

The Other Voice

Antonia Pulci is, if not the first, certainly one of the first women writers to have sent her work to press, and this is not her only claim to our attention.¹ She belonged to the industrious Florentine merchant class, to a family that rose economically and socially in the fifteenth century, and she married into the noble Pulci family, a trajectory shared by prosperous members of her class; but what is unusual is that she married into a family that included three of the most important literary figures in Florence of the time, Luca, Luigi and Bernardo Pulci (four, if we include, Mariotto Davanzati, the husband of their sister Lisa), and she brought to that brilliant, but financially strapped family, more than the value of her dowry. Somewhere along the way, either at home, in a nearby convent, or at a neighborhood public school, she had learned to read and write in the vernacular, at a level of attainment that was exceptional for any woman at the time, certainly for any of her class.² However, it was probably as a member of her

1. Her published miracle play, the *Rappresentazione di Santa Domitilla*, bears the date 1483 following the title. It was included in the anthology of religious plays published in Florence without indication of date or publisher but attributed to the press of Antonio Miscomini and to the early 1490s. The *Santa Domitilla* is the only play of the collection that is dated, indicating, perhaps, that it was published or slated for publication earlier and then included in the undated collection of plays printed by Antonio Miscomini, who was active in Florence 1481/82–1494. If not the first woman to take her work to press, she shares the distinction only with a learned woman of the upper class, the early humanist writer, Cassandra Fedele, who published her *Oratio pro Bertucio Lamberto* in Modena in 1487 (and again in Venice, 1488; Nuremberg, 1489). I thank Diana Robin for this information. According to Virginia Cox, *Women's Writing in Italy 1400–1650* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2008), it is “an unconscious prejudice that sees publication [by early modern women] as an index of merit” (88), since most prestigious women writers of the upper classes preferred to share their work in manuscript and only with select readers (*passim*). Cox acknowledges that the situation in Florence was quite different from that in the court societies of Italy; yet it is the case that Lucrezia Tornabuoni, Lorenzo de' Medici's mother and Antonia's contemporary, circulated her writing in manuscript.

2. Among Quattrocento Florentine women, only she and Lucrezia Tornabuoni, accomplished authors of vernacular texts, demonstrate such a high level of literacy. For this social class it has been generally thought that the most one finds at the time among women is “semi-literacy,” or “partial literacy,” like that of Margherita Datini and Alessandra Macchini Strozzi, who dictated and eventually penned letters in the language of their speech, compelled to do so in order to communicate with distant family members. See the discus-

husband's family that she began to compose dramatic verse; and she soon became known in Florence as one of the most prolific writers of *sacre rappresentazioni*, mystery and miracle plays written in *ottava rima*, one of the most popular vernacular genres in Florence in her lifetime. She is the only known secular woman author of *sacre rappresentazioni*, and at least three of her plays appeared in the first printed anthology of Florentine religious drama (circa 1490–95).³ Most of her plays had a second edition during her lifetime and were published again and again throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth century; four have had modern editions. It is an extraordinary success story for a woman of rather humble origins, and it does not end with her literary accomplishments. When she was widowed, she left the social world she knew as a member of the Pulci family but continued her education, studying Latin, reading Scripture, and writing *laude*, religious poems of praise, another of the most popular vernacular literary genres. She became an *ammantellata*, a woman religious living

sion of the limited literacy of women of the Florentine merchant class in Ann Crabb, "If I could write': Margherita Datini and Letter Writing, 1385–1410," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 60:4 (2007), 1170–1206. Judith Bryce, however, has recently shown that this view needs to be revisited and revised, in light of the evidence especially of the many books of devotional readings belonging to women, and evidence of their use, not merely their possession of such books. This and many references to lay women readers, of secular as well as religious texts, suggests that literacy among the women of the Florentine mercantile class was much more widespread than we have acknowledged. See Judith Bryce, "Les livres des Florentines: Reconsidering Women's Literacy in Quattrocento Florence," in *At the Margins: Minority Groups in Premodern Italy*, ed. Stephen J. Milner, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 133–61. It is less surprising in a society in which many women of the mercantile class were readers that literary figures such as Antonia Tanini Pulci and Lucrezia Tornabuoni would emerge.

3. See note 1. The anthology consists of two volumes. Some scholars refer to both volumes as the "Prima raccolta," following Alfredo Cioni, in his *Bibliografia delle sacre rappresentazioni* (Florence: Sansoni Antiquariato, 1961); others, including Anna Maria Testaverde and Anna Maria Evangelista, *Sacre rappresentazioni manoscritte e a stampa conservate nella Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, Inventario* (Florence: Giunta Regionale Toscana Editrice Bibliografica, 1988), call the volume that includes Antonia's plays the "Seconda raccolta." The early bibliographer, Paul Colomb De Batines, *Bibliografia delle antiche rappresentazioni italiane sacre e profane stampate nei secoli XV e XVI* (Florence: La Società Tipografica, 1852), calls it volume 2 of the fifteenth-century *Raccolta*. The distinction is arbitrary. Since recent scholars believe that both volumes were published by Antonio Miscomini, it is often referred to as the Miscomini anthology and that is the term I will use.

in lay society, and she commissioned a chapel dedicated to St. Monica in the church of San Gallo, where she wished to be buried. She purchased property just outside the city walls, a house and some connected buildings, and there she assembled a small group of women, who would become the first sisters in the convent of Santa Maria della Misericordia, which she founded.

The *sacre rappresentazioni* that are known to be hers are the *Rappresentazione di Santa Domitilla (Play of Saint Domitilla)*, the *Rappresentazione di Santa Guglielma (Play of Saint Guglielma)*, the *Rappresentazione di San Francesco (Play of Saint Francis)*, the *Rappresentazione del figliuol prodigo (Play of the Prodigal Son)*, and the *Rappresentazione della distruzione di Saul e il pianto di Davit (Play of the Destruction of Saul and the Lament of David)*. Antonia also wrote a play based on the Biblical story of Joseph, but it is not clear that either of the surviving plays on that subject is hers, and she may be the author of other plays as well—a *Rappresentazione di Santo Antonio Abate (Play of Saint Anthony Abbot)* has often been attributed to her.⁴

The genre of *sacra rappresentazione* flourished in Tuscany, primarily in Florence in the fifteenth century.⁵ The early plays were often performed for religious celebrations in some of the major church-

4. Only the plays that can be securely attributed to Antonia Pulci are included in this volume. The two extant Joseph plays are the *Rappresentazione di Joseph, di Jacob e de' fratelli* and the *Rappresentazione di Joseph, figliuol di Jacob*; the latter and the *Rappresentazione di Santo Antonio Abate* were published in the anthology that contains Antonia Pulci's *Santa Domitilla, Santa Guglielma*, and *San Francesco* plays, as well as a play written by her husband Bernardo Pulci, the *Rappresentazione di Barlaam e Josafat*; however, unlike the others, these two plays do not include the name of the author.

5. On the Florentine *sacra rappresentazione* much has been written. For some of the most important and useful contributions to its history see Cesare Molinari, *Spettacoli fiorentini del Quattrocento: contributi allo studio delle sacre rappresentazioni* (Venice: Neri Pozza, 1961); Nerida Newbigin, *Feste d'Oltrarno: Plays in Churches in Fifteenth-Century Florence*, 2 vols (Florence: Olschki, 1996); Paola Ventrone, *Gli araldi della commedia: teatro a Firenze nel Rinascimento* (Ospedaletto [Pisa]: Pacini Editore, 1993), "Per una morfologia della sacra rappresentazione fiorentina," in *Teatro e culture della rappresentazione: lo spettacolo in Italia nel Quattrocento*, ed. Raimondo Guarino (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1988), and "La sacra rappresentazione fiorentina: aspetti e problemi," in *Esperienze dello spettacolo religioso nell'Europa del Quattrocento*, ed. M. Chiabò and F. Doglio (Rome: Torre di Orfeo, 1993), 67–99; and the classic study by Alessandro D'Ancona, *Origini del teatro italiano*, 2 vols. (Turin: Loescher, 1971 [rpt. of 2nd ed., 1891]).

es and on public occasions. The most frequent subjects were taken from the Old and New Testament. Toward the end of the century, however, saints' lives became popular subjects of the plays, especially the stories of virgin martyrs, and the genre also admitted romance elements, dangerous adventures, and miraculous interventions, mainly of the Virgin Mary. Antonia Pulci's plays partake of both traditions. She tried her hand at all of these subjects: two of her plays are based on the Old Testament, one on the New Testament, and three are saints' lives, one of which follows the romance tradition. Yet within these well-established parameters, Antonia Pulci's plays display certain characteristics that link them rather closely to her life experiences. She gives considerable emphasis to female characters, she perhaps alludes to members of her family in one play, and she introduces issues that had special appeal to her female readers and audiences, including a very subtle defense of Eve, a prominent feature of the *querelle des femmes* before and after Antonia's time. While the plots of her plays are simple and the stories with one exception quite well-known, her talent lies in their versification and in her ability to enliven the speech of her characters with believable contemporary language and to turn *ottava rima* into an entertaining dramatic form.

Biography

Antonia Pulci, as she is known to modern readers, was born Antonia Tanini, sometime between 1452 and 1454, to Francesco di Antonio di Giannotto Tanini and Jacopa di Torello di Lorenzo Torelli.⁶ Antonia's

6. Information about Antonia's mother is from the notarial document that gave her guardianship of the Tanini children following their father's death in 1467: ASF, Notarile antecosimiano 389, notary Andrea di Agnolo da Terranova, dated September 4, 1467, fols. 81r-83r. This and the detailed information that follows regarding Francesco and his family have been gleaned from the Tanini family's tax declarations in the Florentine State Archives for the Quartiere San Giovanni, Gonfalone Leon d'oro, made over the course of the century from 1427 through 1495: Catasto 78, campioni 1427, fols. 535-36; Catasto 407, campioni 1430, fol. 260; Catasto 497, campioni 1433, fol. 273; Catasto 822, portate 1457, fol. 657; Catasto 924, portate 1469, fol. 564; Catasto 1017, portate 1480, fol. 247 and the copy of the 1480 census in Monte Comune 84, fol. 167; the copy of the 1487 census in Monte Comune 86, fol. 1066r; and the 1495 Decima Repubblicana 28, fol. 229v (the *portate* were the original documents compiled by those making their declaration, the *campioni* were redactions made

dating from the early sixteenth century in the hand of Fra Antonio Dolciati, who, as prior of San Gallo, served also as the convent's *direttore*, or governor, and for a while kept their records, which today are found with those of San Clemente.⁸⁸

The Plays

The anthology in which Antonia first published her plays may have been intended for an audience of readers, and it seems that the individual plays also circulated separately, perhaps the better for use in performance.⁸⁹ These characteristics and the lack of a dedication in either of the two volumes of the anthology suggest that the publication aimed at a wide pool of consumers; and, as Paolo Trovato and others have argued, local consumers, since Florence had little access to other markets, having to use for exports land routes which were expensive and slow.⁹⁰ Large sectors of the Florentine population had achieved a significant level of literacy, and, judging from the many religious plays that were published in the last decade of the fifteenth century and in the early years of the sixteenth, there must have been a local demand for them. We can assume, I believe, that they were bought by some to be read as devotional texts, and also by others to be performed, by confraternities in churches and oratories or for civic celebrations, and by nuns in convent theater.⁹¹ We know that one of the plays in the

88. In 1532 Dolciati, then prior of San Gallo, was asked to straighten out the accounts of the convent of Santa Maria della Misericordia, which was under the supervision of his Augustinian house. The sister who was the recorder that year, Sister Serafina, was confused by the records and needed assistance. To his accounts Dolciati added a note saying that he had done his best, but the problems were not entirely resolvable, since Sister Monica, the previous convent recorder, who had held that office since the convent's founding, had died of the plague and all earlier records had been burned (ASF, Corporazioni religiose soppresse dal governo francese, 125, entry for 14 September 1532, fol. 9).

89. Several of the anthologies held by the Florentine Biblioteca Nazionale have been reconstructed from copies of individual plays.

90. Paolo Trovato, "Il libro in Toscana nell'età di Lorenzo," in *L'ordine dei tipografi. Lettori, stampatori, correttori tra Quattro e Cinquecento* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1998), 49–89.

91. Local convent theater has been documented as early as the last decade of the fifteenth century. Richard Trexler reports that theatrical performances by young boys at the convent of Santa Caterina al Monte in San Gaggio, just north of Florence, common in the past,

anthology, whether intended or not for convent theater, was read and performed by nuns: a copy of the *Santa Domitilla* at the Florentine Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale contains the names of convent women entered in the margins of the text alongside the parts they played (Figures 11a, b). There are eleven or twelve names: suor Maria Angelica; suor Maria Gostanza (both are mentioned again as Maria Angelica and Gostanza); others, given without title, are Jacopa, Ottavia, Innocenza, Lodovica, Dorotea, Filippa, Pace, Maria Vincenza, Anna and Maria Anna (the latter two may refer to the same person), novices perhaps, or the title of *suor* may have been omitted in order to fit the names easily into the book's margins.⁹²

Antonia's plays were short texts, averaging around a hundred octaves each, and they were sold unbound in small quarto pamphlets of eight to twenty-four leaves. Those in the Miscomini anthology, the first editions of her *St. Domitilla*, *St. Guglielma*, and *St. Francis* plays were unadorned but generously printed in a single column per page. The second editions of the same plays and the *Saul and David* play, also incunables, were illustrated with woodcuts and printed in double columns (Figures 4–11).

The structure of the plays varies according to the source, as we shall see below, but all begin with a prologue delivered by an angel, who is depicted bearing a lily, like the angel of the Annunciation, in a woodcut on the opening page of many of the early editions. The prologue invokes divine help in telling the story and often provides a very brief summary of it. This is the case in all of Antonia Pulci's extant plays except the *Prodigal Son*, where the author simply indicates

were avoided by the Savonarolan boys during the Carnivals of 1496–98. See his "Florentine Theater, 1280–1500. A Checklist of Performances and Institutions," *Forum Italicum* 14 (1980), 471.

92. It seems likely that the demand for her plays was owing, at least in part, to the growing convent population of those years and the tradition in the convents of performing plays at Carnival time and for important convent festivities, such as the clothing ceremony and profession. According to the bibliographer Colomb de Batines (*Bibliografia delle antiche rappresentazioni italiane*, 15–16), this play had been printed at least fifteen times by 1602. See Weaver, *Convent Theatre*, Ch. 2, "The Convent Theatre Tradition," and also 99–104, 126, and the accompanying notes. The many references to 'taking the veil' in the play would suggest, at the very least, the appropriateness of this play for the festivities connected with a convent 'veiling' ceremony (see note 8 to the Italian text of the *Santa Domitilla* play).

that the source of the story is the well-known parable of the Gospel. Despite their presentation by an angel, the language of the prologues implies that the speaker is the author, for example, “And, Virgin Mary, you, elect in heaven/... /Inflame and set alight my fantasy/... /So that, unfraught with peril, my small boat / Can reach the harbor, ...” (*St. Francis*, 2. 1–6), or the opening of the *Prodigal Son*, where it is said that the Redeemer “to Heav’n, / Summoned us” (15–16).⁹³ The angel returns at the end of the play to dismiss the audience with the *licenza*, the envoy, and in this case speaks as a messenger from heaven, for example, in the *St. Domitilla*, by referring to the audience as you who are “in this blind world where you’re entangled all” (106.5) or, in the *St. Guglielma*, “O you who wander in this wayward wood,/ This mortal life where nothing is secure” (106.1–2).⁹⁴

Another characteristic of Antonia Pulci’s plays that is perfectly in keeping with the tradition as it developed in Tuscany is their disregard for temporal and spatial realism. Much time can pass in the imagined story between octaves; and between octaves the scene can shift from one place to another. Some of these incongruities could be overcome in the performance of the play as the action shifted from one *luogo deputato* to another. The *luogo deputato*, or ‘appointed place,’ was the term used to indicate where the action is performed; there could be many *luoghi*, and the term could refer to different small stages or to designated locations in the performance space: in a church, piazza, refectory, courtyard, or in a simple curtained stage.⁹⁵ The movement

93. “E tu, vergine eletta in ciel Maria,/ ... / accendi e infiamma la mia fantasia/ ... / acciò che in porto la barchetta mia / arrivar possa senza alcun periglio” (*San Francesco*, 2. 1–6); “al ciel per tua pietà ci revocasti,” (*Figliuol prodigo*, 1.6).

94. “nel mondo cieco, dove involti siete” (*Santa Domitilla*, 106.5); “O voi che siete in questa selva errante,/ vita mortal dove non è fidanza”(*Santa Guglielma*, 106.1–2).

95. I have found two places in the stage directions which seem to refer specifically to the performance space. In the *Rappresentazione del figliuol prodigo*, the stage direction just before octave 41 reads “El figliuol prodigo, *uscendo fuori* tutto stracciato, dice da sé,” where “uscendo fuori,” literally “coming out,” can mean making a stage entrance. In the *Distruzione di Saul e il pianto di Davit*, preceding octave 33 we read “E partonsi con assai romore e strepito di trombe e, giunti al *luogo diputato*, Gionatas segue,” where the place to which the characters arrive is called the “luogo diputato,” the appointed space, ambiguous here perhaps, but it is the technical term used to indicate the performance space of miracle and mystery plays (italics mine).

of the audience, or only of their eyes and attention, to a different *luogo deputato* could simulate the change in geography in the story and the passing of time in the action.⁹⁶ It seems obvious, however, that a realistic depiction of time and space was not a concern of the authors of early mystery and miracle plays, at least not in the late fifteenth century before classical theater became the tradition to emulate.

The verse form typical of the genre of *sacra rappresentazione* was *ottava rima*, or octaves, eight-line stanzas composed of *endecasillabi*, eleven-syllable lines,⁹⁷ of three pairs of alternating rhymes followed by a rhymed couplet (ABABABCC). Antonia Pulci's verse seems to flow easily from her pen. She varies her diction, including her rhyme words, which are simple but never repetitive, and are often carefully chosen to lay emphasis on the important notions expressed in the octave. She also exhibits a facility in representing conversations, frequently enlivening them by dividing up the lines of an octave, sharing them between and among her characters. With the final couplet she often closes a discussion (see, e.g., *St. Domitilla*, octaves 6, 7, 35, 43, 65).

The Play of St. Domitilla

The *St. Domitilla* appears first in the early anthology. It dramatizes the story of Flavia Domitilla, a Roman noblewoman, niece of Emperor Domitian (81–96 CE) and virgin martyr. She has always been associated with Saints Nereus and Achilleus, the two Christian servants who converted her to Christianity, convinced her of the superiority of virginity to marriage, and who were martyred and buried with her. The Church celebrates her feast on May 7th, that of Nereus and Achilleus, instead, on May 12th.⁹⁸

96. On the movement of action from one *luogo deputato* to another and its spatial and temporal implications, see C. Molinari, *Spettacoli fiorentini del Quattrocento*, 77–78.

97. It is a common oversimplification to call an *endecasillabo* an eleven-syllable line. It may have ten, eleven, or twelve syllables depending upon whether the word in rhyme position is an oxytone (accented on the final syllable), paroxytone (accented on the next last syllable), or proparoxytone (accented on the third from last syllable). The final accent in an *endecasillabo* falls invariably on the line's tenth syllable.

98. See *Acta Sanctorum, Mai*, II and III (Paris, 1866), 13: 132–33; 14: 4–16.

La rappresentazione di Santa Domitilla

INTERLOCUTORI

PROLOGO

IMPERADORE Domiziano

AURELIANO, nobile romano

[Molti baroni di Aureliano]*

DOMITILLA, nipote dell'Imperatore

NEREO, servo in casa di Domitilla

ARCHILEO, servo in casa di Domitilla

PAPA CLEMENTE

I POVERI

UNO CHE DÀ LA LIMOSINA, della casa di Domitilla

SERVO di Aureliano

SERVI dell'Imperatore

DUE VERGINI, also DONZELLE, compagne di Domitilla

GLI SPOSI delle Compagne di Domitilla

LUSSURIO, fratello di Aureliano

MANIGOLDO

CAVALIERE

ERODE, fratello delle Compagne di Domitilla, cieco sanato

SERVA MUTOLA delle Compagne di Domitilla, sanata

*Accompagnano Aureliano, ma non parlano.

The Play of Saint Domitilla

INTERLOCUTORS

PROLOGUE

EMPEROR Domitian

AURELIANUS, noble Roman [also AURELIAN]

[Many barons of Aurelianus]*

DOMITILLA, niece of the Emperor

NEREUS, servant of Domitilla

ARCHILEUS, servant of Domitilla

POPE CLEMENT

PAUPERS

ONE WHO DISTRIBUTES ALMS at Domitilla's house

SERVANT of Aurelianus

SERVANTS of the Emperor

TWO VIRGINS, also MAIDENS, companions of Domitilla

THE BRIDEGROOMS of the Companions of Domitilla

LUXURIUS, brother of Aurelianus

EXECUTIONER

KNIGHT

HEROD, brother of the Companions of Domitilla, blind man healed by Domitilla

mute MAIDSERVANT delle Compagne di Domitilla, healed by Domitilla

*They accompany Aurelianus but do not speak.

[PROLOGO]

1

O buon Iesù, per la tua gran potenza,
concedi grazia al mio basso intelletto
sì ch'io possa mostrar per tuo clemenza
la sua storia divota e 'l gran concetto
di Domitilla, pien di sapienza,
che volse verso Idio con puro affetto.
Cristiana essendo, vergine sposata,
secretamente a Dio fu consacrata.

2

Nipote fu questa vergine detta
del gran Domiziano imperadore;
fuggì lo sposo, essendo giovanetta,
e volse l'alma al suo degno fattore;
e per trovar la via vera e perfetta
da potere abitar col suo Signore,
cercando la corona del martire,
al fin nel fuoco poi volse morire.

*Lo IMPERADORE parla a uno suo barone¹ chiamato Aureliano e dice
come gli ha dato per donna Domitilla:*

3

Aurelian, perch'io t'ho sempre amato
quanto conviensi un buon figliuol diletto,
perch'io t'ho visto onesto e costumato,
sendo dal padre tuo pregato e stretto,
per tua sposa diletta io t'ho donato
una donzella di gentile aspetto,
a me nipote di gran pregio e fama,
che Domitilla per nome si chiama;

[THE PROLOGUE]

1

O good Jesus, by your power great
Grant to my lowly intellect such grace
That through your clemency I can present
The great renown and sacred history
Of Domitilla who, with love most pure
And filled with wisdom, pledged herself to God.
A Christian virgin, having been betrothed,
Was consecrated secretly to God.

2

This virgin whom I spoke about was niece
To great Domitian, the Emperor;
She, still a girl, fled from her plighted groom
And to her worthy maker pledged her soul,
So she might find the true and perfect way
That she could go on dwelling with her Lord,
Seeking the crown of martyrdom at last
She gave herself to perish in the fire.

The EMPEROR speaks to one of his barons¹ named Aurelianus and says he has given him Domitilla as his wife:

3

Aurelian, since I have ever loved
You as a good and cherished son deserves,
And found you honorable and well brought up,
Entreated by your father secretly,
I've given you for your beloved wife
A damsel of a noble mien and mild,
My niece, one greatly valued and renowned,
And she is Domitilla, by her name.

4

la qual per mio rispetto accetterai
e sopra ogni altra cosa amerai quella.
So che lieto e felice ne sarai
perché ella è molto graziosa e bella;
e con questi baron presto n'andrai
con molta festa a casa per vedella.
Pregate e nostri dèi che sien propizi
benignamente a questi isposalizi.

Risponde AURELIANO allo Imperadore e dice:

5

Bench'io non sia di tanta sposa degno,
poi ch'è piaciuto alla tua maestate
benignamente il tuo fedele indegno
acomagnar con la tua nobilitate,
io ti ringrazio col mio basso ingegno.
Signor, sia fatto la tua volontate.
Fate questi baroni apparecchiare:
andian la nuova sposa a vicitare.²

AURELIANO con molti baroni va a vicitare la sua sposa Domitilla e dice giunto a lei:

6

Tu sia la ben trovata, o cara sposa,
tu sola se' dolceza del mio core.
O Domitilla, sopra ogni altra cosa
da me amata con perfetto amore,
sappi ch'ogni speranza in te si posa,
che se' di tutte l'altre il vero onore.

Risponde DOMITILLA ' Aureliano:³

E tu, mio sposo, il ben venuto sia,
con tutta questa degna compagnia.

4

Accept her, for you owe me this respect,
Beyond all else, too, love her faithfully.
I know that you'll be happy when you do.
For she is very gracious and she's fair,
And with these barons you will quickly go
With great festivity and ask to see
Her at her home; entreat our gods
To kindly sanctify these nuptials.

AURELIANUS *answers the Emperor and says:*

5

Although for such a highborn spouse I am
Unworthy, since your majesty is pleased
So graciously your loyal subject low
To match with your nobility, I thank
You with my humble intellect, my lord,
And may your will be done; these barons—have
Them get prepared at once and let us ride
To pay a visit to my newfound bride.

AURELIANUS *with many barons goes to visit his betrothed Domitilla
and on arriving says to her:*

6

I bid you the most happy day, dear spouse,
You only are the sweetness of my heart,
O Domitilla, more than anything
With perfect love you are by me beloved,
Know that my every hope is placed in you,
For, past all others, you are the true prize.

DOMITILLA *answers Aurelianus:*

And welcome here, dear husband mine, are you—
And welcome all your fine companions too.

Qui dopo alquanta festa di suoni e balli AURELIANO si parte e dice così a Domitilla:

7

Rimanti, sposa mia, nella tua pace;
io non posso più teco dimorare,
benché 'l partir da te mi duole e spiace;
di rivederti mill'anni mi pare.
S'alcuna cosa ti diletta o piace,
comanda Aurelian, ché tu 'l puoi fare.

Risponde DOMITILLA ' Aureliano:

Che posso io più da te, sposo, volere,
se non che tu mi torni a rivedere?

Partito Aureliano, uno servo di Domitilla detto NEREO dice con l'altro servo chiamato Archileo:

8

O Archileo, tu sai con quanto amore
la madre di costei, venendo a morte,
essendo ognun di noi suo servidore,
sorella dette a noi questa per sorte,
perché l'amaestrassin nel Signore
Cristo Iesù, ch'è nella eterna corte,
sendo la madre sua e lei cristiana.
Or si congiunge alla legge pagana.

Vanno questi dua servi a Domitilla, partito Aureliano, per convertirla di servare virginità e dicono fra loro. E prima detto ARCHILEO dice:

9

Immenso Iddio, dacci tanta forteza
che per tua grazia a te facciàn tornare
costei che la tua legge non apprezza;
nolla lasciare in perdimento andare

After some festivity of music and dancing, AURELIANUS bids farewell, and says to Domitilla:

7

Remain, my bride, in your tranquility;
I cannot longer linger at your side—
Though parting from you grieves and saddens me;
A thousand years 'twill seem before we meet.
If aught delight or please in any way,
Know you can ask Aurelian, for you may.

DOMITILLA *answers Aurelianus:*

What can I wish from you except, O spouse,
That you'll return to see me at my house?

When Aurelianus has gone, a servant of Domitilla, NEREUS, says to the other servant, Archileus:

8

Archileus, you know with what great love
Her mother, as she was about to die,
Since each of us did serve her as a slave,
Made her our sister, as our destiny,
So we would teach her of Lord Jesus Christ
Who reigns in the eternal court, for both
She and her mother Christians were. She now
Intends to marry into the pagan law.

The two servants go to Domitilla, after Aurelianus has left, to convert her to a life of virginity, and the two speak. First the one called ARCHILEUS says:

9

O God immense, pray give us such great strength
That by your grace we bring her back to you.
She does not know the value of your law—
And don't let her immortal soul be damned

allo sposo mortal, che con presteza
la sua verginità gli vuol furare.
Benigno Redentor, che intendi e puoi,
fa' che tu guidi questi servi tuoi.

ARCHILEO rivolto a Nereo dice così:

10

Nereo, andian con l'aiuto di Dio
alla nostra madonna Domitilla,
ché egli è tanto clemente e giusto e pio
forteza ci darà di convertilla
e vorrà contentar nostro desio;
nel cor gli accenderà qualche favilla
del dolce amor che la convertiremo
e di cotanto ben cagion saremo.

Giunti a Domitilla, UNO DI DETTI SERVI dice così:

11

Madonna, benché sia presunzione
el servo il suo signore amaestrare,
perch'io ti porto grande affezione
la verità non si convien celare,
la qual credendo, tu sarai cagione
farti felice su nel ciel posare
tra le vergine elette in compagnia,
se vorrai prender la diritta via.

12

O Domitilla, con che vestimenti
adorni il corpo tuo per compiacere
al tuo marito. E se altri ornamenti
facessi all'alma, ancor potresti avere
per isposo Iesù, ch'a' sua serventi
concede il ciel per grazia a possedere,

By mortal spouse who hastens to her bed
To seize her maidenhood without delay.
Redeemer kind, since you know how, and can,
Give guidance to us now to foil his plan.

ARCHILEUS *turns to Nereus and says:*

10

Nereus, with God's help now let us go
To see our lady Domitilla, for
He's so clement, compassionate, and just,
That to convert her he will give us strength
And he will want to satisfy our wish;
Within her heart a spark of gentle love
Will kindle so that we'll convert her; thus
We shall become the cause of much great good.

Having come before Domitilla, ONE OF THE SAID SERVANTS says:

11

My lady, though it seems presumptuous
To have a servant educate his lord,
Since I feel such great affection for you
It is improper for me to conceal
The truth that, once you believe it, will become
The happy cause of setting you in heaven
Amid the company of chosen virgins,
If you will choose to take the righteous way.

12

O Domitilla, with what garments you
Array your body to make your spouse rejoice,
But if with other ornaments your soul
You would adorn, then Jesus you could have
To be your spouse, who to his servants grants
That, through his grace, in heaven they may dwell;

el quale è vero Idio, Sposo eternale,
e 'l tuo Aurelian è uom mortale.

Risponde DOMITILLA a' servi e dice:

13

Io non so qual si sia maggior dolceza
ch'aver marito che sia di te degno
per consumar con lui sua giovaneza,
giovane e ricco e di gentile ingegno,
di poi figliuo' che nella tua vechieza
sien di tua vita bastone e sostegno.
E chi può disprezar le cose certe
per le future, le qual sono incerte?

UNO DE' SERVI risponde a Domitilla:

14

Tu, Domitilla, ha' posto ogni tua cura
nella pompa del mondo sì fallace,
la qual sì come fior passa e non dura;
e cerchi ove non puoi trovar mai pace,
non pensando a colei che presto fura,
quando più il viver ci diletta e piace,
ogni speranza, e nessuno è sì forte
che non vinca costei chiamata Morte.

Segue detto SERVO:

15

Ciò che tu vedi è in man della fortuna;
tal che fu degno ha poi fatto infelice
costei, con chi non val difesa alcuna;
e però⁴ non si può chiamar felice
nessun che vive qui sotto la luna,
se non colui ch'al mondo contradice

He is the true God, an eternal Spouse;
A mortal man is your Aurelianus.

DOMITILLA *answers the servants:*

13

What greater sweetness could be, I don't know,
Than having a husband worthy of one's self
And sharing with one's mate the bloom of youth—
A mate young, rich and with a courteous wit—
Thereafter children, who in one's old age
Will be one's life's support, its staff; and who
Can cease to value certainties? Who would
Exchange them for uncertainties to come?

ONE OF THE SERVANTS *answers Domitilla:*

14

You, Domitilla, have placed your every trust
In the pomp of this false world, which will,
Just like a flower, pass and not endure,
And, where you seek, peace never can be found,
You think not on that one who, just when life
Delights us most—most pleases, quickly steals
Our every hope; but no man's strong enough
To not be conquered by the one named Death,

That SERVANT continues:

15

The visible world lies in Fortune' hands.
She, against whom no defense prevails,
Makes men once worthy fall to wretchedness.
And thus no one who lives beneath the moon
Can be called happy, but a person who
Will set his face against the world and turn

volgendo a quel ch'è d'ogni ben cagione.
È cieca e falsa ogni altra opinione.

Risponde DOMITILLA a' servi:

16

Qual cosa è più difficil che sprezzare
della vita presente le ricchezze
e non voler tanti piaceri usare,
l'umane pompe e tante gentilezze,
per volere altra vita al fin trovare,
la qual di te s'acquista con asprezze,
con tormenti e digiuni e discipline?⁵
Intendale chi può vostre dottrine!

UNO DE' DETTI SERVI a Domitilla risponde e dice:

17

Quando sarai congiunta col tuo sposo,
della virginità perderai il nome,
e se ti fia benigno t'è nascoso,
che spesso uom si rallegra e non sa come
ha ' a saper, ché 'l futur sempre è dubioso.⁶
E così si raguaglian queste some:
oggi tu vesti la virginil gonna,
e poi detta sarai femmina e donna.

18

E tu, che non potevi sostenere
che la nobilità tua virginile
fussi sol violata nel pensiero,
la sottometti a un pagan or vile;
e converratti a ogni suo piacere
mutar vita, costumi, modi e stile
e fare ogni suo vil comandamento,
pur che 'l suo desiderio sia contento.

To Him who is the source of every good.
Any opinion else is false and blind.

DOMITILLA *answers the servants:*

16

What is more difficult than to despise
The riches of this present life and not
Desire to taste the pleasures manifold
Of human splendor, great nobility,
So one can want, at last, another life
That one gains for oneself with torment and
With harshness, fasting, and self-wielded whips?
These doctrines of yours! Who can fathom them?

ONE OF THE SERVANTS *answers and says to Domitilla:*

17

When you have been united with your spouse,
The title of virginity you'll lose,
And whether or not he'll treat you kindly is
Quite hidden from you, for one's often blithe
But knows not why; the future is unsure.
And so these burdens are weighed side by side:
Now you wear a maiden's gown, but then
You will be called a woman and a wife.

18

And you, who could not even entertain
The very notion that your virginal
Nobility might be defiled, would bend
Yourself to a base pagan and submit
To every pleasure of his, transform your life,
Your habits, and your manner, and your style;
His every vile commandment you'd perform
So that he'd gratify his appetite.

19

Tutti gli sposi si mostran discreti
quando la donna lor tengon giurata;
vogliono parere umili e mansueti
prima che a casa lor l'abbin menata;
però non puoi saper cotal secreti,
se prima un tempo con lui non se' stata.
Sara' pien di paura e di sospetti:
fa' che tu pensi ben di ciò gli effetti.

Risponde DOMITILLA e dice:

20

Ben mi ricorda che la madre mia
sostenne molte pene tutti gli anni
della suo vita sol per gelosia
del suo marito con sì gravi affanni;
e s'io credessi seguitar tal via
già mai non vestirei del mondo e panni.
Non credo che 'l mio sposo Aureliano
questo facessi, perché è molto umano.

UNO DI DETTI SERVI *dice a Domitilla:*

21

Quel ch'io ti parlo spesse volte aviene:
ècci chi tiene amiche o concubine,
e le lor donne con tormenti e pene
batton con molte dure discipline;
per questo molti sdegni si sostiene.
D'ogni cosa si vuol pensare al fine,
alle pene del parto e ' grievi duoli
quando si partoriscono e figliuoli.

22

Alcuna volta ancor nel nascimento
chi nasce muto, attratto o insensato,

19

All these husbands put their best foot forward
When their lady is engaged to them;
How humble, then, they wish to seem, and mild
At least until they've led her to their home.
However, secrets like those you can't know,
If you have not first spent some time with him.
You will be filled with fear and full of doubt:
Be sure you think about such outcomes well.

DOMITILLA *answers*:

20

My mother suffered, as I well recall,
So many torments throughout all her life;
Because of her husband's jealousy alone
Bore very great distress; and if I were
To think that I would follow such a path,
The garments of the world I'd never don,
Though I don't think my spouse, Aurelian
Would act like this because he is so kind.

ONE OF THE SERVANTS *says to Domitilla*:

21

That which I tell you often comes to pass,
Some maintain mistresses or concubines,
And some their ladies batter painfully,
Beat them cruelly with sturdy whips;
Many scornful outbursts, too, wives bear.
One needs to think through all things to their end—
About the pangs of childbirth and the woes
So grievous when the children are brought forth.

22

Sometimes, as well, when coming forth, a child
Will be born dumb, deformed, or senseless, whence

onde sente la madre gran tormento,
chi nasce cieco, al mondo disprezato.
Or pensa tu se l'ha' gran pentimento
d'aver cotal figliuol già mai portato.
Alcuna volta la madre morire
fanno e figliuoli innanzi al partorire.

L'ALTRO SERVO *aggiunge e dice:*

23

Santa verginità quanto se' degna,
diletta a Dio e agli angeli cara,
la quale in sempiterno vive e regna
in ciel col suo fattor lucente e chiara!
Quanto è beato chi sotto tua insegna
piglia il camino e questa vita amara
dispreza, la quale è d'affanni piena,
per trovar altra vita più serena.

24

Con penitenza si spegne e peccati,
ma la virginità, poi ch'è perduta,
già mai non può tornar più ne' sua stati.
Misera a quella che questa rifiuta,
ch'ogni altra virtù vince, e tra ' beati
nel sommo ciel con gaudio è ricevuta!
Sì come la reina è la maggiore
di tutte l'altre, questa è 'l vero onore.

25

Getta suave odore apresso a Dio.
Se terrai questa, per sposo arai
un giovane gentil, benigno e pio,
il qual da te non si partirà mai,
cioè, Cristo Iesù, che con disio
delle sue spose in ciel fa festa assai.

The mother will experience great grief;
Some children, those born blind, the world will scorn.
Consider now if you'd have great regret
For ever having borne a child like these.
Sometimes before they're born, some children will
Become the causes of their mothers' deaths.

THE OTHER SERVANT *joins in and says:*

23

O sacred maidenhood, what worthy joy
You bring to God, and to the angels dear
Who live in heaven for eternity
And with their bright and shining Maker reign!
How blest whoever may, beneath your sign,
That journey undertake, whoever scorns
This bitter life so trouble-filled to find
Another life more tranquil, calm and kind.

24

With penitence can one atone for sins,
But once virginity is lost, no more
Can it return to its first state again;
Woe unto her who throws it all away!
All other virtues virginity excels;
With joy the saints in heaven welcome it.
And as the queen is greater than the rest,
So is virginity true glory's best.

25

It wafts a sweet aroma up to God.
If you preserve this, for a spouse you'll have
A noble youth, compassionate and good,
Who will not ever go away from you,
That is Christ Jesus, who, with yearning for
His brides, rejoices greatly in high heav'n.

Qui gaudio certo, qui vero riposo:
beato a chi si volge a tanto sposo.

26

Prendi or di questi dua qual più ti piace:
o questo Aurelian che de' morire
e lasciar le ricchezze in contumace,
breve speranza a sì lungo martire;
se vuoi prender Iesù, Sposo verace,
e solo a lui desideri servire,
dolceza senza affanno ch'è infinita,
e ti darà dopo la morte vita.

Risponde DOMITILLA a' dua servi e dice:

27

E' mi par già sentire il core aprire,
tanta potenza han le vostre parole;
e quel ch' i' ho dentro non vi so scoprire,
ma d'aver tolto sposo assai mi duole,
perché Iesù desidero servire
e la sua santa legge, e sia che vuole,
fuggendo il mondo e ogni pensier vano,
e vo' lasciar lo sposo Aureliano.

28

Come potrò delle suo man fuggire?
Ma spero nel mio Dio che col suo aiuto
mi darà tanta forza e tanto ardire
che 'l mio giusto pensier sarà adempiuto;
perché non lascia e sua servi perire
e per isposa di nuovo m'ha 'vuto,⁷
vorrà guardar la mia virginitate,
per la infinita sua somma bontate.

Here certain joy, here true repose—she's blest
Who is devoted to so great a spouse.

26

Whichever of these two most pleases you,
Choose now: take either this Aurelian
Who must die, leave his riches in default,
A fleeting hope for such long suffering;
Or, if you want Jesus the true Spouse,
And your desire is to serve him alone,
He'll give untroubled sweetness infinite
To you, and after death will give you life.

DOMITILLA *answers the two servants and says:*

27

Truly I seem to feel my heart unfold,
Such power your words have, and what within
I feel I can't express, but I'm much grieved
I took a spouse because I wish to serve
Christ Jesus, keep his holy law, do all
He asks of me, fleeing the world and each
Vain thought, and I desire now to renounce
The spouse I'd meant to wed, Aurelian.

28

Yet from his hands how can I flee? But still
I place my trust in God, for with his aid
Such courage and great strength he'll give to me
That my just purposes he will fulfill;
Because he does not let his servants die,
And, since for his new bride he's taken me,
He will watch over my virginity
In his great goodness infinite and high.

29

Fate ch'io sia prestamente velata
e consacrata al mio superno Sposo,⁸
il qual m'ha del suo amor tutta infiammata,
ch'è sua diletti dà sommo riposo.
Eccomi qui presente apparecchiata⁹
servire al mio Signor giusto e pietoso.
Tu che m'apristi e misurasti el core,
fammi costante nel tuo dolce amore.

UNO DE' DETTI SERVI, *rendendo grazie a Dio, dice così:*

30

Io rendo grazie a te, superno Idio,
che ci hai per tua pietà fatto sì degni
e sì contento el nostro buon desio,
che veggian caminar sotto tuo insegni
costei che andava in perdimento rio;
or l'hai rivolta a' tua superni regni.
Quanto la tua bontà per noi si mostra,¹⁰
poi ch'è disposta a far la voglia nostra.

Vanno QUESTI DUA SERVI a Papa Clemente e dicono come hanno convertita Domitilla e che lui debba venire a vederla e confortarla:

31

O reverente in Cristo buon pastore,
intendi perché a te venuti siamo;
che la nipote dello Imperadore
a te parente convertita abbiamo,
benché fussi sposata a grande onore
a quel nobil barone Aureliano.
Ella non cura il suo sposo lasciare,
ché sua virginità vuol conservare.

Risponde PAPA CLEMENTE a detti servi e dice:

29

Arrange for me to take the veil⁸ at once
And swear allegiance to my heavenly Spouse,
Who's filled me with the fiery flame of love,
Who brings great peace to all those whom he loves.
Behold me present here and all prepared
To serve my Lord, compassionate and just;
Thou who has opened me and seized my heart,
Oh, make me constant in thy tender love.

ONE OF THE SERVANTS, *giving thanks to God, says:*

30

I render thanks to you, supernal God,
Who mercifully have made us of such worth,
And our good purposes so satisfied
That 'neath your banners we see setting forth
One who was on her way to wicked loss;
Now you've aimed her toward your supernal realms.
How much your goodness you've revealed to us
Since to perform our wish she is resolved.

These TWO SERVANTS go to Pope Clement, explaining that they have converted Domitilla and that he must come to see her and urge her to be strong:

31

O Reverend Sir, good shepherd of the Christ,
Pray understand why we have come to you;
For we've converted the Emperor's niece, your kin—
Though she with honor great was soon to wed
The noble cavalier Aurelian.
In truth, she would prefer to take her leave
From that Aurelian, for she desires
To keep inviolate her maidenhood.

POPE CLEMENT *answers the servants and says:*

La Rappresentazione di Santo Francesco

INTERLOCUTORI

[PROLOGO]

SAN FRANCESCO

UN POVERO

IL CROCIFISSO

SACERDOTE

AMICO DEL PADRE di San Francesco

IL PADRE di San Francesco

DUE UOMINI di Assisi, uno detto UN AMICO

LA MADRE di San Francesco

IL VESCOVO

SERVI del Vescovo

COMPAGNO di San Francesco

MESSER BERNARDO di Assisi

ALCUNI POVERI

IL PONTEFICE

COMPAGNI di San Francesco, poi DISCEPOLI, FRATI

SERVO del Pontefice

DUE CARDINALI

ALCUNI SARACENI

IL SOLDANO

MESSER ORLANDO

SERVO di Messer Orlando

FRA LEONE

IL SERAFINO

CONTADINO, padrone dell'asino

UNA DONNA con figlio idropico

[IL FIGLIO IDROPICO]*

UNA DONNA ROMANA, MADONNA JACOPA

IL GUARDIANO

*Presente, ma non parla.

The Play of Saint Francis

CAST OF CHARACTERS

[PROLOGUE]

SAINT FRANCIS

A PAUPER

THE CRUCIFIX

A PRIEST

A FRIEND OF THE FATHER of St. Francis

THE FATHER of St. Francis

TWO MEN from Assisi, one called A FRIEND

THE MOTHER of St. Francis

THE BISHOP

SERVANTS of the Bishop

FRIEND of St. Francis

MASTER BERNARDO of Assisi

SOME PAUPERS

THE POPE

COMPANIONS of St. Francis, later DISCIPLES, BROTHERS

SERVANT of the Pope

TWO CARDINALS

SOME SARACENS

THE SULTAN

MESSER ORLANDO

SERVANT of Master Orlando

FRA LEO

THE SERAPH

PEASANT, owner of the donkey

A WOMAN whose son has dropsy

[THE SON WITH DROPSY]*

A ROMAN WOMAN, LADY JACOPA

THE SACRISTAN

*Present, but does not speak.

[PROLOGO]

1

O Iesù mio, superno Redentore,
s'alcun mio priego mai t'è stato accetto,
per la tua carità, pel grande amore,
metti il tuo dolce foco nel mio petto,
sì che possa mostrar con gran fervore
del tuo Francesco, immenso servo eletto,
la sua storia divota e 'l gran mistero.

[rivolto al pubblico:]

State divoti ogniun col cor sincero!

2

E tu, vergine eletta in ciel Maria,
che siedi dalla destra del tuo figlio,
accendi e infiamma la mia fantasia
col tuo divino aiuto e buon consiglio,
acciò che in porto la barchetta mia
arrivar possa senza alcun periglio,
che se' de' peccator ferma colonna
della terra, e del ciel regina e donna.

3

Perché sarebbe lungo a recitare
tutti e misteri e la sua santa vita,
vogliànne adunche una parte mostrare
e la carità sua giusta infinita,
sì come e' volse il mondo disprezare
per aver el riposo alla partita,
non curando del mondo alcun diletto,
perché avea volto a Dio ogni concetto.

[PROLOGUE]

1

My Jesus, O Redeemer from on high,
If any prayer of mine you have approved,
Now for your charity, for your great love,
Set your sweet fire within my breast so I
Can show most fervently to everyone,
The pious story and great miracles
Of Francis, your high servant, your elect.

[to the assembled public:]

Devout, with hearts sincere, on it reflect!

2

And, Virgin Mary, you, elect in heaven,
Who's seated at the right hand of your Son,
Inflame and set alight my fantasy
With your good counsel and your aid divine
So that, unfraught with peril, my small boat
Can reach the harbor; for all sinners you
Are the firm and steadfast column, and you are
The queen and lady of heaven and of earth.

3

Because it would require too long to tell
His every miracle and holy life,
We therefore wish to show a part of it,
Portray his righteous, boundless charity,
The way he chose to scorn the world to have
Repose at his departure, caring not
For any pleasure of the world because he had
Devoted every thought of his to God.

Essendo San Francesco¹ al banco viene uno povero e chiede limosina e
SAN FRANCESCO, *essendo occupato, lo caccia da sé:*

4

Messere, un po' di carità per Dio;
questo infermo ti sia raccomandato.

SAN FRANCESCO *dice:*

Non mi dar noia, deh, vatti con Dio.
Non vedi tu quant'io son occupato?

EL POVERO *dice a San Francesco:*

O sventurato a me! Morto fuss'io!
Io son da tutti in tal modo trattato.
Signor del cielo, abbi di me pietate:
rendimi almen la vera sanitate.

SAN FRANCESCO *dice seco medesimo:*

5

Misero, perch'hai tu cacciato quello
povero infermo con tanto furore?
Sol pietà non ha' àuto di vedello?²
Perdonami, Iesù, dolce Signore.

SAN FRANCESCO *dice al povero:*

Tien qui, caro compagno e buon fratello,
che di cacciarti feci troppo errore.

El POVERO dice:

Per me, messer, te lo meriti³ Idio,
di poi che meritar non tel poss'io.

While St. Francis¹ is at his counter, a PAUPER comes and asks for alms, and St. Francis, being busy, chases him away.

4

Good sir, a little charity for God,
Let this decrepit fellow thank you for.

ST. FRANCIS *says*:

Do not disturb me; may you go with God.
Do you not see how busy I am now?

The PAUPER says to St. Francis:

O me, unfortunate, would I were dead,
For I am treated thus by everyone.
Lord of heaven, pity take on me;
Give to me my true well-being at least.

ST. FRANCIS *says to himself:*

5

O stingy one, why did you drive away
That feeble pauper with such wrath intense?
Ah, did you not feel pity, seeing him?
Forgive me Jesus, my sweet Lord, for that.

ST. FRANCIS *says to the pauper:*

Take this, companion dear and brother good,
For I have greatly erred in ousting you.

The PAUPER says:

For me, may God reward you, my good sir,
Since, afterwards, I cannot pay you back.

SAN FRANCESCO *andando a San Damiano s'inginocchia al crocifisso e dice:*

6

Giusto Signor, che per me se' chiovato
in sulla croce e giù veggo versare
el prezioso sangue immacolato
per me, vil peccator, voler lavare.

EL CROCIFISSO *parla a San Francesco e dice:*

Francesco, el tempio mio già rovinato
leva su presto e fallo racconciare;
metti quel ch'io ti dico a seguizione⁴
che tu sarai di molto ben cagione.

SAN FRANCESCO, *udito parlare il crocifisso, tornato in sé dice seco medesimo:*

7

Io sento nel mio cor tanta dolceza,
immenso Idio, ch'io non te lo so dire;
tu se' senza dolor somma allegrezza
che m'ha' tuo dolci don fatti sentire.
El tempio tuo racconciar con presteza
farò, perché sol te voglio ubidire.
Fammi sol camminar per la tua via
e contenta sarà la voglia mia.

SAN FRANCESCO *tornato a casa rauna pecunia nascosamente e va a San Damiano e giunto dice al sacerdote di quel tempio come lo vuole racconciare e profera a lui quella pecunia:*

8

Vita ti presti, sacerdote, Idio.
Parlar vorrei con teco se t'è grato,
che di far racconciar ho gran desio

Going to St. Damian's, ST. FRANCIS falls on his knees before the crucifix and says:

6

O righteous Lord, who on the cross are nailed
For me, your precious blood immaculate
I see pour down to wash me clean again,
An undeserving sinner, mean and vile.

THE CRUCIFIX *says to St. Francis:*

My temple's fallen, Francis, into ruin
Indeed; now raise it up and set it right.
Put into practice what I say to you;
For you shall be the doer of much good.

Having heard the crucifix speak, ST. FRANCIS comes to and says to himself:

7

Such sweetness great I feel within my heart,
O boundless God, I cannot speak of it,
For, with no grief, are you surpassing joy;
The sweet gifts of your words you've made me hear.
I shall restore your temple eagerly—
I shall because I wish to heed just you.
Pray, let me travel only in your way,
And my will shall remain therein content.

ST. FRANCIS, *having gone home, secretly gets money together and goes to St. Damian's and, once there, tells the priest of that church that he wants to restore it and offers him the money:*

8

May God prolong your life, O priest. I wish
To speak together with you, if you please,
For I long urgently to build again