on a rack, scourged her most inhumanly, threw her into a burning furnace, pierced and tore her tender body with unprecedented cruelty; but as she still adhered to her faith and was not injured by the fire, she ended her life, like her sisters, by the sword. God manifested to heathens and Christians, by these three feeble maidens, what those

are able to endure who are strengthened from above, as all three showed great joy to suffer for Christ's sake, and displayed an invincible fortitude. They were greatly strengthened by their mother who, like the mother of the Maccabees, encouraged her children by describing the glory that awaited them in Heaven. She accompanied them to the place of execution; she cheered them to the last moment entreating them to be faithful to their God. "Oh! happy mother that I am! I have been deemed worthy to honor the most Holy Trinity with my three daughters. O God! how inexpressibly great is the favor Thou hast shown me by taking my beloved children, adorned with the crown of martyrdom, into Thy kingdom." God ordained that the holy mother should quietly bury the bodies of her three daughters. Three days later, when she went to their graves to pray, her heart became filled with the most intense desire to be with them. "O you three priceless victims!" cried she, "who were sacrificed in honor of the Holy Trinity take your mother up to you." She prayed thus till she sank in a swoon to the ground and God accepting her petition, the holy mother breathed her last upon her children's grave. This happy death and the martyrdom of the three holy virgins took place in the year of our Lord 120.

---

This story is taken from Acta Sanctorum---First volume for August.

**Dramatis Personae.**

**Hadrian, Emperor of Rome.**

**Antiochus, Judge and Informer.**

**Sapientia, A noble lady from one of the Grecian provinces.**

**Faith (Fides)**

**Hope (Spes)**

**Charity (Charitas)**

**Daughters of**

**Sapientia.**

**Soldiers, Tribunes.**

**The Scene is laid in Rome.**

**Time, 120 A. D.**

The Sufferings of the Holy Maidens,  
Faith, Hope and Charity.

Act I.

Scene I.---Imperial Palace in Rome.

Hadrian, Antiochus.

Antiochus.       It is in accordance with your wishes, O Emperor Hadrian, and with your vows for the welfare of your state, that your empire, freed from all disturbance, should as I think, grow strong and vigorous. For this reason, I desire that whatever may be considered a menace to the country, or whatever may disturb the tranquillity of your mind, may be destroyed immediately.

Hadrian.        You act wisely since your happiness is inseparably bound up with our prosperity. Nor do we cease day by day to add fresh honors to those already bestowed upon you.

Antiochus.       Allow me to return thanks for your great kindness. Believe me that if anything should come to light that seems in any way to oppose your authority, I shall not keep it a secret, but impatient of the least delay shall make it known at once.



Hadrian. 'Tis well you do. Were you to conceal what should be made known, you would convict yourself of high treason.-1-

Antiochus. I have been accused of this crime before but have never been found guilty.

Hadrian. I remember, but if you know anything new, tell it.

Antiochus. A foreign woman has come to Rome, recently, accompanied by her brood of three children.

Hadrian. Are these children boys or girls?

Antiochus. Girls, all of them.

Hadrian. (slightly sarcastic) You don't think, do you, that the state will be injured by the arrival of these three little girls?

Antiochus. Yes, I think it will be injured very much.

Hadrina. How?

Antiochus. They will take away our peace.

Hadrian. In what way?

---

Note. Nec injuria---a favorite phrase with Roswitha cf. Cal. p. 140, winterfeld.

-1- Crimen magistatis, high treason.

Antiochus.           What can disturb civil concord more than a lack of harmony in the observance of our established customs?

Hadrian.            There is nothing worse, nothing more mischievous, as the whole Roman world can testify. The soil of every land is dyed from the slaughter of those wretched Christians.

Antiochus.          This woman of whom I spoke exhorts the people to renounce their ancient rites and embrace the Christian faith.

Hadrian.            These exhortations do not make a great impression do they?

Antiochus.          Too much, by far; even now, our own wives despise us and will have nothing more to do with us.

Hadrian.            I admit this looks dangerous.

Antiochus.          It is in accordance with your wisdom to guard against this person.

Hadrian.            That follows. Let the woman be brought before us that we may endeavor to change her sentiments. Perhaps she will listen to our admonitions.

Antiochus.          Do you wish me to call her?

Hadrian.            I wish it, certainly.

Scene II.-----Home of Sapiientia.

Sapiientia, Antiochus.

Antiochus.           You are a stranger I perceive.   What is your  
name?

Sapiientia.           Sapiientia.

Antiochus.           The Emperor Hadrian orders you to appear before  
him in his palace.

Sapiientia.           I do not fear to enter the royal palace accom-  
panied by my dear children nor do I shrink from the  
threatening countenance of the Emperor.

Antiochus.           These detestable Christians!   Always prepared to  
defy the prince!

Sapiientia.           The Lord of the World who has never known defeat,  
will not suffer his own to be overcome by the enemy.

Antiochus.           Be quiet and proceed to the palace.

Sapiientia.           Go before us to point out the way.   We shall  
follow you at once.

Scene III.---The Imperial Palace.

Emperor Hadrian, Antiochus,  
Sapiientia with her daughters,  
Soldiers.

Antiochus.           That is the Emperor whom you see sitting on his

throne. Consider well, what you will say to him.

Sapientia. That would not be in accordance with the words of Christ who promised to us the gift of insuperable wisdom.-1-

Hadrian. Come nearer, Antiochus.

Antiochus. I am here, my Lord Emperor.

Hadrian. These are not those women whom you denounced for the Christian faith are they?

Antiochus. They are indeed.

Hadrian. I am astonished at the beauty of each one of them, and moreover, am unable to admire sufficiently the nobleness of their appearance.

Antiochus. Cease to admire them, my lord, and compel them to sacrifice to the gods.

Hadrian. What if I should address them at first with comforting words, perhaps they may wish to yield.

---

-1- Cf. St. Luke XII, 11-12. And when they shall bring you into the synagogues, and to magistrates, and powers, be not solicitous how or what you shall answer, or what you shall say-

For the Holy Ghost will teach you in the same hour what you ought to say.

Antiochus.            That is much better, for the frailness of their sex can easily be overcome by flattery.

Hadrian.            Illustrious Lady, that you may enjoy the benefits of our friendship, I most courteously invite you to the worship of the gods of Rome.

Sapientia.           I cannot embrace the worship of the gods even to satisfy your wishes, nor do I desire your friendship.

Hadrian.            As yet, I cannot be angry,<sup>-1-</sup> nor am I moved by any indignation toward you, but for your own safety and that of your daughters, I solicit you with the love of a true father.

Sapientia.           (Aside to her daughters) Oh, my beloved children, incline not your hearts to the blandishments of this satanic serpent, but with me despise them.

Fides.            (Aside) We do despise them and from our hearts condemn this frivolousness.

Hadrian.            What is that, you are murmuring?

Sapientia.           I was saying a few words to my daughters.

-----  
<sup>-1-</sup>            Adjue, mitigato furore, Cf. Calimachus Act I, Scene III.

Adjue non repperi occasionem irascendi..

Hadrian.            You appear to be of noble origin, but nevertheless I wish to know fully of your country, your family and your name.

Sapientia.        Pride of lineage is unbecoming to a Christian but I do not deny that I belong to a noble family.

Hadrian.            That is easily seen.

Sapientia.        The most distinguished princes of Italy were my ancestors. My name is Sapientia.

Hadrian.            The brightness of your intellect glows in your countenance and the wisdom of your name manifests itself in the words that fall from your lips.

Sapientia.        Flattery will not prevail over us nor will the sweetness of your words make any change in our belief.

Hadrian.            Tell me why you have come here. Why you wish to be among our subjects.

Sapientia.        For no other cause than this---to know the truth, to learn in all its fulness the faith against which you are fighting and to consecrate my daughters to Christ.

Hadrian.            Tell me the name of each child.

Sapientia.        The eldest is Faith, the second Hope and the third Charity.

Hadrian.           How old are they?

Sapientia.       (Aside to daughters) Will it please you, oh, daughters, if I bewilder this lack-brain by an arithmetical problem?

Fides.            We shall be delighted, dear mother, and shall ourselves, constitute an audience.

Sapientia.       Great emperor if you would know the ages of my children, Charity has completed *imminutum pariter* <sup>(1)</sup> *parem mansurnorum numerum*. Hope has completed a number equally diminished but equally unequal but Faith has reached a number increased but unequally equal.

Hadrian.        From the response which you make I can ascertain nothing of what I asked.

Sapientia.       Nor is that to be wondered at for under the appearance of this definition, fall, not one number only but several.

---

(1) A number which is even in many ways and is diminished in itself.

Hadrian. Explain yourself more clearly,<sup>-1-</sup> How can my mind receive your words in any other way than the way you say them?

Sapientia. Charity has seen two olympiades,<sup>-2-</sup> Hope, two lustrums and Faith, three olympiades.

Hadrian. And why are the number eight, which is made up of two olympiads, and the number ten which consists of two lustrums, said to be diminished, and the number twelve, containing three olympiads, said to be increased?

Sapientia. Because every number is said to be diminished whose parts being added together give a smaller sum than the number itself, as the number eight; half of eight is four; the fourth part of eight is two; and the eighth part is one; adding these parts---four, two and one, you obtain seven. Similarly ten, divided into halves gives five, into fifths, gives two, and into tenths but one; these parts counted up give eight. On the contrary a number is said to be increased in itself whose parts when added exceed the original

---

-1- Enucleatus, from Enucleo, to take out the kernels, to clear from the husk.

-2- Cf. Abraham. Duas olympiades vitali aura vesceretur.



number, as twelve: the half of twelve is six; the third part, four; the fourth part; three, the sixth part two, and the twelfth part, one. The sum of these parts is sixteen. I must not pass by the most important number which is between the two extremes, and is called the perfect number, which equals the sum of all its parts and is neither increased nor diminished as six, the addition of whose parts returns the same sum as the original number. By a similar process, twenty eight, four hundred and ninety six, and eight thousand one hundred twenty eight, are called perfect numbers.

Hadrian.           And what of the rest?

Sapientia.           They are all either increased or diminished numbers.

Hadrian.           What number is equally equal?

Sapientia.           That number which can be divided into two equal parts, and these parts again into two equal parts, and so on until you reach indivisible unity: so is it with eight, sixteen, and all other numbers which are made by doubling these numbers.

Hadrian.           And which numbers are equally unequal?

Sapientia.           All those which can be divided into two like parts but whose parts cannot be again divided equally, as ten; and all other numbers composed of fractional

parts or that are made uneven by division. A number of this kind is the opposite of the former, because in that alone, the 'minor terminus' is capable of division, but in the latter the 'major terminus' only may be divided. In the former also every part, in name and in quantity, is 'pariter pares' but in the latter, if the name indicates an even number, the quantity represents an uneven number, if the quantity is even, the name is uneven.

Hadrian. I am not very clear as to what you mean by terminus, nor of what you denominate quantity.

Sapientia. As soon as you write any number in a series the first number is called the minor terminus, and the last, the major terminus; but since in making a division, we mention the different parts that make up the number we express a name; but when we mention the value in any part, we express a quantity.

Hadrian. And what do you mean by 'impariter par'?

Sapientia. The number which may be divided equally not only once as the 'pariter par' but even a second, a third and more than a third time, and still not reach indivisible unity.

---

Boethius's treatise is taken almost word for word from Boethius' De Arithmetica, liber 1, cap. IX, X, XI, XX.

Hadrian. Oh, what enigmatical and perplazing questions have come up from asking the age of those children!

Sapientia. In this, let us praise the transcendent wisdom of the Creator and the wonderful skill of the Artist, who in the beginning not only created the world from nothing, and arranged all things according to number, measure and weight, but even in the order of succeeding time and in the age of a human being, he shows how admirably the most perfect science may be investigated.

Hadrian. I have listened to your syllogisms for a long time, I trust that you will now conform to my wishes.

Sapientia. In what way?

Hadrian. In the worship of the gods.

Sapientia. Assuredly I shall never consent.

Hadrian. Should you resist you must submit to tortures.

Sapientia. Upon my body, indeed, you may inflict tortures; you will never be able to compel my soul to yield.

Antiochus. It is growing late. Evening is coming on. Let us have an end of argument, it is time for dinner.

Hadrian. Take them to the prison near the palace, give them three days, in which, if they wish, they may retract.

Antiochus.           Keep a strict watch over them, soldiers, and see to it that there is no chance of escape.

Act II.

Scene I---A Prison.

Sapientia. Her Daughters.

Sapientia.           Grieve not, beloved children, over the narrow confines of our guarded prison, and oh, dear little girls, fear not the threats of near approaching torture.

Fides.               And even should our little bodies tremble under torments, our souls will glow with thoughts of the reward.

Sapientia.           To overcome the tenderness of childhood's age requires the understanding of mature years.

Spes.                Thine is the task, dear mother to help us conquer by your prayers.

Sapientia.           My constant prayer to heaven is this, that you may persevere and not give up that faith which I instilled into your minds since first you grasped with tiny fists the toys of childhood.

Charitas.            What we then learned we shall not forget.

Sapientia.           It was for this I nurtured you and cherished you with delicate attention that for you I should

choose no earthly spouse but merit, rather, to establish a firm and lasting bond of friendship with the King of Heaven, by your espousals with the Son of God.

Fides. For love of this Heavenly Spouse we are prepared to die.

Sapientia. More delightful are your words to me, my daughter, than taste of sweetest nectar.

Spes. Send us before the tribunal of the judge and you will see how bold our love of Him will make us.

Sapientia. This do I hope, that you may be crowned for virginity and glorified for martyrdom.

Charitas. Hand in hand shall we advance and confound the face of the tyrant.

Sapientia. Wait until the hour is at hand for our summons.

Fides. We are weary of delay, still we must wait.

### Act III.

#### Scene I.

Hadrian, Antiochus, Sapientia, Spes, Fides, Charitas.

Hadrian on the judgment seat, Antiochus and soldiers next to him.

At one side Sapientia and her daughters.

Hadrian. Antiochus, order those Brecian captives to be

brought before us.

Antiochus. Sapiaentia, you and your daughters are summoned to appear before the Emperor.

Sapiaentia. Go forth with me, my daughters, that, happily, you may be able to seize the palm.

Spes. We shall go forth and with us He for love of whom we die.

Hadrian. Our Serene Highness has given you three days as armistice. If you have made good use of them you will now yield to our commands.

Sapiaentia. It is evident that we have used them very profitably since we shall not yield.

Antiochus. Why do you deign to dispute with this insolent person who wearies you with such overbearing presumption?

Hadrian. Do you advise me to send her away unpunished?

Antiochus. By no means.

Hadrian. What then?

Antiochus. Warn those young girls that if they continue to resist your authority, that you do not spare even children, but will condemn them to death; you will thus be able to inflict on this rebellious woman the

most bitter torments by compelling her to witness the death of her children.

Hadrian. I shall take your advice.

Antiochus. Thus at last you shall establish your authority.

Hadrian. Fides, cast your eyes upon this venerated image of the great Diana and to obtain her favor, offer a libation to this sacred goddess.

Fides. (Aside to her sisters.) Oh how stupid is the command of the Emperor! Worthy, indeed of all contempt!

Hadrian. What is that you are murmuring? Whom do you mock with that derisive air?

Fides. I mock the foolishness of your command oh, Emperor.

Hadrian. Of my commands?

Fides. Of thy commands?

Antiochus. The commands of the Emperor!

Fides. The very same.

Antiochus. Most execrable!

Fides. What can be more foolish or more senseless than to ask us to despise the Creator of the Universe and worship a metal statue?

Antiochus. Has anyone ever heard of such madness, such insanity! Have you said that our chief ruler is foolish?

Fides. I said it, I say it now and I shall say it as long as I live.

Antiochus. You have but a very short time to live and you deserve to be put to death immediately.

Fides. To die in Christ is my hope.

Hadrian. Let twelve centurians in turn scourge her with whips.

Antiochus. It is but just.

Hadrian. Most brave centurions approach. Avenge this insult to our majesty.

(Centurians seize and scourge Fides)

Hadrian. Ask her now Antiochus, if she will submit.

Antiochus. Do you still wish to disparage the Emperor and make him an object of scorn with your customary reproaches?

Fides. Why less now?

Antiochus. In that case you will receive no more blows.

Fides. Blows will never compel me to be silent because



I suffer no pain.

Antiochus. Oh, unhappy obstinacy, Oh, stiff-necked audacity.

Hadrian. Her body is fainting from the blows but her mind swells with pride.

Fides. You err Hadrian, if you think me weakened by punishment. Not I, but the executioners are fainting from weakness, see how their sweat flows from exhaustion.

Hadrian. Throw her on the gridiron and broil her. Place blazing fires beneath, See if the power of heat will end her.

Antiochus. She who feared not to oppose the Emperor's commands, deserves to perish thus, most miserably.

Fides. All that you do to hurt me turns to my comfort. I rest as easily on this fiery bed as if reclining in a little boat on tranquil waters.

Hadrian. Let a vessel filled with pitch and wax be placed upon a burning pyre; throw the rebellious thing into the boiling liquid.

Fides. Willingly shall I leap into it.

Hadrian. I agree.

Fides. (From boiling pitch) Where are your threats?  
Immersed in waves of flame I swim and sport about.  
Instead of voilent heat I feel refreshing coolness as  
of the morning dew.

Hadrian. Antiochus, what is to be done with her?

Antiochus. See that she does not escape.

Hadrian. She must be beheaded.

Fides. Now must I rejoice and praise the Lord with  
gladness.

Sapientia. Oh Christ, thou conqueror of the evil one, give  
to my daughter, Faith, the grace to suffer death.

Fides. Oh, mother, dear and ever venerated, say a last  
farewell to me, your daughter. Kiss for the last  
time the lips of your first-born child. Let not your  
heart be touched by any sorrow, for now I go into  
eternal life.

Sapientia. Oh daughter, daughter, I am not distressed, nor  
do I weep in grief, but kiss your lips and eyes with  
tears of joy, and pray to God that you, beneath the  
headsman's blow will still preserve the mystery of  
your name.-1-

Fides. Do you, my sisters, give me the kiss of peace, and now prepare yourselves to bear the coming conflict.

Spes. (Kissing Fides) Help us, dear sister, with your prayers; ask that we may deserve to follow in your footsteps.

Fides. Be you obedient to our mother's counsels who, ever, in her holy way, taught us to disregard the things of earth and strive to merit the eternal crown.

Charitas. Gladly shall we obey our mother's counsels that we may merit to enjoy eternal happiness.

Fides. Come hither, headsman, put me to death at once and thus fulfil the duties of your charge.

(Fides is beheaded.)

Sapientia. (Embracing the head of Fides.) My martyred child, I now embrace your head, thus, thus, print warm kisses on your brow. Oh Christ, for this receive my thanks that thou didst give this tender child the grace of victory.

Hadrian. (To Spes) With true paternal feelings, Spes, do I advise you; yield to my exhortations.

Spes. What do you advise, what do you counsel?

Hadrian. Take heed you do not imitate your sister's stubbornness lest you incur a similar punishment.

Spes.                    Oh, how I hope that I may imitate her patience,  
so that I may receive the same reward.

Hadrian.                Forget about this bitterness of heart. Come,  
throw yourself before this holy image of Diana and  
offer incense to her. Then I in turn, will love you  
as my own dear child, all that the world can give may  
be yours.

Spes.                    I do not want you as my father, and I do not want  
your gifts. Why, then do you deceive yourself with  
hope so vain or think that I shall ever yield to your  
commands.

Hadrian.                Be quiet girl. I may become angry.

Spes.                    Be angry if you wish. I do not care.

Antiochus.             Most August Emperor, I marvel much that for so  
long a time you listen to the blasphemous remarks of  
this young girl. I am consumed with fury to hear her  
taunt and chide your majesty in this shameful way.

Hadrian.                So far I have spared this child. I shall no  
longer spare her but shall inflict the punishment so  
well deserved and thus avenge myself for all her  
stubbornness.

Antiochus.             Oh, how I wish you would.

Hadrian.           Lictors, approach. Beat with crude thongs this stubborn girl until she's dead.

Antiochus.       'Tis proper she should feel the weight of your resentment, who thought so little of your love and mildness.

(The soldiers begin to scourge Spes who is at first overcome with pain)

Spes.             I wish for this love, I desire this mildness.  
(Sapientia prays fervently that Spes may not yield.)

Antiochus.       Ah, Sapientia what is that you are murmuring? Why do you stand near the body of your dead child and raise your eyes to heaven?

Sapientia.       I am calling upon God to give the same strength of endurance to Spes that he gave to Fides.

Spes.             Oh mother, mother, your prayers were quickly heard and answered! Behold the angels came in answer to your prayer, and all the blows the lictors aimed at me, these angels rendered neutral so that they hurt me not at all.

Hadrian.         If these blows hurt you little you shall be forced by sharper punishments.

Spes.             Do as you will! Afflict me with whatever deadly thing your cruelty suggests. The greater is your

savageness, being conquered, so much the greater your humiliation.

Hadrian. Hang her up in the open air. Tear out her entrails with hooks.. Pull all the flesh from off her bones and let her body rattle in the wind and die by inches.

Antiochus. (To soldiers) The imperial command, and a most suitable punishment.

Spes. You speak with the cunningness of the fox Antiochus, and flatter with the adroitness of the werewolf.

Antiochus. Silence, unhappy girl, your babbling tonque will soon be hushed forever.

Spes. It will not happen as you think, but will embarrass you and your royal master.

Hadrian. What is this strange sweet fragrance? Whence comes this heavenly smell?

Spes. The bits of flesh torn from my person and fallen to the earth give forth this odor of paradise; whence,

---

-1- Versipellis. The ancients entertained a superstitious belief that there were certain persons who could change themselves into a wolf. Therefore versipellis is a wolfman.

although unwilling, you must confess your tortures do not hurt me.

Hadrian.           Antiochus.what shall I do?

Antiochus.         Think of some other torture.

Hadrian.           Place that copper kettle, filled with oil and lard and wax and pitch, above that burning pyre. (Soldiers obey order.) Now bind her and throw her into it.

Antiochus.         If she falls under the power of Vulcan I think she will not manage to escape.

Spes.               Christ has the power to change the course of nature; 'Tis not unusual for him to mitigate the force of flames.

Scene II.---Interior of the Palace.

Hadrian, Antiochus.

Hadrian.           What is that? I hear a sound as if of many waters?  
(Antiochus retires and soon returns in a great fright)

Antiochus.         Alas, alas, my Lord!

Hadrian.           What has happened?

Antiochus.         The vessel burst asunder. The great heat has burned the servants. It is evident that all who took

part are injured.

Hadrian. I admit it. We are conquered.

Antiochus. Utterly!

Hadrian. She must be beheaded.

Antiochus. It seems she can't be killed in any other way?

Scene III.---Exterior.

Spes, Charitas, Sapientia.

Spes. Oh, dearest Charitas, now my only sister! Fear not the tyrant's threats nor tremble at the torture. Strive to do as your sisters, believing firmly they have gone before you to the bliss of paradise.

Charitas. I'm weary of this life; I'm weary of this earthly dwelling place; I'm weary of the time I shall be separated from you.

Spes. Put by all thoughts of weariness and look to the reward. Neither shall we be long separated but soon shall be united in the bliss of heaven.

Charitas. Oh, may it be so, may it be so.

Spes. -1-Good! Courage, illustrious mother. Let not my sufferings touch your tender heart with grief. Let

---

-1- Euge---suggestive of Terence. This word occurs frequently in his plays.



hope sustain you when you see me die for Christ.

**Sapientia.** Now do I rejoice, indeed, but then shall I rejoice exultingly when I shall send you on before me into heaven, a martyr like your sister, and I, at last, shall be allowed to follow.

**Spes.** The Everlasting Trinity will restore to you the full and perfect number of your daughters, and of this number there will be no lessening.

**Sapientia.** Strengthen your soul, my daughter, the executioner approaches with drawn sword.

**Spes.** Gladly do I receive this sword. Do thou oh Christ, receive my soul departing from the habitation of the body for the confession of thy name.  
(Spes is beheaded.)

**Sapientia.** Oh, Charitas, my noble child, the last of all my daughters! Do not frustrate your mother's holy hopes that you will be victorious over suffering. Despise the gladness of this present life that is so short, that you may have those joys that are eternal in the life to come, where both your sisters, unharmed by all their tortures, now wear the virgin's crown of shining splendor.

**Charitas.** Assist me, mother, with your holy prayers so far that I may soon deserve to share their happiness.

Sapientia.           Unto the end I pray that you may go in un-  
diminished faith, and firmly do believe this ever-  
lasting happiness will be yours.

Hadrian.            The never-ending contradictions of your sisters,  
Charitas, have irritated me beyond endurance. I do  
not care to spend more time with you. If you will  
be obedient to my wishes, I shall reward your con-  
fidence by giving you everything good; oppose me---I  
punish you with everything bad.

Charitas.            The good I love with all my heart. The bad I  
do detest.

Hadrian.            To me this is most pleasing, to you it is a  
powerful means of safety; therefore the kindness of  
my paternal love will ask from you but very little.

Charitas.            What?

Hadrian.            Say, only, 'Great Diana'<sup>1-</sup> and I shall not compel  
you to make further sacrifice.

Charitas.            Certainly, I<sup>-2-</sup> shall not say it.

---

-1-       Magna Diana Ephesorum. Cf. Act Apostol. 19, 27.

-2-       Percerte Cf. Sapientia, Act. I, Scene I, last word.

Hadrian.           Wherefore?

Charitas.           Because I do not wish to tell a lie. I and my sisters were born of the same parents, received the same sacraments; together we possess the same strong faith. Our wishes, thoughts and feelings are the same, and therefore I shall never differ from my sisters.

Hadrian.           (Very angry.) Must I be put to scorn, then, by this babe, this underling? Oh, shocking!

Charitas.           I know I am quite young but wise enough to baffle you in argument.

Antiochus.         Take her away, Antiochus. See to it that she is placed upon a rack and beaten violently.

Antiochus.         I fear that lashes will not overcome her.

Hadrian.           Then order her shut up within an oven for three days and nights together. See that the stove is heated from beneath. There let her lie amidst the raging flames.

Charitas.           Oh, see how feeble is this judge who fears he cannot force a child of eight even by means of fire!

Hadrian.           Go, go, Antiochus! Execute your orders.

Charitas.           He will obey your cruel orders to your satisfaction, but will not hurt me in the very least,

because your lashes will not harm my body nor will  
the flames so much as singe<sup>l</sup> my hair.

Hadrian.           We shall see!

Charitas.           We shall see!

Act IV.

Scene I.---Interior of Palace.

Hadrian.

(Antiochus approaches, frightened and very sad.)

Hadrian.           What has happened to you, Antiochus? You come  
to me with looks more downcast than is usual.

Antiochus.        When you have learned the cause you will not be  
less troubled.

Hadrian.           Tell me. Conceal nothing.

Antiochus.        That wicked little girl you gave me for the  
torture was scourged before my eyes but not a mark or  
trace of any lash showed on her delicate skin or left  
a single sign. Then was she thrown into the furnace  
glowing with white heat. Because of too much heat the  
pressure----

Hadrian.           Why do you cease to speak? Explain the outcome  
of the thing.

Antiochus.           There was a great explosion. The flames leaped  
forth and killed five thousand men.

Hadrian.            And what happened to her?

Antiochus.          To Charitas?

Hadrian.            Yes.

Antiochus.          She wandered round midst flames and smoke, sport-  
ing and singing praises to her God. Those who looked  
close could see three men in snow-white robes who  
walked about with her as if to guard her.

Hadrian.            I do not wish to see the girl again because,  
indeed, I have no power to harm her.

Antiochus.          It still remains that she may perish by the sword.

Hadrian.            Then see to it immediately.

#### Act V.

#### Scene I.---Place of Execution.

Antiochus, Sapientia, Charitas, Executioner.

Antiochus.          Uncover that stiff neck of yours, Charitas, and  
bow your head before the sword.

Charitas.           In this, indeed, I yield to your commands and,  
being ordered, gladly I obey.

Sapientia.          Now, now, my daughter, I congratulate you! And

now, indeed, may we rejoice in Christ. There is no care that now disturbs my happiness because I rest in this your victory.

Charitas. Kiss me, dear mother, and commend my soul to Christ.

Sapientia. He who first gave you life will now take back to heaven the soul which He created.

Charitas. Glory to thee, oh Christ, who with the martyr's palm dost beckon me.

Sapientia. Farewell, sweet child! and when, in heaven, with Christ you are united, be mindful of your mother and be for her an advocate.

Scene II.---House of Sapientia.

Sapientia, Roman Mothers.

Sapientia. Come with me, noble matrons. Let us bury now the bodies of my children.

Matrons. We shall cover their delicate bodies with sweet spices. It is proper they should be interred with all honor.-1-

Sapientia. How kind you are! What Christian love do you exhibit for me and for my dead.

---

-1- Exequias honorifice celebramus. Compare Calimachus, 'Decet, ut tumuletur honorifice', p. 138 Winterfeld.

Matrons. With all our hearts we seek to give you comfort.

Sapientia. That is very true.

Matrons. Where do you wish to choose a place for  
sepulture?

-1-  
Sapientia. Three miles from out the city, if you find not  
that distance too displeasing.

Matrons. We are most pleased to follow you to any place  
that you have chosen.

Scene III. --- Place of Burial, a Field near Rome.

Matrons, Sapientia.

Sapientia. This is the place.

Matrons. This is, indeed, a place most suitable for their  
burial.

Sapientia. (Addresses first the earth, then speaks to  
Christ.)

Oh Earth, unto your keeping I commit the tender  
bodies of my children. Cherish them in your mother's  
heart and guard them well until the Resurrection,

---

-1- Tertio miliario. miliarum, a mile-stone which in-  
dicated a distance of a thousand paces, i. e. a  
Roman mile.

when they will rise again in greater loveliness.  
And thou, oh Christ, meanwhile, surround their souls  
with all the bliss of heaven. Let them find rest  
in God.

Matrons. Amen!

(The children are then buried.)

Sapientia. (To Matrons) I thank you for your kindly  
sympathy, your consolation in my deep bereavement.

Matrons. Do you wish us to remain here with you.

Sapientia. No.

Matrons. Why not?

Sapientia. Lest any harm should come to you on my account.  
It is enough that you have spent three days and  
nights with me. Go home in peace. God grant that it  
may be in safety.

Matrons. Do you not wish to go with us?

Sapientia. No, No.

Matrons. What use is there of your remaining here?

Sapientia. I wish to stay to see if my petition may be  
answered. What I desire, perchance, may come to me.

Matrons. What is it that you seek? What is it you desire?



Sapientia.            This and this only---when my prayer is done that  
I may die in Christ.

Matrons.             Then it remains that we shall wait until we place  
you with your children.

Sapientia.            (To Matrons) As you wish. (Sapientia now  
kneels and prays) Adonai Emmanuel, born of the Father  
before time was and born of thy virgin mother in time.  
Thou who from two natures art, wonderfully, one Christ;  
neither is the unity of thy person divided by the  
diversity of natures nor is the diversity of natures  
confused or changed by unity of person. The serene  
happiness of the angels praises thee; the sweet  
harmony of the spheres praises thee;<sup>1</sup> The knowledge  
of all things that may be known, exalts thee; every-  
thing formed from the matter of the elements exalts  
thee because thou, alone with the Father and the Holy  
Ghost, art uncreated. In accordance with the will of  
the Father and cooperation of the Holy Ghost, and  
for the salvation of the human race, thou didst not  
refuse to become man, capable of suffering; that no

---

-1-            Music, in the Middle Ages, was, for dialectical purpo-  
ses treated in accordance with the Pythagorean theory  
as interpreted by Cicero in his Somnium Scipionis, who  
represented the eight revolving spheres of heaven as  
forming a complete musical octave.

one believing in thee may perish, but may live for all eternity, thou didst not refuse to taste death and to consummate thy work by thy resurrection. Remember, Lord, that thou, true God and true man, hast promised to him who for the veneration of thy name, has left the use of his terrene possessions or, for the love of near relations in the flesh, has disregard---that this oblation of himself would be rewarded here a hundred fold, and with eternal life hereafter. Encouraged by this promise, those things which thou hast ordered have I done. For thee I gave my children unto death. Delay not, therefore, mindful of thy promise, to free my soul still held by bonds of flesh. Let it rejoice once more in the embraces of my children, who were martyred for thy sake. I offered them that they might follow thee, the lamb, and in that company of holy virgins, might sing the song that is sung by virgins only, which I, in hearing, will rejoice the more in their great happiness. Although 'Tis not for me to sing this song, grant this, that, with them, I may sing thy praises for all eternity. Thou who art not the Father, but art equal to the Father and with him and with the Holy Ghost art one only God, who dost command the universe and dost rule all things that are in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or those things that are under the earth, through the endless ages of eternal

years. (Sapientia dies.)

Matrons.           Receive, Lord her soul. Amen.

### Criticism of Sapientia.

In her letter to the Sapientes as Roswitha calls the learned men who critized her plays, she says, "In order that the gifts of God might not come to nothing in me through my own fault, I have zealously endeavored to adorn my little book with scraps from the garment of Philosophy. Whenever I succeeded in getting hold of a floating thread of her dress I have gladly woven it into my little work as a precious ornament."

In two cases this weaving in of scraps from philosophy and science, gives rise to scenes which if they impede the action have at least the merit, for us, of throwing some light on the learning of the tenth century. One of these scenes is in Paphnutius in an argument or better, perhaps, a discussion on "The danger of intellectual pursuits." "Dangerous only," as Roswitha argues, "When we cease to refer them to Him who furnishes us at once with the matter and the instrument of our knowledge; but good, holy, and greatly to be desired when by supplying us with a more perfect knowledge of Him, they fill our hearts with love." The other scene occurs in Sapientia in which the heroine puzzles and confuses the Emperor Hadrian, who asks the age of her daughters, by a scientific enigma, and, afterwards at the request of the Emperor, explains it in detail.

In the fire scenes and in the description given by Antiochus to Hadrian, of Charitas in the midst of flames there are many passages that are suggestive of the third chapter of Daniel.

Although Sapiientia has been pronounced the weakest of Roswitha's plays by competent critics, a sympathetic reader will find many beautiful and tender passages in her portrayal of the sufferings of those holy martyrs.

In conclusion I shall quote from (1) Dr. Walsh's Education How Old the New. "Roswitha was only a young woman of twenty-five when she wrote her plays and poems, and while her style, of course does not compare with the classics, worse Latin has often been written by people who were sure that they knew more about Latinity than any nun of the obscure tenth century could possibly have known."

---

Note (1) Cf. Introduction, p. 18.