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TORQUATO TASSO'S "IL RE TORRISMONDO": TRANSLATION AND  
INTRODUCTION

*City University of New York*

PH.D. 1987

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TORQUATO TASSO'S IL RE TORRISMONDO:  
TRANSLATION AND INTRODUCTION

by

Maria C. Pastore Passaro

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty  
in Comparative Literature in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1987

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MARIA C. PASTORE PASSARO

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ABSTRACT

TASSO'S IL RE TORRISMONDO:  
TRANSLATION AND INTRODUCTION

by

Maria C. Pastore Passaro

Adviser: Professor Fred J. Nichols

Il re Torrismondo (1587) was one of the most popular Renaissance tragedies. This 16th century Italian drama, written by Torquato Tasso, whose Aminta and Gerusalemme Liberata established the author's renown throughout Europe, was very influential. It influenced French, English, and Spanish writers, and enjoyed a wide readership not only in Italy, but also beyond the Alps, as its many editions, a translation, and its many performances attest. Tasso's tragedy follows models both ancient and modern. As a result, Il re Torrismondo, tempered as it is by the new spirit of the age, and incorporating into the dramatic genre elements of epic and lyrical poetry, aims to equal the tragedies of ancient Greece and Rome, while introducing innovations in tragedy as a genre. It is the successful blending of these elements that makes Tasso's work unique.

The only translation of Il re Torrismondo was done by Charles Vion Dalibray (1636). Although the French translation retains Tasso's poetical meter, Dalibray simplifies the plot in order to make the tragedy suitable for performance.

The present translation is the first into English. It is a literal rendering of the Italian tragedy, based on the Maier Edition of 1964. It is intended for the reader who has little or no knowledge of Italian. I have sacrificed the original meter so as to remain as close to the meaning as possible; at the same time I have tried to reproduce Tasso's style by retaining the original syntactical structure.

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## INTRODUCTION

Nearly fifteen centuries had elapsed since the classical accomplishment of Latin tragedy as seen in Accius, Pacuvius, and, especially Seneca. Tasso's Il re Torrismondo brings together the rules and models of Greek and Roman tragedy; it subscribes to the theories of the genre as practiced in the High Renaissance, and, as such, becomes innovative.

My introduction to Torrismondo, the King consists of six sections (each section has its own footnotes; all translations are mine, unless otherwise stated):

1. "Torquato Tasso: The Life" (a biographical sketch of the man and his love legend.)
2. "Tasso, the legend and the Romantics" (the popularity that Tasso's life and love legend had in England, its influence on English and German Romantics, its impact on the Romantics in Italy and its inspiration in art history and in music).
3. "Il re Torrismondo" (the popularity of the tragedy in Italy and in France, 17th and 19th century critics, its relationship to Tasso's theory on tragedy, how it follows principles of ancient and contemporary genres, works that influenced Il re Torrismondo's language, including Tasso's own epic).

4. "Influence" (Il re Torrismondo's influence on Racine, Milton and Calderón).
5. "About the translation" (some problems in translating Tasso's tragedy).
6. The Sonnet "Nel Ritratto di Torquato Tasso" acquaints us with Costantini's view of Tasso, and the Dedication letter "Al Serenissimo Signor DON VINCENZO GONZAGA Duca di Mantova e di Monferrato, etc." shows us Tasso's view of the tragedy.

## Torquato Tasso: The Life

Tasso's life greatly influenced European literature. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century writers held Tasso in veneration. His life was symbolic of the sufferings of all poets in their struggle against society. Similarly, his love legend captured the attention of the Romantics. For a better understanding of all this, I found it necessary to refer to the most salient vicissitudes in Tasso's stormy life from which the very legend arose. As a result, I am confident the reader will welcome a brief biographical sketch of Torquato Tasso the man.

Born in the scenic town of Sorrento,<sup>1</sup> on March 11, 1544, Torquato Tasso inherited from his father, Bernardo, his love for poetry.<sup>2</sup> At the age of ten, Torquato broke off his studies with the newly found Jesuit order in Naples, and joined his father in Rome.<sup>3</sup> With Bernardo he went to the court of Urbino in 1557 and to Venice in 1559. In 1570, Torquato was sent to the University of Padua, where, after a year spent in the reluctant study of law, he eagerly took up the study of philosophy and eloquence. While in Padua, Torquato spent time with Sperone Speroni, who gave him friendly literary counsel. There he began the writing of lyrics, and of his first substantial poem, the Rinaldo.<sup>4</sup> While at the University of Bologna, Torquato was expelled when he was falsely accused of writing satires on his professors. Consequently, he returned to Padua (1564) where

he joined the Accademia degli Eterei.

In 1565, on the completion of his university studies, Torquato entered the service of Cardinal Luigi d'Este in Ferrara, where he remained until his father's death in 1569. The following year, he went to Paris and entrusted to friends his love poems, his Discorsi dell'arte poetica, and six cantos of his epic poem. In the spring of 1571, he returned to Ferrara and joined the ducal court of Alfonso d'Este. Between 1573 and 1575, he wrote his pastoral poem Aminta, began the tragedy Galealto, re di Norvegia, and completed the Gerusalemme Liberata. The immediate success of the pastoral play and of his epic poem gave Torquato Tasso international renown.

Fearing public criticism, the poet submitted his epic poem to several of his friends for criticism. Their comments proved to be pedantic, censorious and exceedingly painful to the poet. Tasso defended himself as best as he could; later, he yielded to his critics and began to rewrite the poem.

The Duke of Ferrara placed the poet, physically and emotionally ill, in seclusion for a short period of time. Once free, Torquato fled Ferrara and went to his sister's house in Sorrento.<sup>7</sup> He remained there for a few months and returned to Ferrara, only to depart again and once more to return in 1579. Fits of rage and accusations against the ducal family led Tasso to confinement in Sant'Anna.<sup>8</sup>

After seven years of solitude and suffering, when Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga of Mantua obtained his freedom, in July 1586, Tasso's poetic gift reached new heights. The experience of the long and painful confinement was, indeed, an important factor in giving us a new Tasso--a poet, by now far from the 'golden age' of his pastoral play or the grandeur of his epic poem, and well aware of human tears, Virgil's "lacrimae rerum." Consequently, he immediately returned to his unfinished tragedy and concluded it with a new title: Il re Torrismondo. His restlessness, however, soon made him wander (from Mantua to Bergamo, to Bologna, to Rome, to Naples and back to Rome, to Florence, to Rome, Mantua and Naples).

Between 1587 and 1590 he wrote the Discorsi sull'arte poetica and two volumes of Lettere along with other minor works, and reprinted Part I of the Rime (1591) and Le Sette Giornate del Mondo Creato (1592). Welcomed back to Rome by Pope Clement VIII, he published the revised version of his epic, the Gerusalemme Conquistata along with its defense ('Giudizio sopra la sua Gerusalemme da lui medesimo riformata'). In 1594, while in Naples, he wrote a Life of St. Benedict. When he learned about the Pope and Roman Senate's decision to crown him poet laureate, he returned to the capital, only to learn that his crown was delayed because of Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini's illness.

Unfortunately, Torquato Tasso never received his laurel wreath. Tired and ill, he had himself taken to the monastery

of Sant'Onofrio on the Gianicolo, and there on April 25,  
1595, he died.

Soon, legends about his life and his love for Leonora d'Este were born. His secret love for the Princess was held responsible for the poet's frenzy and his subsequent imprisonment. Tasso's own letters and other writings show a soul obsessed with religious, moral, and philosophical scruples. What was the real reason that exacerbated his genius? Perhaps the answer can be found in the words of the Counselor to Torrismondo:

...tanto ogni mal più grave è sempre  
quanto è in più nobil parte, ...  
(I, iii, 610-611)

Footnotes to "Torquato Tasso: The Life"

1

There have been many disputes about Torquato's place of birth. Some mistakes have arisen from his having an elder brother of the same name, who died an infant. Manso argues that Torquato ought to be considered a Neapolitan--as it was 'by chance' that his birth happened in Sorrento, his mother being on a visit there from Naples. Serassi angrily contradicts Manso's argument: "Il Manso e il Fasano pretendono che il Tasso sia 'generato' in Napoli, e che per questa cagione si debba assolutamente chiamar Napoletano, ma ciò è falsissimo, perché fu 'concepito' e partorito in Sorrento," (See John Black, Life of Torquato Tasso with an historical and critical account of his writings, Vol. I. (Edinburgh: John Murray, 1810), 14.

A considerable part of the humor in Goldoni's comedy Il Torquato Tasso, consists in disputes on Torquato's birth-place. Like Manso, Goldoni's character observes,

Compare, a sto discorso no posso più star saldo.  
Sta rason, compatime, m'ha fatto vegnir caldo;  
Se sè nassù in Sorriento, cossa conclude? gnente,  
Se sa, che là sè nato, solo per accidente.

(III, viii)

(See "Il Torquato Tasso" in Tutte le Opere di Carlo Goldoni a cura di Giuseppe Ortolani, Volume Quinto (Milano: Arnaldo Mondadori, 1941), 812. See also John Black, Life of Torquato Tasso, 14).

However Tasso himself gives us an account of his place of birth: "Ora sono in Napoli poche miglia lontano da Sorrento, città ove nacqui... Io nacqui del 1544, gli undici Marzo nel quale è la vigilia di S. Gregorio." (John Black, 14)

2

Bernardo Tasso was a famous poet in his day. When Torquato was born, Bernardo was working at his epic poem Amadigi di Gaula and was a courtier of the Prince of Salerno. Bernardo's other major work was Floridante (completed after his death by his more famous son). Torquato's mother was Porzia de' Rossi, the daughter of a noble family in Naples. See Angelo Solerti, Vita di Torquato Tasso, Volume I--La Vita (Roma: Ermanno Loescher, 1895), 1-25. See also C.P. Brand, Torquato Tasso A Study of the Poet and his Contribution to English Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1965), 4-9.

3

Bernardo was in exile with his then lord, Prince Sanseverino (Black, 23-26).

4

The Rinaldo is a romantic poem in octaves, in twelve cantos. Published in 1562, the Rinaldo proved to be a great success for the eighteen year old poet. (Angelo Solerti, 53-64).

5

See Solerti, 80-90 and 91-102.

6

We must remember that this was the age of the Counter-Reformation, and of the Inquisition.

7

Torquato's sister, Cordelia, was seven to eight years his senior. She was married and lived in Sorrento. (See C. P. Brand, Torquato Tasso, 4).

8

Sant'Anna was a mental hospital; it often had the reputation of being a prison and a dungeon.

For all other information on Torquato Tasso's life, I am indebted to Solerti's and Brand's account on the poet's life.

## Tasso, the legend, and the Romantics

In the history of European literature as much significance has been attached to the life and legend of Tasso, the man, as to the work of the poet.

Elizabethan England soon learned to admire Tasso.<sup>1</sup> Tasso's love legend was known in England while the poet was still alive. J. Eliot refers to it in his Orthoepia Gallica published in 1593,<sup>2</sup> and Scipio Gentile accepted it in the Latin translation of the Gerusalemme Liberata (1594). During the summer of the same year (August 1594), a play entitled Tasso's Melancholy was performed in London and was revised on a number of occasions during the succeeding months. It is interesting to note that in 1602, when Hamlet was first produced at the Globe theater, Thomas Dekker revised Tasso's Melancholy for a further run.<sup>3</sup> After Tasso's death, new biographies and critical studies were published in Italy and in England.<sup>4</sup>

Although Tasso's legend evolved largely out of his poetry, Manso's biography of the poet, published in 1621,<sup>5</sup> spread the love legend. The biographical vicissitudes of Tasso's life attracted considerable attention throughout Europe during the period 1750-1850. The legend about his life and hopeless love for Leonora d'Este established Tasso as a prototype of the Romantic poet. The Romantics saw in Tasso a forerunner of their own ideal of the unhappy creative artist at odds with society. Seventeenth-century writers accepted

Tasso's love legend, and by the eighteenth century a varied and extensive body of fiction developed in Italy and crossed the Alps.

In England, the author of Childe Harold<sup>6</sup> had a deep admiration for Tasso. In visiting Ferrara, Lord Byron had himself shut up in Tasso's cell in order to relive the poet's feelings. The English poet imagines the gloom of Tasso's solitary confinement and its effect on the poet's sensitive mind in the memorable monologue The Lament of Tasso.<sup>7</sup> For Byron, Tasso's was a romantic and hopeless love:

A princess was no love-mate for a bard.  
(124)

The poet's feelings, however, were so strong as to live beyond the grave:

No power in death can tear our names apart,  
As none in life could rend thee from my heart.  
(244-245)

The English Romantic poet proclaims Tasso's dungeon a shrine for future generations:

.....and I shall make  
A future temple of my present cell  
Which nations yet shall visit for my sake.  
(219-221)

Lord Byron confirmed Rousseau's claim to have heard Venetian<sup>8</sup> gondoliers exchange verses from Tasso's epic poem.

Shelley's visit to Ferrara is recorded in his letter to Peacock (November 7, 1818). The English poet was moved by<sup>9</sup> the sight of Tasso's manuscript,

"There is here a manuscript of the entire Gerusalemme Liberata written by Tasso's own hand;..."

Shelley describes Tasso's handwriting as

"large, free, and flowing... It is the symbol of an intense and earnest mind..."

In Germany, the Romantic poet who contributed most to Tasso's legend was Goethe. In Dichtung und Wahrheit, the author of Faust tells us that Tasso was a favorite poet of his father, and that he himself in his boyhood had read the Jerusalem Delivered in Kopp's translation.<sup>10</sup> Goethe began his drama Torquato Tasso on March 30, 1780 and completed the first two acts in rhythmical prose by the spring of 1781. He left his drama as a fragment until 1786 and completed it in 1789.<sup>11</sup> Published in 1790, Torquato Tasso was performed with success at Weimar in 1808. Goethe's drama illustrates the 'Überwindung' of his Sturm und Drang, and his achievement of classicism.<sup>12</sup> The play can be seen as a 'dramatic portrait' of Tasso, his relations with his patron and the Court circle, including the Princess whom he loves. Goethe depicts Tasso from the point of view of psychology and character: his hero is as happy as a child when he is writing his poems, or when he is in love; he is as triumphant as a king when he is crowned with the wreath of laurel by the Duke, but he is also a man in whom genius creates a permanent problem in his relation to the world.<sup>13</sup>

Through the distressing story of Tasso's life, Goethe portrays the romantic poet. The Torquato Tasso has a link with Werther and with Eqmont. The analogies between Goethe

and Tasso were many and striking: they both experienced the perturbations of a poet's heart, they were acquainted with the imperious forms of court life and familiar with the conflicts. In Eckermann's "Conversation with Goethe" (May 6, 1827), we learn Goethe's own opinion of the drama he had written: "... I had the life of Tasso, and I had my own life, and putting together these two singular figures with their peculiarities, I obtained my Tasso. To him, by way of prosaic contrast, I opposed Antonio, for whom I also had models. As for the rest, the general situation was the same in Weimar as in Ferrara; and I can truly say of my delineation, that it is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh."<sup>14</sup>

In Italy, Goldoni saw in Tasso a reflection of himself.<sup>15</sup> In the vast production of the Venetian playwright, three of his comedies in verse stand apart from any prose comedies in that they treat of the lives of classic poets.<sup>16</sup> Il Torquato Tasso gave Goldoni the opportunity of creating "an Italian Hamlet or an Alceste."<sup>17</sup>

Ugo Foscolo saw in Tasso the poet who enacted the agony of his own tortured spirit. Foscolo preferred Tasso's Gerusalemme Liberata to Dante's Divina Commedia because in the epic tradition it joined a national theme with a serious religious subject. In his essay "Lyric Poetry of Tasso" he concluded that Tasso's poetry was the "last great flowering of Italian Renaissance literature,"<sup>18</sup> and that "Tasso is worthy of being placed by the side of Dante and Milton.

Like them, his erudition was unbounded, his character was dignified; and he adhered to literature in despite of every misfortune which can afflict human nature."<sup>19</sup>

Moved by the sight of Tasso's humble tomb, Vittorio Alfieri expresses his outrage in a sonnet "Per il sepolcro del Tasso".<sup>20</sup> Alfieri is angry against Rome for denying to the sublime epic poet, the only place worthy of his tombstone --the center of Saint Peter's Church:

Là, nel bel centro d'esso ei sia locato:  
Degno d'entrambi il monumento quivi Michelangelo  
ergeva al gran Torquato.

Tasso's life and works greatly influenced some of Giacomo Leopardi's writings. In Operette Morali, Leopardi<sup>21</sup> imagines a dialogue between 'Tasso' and his 'Genio'. In a letter written from Rome to his brother Carlo,<sup>22</sup> Leopardi says: "... Venerdì 15 febbraio 1823 fui a visitare il sepolcro del Tasso e ci piansi. Questo è l'unico piacere che ho provato in Roma... Molti provano un sentimento d'indignazione vedendo il cenere del Tasso coperto e indicato non da altro che da una pietra larga e lunga circa un palmo e mezzo, e posta in un cantoncino d'una chiesuccia. Io non vorrei in nessun modo trovar questo cenere sotto un mausoleo. Tu comprendi la gran folla di affetti che nasce dal considerare il contrasto fra la grandezza del Tasso e l'umiltà della sua sepoltura. Ma tu non puoi avere idea d'un altro contrasto, cioè di quello che prova un occhio avvezzo all'infinita magnificenza e vastità de' monumenti

romani, paragonandoli alla piccolezza e nudità di questo sepolcro..."

23

Much has been written about Tasso's life. His works, his letters and his actions have been analyzed in detail over the centuries. Plays and poems arose from different aspects of Tasso's legend; novels, pseudo diaries, works of fiction and critical studies have been the subject of Italian, French and English writers. <sup>24</sup> In Paris, as late as 1908, a French play, by Paul Souchon, followed the traditional legends and in 1914 the Veglie del Tasso were republished as authentic work. In art history, Tasso's life and poetry inspired <sup>25</sup> Delacroix, Morelli, Reni and other artists. In the field of music, we must remember Monteverdi's Il Combattimento di Tancredi; Gluck's opera Armide; Handel's Rinaldo and Armida Abbandonata; Rossini's Tancredi and Armida; Verdi's I Lombardi Alla Prima Crociata; Listz's tone poem Tasso; <sup>26</sup> Donizetti's three-act opera Torquato Tasso and others.

In conclusion, it is interesting to note that the term "romantic poetry" was first used in connection with Ariosto and Tasso. Hurd speaks of Tasso as "trimming between the Gothic and the Classic." <sup>27</sup> Was Tasso's love legend close to truth? The answer is not important; its function, however, had the same magic of his poetry: it paved the way and created a symbol which the Romantics adopted.

Footnotes to: Tasso, the legend and the Romantics

1

Queen Elizabeth had committed to memory many stanzas of the Gerusalemme Liberata, and considered the Duke of Ferrara, for having 'his praise sung by such a poet', as lucky as Achilles 'for having had the great Homer'. See Mario Praz, The Flaming Heart (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1966), 310.

2

Returning from a trip to Italy, John Eliot sums up his view of Tasso for the English reader: "Torquato Tasso, a fine scholar truly, who is yet living, the last Italian Poet who is of any great fame in our age, but worthie of the first honour, besides that he is a divine Poet, he is also a most eloquent Oratour and Rhetoricyan as his massive Epistles do shew very well. This youth fell mad for the love of an Italian lasse descended of a great house" He goes on to mention Tasso's works among which "a Tragédie," and the heroic poem "where in all the riches of the Greekes and Latines are gathered..." John Eliot finds in Tasso "grace, brevitie, gravitie, learning, liveliness and vivacitie" that was in Virgil "Prince of Latine Poets". See Godfrey of Bulloigne a critical edition of Edward Fairfax's translation of Tasso's Gerusalemme Liberata, together with Fairfax Original Poems (Oxford: The Clarendon, 1981), 28.

3

The author of the play is unknown; the play itself is lost. See E. K. Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage (Oxford: The Clarendon, 1923), 11, 134, 168, 181.

4

Mario Praz, 308-347.

5

Manso attributes Tasso's felicity of style to a happy love affair with one of the three Leonoras (the Contessa San Vitale, or a 'damigella' of Leonora d'Este, or Leonora d'Este herself), on the other hand, he explains Tasso's unhappiness as the result of his secret love. See G.B. Manso, Vita di Torquato Tasso (Venezia: Gamba, 1825), 48-49.

6

Ugo Foscolo collaborated with John Cam Hobhouse to the illustrations of Byron's Childe Harold. See E. R. Vincent, Ugo Foscolo, An Italian in Regency England (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1953), 87.

7

Lord Byron, The Complete Poetical Works edited by Jerome J. McGann, Vol.IV. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), 116-124.

"The Lament of Tasso" offers a model for Browning's and Swinburne's lyrical monologue. See Mario Praz, The Flaming Heart, 343.

8

Mario Praz, The Flaming Heart, 332 and John Black, Life of Torquato Tasso, with an historical and critical account of his writings, Vol.I, (Edinburgh: John Murray, 1810), 332.

Besides Rousseau, other well-known poets who greatly admired Tasso were Dryden, Voltaire, Wordsworth and Alexander Pope. See C. P. Brand, Torquato Tasso (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1965), 209, 225, 256, 260.

It is interesting to note that in 1833, Buttura Antonio included Tasso in I quattro poeti italiani, con una scelta di poesie italiane dal 1200 sino ai nostri tempi. Pub. secondo l'edizione del 1833 da A. Buttura, Parigi, Lefèvre, 1836.

9

The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley edited by Roger Ingpen, Vol.II (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1914), 633-636. See also his fragments "Scene from Tasso" and "Song for Tasso" in The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley edited by Edward Dowden (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1839), 511-512.

10

How deep and lasting an impression the poem made upon Goethe's mind can be seen in the seventh chapter of the first book of Wilhelm Meister (1777). See introduction to Calvin Thomas, Goethe's Torquato Tasso (Boston: D.C. Heath, 1906), XXII.

11

Kopp's German translation of the Jerusalem Delivered was prefixed with a sketch of Tasso's life, based on Manso's biography. Serassi's Vita di Torquato Tasso (1785) was probably read by Goethe while he was in Italy. It is interesting to note that Goethe was writing his "tragödie" Torquato Tasso exactly two hundred years after the date in which Tasso was returning to his unfinished "tragedia" Il Galealto, later completed as Il re Torrismondo.

12

Ronald Peacock, Goethe's Major Plays (Manchester: UP, 1959), 145.

13

Ronald Peacock, Goethe's Major Plays, 104.

14

Calvin Thomas, Goethe's Torquato Tasso, V.

15

Goldoni was criticized for the impurity of his Italian; Tasso's epic had been persecuted by the academicians of La Crusca. See H. C. Chatfield-Taylor, Goldoni a Biography (New York: Duffield & Co., 1913), 436.

16

The three comedies in verse are: Il Molière, Terenzio and Torquato Tasso. See Tutte le Opere di Carlo Goldoni a cura di Giuseppe Ortolani ("Il Molière" in Volume Terzo, "Terenzio" and "Torquato Tasso" in Volume Quinto), (Milano: Arnaldo Mondadori, 1941).

17

H. C. Chatfield-Taylor, 437.

18

Glauco Cambon, Ugo Foscolo Poet of Exile (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1980), 204.

19

Ugo Foscolo, Saggi di Letteratura Italiana, Parte Prima, edizione critica a cura di Cesare Foligno (Firenze: Felice Le Monnier, 1958), 195.

20

Vittorio Alfieri, Rime a cura di Rosolino Guastalla, nuova presentazione di Cesare Bozzetti (Firenze: Sansoni, 1963), 133-134. For a translation of the sonnet see: From Marino to Marinetti an Anthology of Forty Italian Poets, translated into English Verse and with an Introduction by Joseph Tusiani (New York: Baroque, 1974), 85.

21

Giacomo Leopardi, "Dialogo di Torquato Tasso e del suo genio familiare", in Tutte le Opere con introduzione e a cura di Walter Binni, Volume Primo (Firenze: Sansoni, 1983), 110-114.

22

The date of this letter is February 20, 1823. "... Friday, February 15, 1823 I went to visit Tasso's tomb and wept. This is the only pleasure I felt in Rome. Many visitors experience indignation on seeing Tasso's ashes covered and marked by nothing more than a stone approximately a span and a half in width and height, and placed in a narrow corner of a small church. By no means would I want to find these ashes under a mausoleum. You understand what a multitude of feelings rises from the consideration of the contrast between Tasso's greatness and the humility of his burial. But you cannot imagine another contrast, that is, that which is felt by one whose eye is accustomed to the infinite magnificence and vastness of the Roman monuments,

when compared to the meanness and bareness of this sepulcher." See Giacomo Leopardi, Tutte le Opere, 1150.

23

J. Hoole's, Jerusalem Delivered, an Heroic Poem (1763), included the 'life of Tasso' based on Manso and Mirabaun's account. Along with the passion for Leonora, Hoole repeated the tale of Tasso's escape from St. Anna and his visit in disguise to his sister Cornelia, in Sorrento.

In 1772, Tiraboschi began to question Tasso's legend and in 1785 Serassi published a documented biography. (P. A. Serassi, Vita di Torquato Tasso, Bergamo, 1970).

The increased interest of English readers in Tasso's life was due to the publication of John Black's Life of Torquato Tasso with an historical account of his writings, (Edinburg, 1810).

24

C. P. Brand, Torquato Tasso, 223-224.

25

Delacroix's painting 'Le Tasse en Prison' inspired Baudelaire's sonnet on the painting. See C. P. Brand, Torquato Tasso, 220.

26

For a more detailed list see footnote 4 in the introduction of: Torquato Tasso, Jerusalem Delivered translated into verse and with an introduction by Joseph Tusiani (Cranbury N.J.: Associated UP, 1970), 15-16.

27

Rene Wellek, Concepts of Criticism (New Haven: Yale UP, 1963), 128.

## Il re Torrismondo

At the beginning of 1582, the first, though incomplete, draft of Tasso's version of Galealto re di Norvegia was published as Tragedia non finita in the Seconda Parte of the Aldine Edition of Tasso's Rime and<sup>1</sup>  
prose.

In 1586, as soon as he was released from St. Anna's<sup>2</sup> prison, Tasso resumed the Galealto; he reworked the tragedy and brought it to a conclusion with a new title:<sup>3</sup>  
Il re Torrismondo. The 1587 edition (Edizioni Bartoli, published in Bergamo, dedicated to Vincenzo Gonzaga)<sup>4</sup> was reprinted at least ten times in the 16th century.

The French translation by Charles Vion Dalibray (Le Torrismon du Tasse Tragedie, Paris: Denis Houssaye, 1636) and the reprints of 1640 and 1646, are a reflection of the<sup>5</sup> influence that Tasso had on French classical drama. The popularity of Tasso's Il re Torrismondo is seen by the many performances at the Teatro Olimpico of Vicenza in 1618, and at the San Luca of Venice in the 17th century (with a<sup>6</sup> performance by the famous actor Luigi Riccoboni). Although no translations are available in English and in Spanish, Tasso's tragedy influenced other seventeenth century works in England and Spain.

Tasso's contemporaries praised Il re Torrismondo for its application of neo-Aristotelian principles. Tasso's only tragedy follows the "rule" and the models both ancient and

modern: Sophocles' Oedipus Rex and Seneca's Oedipus and Phaedra; in his own century, Giralaldi's Orbecche (1541)<sup>7</sup> and Speroni's Canace (1542).

In the preface to Le Torrismon, Dalibray calls Il re Torrismondo "la merveille des tragedies italiennes"<sup>8</sup> and presents Tasso as "an auteur universal"<sup>9</sup> who excelled in all genres except comedy. Dalibray cites the favorable opinions of such writers as Du Bartas and Guez de Balzac and concludes by saying that, even in this work, Tasso proves to be "un bon Poète" unlike many a tragedian who is only "un mauvais versificateur."<sup>10</sup>

Tasso's tragedy has aroused the critical interest of nineteenth century writer, as well. Carducci noted that "gl'italiani letterati discorsero del Torrismondo assai"<sup>11</sup>. According to Crescimbeni, Tasso's tragedy, "tra le più scelte tragedie largamente risplende",<sup>12</sup> and for Tiraboschi, "ha luogo a ragione tra le migliori tragedie del Cinquecento".<sup>13</sup>

Although much of the critical writing devoted to Il re Torrismondo has sought to demonstrate that, as a tragedy, the play is only a partial success, the past thirty years of the twentieth century have seen a gradual upswing in the critical evaluation of Il re Torrismondo, beginning with the erudite and sensitive judgments of Sozzi, and including, among others, the studies of Getto, Ramat, Renda, Di Benedetto and Venturini, all of whom attempt to find in Tasso's tragedy the

unity of content and form sought by the author. Other recent studies tend to see in the play a novel and original approach to tragedy, or a study of the dilemma of late-Renaissance man caught up in the restrictions of the Counter-Reformation, and, more importantly a "text" which can bear the same close analysis of symbolic, lexical, prosodic, and phonic features as has been applied to the Gerusalemme Liberata.<sup>15</sup> An approach frequently used is a comparative study of the play's earlier incomplete version, Galealto re di Norvegia, with the completed, mature play of 1586-1587.<sup>16</sup>

Il re Torrismondo reflects Tasso's theory of tragedy as an autonomous literary genre. In the Discorsi dell'arte poetica (1564-1565), Tasso argues that a tragedy normally borrows its subject from history,<sup>17</sup> in the name of verisimilitude:

La materia che argomento può chiamarsi, o si finge, ed allora par che il poeta abbia parte non solo nella scelta, ma nella invenzione ancora; o si toglie da l'istorie. Ma molto meglio è, a mio giudicio, che l'istoria si prenda...<sup>18</sup>

In 1553, Olaus Magnus had published, in Rome, his Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus.<sup>19</sup> This work provided Tasso with an historic subject and it gave him the harsh and mysterious setting of the remote northern countries, for the effect of awe and horror needed for his tragedy. As a matter of fact Tasso mentions in his Dialoghi:

Ed io ho letto ne l'istoria di Gotia d'Olao Magno che gli uomini si trasformano in lupi...<sup>20</sup>

For Tasso tragedy, like epic, deals with actions that

are 'nobili ed illustri', but its methods are different--it represents those actions instead of narrating them, and has the use of 'il ritmo e l'armonia' (i.e. the Chorus); but more important is the sudden change of fortune which arouses pity and terror:

Le azioni tragiche movono l'orrore e la compassione; ed ove lor manchi questo orribile e questo compassionevole, tragiche più non sono.<sup>21</sup>

Tasso bases his opinion on Aristotle:

...il rallegrarsi de la pena de gli scelerati, quantunque piaccia a gli spettatori, non è proprio de la favola tragica, ma ne l'eroica si loda senza fallo;...<sup>22</sup>

He goes on to explain that the actions of the tragedy and the epic do not present high matters in the same fashion; their concern with great affairs is diverse in nature and form.

Since tragedy

...consiste ne la inaspettata e subita mutazione di fortuna e ne la grandezza de gli avvenimenti che muovono misericordia e terrore...<sup>23</sup>

Thence it comes about that the persons introduced in the two types of poem are not of the same nature, though both types deal with kings and great princes. Whereas the epic requires characters of exceptional virtue, the tragic **dramatis personae** should be

né buone, né cattive, ma d'una condizione di mezzo: tale è Orestes, Electra, Giocasta, Eteocle, Edippo, la cui persona fu da Aristotele giudicata attissima a la favola tragica.<sup>24</sup>

Thus, Tasso subscribes substantially to the neo-Aristotelian dramatic theory of the second half of the Cinquecento. The

Italian high Renaissance had failed to produce an acknowledged  
 tragic masterpiece in spite of Trissino's Sofonisba (1524),<sup>25</sup>  
 Giraldi's Orbecche (1541),<sup>26</sup> and other works by Rucellai,<sup>27</sup>  
 Aretino,<sup>28</sup> Alamanni,<sup>29</sup> Dolce and others.<sup>30</sup> Actually,  
 Giraldi's tragedy and Speroni's Canace (1542)<sup>31</sup> were the  
 principal debating points for the dramatic critics of the late  
 sixteenth century. While Giraldi proposed an Aristotelian  
 imitation of Seneca, Speroni aimed to produce a drama on  
 Aristotelian principles thus provide a model of 'peripezie'.  
 Tasso's Il re Torrismondo was written while the controversy  
 about the two contemporary tragedies was going on. Tasso was  
 concerned to show how a tragedy could be written avoiding  
 the pitfalls<sup>32</sup> into which others had fallen. As a result,  
Il re Torrismondo, tempered by the new spirit of his age, and  
 incorporating into the dramatic genre elements of the epic  
 and lyrical poem, tries to equal or outdo the tragedies of  
 ancient Greece and Rome. In accordance with Aristotelian  
 principles ('peripezie, agnizione, perturbazione'), there are  
 pity and terror, no death on the stage, the use of a known  
 theme (i.e. the theme of Oedipus Rex), and an incestuous  
 relationship such as Speroni had treated. Leaving himself  
 room for invention, Tasso devised a complicated and original  
 plot. Il re Torrismondo starts as a tragedy of betrayed  
 friendship and ends as a tragedy of incest. All the main  
 characters suffer tragic consequences; thus, it is not only  
 Torrismondo's tragedy, but Germondo's, Rosmonda's, the  
 Queen's and indeed Alvida's, who commits suicide not because

of incest (she does not believe that she is Torrismondo's sister), but because of what she deems to be unrequited love. Alvida can be seen as the heroine of the play. Her love for Torrismondo is parallel to that of Aminta for Sylvia, Olindo for Sofronia, and Erminia for Tancredi.

The love story has reminiscences of Dante's Paolo and Francesca. The language that Alvida uses in confiding to the nurse the first impact of her love for Torrismondo,

Io del piacer... presa restai,  
(I, i, 82-83)

is an echo of Francesca's

Amor,... mi prese del costui piacer sì forte  
(Inferno, V, 103-104)

The account of the seduction scene is modelled on canto V of the Inferno,

... Il tempo largo,  
e l'ozio lungo e lento, e 'l loco angusto,  
e gl'inviti d'amor, lusinghe e sguardi,  
rossor, pallore e parlar tronco e breve,  
solo inteso da noi, con mille assalti  
vinsero alfin la combattuta fede.  
Ah ben è ver, che risospinto Amore  
più fiero e per repulsa e per incontro  
ad assalir sen torna, e legge antica  
è che nessuno amato amar perdoni.  
.....  
Questo quel punto fu che sol mi vinse  
(I, iii, 488-564)

In Torrismondo's words,

... Ma troppo accresce  
questa dolce memoria il duolo acerbo,  
(I, iii, 313-314)

we recall Francesca's

... "Nessun maggior dolore  
che ricordarsi del tempo felice  
nella miseria;...  
(Inferno, V, 121-123)

Nature plays an important part in the consummation of Torrismondo and Alvida's love. The tent is a reminiscence of Dido and Aeneas's cavern (Aeneid, IV). The description of the storm,

e divento di nemi e di procelle  
il mar turbato un periglioso campo;  
(I, iii, 513-514)

echoes Virgil's,

Eripiunt subito nubes caelumque diemque  
Teucrorum ex oculis; ponto nox incubat atra  
(Aeneid, I, 88-89)

Moreover,

parte inghiottinne ancor l'empia Caribdi  
che l'onde e i legni intieri absorbe e mesce:  
son rari i notatori in vasto gorgo.  
(I, iii, 542-544)

is a reminder of,

implacata Charybdis/ ... imo barathri ter  
gurgite vastos/ sorbet in abruptum fluctus  
(Aeneid, III, 420-422)

and

apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto  
(Aeneid, I, 118)

Il re Torrismondo follows the linguistic norm of the Gerusalemme Liberata.

Echoes of Petrarch's Rime can be singled out from the very first words of the nurse

vi sono in vece di pietosa madre  
(I, i, 23)

is a reminder of

Ne mai pietosa madre al caro figlio  
(Rime, CCLXXXV )

1

Alvida's

ch'a me stessa non è. Bramo e pavento,  
(I, i, 23)

echoes

dolce et acerbo, ch'i pavento et bramo;  
(Rime, CLXXXI )  
6

Moreover,

di stelle congiurate; e temo, ahi lassa  
(I, i, 29)

is a reminder of

o stelle congiurate a 'mpoverirme!  
(Rime, CCCXXIX )  
2

Other echoes of Petrarch include Alvida's "m'arde e strugge"  
(I, i, 60),<sup>33</sup> "che s'aspetti... agogni"<sup>34</sup> (I, i, 118), and  
Torrismundo's "pondo"<sup>35</sup> (I, iii, 269), "Squille"<sup>36</sup> (I, iii, 276),<sup>37</sup>  
"tutta lontana dal camin del sole" (I, iii, v.354),  
just to mention a few instances of Petrarchan influence on  
the language of Il re Torrismondo.

Other works that influenced Il re Torrismondo's language  
include Ariosto's Orlando Furioso,<sup>38</sup> Seneca's Phaedra,<sup>39</sup>  
Ovid's Metamorphoses,<sup>40</sup> and Olaus Magnus's Historia de  
gentibus septentrionalibus.<sup>41</sup>

Tasso's epic language is easily recognized in the fatalistic romantic love of Torrismondo and Alvida. The tragedy is pervaded by a sense of lugubrious omens and spiritual inquietude with which Tasso so often seems to identify himself with his characters. From the very beginning of the play the lovers are in torment--Torrismondo because he has betrayed his friend, and Alvida because she

thinks Torrismondo does not love her any longer. Their sense of guilt is heightened not only by the fact that they have fallen victim to their own desire, but in Alvida's case because she has become oblivious to her brother's memory, and, in Torrismondo's case, because he deceives his friend as well as the woman he loves. Alvida's fears and visions are  
 42  
 typical of Tasso's work:

e temo, ah! lassa  
 un non so che d'infausto o pur d'orrendo  
 ch'a me confonde un mio pensier dolente,  
 lo qual mi sveglia e mi perturba e m'ange  
 la notte e 'l giorno.

(I, i, 29-33)

This gloomy, pessimistic attitude recalls some of the poet's  
 43  
 letters from St. Anna:

La povertà, l'essiglio e gli altri rischi,  
 e le pallide morti, e i lunghi morbi,  
 fianchi, stomachi, febri.

(I, 1247)

Tasso's own experience and his melancholic nature, find poetic expressions through his characters. Rosmonda 'vergine bella' (IV, iii, 2281) can be seen as the counterpart of Sofronia 'Vergine... di già matura/ verginità,' (Gerusalemme Liberata, II, 14). Her desire

di viver vita solitaria e sciolta  
 (II, iv, 1146)

Ed a me gioveria lanciare i dardi  
 tal volta in caccia e saettar con l'arco,  
 .....  
 poiché non posso il crin d'elmo lucente  
 coprirmi in guerra, e sostener lo scudo  
 .....  
 come un tempo solean feroci donne

(II, iv, 1297-1307)

is a reminder of Sylvia (Aminta) and Clorinda (the fierce lady warrior of the Gerusalemme Liberata). Through Rosmonda's words (II, iv) we learn about the advantages and disadvantages of marriage--a controversial theme of the Counter-Reformation and also a theme dear to the poet.<sup>44</sup> The Queen's monologue deals with maternal joys:

Infelice non è dolente donna  
se ne' suoi figli il suo dolor consola  
(II, V, 1343-1344)

In his perfection, Germondo, the true friend, who sighs:

... Oimè, qual grave colpa  
non perdona amicizia o non difende?  
(V, 3137-3138)

46

reminds one of the dignity of 'pio Goffredo'. It is, however, in the character of Torrismondo, and more so in the figure of Alvida, that Tasso pours out his very soul in a fashion that recalls the figure of the tragic lover Tancredi, and that of tearful Erminia. The romantic lovers express the psychological aspect of the situation.

The conflict between the duty of friendship and love does not cease in Torrismondo's soul after he possesses his loved one; it is, rather, augmented because of the remorse in his conscience of which Tasso gives us a vivid representation whenever the protagonist appears on the scene. Torrismondo hates his title, his position, and would like to escape the situation he is in:

Lasso, io ben me n'andrei per erme arene  
solingo, errante....

(I, iii, 258-259)

He would like to hide from people, from the sun, from the stars. His conscience is at war: it rebels, it feels disgrace and shame "rimbomba e mugge" (I, iii, 275), while the sweet memory greatly augments the sharpness of his pain (I, III, 313-314). In *Torrismondo*, feelings of 'love' and 'friendship' fight for supremacy; Alvida is dominated by 'love' alone. She dramatically shows the raptures, the doubts, the torments and contradictions of that love. Love won her over with the classical stroke of lightning

e prima quasi fui che sposa, amante  
e me n'avidí a pena.

(I, ii, 92-93)

Because of love she forgot the vow she had made to her father and is ready to give up her royal pride and her own personality. *Torrismondo*'s pleasures will be her only pleasures, his joy her only joy:

Posso io, s'a voi dispiaccio, odiar me stessa,  
posso, se voi l'amate, amar Germondo.

(III, iv, 1698-1699)

Alvida is another example of Tasso's natural tendency to delve into the psychology of female characters. Another distinctive note is the tendency to dwell on sexual details. As a result, while *Il re Torrismondo* follows the Sophoclean theme, it reflects late sixteenth-century attitudes.

*Il re Torrismondo* has been seen as a tragedy of incest, and of 'love and friendship,' I see it also, however, as a great tragedy of love. We do not find out

about the incest until Act Four; Alvida dies before realizing the incestuous nature of her love and Torrismondo's suicide is determined by his inability to survive his beloved (V,iv, 3028-3031). The theme of love and death, a favorite one in neo-Latin poetry,<sup>49</sup> is an important theme in Tasso's tragedy. In dealing with the romantic love of a King and Queen, Il re Torrismondo becomes innovative in tragedy as a genre--it foreshadows the romantic love of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet.

One of the most highly praised features of Il re Torrismondo is Tasso's use of language. A pertinent example is Torrismondo's description of the storm (Act One, Scene Three). Tasso's model is obvious, judging by the closeness of the Italian hendecasyllabic line "son rari i notatori in vasto gorgo" (544) to Virgil's hexameter "apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto." It seems to me that this "gurgite," with the ominous, lugubrious sound of its first vowel, inspires Tasso's masterly use of onomatopoeia in his description of the mounting billows, which he compares to "minacciose rupi" and "ciechi sassi." As with "gurgite" in Aeneid's Book One, 118, the sound of "rupi" in Tasso's tragedy is prolonged and therefore strengthened by the fierceness of its own echo:

sempre canute, ove risona e mugga,  
mentre combatte l'un con l'altro flutto.  
(I, iii, 538-539)

But, masterly though it be, this page should not divert our attention from what may be this work's most conspicuous characteristic--the lyrical beauty of the Choruses at the

end of the five acts, and in the action of certain scenes. The combination of seven-and eleven-syllable lines in their speeches recalls the metrical variety of the Aminta and Rogo Amoroſo. While the dialogue of all scenes, until Act Five, is carried on in 'endecasillabi ſciolti', the meter of the Choruses concluding the acts varies--using the metrical ſcheme of the medieval 'Canzone', complete with an 'Envoi.' The Chorus at the end of Act One, for example, in each stanza ſhows the following intricate rhyme-ſcheme, ABbCACcADEeDdEeF, whereas the Envoi with a conſiderable "rallentando" has an aBBAcC. Where the Chorus participates in the dialogue, blank verſe is retained. The change of the metre coincides with the catastrophe--in the final ſcene of the laſt act we find ſeven,<sup>50</sup> five and three ſyllable lines. All of the Choruses' ſpeeches are effective, eſpecially thoſe that conclude each act. The tone is lyrical, detached from the immediate perſons and ſituations, commenting on events and bewailing the inevitable tragic denouement like an echo of the ſpectator's ſhifts of emotions. So authentic is Taſſo's voice in his Choruses that the concluding ſection of each Act ſhould indeed be ſtudied as a Canzone (or as a Madrigal) of his Rime. Thus the Chorus becomes a neceſſary element in the overall aeſthetic and ideological compoſition of the tragedy. Its final lament identifies human miſery with the cold<sup>51</sup> Scandinavian ſetting (winter, ice, mountain torrent):

Ahi lacrime, ahi dolore:  
passa la vita e si dilegua e fugge,  
come giel che si strugge.

.....  
E come raggio il verno, imbruna e more  
gloria d'altrui splendore;  
e come alpestro e rapido torrente,

.....  
(V, 3320-3329)

Footnotes to "Il re Torrismondo"

1

Tasso wrote the Galealto re di Norvegia toward the end of the 1573 or the beginning of 1574. See Il teatro italiano II--La tragedia del Cinquecento (Tomo Secondo), (Torino: Giulio Einaudi, 1977), 427.

2

In a letter to his sister Cordelia, Tasso announces his freedom from St. Anna: "Io sono libero per grazia del signor principe di Mantova,..." The letter is dated July 1586 and was sent from Mantua to Sorrento. See Letter LXXV in Torquato Tasso, Prose a cura di Ettore Mazzali (con una premessa di Francesco Flora), (Milano: Riccardo Ricciardi, 1959), 980.

3

In a letter to Antonio Costantini, in Ferrara, Tasso says: "... oggi ho finito la mia tragedia." This letter is dated December 14, 1586. Torquato Tasso, Prose, 999.

Antonio Costantini, secretary to don Cesare, and later to the Gonzaga family, became a dear friend and amanuensis of Tasso. At least 29 out of the 213 published letters of Tasso are addressed to Costantini. The poet's last letter, written from the monastery of Sant'Onofrio, dated April 10, 1595, was addressed to Costantini in Mantua: "Che dirà il mio signor Antonio, quando udirà la morte del suo Tasso?... Mi sono fatto condurre in questo munistero di Sant'Onofrio, non solo perché l'aria è lodata da' medici più che d'alcun'altra parte di Roma, ma quasi per cominciare da questo luogo eminente, e con la conversazione di questi devoti padri, la mia conversazione in cielo." Torquato Tasso, Prose, (letter CCXII), 1142. (Tasso died in the monastery of Sant'Onofrio in Rome, on April 25, 1595.)

4

"Tasso's fame was so great, and the curiosity of the public was so strong that in the course of five months, at least eleven editions of Il re Torrismondo were published in different cities of Italy." (See John Black, 204)

For a complete list of the editions of Il re Torrismondo see: Solerti, Torquato Tasso, Opere minori in versi, III: Teatro (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1895), CXXVII-CXXXIII.

5

Umberto Renda, "Il Torrismondo di Torquato Tasso e la tecnica tragica nel Cinquecento," in Rivista Abruzzese, (Teramo, 1906), 111-141.

6

B.T. Sozzi, Studi sul Tasso, (Pisa: Nistri-Lisci, 1954), 93.

Luigi Riccoboni was known in France by the name Lelio. He translated Racine's Andromaque and Britannicus. He also wrote a history of the Italian theater in French. See Teatro di Torquato Tasso edizione critica a cura di Angelo Solerti con due saggi di Giosue Carducci (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1895), XLIV-XLV.

7

Guastavini remarks "la qual tragedia fino a qui, per giudizio di ciascheduno, ha tenuto lo scettro di quante tragedie si son vedute scritte in qualsiasi lingua." See Giovanni Getto, "Dal Galealto al Torrismondo," in Interpretazione del Tasso, (Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1967), 171.

Also see Guastavini's introduction to the Torrismondo (Genova: Bartoli, 1587).

8

See "Au lecteur," in Le Torrismon du Tasse Tragédie Par le Sr Dalibray (Paris: Denis Houssaye, 1636), b.

9

Dalibray, "Au lecteur", a ij.

10

Dalibray, b iij.

Dalibray's verse translation of Tasso's Il re Torrismondo aims at a faithful rendering of the original text within the limitations imposed by the alexandrine (he transforms 'endecasillabi' and 'settenari' into rhyming alexandrines). Apart for the omissions of the Choruses at the end of each Act and in the middle of certain scenes, when Dalibray simplifies the plot, it is with the intention of making the tragedy more suitable for performance. In his preface to Le Torrismon, Dalibray explains: "In all sincerity, I do not believe that it was Tasso's intention to write a tragedy for the theater, but only to make a subject quite agreeable for reading: he cared more for beautiful portraitures rather than for scenes easy and pleasant to watch. One can see this in Torrismondo's lengthy dialogue with his Counselor and, particularly, in his ample description of the tempest..." (b iij).

11

Torquato Tasso, Teatro, ed. di Solerti, (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1895), XLVI.

Carducci adds that Il re Torrismondo's elocution and style are "un fatto notevole nella fasi del dramma." Giosue Carducci, Opere (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1954), 349.

12

Istoria della volgar poesia (Tomo Secondo), (Venezia: Basegio, 1730), 444. According to Venturini, Il re Torrismondo was a sincere and original work that Tasso worked on constantly, giving to Italy "una delle poche tragedie, che si leggono ancora insieme al Saul dell'Alfieri, e all'Adelchi del Manzoni." G. Venturini, Saggi Critici (Cinquecento minore: O. Ariosti, G.M. Verdizzotti e il loro influsso nella vita e nell'opera del Tasso), (Ravenna: A. Longo, 1970), 149.

13

Storia della letteratura italiana (Tomo VII), (Modena: Società tipografica, 1792), 1292-1293.

14

B.T. Sozzi, Studi sul Tasso (Pisa, 1954), 69-202; and also his "Il Torrismondo", in Nuovi studi sul Tasso, 116-120; Arnaldo Di Benedetto, "Per una valutazione del Re Torrismondo," in Stile e Linguaggio (Roma, 1974), 136-141; Giuseppe Venturini, "Il Torrismondo," in Saggi critici (Ravenna, 1970), 143-157.

15

See Ariani's and Jacques Goudet's essay, "La Nature du tragique dans Il Re Torrismondo du Tasse," in Revue des etudes italiennes 7 (1961), 146-168.

16

Giovanni Getto, "Dal Galealto al Torrismondo," in Interpretazione del Tasso, 171-209.

In Tasso's "Dialogo II" is mentioned 'Galealto re delle isole' the one who 'fra Lancilotto suo amico e Ginevra pose maggior concordia di quella che ponesse mai alcun giudice fra' litiganti,..." See Torquato Tasso, Opere a cura di Bruno Maier IV (Milano: Rizzoli, 1964), 547.

It is interesting to note that in Spanish and Portuguese the name 'Noruega' is a symbol of obscurity. See A. Castro, "Noruega simbolo de oscuridad," in Revista de filologia española, VI (1919), 184-185; and L. Spitzer, "La Norvège comme symbole de l'obscurité," Ibid, IX (1922), 316-317.

17

In the history of the fourth to the eleventh centuries there are at least three kings named Torrismondo: Torrismondo, the son of king Unimondo (and grandson to Ermonarico who fought with success against Sweden); Torrismondo, son of Torisindo; Torrismondo, son of Teodorico king of the Visigoths. See I Barbari, Testi dei secoli IV-XI scelti, tradotti e commentati da Elio Bartolini (Milano: Lagonesi 1970), 517-535, 545, 905-907.

In Giangiorgio Trissino's L'Italia Liberata dai Goti we find the name 'Turrismo'. He is a famous and brave king (Books X and XV); his death is decided by a celestial council (Book XVIII). See Filippo Ermini, L'Italia Liberata di Giangiorgio Trissino (Roma: Tipografia Editrice Romana, 1895), 36-43.

18

Torquato Tasso, "Discorsi dell'arte poetica," in Prose, a cura di Ettore Mazzali, 351.

19

In the sixteenth century, two histories of the Northern people were published by two brothers, both archbishops: Olaus Magnus, Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus (1555) and Johannes Magnus, Gothorum Suenonumque Historia (1558).

For Tasso's description of his readings on the Northern countries, see Tasso's Dialogue "Il Massaggiere" in Prose, 21-23.

20

C. P. Brand, Torquato Tasso a Study of the Poet and of his Contribution to English Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1965), 176; or see E. Terza, Una pagina da rivedere nel "Messaggiere" di Torquato Tasso, in "Propugnatore", III (1890), 235-237.

21

Torquato Tasso, "Discorsi dell'arte poetica," in Prose, 359-360.

22

Torquato Tasso, Prose, 544.

23

Torquato Tasso, Prose, 545.

24

Torquato Tasso, Prose, 545. For a translation of the quoted Discourses, see Allan H. Gilbert, Literary Criticism Plato to Dryden (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1982), 484.

25

Giangiorgio Trissino's La Sofonisba written and published in Rome in 1515, was performed for the first time in Vicenza in 1562. La Sofonisba is considered Trissino's masterpiece and the first "modern" tragedy, in that it breaks away from the tradition of the "sacra rappresentazione" and follows the principles of the Greek models (Sophocles and Euripides). La Sofonisba was the first tragedy to be written in the Italian language and, perhaps, the first work written

in free verse. See Francesco Flora, Storia della Letteratura Italiana, Volume Secondo (Il Quattrocento e il primo Cinquecento), (Milano: Mondadori, 1972), 647-650.

Tasso was familiar with Trissino's tragedy. He read La Sofonisba and noted the sources for Trissino's lines (i.e. "similitudine tratta da Omero e ben appropriata" or "imita Cicerone veni, vidi, vici"), the weakness of some verses (i.e. "Orazio lo chiamerebbe sermo pedestris di cui ne fa l'autore troppo abuso"), the beauty of others (i.e. "parla il poeta con il linguaggio degli antichi, si mostra discepolo et appare pittore da la natura"). See La Sofonisba di Giangiorgio Trissino con note di Torquato Tasso, edite a cura di Franco Paglierani (Bologna: Gaetano Romagnoli, 1884).

26

Gianbattista Giralaldi (1541) follows the Senecan example of dismemberment and horror. The subject is taken from one of his novelle (Orbecche, daughter of Sulmone-king of Persia, secretly marries Oronte and goes to Armenia. Two children are born to the couple. Sulmone, pretending forgiveness to his daughter and nephews, invites them to his house and presents to Orbecche the heads and hands of Oronte and the children, on a platter. The tragic woman kills her father and herself). Orbecche is considered the first regular tragedy of the Cinquecento. Giralaldi's novelle influenced some of Shakespeare's tragedies. Giralaldi's Epitia had a theme that we can find in Measure for Measure and his novel the Moor of Venice became Shakespeare's Othello. See Francesco Flora, Storia della Letteratura Italiana, Volume Secondo (Milano: Arnoldo Mondadori, 1972), 650-651.

27

Giovanni Rucellai's Rosmunda was almost contemporary with Trissino's Sophonisba. The subject is taken from early medieval history (Rosmunda, daughter of Comundo, king of the Gepidae, had been about to marry Almachilde, king of the Lombards. Almachilde slays Comundo and marries Rosmunda, but at the wedding feast, he forces his bride to drink from a cup made of her father's skull; and Almachilde wreaks due vengeance). Rucellai is also remembered for his Oreste. See Francesco Flora, 652.

28

Pietro Aretino wrote the tragedy Orazia (1546), Senecan in its general character. "The tragedy of the Horatii" attains a considerable degree of tragic dignity. The relentless patriotism of Orazia foreshadows Alfieri's tragedies. See Flora, 693-695.

29

Luigi Alamanni is remembered for the didactic poem Coltivazione and for two epics: Gyrone il cortese, and Avarchide. Some of his best lyrics are those that express his love for Italy. See Flora, 323-325.

30

Lodovico Dolce wrote La Marianna. Among other tragedies of the Cinquecento, should be noted: Federico della Valle's La Reina di Scozia, Antonio Decio's Acripanda, Lodovico Martelli's Tullia, Nuzio Manfredi's Semiramide, Pomponio Torelli's Merope, Vittoria, Polidoro, Tancredi, whose political theme influenced the French theatre and Alfieri's tragedies. See Flora, 652.

31

Sperone Speroni's Canace (1542) was a notable tragedy because of its innovations: its choice of a mythological subject, its mingling of seven and eleven syllables lines, and its extensive use of 'peripetia'. See Flora, 349-353.

32

Giosue Carducci, Il Torrismondo, Opere (Bologna: Edizione Nazionale, 1905), 491.

33

See Francesco Petrarca's Rime, XVIII

4

34

Petrarca, LII

4

35

Petrarca, CCCXXXVIII

4

36

Petrarca, CIX

6

37

Petrarca, XXXVIII

38

"Quante promesse... Amor" (I,i, 80-81), reminds us of "L'amante.../aviluppa promesse e giuramenti, che tutti spargon poi per l'aria i venti" (Orlando Furioso, X5), and "Questa... mira" (I,i, 80-81), or "Questa... mira" (II,iv, 1083-1086) modelled after Angelica's lament (VIII,42).

39

"potrian lavar occulta e 'ndegna colpa/che mi tinse e macchiò le membra e l'alma?" (I,iii, 237-238); the theme of guilt which can never be washed by earthly water is a reminiscence of Seneca's Phaedra "Quis eluet me Tanais aut quae barbaris Maeotis undis Pontico incumbens mari?/Non ipse

toto magnus Oceano pater tantum ex expiarit sceleris" (715-718), an idea which will be echoed in Shakespeare's Macbeth ("Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood/clean from my hand?" (Act II, Scene ii)).

40

"a' sette... Trioni" (I,iii, 353) used by Ovid as "Triones" (II,171) and by Tasso in the Gerusalemme Liberata (XI,25).

41

"lungo giorno... lunga notte" (I,iii, 350-351) follows Magnus's description of phenomenon of the northern regions when "una metà d'un anno intiero sia solo un giorno artificiale, e l'altra metà una notte" (I,I).

For the Latin text, see Historia De Gentibus Septentrionalibus, autore Olao Magno Gotho Archiepiscopo Upsalensi, Romae M.D.LV. (Westmead, Farnborough, Hants., England: Gregg International, 1971), an illustrated text of 815 pages. The text is available also in German, in Swedish, in French, and in the Italian translation: Storia D'Olao Magno Arcivescovo D'upsali, De' Costumi De' Popoli Settentrionali, tradotta da Remigio Fiorentino (Torino: Vincenzo Bona, 1958). A text of 323 pages, with illustrations reproduced from the original.

From Magno's work Tasso derived the names for the geography of Il re Torrismondo (i.e. Tile, i Moschi, i Biarmi and Olma). Germondo is the name of one of the kings in Storia D'Olao Magno, while Alvida is the name of a princess-pirate, who married king Frontho of Denmark; also, in the same work, we find the names of Rusilla, Aldano and Araldo, in Chapter (XXIII): "D'alcune donne, che facevano l'arte del Corsaro". (See Storia D'Olao Magno, 102-103).

42

C. P. Brand, Torquato Tasso, 174

43

C. P. Brand, 175.

44

Getto, "Dal Galealto al Torrismondo", 185. Donadoni sees in Rosmonda "una specie di Camilla virgiliana". See Eugenio Donadoni, Torquato Tasso Vol.II, (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1921), 88.

45

See Tasso's Gerusalemme Liberata, I, 20.

46

Umberto Renda, "Il Torrismondo di Torquato Tasso e la tecnica tragica del Cinquecento" in Rivista Abruzzese di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti (Teramo: Anno XX, Fascicolo VII, Luglio 1905), 371-374.

47

Torquato Tasso, Jerusalem Delivered, translated into verse and with an introduction by Joseph Tusiani (Cranbury, N.J.: Associated UP, 1970), see introduction, 18-20.

48

Getto, 192 and 204.

Carducci says: "Tasso fu il primo nella tragedia a far contrastare in un carattere l'amicizia e l'amore." See Teatro di Torquato Tasso edizione critica a cura di Angelo Solerti con due saggi di Giosue Carducci (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1895), LXV.

49

Fred J. Nichols, ed. and trans., An Anthology of Neo-Latin Poetry (New Haven: Yale UP, 1979), see Nichols's introduction, 1-89.

50

C. P. Brand, 176-177.

51

C. P. Brand, 176.

## Influence

The popularity of the Aminta and the Gerusalemme Liberata assured Tasso's international renown. Soon his works were influential on French,<sup>1</sup> English,<sup>2</sup> and Spanish<sup>3</sup> literature.

Although Il re Torrismondo remains a minor work in comparison with his masterpieces--Gerusalemme Liberata and Aminta--Tasso's already famous name made even this tragedy known throughout Italy and beyond the Alps. Consequently, Il re Torrismondo influenced Racine, Milton, and Calderón.

In a reference to Le Torrismon du Tasse: tragedie, Leo Spitzer points out that Dalibray's translation is a clear case of the "sourdine" of the classical style, some thirty years before Racine's first great success.<sup>4</sup> The popularity of Tasso's Il re Torrismondo in France is proved not only by Dalibray's translation and its reprints, but also by the two performances of the tragedy at the Théâtre du Marais, in Paris.

In his preface to Le Torrismon, Dalibray points out that Tasso's tragedy (and Cremonini's play, which he also translated into French),<sup>5</sup> formulated the tendencies of the period. At this time, the French theater was permeated with classical drama and its contemporary genres, pastoral drama and tragi-comedy, both of which had their origins in Italian models of the previous century. Renda analyzes the fact that each character can appear on the scene no more than five times

(for there are five acts) and that the poet "ha saputo intrecciare l'attuazione con una nuova forma di legamento di scena--diffusasi poi nel teatro francese--in guisa da costituire d'ogni atto un tutto ben organico, in cui l'ordine di successione delle scene non apparisse scompaginato da inutili monologhi." <sup>6</sup> It seems most likely that Tasso's tragedy was read by Racine and other French dramatists, not only in Dalibray's popular translation, but also in the original. As a result, with Athalie, Racine introduces the Chorus in a fashion that recalls Tasso's in Il re Torrismondo. The four choral songs divide the five-act play of the French tragedy. The Chorus is not continually present on the stage, but comes on it "to punctuate with lyric interludes the otherwise uninterrupted progress of the action." <sup>7</sup>

In analyzing Il re Torrismondo's unity of time, Renda points out that Alvida's drama begins when she arrives in Arana (after the 'antefatto') and when she wrongly becomes convinced that Torrismondo does not love her any longer: "Si determina adunque nelle due anime quella crisi di passione che gli avvenimenti hanno preparato da tempo, ma che raggiunge l'estrema violenza e si risolve quindi nel giro di poche ore, pregio essenziale della futura tragedia raciniana." <sup>8</sup> Secrecy and mystery, a characteristic of Tasso's tragedy, is, indeed, one of the themes of Racine's best plays (Phedre, Athalie, Britannicus).

Another important theme in Tasso's tragedy, is the idea of time: "Quel che ricopre, al fin discopre il tempo" (IV,iii, 2267) says Torrismondo to Rosmonda, and "Quetate il duol, che tutto scopre il tempo" (V,vi, 3270), says Germondo to the lamenting Queen. In Racine's Britannicus, Narcissus says to Nero: "Il n'est point de secrets que le temps ne revele;" (IV, iv, 1404)<sup>9</sup> an echo, indeed, of Tasso's Il re Torrismondo.

In the late 16th century, Tasso's popularity in England was such that Giuseppe Baretta tried to contest his supremacy by making the English understand that Italy had in Dante a greater poet, and that Ariosto's reputation had been too long overshadowed by Tasso's.<sup>10</sup> While the pastoral play Aminta was being performed in Reading,<sup>11</sup> the Gerusalemme Liberata found its first translator.<sup>12</sup> Through Spenser's imitation, in the Fairie Queene, Tasso entered English literature. Although Spenser is the most often cited example, echoes of Tasso's "heroic poem" can be traced in Tennyson,<sup>13</sup> in Browne, in Dryden, in Hoole, and in Cowley. In Milton's Paradise Lost is reflected, however, not only the influence of the Gerusalemme Liberata, which critics often deal with, but also Tasso's Le Sette Giornate del Mondo Creato and Il re Torrismondo.

Five years after the first publication of the tragedy,<sup>14</sup> Tasso began to write Il Mondo Creato at the suggestion of Donna Vittoria Loffredo, mother of Gian Battista Manso, the

Marquis of Villa, a patron of Tasso who lived in Naples. To Manso, Milton addressed a Latin poem in which he refers to Tasso as "mighty". Milton, who knew Italian and admired Tasso's work, during his stay at Manso's house was able to familiarize himself not only with Tasso's Il re Torrismondo, but also with his last work--Il Mondo Creato. Consequently, while Tasso's Catholic poem foreshadowed the style of blank verses in Paradise Lost, Tasso's Il re Torrismondo set the meter of the English poem.

Mario Praz demonstrates Il re Torrismondo's influence on Milton's epic verse. He quotes a passage toward the end of the Second Act, when Torrismondo orders military games to celebrate King Germondo's arrival:

Ora a voi, cavalieri, a voi mi volgo,  
 Giovani arditi. Altri sublime ed alto  
 Drizzi un castel di fredda neve e salda,  
 E 'l coroni di mura intorno intorno:  
 Faccian le sue difese, e faccian quattro  
 Ne' quattro lati suoi torri superbe;  
 E di candida mole insegna negra,  
 Dispiegandosi a l'aure, e 'l ciel s'innalzi;  
 E vi sia chi 'l difenda e chi l'assalga.

.....  
 L'altre diverse mie lucenti squadre  
 A cavallo ed a piè frattanto accolga  
 Il mio buon duce intorno a l'alta reggia,  
 E i destrier di metallo, onde rimbomba  
 La fiamma ne l'uscir d'ardente bocca  
 Con negro fumo, e' miei veloci carri;  
 E lungo spazio di campagna ingombri  
 Sotto vittoriosa e grande insegna.

(VI, 1398-1470)

The rhythm of these lines "seems actually to be the model of the metre of Paradise Lost":

Nigh on the Plain in many cells prepar'd  
 That underneath had veins of liquid fire  
 Sluc'd from the Lake, a second multitude

With wondrous Art founded the massie Ore,  
Serving each kinde, and scum'd the Bullion dross:  
A third as soon had form'd within the ground  
A various mould, and from the boyling cells  
By strange conveyance fill'd each hollow nook,  
As in an Organ from one blast of wind  
To many a row of Pipes the sound-board breaths.

.....  
(I, 700-717)

As when to warn proud Cities warr appears  
Wag'd in the troubl'd Skie, and Armies rush  
To Battel in the Clouds, before each Van  
Prick forth th'Aerie Knights, and couch their spears  
Till thickest Legions close; with feats of Arms  
From either end of Heaven'n the welkin burns.

.....  
(II, 533-541)

Magnificence and gravity were Milton's constant guidelines; he followed them in his sentences "variously drawn out from one verse into another" or--in Tasso's words--"i versi spezzati, i quali entrano l'un nell'altro...fanno il parlar magnifico e sublime".

Il re Torrismondo is a tragedy of fate. The sinister predictions that the baby girl would cause Torrismondo's death prompted the king of the Goths to rid himself of his daughter. In Calderón's La Vida es sueño,<sup>20</sup> King Basilio's terrible interpretation of Segismundo's future forces him to imprison his son. Both father-kings, in the attempt to escape a future tragedy, fulfill fate's decree: Alvida, unaware of her true identity, turns fraternal love into passion; Segismundo, deprived of humanity, becomes a commixture of man and beast. Both plays are set in a far, exotic place: Tasso chooses the Scandinavian countries whereas Calderón chooses Poland. Tasso's popularity in Spain is shown by his

influence on Spanish poetry.<sup>21</sup> Was Calderón familiar with Tasso's tragedy? His knowledge of the Italian language and his trips to Italy<sup>22</sup> lead me to believe that he not only read Il re Torrismondo in the original or in the French translation, but that he was influenced by the tragedy. Honor is one of the themes in Tasso's tragedy. Torrismondo's misery is caused by his own violation of "d'onore/ e d'amicizia le severe leggi." (I,iii, 569-570). Honor<sup>23</sup> is a major theme in Calderón's plays. The sacredness of the primary natural ties, measured by the horror of a sin unconsciously committed against it, is further shown in Calderón's play, La Devoción de la Cruz.<sup>24</sup> Julia's passion for Eusebio is a reminder of Alvida's passion for Torrismondo. Tasso allows his two characters to follow natural instinct<sup>25</sup> and consummate their love, Calderón restricts his two lovers by using a *deus ex machina*--the vision of the Cross!

In conclusion, while Tasso's tragedy can be seen as a revelation of Alvida's identity, Calderón's play unscrambles the puzzle of Eusebio's. Both tragedies deal with pathos, discovery, and a revelation of kinship-love mistaken for passion because of an ignorance of true identity.

Footnotes to "Influence"

1

Joyce Simpson, Le Tasse et la Litterature et l'art Baroque en France, (Paris: Librairie A.G.Nizet, 1962).

2

Lytton A. Sells, The Italian Influence in English Poetry (from Chaucer to Southwell), (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana UP, 1955).

3

Joaquin Arce, Tasso y la poesia española, (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1973).

4

Leo Spitzer, "L'effet de sourdine dans le style classique: Racine," in Etudes de style (Paris, 1970), 208-335, translated from the German, first published in 1931.

5

Previous to the translation of Le Torrismon, Dalibray had translated L'Aminte du Tasse (1632) and Cremonini's La Pompe funèbre ou Damon et Cloris (1634).

6

Umberto Renda, "Il Torrismondo e la tecnica tragica del Cinquecento", in Rivista Abruzzese, Anno XX, Fasc.X, Ottobre 1905, 536-537.

7

The Best Plays of Racine translated by Lacy Lockert (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1964), 303.

8

Umberto Renda, 367.

9

Racine, Britannicus edited by H.J. Chaytor, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1950), 51.

10

Mario Praz, The Flaming Heart (Gloucester, Mass: Peter Smith, 1966), 336.

11

The Aminta was performed by Italian actors in Reading during July 1574. The pastoral play had been produced at Ferrara the year before.

12

The first complete translation of the Gerusalemme Liberata, into English, was in the year 1600, by Edward Fairfax. See Godfrey of Bulloigne ( A critical edition of Edward Fairfax's translation of Tasso's Gerusalemme Liberata, together with Fairfax's Original Poems edited by Kathleen M. Lea and T. M. Gang), (Oxford: The Clarendon, 1981), 1-24; also in Mario Praz's The Flaming Heart, 315.

13

Mario Praz, 309-320.

14

Critics identify Tasso's Le Sette Giornate del Mondo Creato by the title Sette Giornate ( see Black, 469-476), or Il Mondo Creato (see Praz, 324); for this study I am using the title Il Mondo Creato.

15

John Milton, The Latin Poems (New Haven: Yale UP, 1930), 152.

16

John Milton's poetical works include poems written in Italian: five "sonnets", and a "canzone", See The Poetical Works of John Milton, Volume II (Oxford: The Clarendon, 1966), 146-149 and 232-234.

17

"That Milton had read attentively the Sette Giornate, has more than once been observed,..." (see Black, 469-476) Raphael's story of the Creation of the World (lines 243-547) in book VII of Paradise Lost, has been called "The Italian element in Milton's verse". (see Praz, 325-326). There are striking similarities between the 9000 lines of Tasso's Il Mondo Creato and Milton's 304 lines dedicated to the Creation of the World. A comparative study of Tasso's catholic poem and Book VII of Paradise Lost has now been made easier by the recent translation of Il Mondo Creato into English: Torquato Tasso, The Creation of the World, translated by Joseph Tusiani, (Binghamton, N.Y.: Medieval and Renaissance Text and Studies, 1982).

18

Praz, 326.

19

Praz, 326, and Torquato Tasso, "Discorsi dell'arte poetica" in Prose diverse (Firenze: G. Guasti, 1875), 219.

20

I found it interesting to note that the Italian version of the name of Calderón's hero, Segismundo, is found in the history of the fourth to the eleventh centuries, along with Torrismondo's name. Segismondo is 'figlio del grande Unimondo'; since one of the three kings named Torrismondo is also the son of Unimondo (see footnote 16), this leads me to believe that in fact, the two kings were brothers. ( See I Barbari, 545).

21

Joaquin Arce, Tasso y la poesia española, Repercusion Literaria y Confrontacion Linguistica, op.cit.

22

For two years, 1624-1625, Calderón "is believed to have been soldiering in Italy and Flanders", see: Calderón de la Barca, Four Plays, translated and with an introduction by Edwin Honig (New York: Hill and Wang, 1961), xii.

23

See "Secret Vengeance for Secret Insult," "Devotion of the Cross," "The Mayor of Zalamea" in: Calderón de la Barca, Four Plays, trans. and with an introduction by Edwin Honig (New York: Hill and Wang, 1961).

24

The setting for this scene is Siena and its surroundings.

25

A reminder of Aminta's "S'ei piace, ei lice" (Scene Second, 681).

## A brief outline of Tasso's tragedy

Il re Torrismondo combines the three styles that Tasso speaks of in his essay: "il magnifico, il mediocre, l'umile"<sup>1</sup>. The poet distributes the 'antefatto' in three parts: the first narration justifies the violence of the drama tormenting Torrismondo, who tries to find a device to save his love and his honor; the second establishes the motif of Alvida's downfall, and the third determines the impossibility of reaching a happy ending. The action of the tragedy is impelled by psychological motives. The interest of the drama is never lost; if at times it seems to slacken, soon it revives and stays alive until the end of the play. There is unity in the tragedy: all actions revolve around the unhappy love of the royal couple. The unity of time and place is observed by Tasso: the action starts in the late morning hours (II,i, 932), and continues in the late evening hours of the same day (IV,i, 2132 and V,ii, 2909). The scenes take place outside the royal palace on a balcony or in the gardens.

While Trissino's L'Italia Liberata dai Goti had<sup>2</sup> inspired the title of Tasso's Gerusalemme Liberata, the "Goti" gave him the setting for his tragedy. Torrismondo is king of the Goths. The action takes place in Scandinavia and involves the countries of Sweden and Norway. The tragedy is divided into five acts,<sup>3</sup> with the appearance of Choruses at intervals<sup>4</sup> and at the end of each act.

The story of the play

ACT ONE

5

In a scene which recalls Seneca's Phaedra, the first act sets the stage: Alvida, a Norwegian princess, confides her fears and doubts to her nurse--it is now three weeks since Torrismondo, king of the Goths, has brought her to his home. Torrismondo had gone to Norway to claim her hand from her father, but had insisted that the marriage should be celebrated, in the presence of his mother, in Arana. During the journey, Alvida was as alluring as possible, and somewhat shook Torrismondo's fidelity. The king might probably have resisted, had not a storm forced the ships to stop in a deserted island. It was here, in the intimacy of their tent, that the couple, unable to curb their passion, had consummated their love. Since that night, Torrismondo had avoided Alvida whose love for the king had grown stronger. In the third scene of the first act, Torrismondo confides to his counselor the reason for his torment: he had been led to ask for Alvida's hand out of friendship for Germondo, king of Sweden. Germondo, who was in love with the Norwegian princess, was debarred from marrying her because of the historic hostility between the countries of Norway and Sweden, and because Alvida's father attributed to Germondo the death of his only son. According to the pact between the two king-friends, Torrismondo was to bring Alvida to his home and hand her over to Germondo. During the voyage,

however, the king of the Goths fell in love with the Norwegian princess, thus betraying his friend's trust. The Counselor suggests that Germondo might be persuaded to marry Torrismondo's sister, Rosmonda, who is perhaps more beautiful than Alvida.

#### ACT TWO

The tension reaches its peak when the messenger announces Germondo's arrival. While Torrismondo is in a state of despair, Rosmonda is worried by the Queen's anxiety that she should welcome Germondo and consider him as a husband-to-be. At this point, the action is relaxed and we witness a discussion of marriage between mother and daughter. The projected marriage of Rosmonda and Germondo is accepted by Torrismondo as a solution to his dilemma. He cannot offer to Germondo the girl he has defiled, who, perhaps, will bear his child; thus, if Germondo will accept Rosmonda, he will be free to marry Alvida.

#### ACT THREE

However, when confronted with Germondo, Torrismondo cannot bring himself to make the treacherous suggestion to his friend, and instead urges Alvida to receive the Swedish king graciously. To please Torrismondo, Alvida accepts rich gifts from Germondo. Meanwhile, in a soliloquy, Rosmonda hints at her secret--she is herself in love with Torrismondo--and declares her intention of revealing her true identity.

#### ACT FOUR

On behalf of Torrismondo, the Counselor urges Germondo to accept Rosmonda as his wife; and Germondo, the faithful friend, seems disposed to comply with whatever the king of the Goths should wish. There follow, however, many disclosures of identity which precipitate the catastrophe. Threatened with being forced to wed Germondo, Rosmonda reveals that she is not Torrismondo's real sister: the latter was taken away following a sinister prediction that she would cause her brother's death. Rosmonda is the daughter of a nurse-maid and, as a child, was substituted for the princess; even the Queen was not aware of Rosmonda's true identity. Meanwhile, Rosmonda was vowed to chastity by her real mother. At this point, a question is raised: where is Torrismondo's real sister? The tragedy takes on a Sophoclean flavor<sup>6</sup> and a messenger appears with the news of the Norwegian king's death, thus providing the missing link in the chain of events. We learn that Torrismondo's real sister was entrusted, as a child, to a servant who handed her over to others, and that she was eventually brought up at the Norwegian court as the Norwegian king's daughter. Consequently, Torrismondo learns that Alvida is the true Rosmonda and his real sister. The anguished king is forced to change his plans and offers Alvida to Germondo.

## ACT FIVE

The last act returns to a setting similar to the first scene of the first act: Alvida talks to her nurse about her confusion and dismay. She does not accept the story of her new identity. She thinks instead that only a lack of love can explain Torrismondo's desire that she should marry Germondo. Believing herself to be scorned by Torrismondo, Alvida commits suicide. After persuading the dying Alvida that she is, indeed, his sister, Torrismondo writes a letter bequeathing his kingdom and his mother to Germondo; he then takes his own life rather than live without his loved one. The Queen, still expecting to witness a double wedding, suddenly learns instead of the true identity of Rosmonda and Alvida and of the death of both her children. Germondo is left commiserating with the bewailing mother. Had he known the faithful friend would have pardoned all.

Footnotes to: "A brief outline of the tragedy"  
and "The story of the play"

1

See "Discorso Secondo" in Torquato Tasso, Prose  
a cura di Ettore Mazzali, con una premessa di Francesco  
Flora (Napoli: Riccardo Ricciardi, 1959), 392.

2

Ernest Hatch Wilkins, A History of Italian Literature  
(Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1974), 277.

3

Act One is divided in three scenes and has a total of  
911 lines (lines for each act include the Chorus)

Act two is divided in six scenes with a total of 576  
lines.

Act three is divided in seven scenes with a total of  
495 lines.

Act four is divided in seven scenes with a total of  
767 lines.

Act five is divided in six scenes with a total of 561  
lines.

4

Torquato Tasso, Il re Torrismondo, III,i; IV,iv;  
IV,vi; V,vi.

5

Seneca's Phaedra (Act One, Scene ii) in The Complete  
Roman Drama, edited and with an introduction by George E.  
Duckworth, vol.II (New York: Random, 1942), 627.

6

Sophocles, Oedipus The king in The Complete Plays of  
Sophocles (New York: Bantam, 1982), 99.

## About the translation

The present translation, the first to be made directly from the Italian into English, it is intended to help readers to understand the original text.

With Torrismondo, the King, I have aimed to produce a version which is as faithful to the letter and spirit of the original as acceptable English usage will allow.

To transform "endecasillabi" and "settenari" into iambic pentameters, I would have had to work within limitations and, perhaps be subjected to omissions or additions. In order to avoid unnecessary interpolations, I decided to translate Il re Torrismondo into English prose. Nevertheless, I have tried to convey a sense of the original poetry by keeping the prose as rhythmical as accuracy and taste would allow. I have tried to recreate most faithfully Tasso's images, his sensory-emotional overtones, his puns, his classical as well as his baroque visions.

Most of the problems I found in this translation dealt with the expressive language of the period--often ambiguous and difficult. I was also confronted with the basic problems of the two languages: the Italian tends to be polyvalent whereas English is clear and precise (as in verbs and nouns) and also precise where English is vague (as in prepositions and conjunctions). Thus, I translated literally, whenever possible. However, when the word order required a shift or an additional word helped to clarify

the meaning, I took the liberty of sacrificing faithfulness to fluency.

May one example suffice to illustrate the numerous instances of textual difficulties which I had to face in the course of my translation of Tasso's tragedy. In Alvida's first, lengthy address to her Nurse (Act One, 87-90) we read:

Ma poiché meco egli tentò parlando  
d'amore il guado, e pur vedetta io chiesi:  
chiesi vendetta, ed ebbi fede in pegno  
di vendetta e d'amor;...

I was, first, confronted with the semantic value of "poiché," obviously meaning, in this case, "quando" or "dopo che," and not "perché." By translating it as "when," I felt that the meaning of the original term had been respected and faithfully preserved. The second difficulty was in the expression "tentare il guado," literally "to try a ford," that is, to find a safe passage in the crossing of a stream. This fluvial analogy, of which a famous example is found in the last stanza of Petrarch's "Canzone alla Vergine," posed, in turn, another difficulty: it would have become unintelligible to the English reader if left in its original garb. I debated, consequently, between "winning love" and "entering into love," and finally opted for the latter, which seems to suggest, and preserve, something of the original metaphor. The last difficulty of the brief passage was posed by the repetition of "chiesi" at the beginning of the new line. The mere

translation of the same verb would not have stressed the clear chiasmus implicit in Tasso's text; therefore, it seemed to me that something else was needed to bring the same device to the fore. Thus I introduced a "Yes," spiritually in keeping with the dramatic tone of the sentence. This is then, the translation of the passage in question:

But when he tried, by talking with me,  
to enter into love, I just demanded vengeance.  
Yes, revenge I craved, and was assured a pledge  
of revenge and love;...

I have based this translation on the Italian text of Il re Torrismondo in Torquato Tasso, Opere II a cura di Bruno Maier (Milano: Rizzoli, 1964), 723-871; but Costantini's sonnet "Nel ritratto di Torquato Tasso" and Tasso's dedication letter "Al Serenissimo Signor Don Vincenzo Gonzaga Duca di Mantova e di Monferrato, etc," were taken from the Opere di Torquato Tasso a cura di Bortolo Tommaso Sozzi, (Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 1964), Volume Secondo, 13, and 275-276. The translation of the sonnet and the dedication letter are mine.

## Sonnet

In a letter to Antonio Costantini in Mantua, dated February 13, 1593, Tasso writes: "Nel leggere il sonetto di V.S. sopra il mio ritratto, non ho saputo riconoscere me stesso; perché m'adorna in guisa col pennello gentilissimo della sua eloquenza, ch'io mi veggio tutto trasformato. M'è piaciuto molto più il delineamento delle mie sciagure, che delle virtù; perché di queste ha detto molto più di quello che doveva: di quelle molto meno di quello che poteva. L'ho ritoccato in alcuni luoghi, acciocché mi rappresenti più al vivo: di che la prego a non isdegnarsi..."

The sonnet Tasso is referring to is the following:

Nel Ritratto di Torquato Tasso  
Sonetto d'Antonio Costantini  
ritoccato dal Tasso

Amici, questi è il Tasso, io dico il figlio,  
che nulla si curò d'umana prole,  
ma fe' parti più chiare assai del sole,  
d'arte, di stil, d'ingegno e di consiglio.

Visse in gran povertade e in lungo esiglio,  
ne' palagi, ne' tempi e nelle scuole;  
fuggissi, errò per selve incolte e sole;  
ebbe in terra ed in mar pena e periglio.

Picchiò l'uscio di morte, e pur la vinse,  
or con le prose, or con i dotti carmi,  
ma fortuna non già, che 'l trasse al fondo.

Premio d'aver cantato amori ed armi  
e mostrò il ver che mille vizi estinse  
è verde fronda: e ancor par troppo al mondo!

On the portrait of Torquato Tasso  
A sonnet by Antonio Costantini  
retouched by Tasso

Friends, this is Tasso, I mean the son,  
who never cared for human kind  
but was rather a clearer part of the sun,  
of art, of style, of genius and counsel.

He lived in great poverty and long exile,  
in palaces, in temples and in schools;  
he fled, he wandered through untrodden, lonely woods;  
sufferings and perils on land and sea were his.

He knocked on death's door, conquered it,  
now with prose, now with learned songs,  
but not fortune which dragged him to the bottom.

The reward for having sung of loves and arms  
and shown the truth that extinguished countless vices  
is but a verdant leaf: and yet it seems too much to  
the world!

## Dedication

Tasso dedicated Il re Torrismondo to Don Vincenzo Gonzaga, son of the Duke of Mantua, who, in 1586 had the poet released from Sant'Anna. Here, reproduced, is the letter in its original Italian:

Al Serenissimo Signor  
DON VINCENZO GONZAGA  
Duca di Mantova e di Monferrato, etc.

La tragedia per opinione di alcuni è gravissimo componimento; come ad altri pare, affettuosissimo, e convenevole a' giovenetti: i quali, oltre tutti gli altri, par che ricerchi per uditori. E benché queste due opinioni paiano fra se contrarie e discordi, ora si conosce come possano amichevolmente concordare: perché V. Altezza nel fior de gli anni suoi giovenili dimostra tanta gravità di costumi e tanta prudenza, ch'a niuno altro principe par che più si convenga questo poema. Oltre a ciò, la tragedia per giudizio d'Aristotele ne l'esser perfetto supera ciascuno altro. E voi sete principe dotato d'altissimo ingegno e d'ogni perfezione, sì come colui al quale non mancano l'antiche ricchezze, né le virtù e la gloria de gli antecessori, né i nuovi ornamenti accresciuti dal padre a la vostra nobilissima stirpe, né il proprio valore e la propria eccellenza in esercitar l'armi e le lettere, né l'azione, né la contemplazione, e particolarmente ne la poesia, ne la quale ancora può essere annoverato fra' principi che nobilmente hanno scritto e poetato. A V. Altezza dunque, ch'è perfettissimo principe, dedico e consacro questo perfettissimo poema, estimando che 'l dono, quantunque minore del suo merito, non sia disdicevole a la sua grandezza, né a la mia affezione, che tanto cresce in me, quanto il saper in lei si va accrescendo. In una cosa solamente potrebbe alcuno estimar ch'io avessi avuto poco riguardo a la sua prospera fortuna. Io dico nel donare a felicissimo principe infelicissima composizione; ma le azioni de' miseri possono ancora a' beati servire, per ammaestramento: e V. Altezza leggendo o ascoltando questa favola troverà alcune cose da imitare, altre da schivare, altre da lodare, altre da riprendere, altre da rallegrarsi, altre da contristarsi. E potrà col suo gravissimo giudizio purgar in guisa l'animo, ed in guisa temprar le passioni, che l'altrui dolore sia cagione del suo diletto; e l'imprudenza de gli altri del suo avvedimento; e gli infortunii, de la sua

prosperità. E piaccia a Dio di scacciar lontano da la sua casa ogni infelicità, ogni tempesta, ogni nube, ogni nebbia, ogni ombra di nimica fortuna o di fortunoso avvenimento, spargendolo non dico in Gotia, o in Norvegia, o 'n Suezia, ma fra gli ultimi Biarmi, e fra i mostri e le fiere e le notturne larve di quella orrida regione, dove sei mesi de l'anno sono tenebre di continova notte. Piaccia ancora a V. Altezza ch'io sia a parte de la sua felicità, poich'ha voluto farmi parte de la sua casa, accioché il poeta non sia infelice come il poema, ne la mia fortuna simil a quella che si describe ne la tragedia: ma se le poesie ancora hanno la rea e la buona sorte, come alcuno ha creduto, questa, essendo di mia divenuta sua, può sperare lieta e felice mutazione, e fama perpetua ed onore e riputazione fra gli altri componimenti, perché la memoria de la cortesia di V. Altezza fia immortale, ed intesa e divulgata per varie lingue ne le più lontane parti del Settentrione.

Di Bergamo il primo di settembre 1587.

Di V. Altezza Sereniss.  
Affez.mo e devot.mo ser.re

TORQUATO TASSO

To The Most Serene Lord  
DON VINCENZO GONZAGA  
Duke of Mantua and Monferrato, etc.

Tragedy, as some people believe, is a very serious task; as it appears to others, it is a most pathetic one, most suitable for the young to whom it seems to prefer as spectators. And, although these two opinions appear to be opposite and discordant with each other, now it is known how they can favorably agree, because Your Highness, in the prime of your life, shows such gravity of customs and such prudence that this poem seems to be more fittingly dedicated to no other prince. Besides tragedy, in Aristotle's judgment, surpasses any other composition in perfection. And you are a prince gifted with high genius and every perfection, like the one who does not lack ancient wealth, nor the virtue and the glory of your predecessors, or new ornaments added by your father to your most noble origin, or your own worth and your excellence in the exercise of arms and letters, or action or contemplation, particularly in poetry, in which you can still be numbered among princes who have nobly written verse. To Your Highness, then, who are a most perfect prince, I dedicate and devote this most perfect poem, considering that the gift, though less in its own worth, is not unbecoming to your might, not to my affection, that grows in me as much as knowledge in you is increasing. In one thing only is someone likely to believe that I might have had little regard for your prosperous fortune. This I am saying in dedicating a very unhappy work to a very happy prince; but the actions of the wretched can be a lesson to the blissful; and, in reading or listening to this tale Your Highness will find some things to imitate, others to shun, others to praise, others to blame, others to rejoice at, others to grieve for. Thus, in your great judgment, you will be able to purify your soul, and so temper your passions that the pain of others will be a reason for your joy; and other people's rashness, for your awareness; and others' misfortunes, your prosperity. And may God drive away from your house all unhappiness, every storm, every cloud, every fog, every shadow of hostile fate or fateful incident, scattering it not in Gothland, or in Norway, or in Sweden, but among the last Biarmians, and among the monsters and wild beasts and the nocturnal ghosts of that awful region where for six months of the year there is continuous, dark night. May it also please Your Highness that I am part of your happiness, since you wanted to make me part of your household, so that the poet may not be as unhappy as his poem, nor my luck be similar to the one described in the tragedy: but if poems are still subject to evil and good fortune, as someone believed, this, then, which was mine and now is yours, can hope for a joyous and happy change, for a perpetual renown and honor

and reputation among my other works, inasmuch as my recollection of the kindness of Your Highness is immortal, and understood and spread through various languages to the farthest parts of the North.

From Bergamo the first day of September, 1587.

Of Your Most Serene Highness  
the most affectionate and devoted servant

TORQUATO TASSO

TORRISMONDO, The King

CHARACTERS

THE NURSE  
ALVIDA  
TORRISMONDO, King of the Goths  
COUNSELOR  
CHORUS  
THE FIRST MESSENGER  
ROSMONDA  
THE QUEEN MOTHER  
GERMONDO, King of Sweden  
A MAID  
THE SOOTHSAYER  
FRONTONE  
THE SECOND MESSENGER  
THE STEWARD

ACT ONE

(SCENE ONE)

NURSE, ALVIDA

[NURSE]

O noble queen, what is the hidden reason,  
that early awakens you? And now that dawn  
in the bright east has barely risen,  
where are you rushing to? And what traces  
5 of fear and of desire at the same time  
do I see on your face and on your brow?  
As soon as inner feeling grieves it  
or a new passion perturbs it  
I am aware of it. To me, the one who, because of age,  
10 and duty, and most faithful love,  
takes the place of a beloved mother,  
and who is your nurse, because of will and fate,  
let your aching thoughts now be disclosed,  
for there should be nothing so concealed or secret  
15 as ever to hide itself from me.

ALVIDA

Dear nurse and mother, it is but right  
that I should tell you what my mind

can hardly ponder in its core:  
for to your trust and to your wisdom  
20 more reverend than your white hair, to your good counsel,  
each secret affection is better entrusted,  
with every hidden desire of my innermost self,  
than it is to myself. I yearn and fear,  
I do not deny it: but I know well what I desire;  
25 what frightens me, I do not know. Shadows and dreams  
I fear,  
and ancient prophecies and strange monsters,  
old promises and new ones, or better still menaces  
of fortune, of heaven, of hostile fate,  
of conspiring stars; and I fear, poor me,  
30 I don't know what ill-omened or appalling thing  
troubles my grievous mind,  
which wakes and upsets me, and pains me  
night and day. Alas, no sooner do I shut  
these eyes already wearied by a brief sleep,  
35 than shapes of horror and of fright  
my dream unveils; and now it seems  
that from my side my dear spouse  
is forcibly taken, and lonely without him  
I seem to wonder on a long, gloomy road;  
40 now I gaze at, or seem to gaze at the dripping walls,  
the marble sweating with dark blood;

now from the ancient tombs, where were buried  
the high queens of the kingdom,  
there comes a mighty ghost and a loud roar,  
45 like a huge giant, turning  
both Pelion and Ossa against Mount Olympus,  
and drives me out of my bed, and reveals to me,  
so that I run away from a bloodied whip,  
a frightful cave, and closes off the way I came  
50 behind me: wherefore, it is no wonder at all,  
dear nurse, if I fear sleep  
and rest, nay the awful war  
of the nocturnal specters in the darkness,  
rising, often, to meet the dawn.  
55 Poor me, I'm like an invalid,  
shaken at night by shivers of deep cold,  
burning with fever the morning after:  
for no sooner does the icy coldness  
of nocturnal fear cease, than in me is enkindled  
60 the amorous desire which burns and consumes me.  
Full well you know, my loyal one, that the first day  
that Torrismondo appeared to my eyes,  
I was told that from the famous kingdom  
of the proud Goths he had come to our realm,  
65 in Norway, and to my own father  
to ask for me as his wife: whence, I so much  
liked that generous countenance

and that virtue made illustrious by fame  
that I almost forgot my vows and my shame.  
70 For I had promised my old father  
that I would not desire or receive if asked  
any worthy lover or knight or spouse  
who would not swear to avenge  
his dead son and my brother;  
75 and this I confirmed on the solemn, sacred day  
in which my brother had been born and when by propitious  
fate  
my father took the crown and the adorned cloak,  
and each year renews both feast and pomp--  
a pomp that has almost grown into a funeral.  
80 How many promises and oaths you scatter  
in the wind, O Love, like black smoke or shade!  
I was so taken with the pleasure  
of that first sight, that my quick will  
would have run ahead of tardy reason  
85 if remembrance, shame, anger and disdain  
had not held me back with harsh reins.  
But when he tried, by talking with me,  
to enter into love, I just demanded vengeance.  
Yes, revenge I craved, and was assured a pledge  
90 of revenge and love; I surrendered, a prey  
to his will, to my own tyrannous desire,  
and was almost a lover before being a bride,  
and was hardly aware of it. And how, afterwards,

my noble father with a rich dowry  
95 made him his son-in-law; and how as a sign  
of pure love and firm loyalty  
he joined his right hand to mine;  
how he decided to celebrate the nuptials  
in Arana, and reap the fruits  
100 of marriage in his paternal kingdom;  
how his people's and his mother's prayers  
were brought to me together with the explanation of  
their customs--  
all is already known to you. Known is it also  
that, before he gathered the ships  
105 at Talarma's port, by the seashore  
on a deserted beach, on the solitary sand,  
not as a husband yet, but as a lover,  
he carried on the furtive secret nuptials  
which the night covered under its shadows,  
110 and in deep silence; and no sooner had  
the report and fame of our nocturnal love spread forth,  
than it was promptly extinct in him, and no one knew  
of it,  
save you alone, who on my face  
read the signs of shame.  
115 Now, then, that we have arrived in the lofty palace  
of the generous Goths, where lives the old  
mother-in-law, who awaits grandchildren from me,  
I do not know what we are waiting for, or what we crave;

in the meantime the hoped-for day is still delayed.  
120 The sun has plunged already twenty times,  
since we arrived, into the deep ocean's lap,  
and still we tarry. But I meanwhile  
(should I speak or keep silent?) oh me, am melting away  
like fresh snow on a sunny hill.

NURSE

125 Queen, how vain your fear  
and the nocturnal fright in you appears to me,  
so just a cause-as I can see-is burning you  
with love's desire; but do not let your love  
upset you: a young lady  
130 who for her young bridegroom does not feel in her heart  
some flame of love, is colder  
than hard snow in winter on a horrid Alpine peak.  
But blessed honesty, as well as honest modesty,  
should temper excessive ardor  
135 so that it may be hidden from eager lovers.  
But the delay will not be any greater,  
for any day now, if I hear the truth,  
the king of Sweden is expected here.

ALVIDA

I know, and the delay distresses me  
140 all the more for its reason. Do I in this way,

see my blood avenged? Can I, in this way,  
comfort my father's persistent grief,  
and soothe my brother's grieving shade?  
Can I and do I want this? Is it not right, then,  
145 to enter the nuptial bed if, first,  
King Germondo does not come back to us from Olma,--  
he, arch-enemy of my whole race?

NURSE

A friend of your king he is; nor must a wife  
love and cease to love by her own will,  
150 but only according as her spouse desires.

ALVIDA

Let it be as you think; this I grant you  
most willingly--that I want and must  
make his every delight my own pleasure.  
If only could extinguish some spark  
155 of my fire and of my flame,  
or so much please him, who thinks of other things,  
as to make him, in turn, feel an equal passion.  
Oh me, in vain do I long for this and vainly I await it,  
nor am I still in need of piercing iron  
160 to hinder our love in bed  
and excessive pleasures. Already he seems  
to avoid me in a disdainful manner

for since that night he has not shown me  
any sign of a spouse or even of a lover.  
165 Mother, I nonetheless will tell you, although shame  
restrains my tongue and drives  
my words back. Often I take  
his hand and move close to him:  
he trembles, and his face takes on a pallor  
170 that seems (and so upsets and dismays me)  
a pallor of death and not of love;  
or he turns his glance elsewhere, or he looks down,  
perturbed and dismal; and if at times he speaks to me,  
he speaks with a trembling voice,  
175 and interrupts his words with sighs.

NURSE

Dear daughter,  
you describe symptoms of burning intense love.  
Trembling, growing pale, shy glances,  
a timid voice and sighs while talking  
reveal at times a lover full of desire.  
180 And if he does not show the same desire  
he once revealed to you on the deserted sands,  
you know that solitude and night  
are spurs of love that make one transgress;  
whereas daylight, sound, the throngs  
185 of the royal palace often bring

glad shame while waiting for a day  
that delays so much to make joy far greater.  
And if he was a bold lover on that beach,  
you must not blame him now if he appears  
190 a modest spouse in his ancient palace.

QUEEN [ALVIDA]

May it please God that it be true. I still, in spite  
of this,  
since I can do nought else, am at least comforted  
by looking at him. Now I come to the place  
where customarily he often stays--  
195 to these decorated balconies--or to this field  
where some spur on and curb their steeds,  
and others make them trot or circle around.

NURSE

Another room, would be suitable to you, O queen,  
a virgin still, still a child and yet a woman.  
200 Your mansion has ornate rooms,  
where you'll be able, in company or alone,  
often to look at him from the balcony above.

[SCENE TWO]

NURSE (alone)

I wonder if on earth there is a tranquil  
or peaceful place that is not disturbed  
205 by hope or fear or joy or pain;  
or a greatness so solid, so well founded on its merits  
or on the favor of good fortune,  
that inconstancy does not flatten or fell  
or threaten. Here is a woman  
210 who was happy before--and more so while she knew not  
of her own happiness--and who, as soon as she was born,  
was placed on fortune's lofty throne.  
And now, when it has appeared that heaven  
and the stars were friendlier to her,  
215 she is afraid of her own royal wedding, and trembles,  
and grows angry and disdainful at once.  
But where love rules hate is extinct,  
and ancient wrath surrenders to new fire.  
And if before a chaste, gentle and sweet passion  
220 rage fades away, let suspicion  
and fear also vanish; and since she chooses  
to love the man she must, may love be kind to her.  
May she love happily; and may the happy course  
of this life, which passes and flees away,  
225 be never interrupted by envious fate

which suddenly can turn joy into grief.  
But I fear the contrary, and am frightened  
by the old, hidden cause of her terror,  
and not only by her new fear, which is almost a sign  
230 of a coming storm; and the gloomy clouds  
will ultimately lead to tears  
unless legitimate love dispels the storm.  
But here is the king the queen is waiting for.

(SCENE THREE)

TORRISMONDO the King, COUNSELOR

[TORRISMONDO]

Oh, when will the Don or the Rhine or the Danube,  
235 or the unfriendly sea or the Red sea,  
or the Caspian waves or the ocean deep  
ever wash the hidden and unworthy guilt  
that stained and soiled my flesh and soul?  
Then, do I live still and breathe and see the sun?  
240 In the light of the world do I live still?  
and, known as king, call myself a knight?  
Do I carry the sword at my side still, hold the sceptre  
in my hand, and wear the crown on my head?  
And yet there are those who bow and rise to meet me,

245 and perhaps love me still: oh, only they are sure  
who cull such fruit out of their loyal love.  
But what good is it to me, alas, if to the sickened heart  
life is unwelcome, and if most rightly I reckon  
that this air moves for me undeservedly,  
250 and for me the sun shines unworthily;  
if the regal accolade, the pomp and the purple cloak,  
and the bejewelled tiara shining with gold,  
and the resounding and illustrious title  
of knight offend me, and merits,  
255 honors, homage I altogether shun and abhor;  
and if I hate and loathe myself in such a way  
as to feel offended even while I'm loved?  
Alas, readily would I go through lonely sands  
alone and wandering; and in thick Ercinia  
260 and in the Black Forest, or on cliffs or in the caves,  
remote and darkened, of the Hyperborean Mountains,  
or in the horrid dens of highwaymen  
I would hide myself from others, shunning the daylight,  
and from the stars and the nocturnal limpidness.  
265 But what use is it to me, if I cannot hide  
from my self? Oh me, it is I, it is I,  
the one who fled and is fleeing still:  
shame, disgrace, and abomination,  
have made me hateful and a grievous burden to myself.  
270 What does it avail me that I do not hear and fear

the rumors and grumbling of the foolish populace,  
or the charges made by the wise, or the fierce bites  
of very sharp or poisoned teeth,  
if my own befouled conscience  
275 resounds and roars in the depth of my heart;  
if it chides me in the evening and at the morning bells;  
if it awakes me at night and interrupts my sleep  
and a thousand confused, sad dreams of mine?  
Wretched me! Neither Cerberus nor Scylla  
280 barked as much as in my soul I hear  
a savage barking; neither monster nor snake  
in sandy Africa, or Hydra in Lerna,  
or in Cocytus a Fury's horrid serpent  
ever bit as my soul gnaws and bites.

COUNSELOR

285 My lord, if faith, already shown  
in both favorable and adverse fortune  
can lend such boldness to a humble servant  
that he dares to beg his master, at a certain time,  
to reveal to him his hidden thoughts,  
290 I beg you to lay bare the reason  
for your troubled look, for your inner anguish,  
and whatever mistake or sin you might have done,  
able to heap up and kindle in you such rage

against yourself, afflicting and troubling you so:  
295 for heavy is the weight of long silence  
in sorrow, and it worsens with new sorrow,  
and is only consoled and assuaged by discussion;  
and he who, by talking, dares at last  
entrust his troubled thoughts to faithful ears,  
300 relieves his soul of a harsh, oppressive weight.

TORRISMONDO

O my faithful one, to whom  
the king my father and your former lord  
wished to entrust the lofty guidance of my tender age,  
well I remember the words, the ways and deeds  
305 with which you guided me; and which you often  
displayed before my eyes--  
wondrous examples of honesty and virtue,  
examples of kings and warriors  
who were praised for their arts of peace  
310 or those of war; and like a sharp spur  
they pierced my heart with warming emulation,  
and, as a pleasant allurement of true honor,  
they used to enamor me. But this sweet memory  
greatly augments the sharpness of my pain,  
315 for the more I see myself swayed  
from the path you showed to me  
the more do I flare up in wrath against myself.

And if to any one of those whom the sun gazes on  
and the earth nourishes or the sea surrounds,  
320 I should hide my fault in shame,  
you ought to be that one: noble advice  
I took from you, and then scattered and threw away.  
Yet your love, the trust I once enjoyed,  
your age, your wisdom, and that friendly hope  
325 of your counsel that is still left to me  
are comfort to my words, though my heart  
is frightened and shudders with horror at the very  
recollection,  
and out of grief flees again--whereupon angrily  
my tardy tongue tarries yet to speak:  
330 that's why I called you aside and far from all.  
Surely you remember, as soon as I emerged  
from childhood, and was freed of  
that soft and gentle curb you held on me,  
how eager I was to earn fame and honor:  
335 therefore, I left my country, my noble father,  
and these lofty palaces, and, wandering, I saw  
many a foreign custom and strange  
people; a stranger and alone, I often lived  
where swords are used and blood is shed.  
340 In these travels of mine, as it pleased Heaven,  
I formed a close and sweet friendship  
with the good Germondo who rules over Sweden--  
young like me and, like me, eager for glory

and loftily yearning for everlasting fame.

345 Visiting the swampy and vast fields,  
with him I saw the nomad Tartars and the Muscovites,  
with him I saw the Sarmatians, the Russians and the Huns,  
and the beaches and the mountains of great Germany;  
and on my return, with him still, at the extreme North  
350 I saw the furthestmost Biarmians, and that day so long  
which is followed by an equally lengthy night;  
and other parts of the frigid earth  
that freezes beneath the seven icy stars of the Great  
Bear,  
all far away from the course of the sun.

355 With him I bore the heavy cares  
of war, and with him at the same time I shared  
no less heavy toils and great perils  
as well as copious spoils and glorious victories  
earned in the fight with enemies and tyrants:  
360 whence often, in perilous battles,  
he shielded me with his very chest  
and rescued me from merciless death,  
and often I, in turn, there where love makes us equal,  
I risked my life for his.

365 But, after our fathers died,  
and each of us was called to rule  
the kingdoms we inherited, the duties and habits  
of friendship did not subside; on the contrary, though  
separated  
by distance but more than ever united in our heart,

370 friendship's sweet fruits we reaped still.  
Wretched, I now have come to that which vexes me.  
This dear and valiant friend of mine,  
before election and chance made us  
companions in arms and wandering,  
375 came to Norway for the famous joust  
in which he was victorious over thousands.  
There, with such intensity to his eyes  
appeared the young maiden Alvida,  
that he felt, at first sight,  
380 his soul burn with an unquenchable flame.  
And, although he could not or dared not  
allow any spark of his flame to shimmer forth  
and thus be seen by her eyes with pleasure,  
nonetheless, in his heart he nourished a burning fire.  
385 Neither length of time or traveling,  
nor risk or hardship or toil,  
nor the sight of new kingdoms and new peoples,  
forests, mountains, fields and rivers and seas,  
nor any new beauty's new delight,  
390 nor anything that might ever extinguish the flame of  
love  
cooled the fire in his heart.  
But, with his thoughts as tinder to the fire,  
throughout the time he roamed in different lands,  
he kept it a secret from others; and of his heart,

395 the only confidants were love and I.  
But, when recalled to the noble kingdom  
he sat on the ancient throne,  
his mind still turned to marriage,  
trying a thousand paths, he used a thousand wiles,  
400 a thousand ways, a thousand entreaties,  
which he presented now as king, now as lover,  
lavish with promises and generous with gold,  
only to convince Alvida's old father  
that he should grant his daughter to his prayers;  
405 but he found him inflexible in heart and soul:  
for the gray-haired king, proud, nay arrogant  
in mind and manners and deeds,  
being tenacious in every proposal,  
and implacable by nature, and thirsty for revenge,  
410 refused peace with his enemies  
by whose hand at times he had seen his kingdom  
plundered and burned, temples profaned,  
altars stripped, and crying infants  
snatched from their cradles, and ancestor's ashes  
415 seized from their tombs and cast to the wind;  
by whose hand, none other than his very son,  
without any tears, without any mourning,  
and even without revenge, had been slain  
horribly; and he held Germondo  
420 to be the killer in the bloody fight,

not the army or the crowd alone.  
And truly it was he who in bitter war  
seized booty yet did not boast of it.  
Seeing himself despised and loathed,  
425 the mighty king of famous Sweden  
seemed to be burning within, he flared without  
with justified rage against the proud old man  
who had rejected him so harshly.  
Not, however, because of prohibition or rejection,  
430 or in rage, or in hate, or in sheer reaction,  
was his first love in the least measure lessened.  
It is quite true that in the human intellect,  
and even more in magnanimous and proud ones,  
hardship makes desire grow  
435 like water that enclosed forms a vortex,  
or like flame in a cavernous mountain  
which cannot find a way out,  
and thundering encumbers the sky with debris.  
Thus he is determined to have, in spite  
440 of her cruel father, the chaste daughter,  
and however the sky may turn and fate be fixed  
and fortune change, to bend his lady to him,  
or else to die in his mighty endeavor.  
He prepared to gain her by deception  
445 or by abduction; and pondering by himself

a thousand means now of force and now of cleverness,  
finally he rejected the others and chose this one.  
Through a secret loyal messenger  
and through letters of his, he strongly urged me  
450 to ask her father for his daughter's hand;  
and having had her by such ingenious deception,  
I should then give her to him, who was her lover,  
and would, therefore, being king, be a son-in-law  
worthy of a king.  
I, although well aware that this deception  
455 would rouse the disdain and perhaps the armies  
of Norway against me,  
thought, nonetheless, that wherever the dear name  
of honored friendship is written down or valued,  
that which seems less honest by itself  
460 would take on honesty's appearance;  
and if right is ever to be violated  
only for a friend should it be violated,  
while in other things justice must be respected.  
Thus I preferred a dear friend's happiness  
465 to other men's peace and to my own, so much did I want  
to become disloyal out of excessive loyalty.  
This being so fixed in me, not through messages,  
nor by those means that are often used  
among high kings in peace and war,  
470 I explored his father-in-law's unchangeable mind;  
then, ending all delay, I swiftly ran

messenger of my own will and of myself.  
He welcomed my arrival and my proposals,  
and joined his royal hand to mine,  
475 and gave to me and in turn received that faith  
which I had determined not to maintain.  
And after I took leave and my lady  
--rather, my prey--was placed on the high ship,  
I set sail; and in the open main,  
480 through the ocean waves setting my course.  
I left the ports and litorals of Norway.  
Merrily we ploughed the sounding sea,  
with a hundred sharp prows breaking it,  
while the one I thought of as my bride was clinging  
to my side,  
485 loving and pensive, and was urging me to return her love.  
In no other than myself could I find shelter  
like a man all around besieged  
by his ruthless enemy. Length of time,  
long and slow idleness, narrowness of space,  
490 love's allurements, flatteries and glances,  
blushing, pallor, and broken and brief words  
that we alone could hear, with a thousand assaults  
overcame the long-resisted faith at last.  
Oh; how true it is that Love, if rejected,  
495 comes back to assail rendered more daring  
by repulse in an encounter, for it is an ancient law  
that no one who is loved is absolved from loving.

But reason was still in charge,  
curbing every rebellious desire still,  
500. when the clear sky shone bright for us again  
and lightning flashed from four sides;  
cruel fortune and the hostile sky  
conspiring with Love, and the evil stars  
aroused a mighty, furiously whirling wind,  
505 to upset earth and sky,  
violently and wickedly to tyrannize the sea,  
for that which it chances to meet, it rolls up,  
turns, twists, uproots, raises and carries,  
and then sinks; all the others, raging,  
510 disturbed our path, and wrathful Boreas  
turned against Auster, and both howled here and there,  
and Zephyr collided with Eurus as in a joust,  
and the sea, perturbed, became a perilous  
field of clouds and storms.  
515 Having surrounded the air with clouds,  
a sudden dreaded night arose all about,  
which seemed almost a frightening hell  
dimly lit by lightning alone;  
and a thousand tall mountains of curving waves  
520 rose white and foaming toward the sky,  
and as many chasms in the midst of the deep sea,  
valleys and caverns opened up,  
and in the water forests and woods appeared,

awful, and gloomy abysses;  
525 and swimming wild monsters of different shapes  
emerged, and the numerous herd  
increased our terror; and finally the darkness  
of the firmament broke down into a stormy rain,  
and through the vast ocean, the fierce whirlwind  
530 carried and scattered the hard-trying ships,  
some of which it dashed against hard cliffs,  
others against immense tree trunks,  
rising out of the sea in the most dreadful shapes,  
looking like troops with arms and spears;  
535 others against threatening rocks or blind stones  
that are still a cruel tomb to the living;  
others against the bottom of alpine mountains,  
ever hoary, where the sea resounds and roars  
while one wave fights with the other,  
540 and it breaks and whitens, and like thunder rebounds,  
and weighs the sailors down with fright;  
other ships were swallowed, still, by pitiless Charibdis  
that absorbs and sucks down the waves and entire ships:  
rare are the swimmers in the vast vortex.  
545 But with the biggest wave a new wind  
struck our ship and pushed it back by force,  
so that with great difficulty the brave sagacious  
steersman  
saved her, then withdrew itself and gathered us

into the curved sides of a most lofty mountain,  
550 where Nature the maker marvellously shaped  
a port carved in the form of a helmet  
which drives all winds and storms away,  
but yet is grievously sprinkled with blood,  
fierce beginning and end of bitter war.

555 Here we found refuge, bewildered and sad,  
setting foot on a lonely shore.

While some dry their wet garments  
and others kindle the smoky wood,  
with Alvida I remained in the innermost part  
560 of the spacious tent. And already the night,  
friend of furtive loves, was rising,  
and, trembling still for fear and  
anxiety, she was holding on to me.

This was the one moment that won me over.

565 Then love, passion, impetus and the force  
of love's pleasure, forced my limbs,  
greedy beyond their wont, to the blind theft.

Oh wretched, it was then that because of an unexpected  
fault

I violated my trust, and broke honor's  
570 and friendship's stern laws.

Contaminated by new outrage,  
and now a traitor, instead of the faithful friend I was,  
or rather an enemy because of love,  
I have been troubled, ever since, alas,

575 by a thousand thoughts, or, worse, by a thousand  
worms of remorse I've been pierced,  
and not only my heart and soul do I feel consumed,  
but never can I find rest or peace  
from my rage. Oh dreadful Furies, oh my  
580 deserved pangs, and just avengers  
of my unjust faults. Wherever I turn  
my eyes, or my mind or my thoughts,  
the deed which the dark night covered  
appears before me, and seems displayed  
585 in daylight to the eyes of all mortals.  
There my betrayed friend appears  
with a dreadful expression; I hear his charges  
and his just complaints, I hear the laments,,  
his love, his constancy, and one by one  
590 all of his many merits, the many deeds  
and proofs of his inviolable faith.  
Wretched me, among the hard claws and bites  
of a guilty conscience and of pain,  
love's torture still endures;  
595 and so much I regret leaving the ill-loved woman,  
whom I nonetheless should leave,  
that I believe I should leave life at the same time.  
This is the easiest way, and this seems  
the fastest way to come out of this predicament.  
600 And since the hard, inextricable knot,

in which love and fortune have now entangled me,  
cannot be untied any more, let it be cut and shattered.  
This solace at least I would have in leaving  
the light, to me so troubled and gloomy--

605 I myself would avenge and grieve for  
my dear friend as well as myself,  
thus wiping out his shame and my guilt,  
if a committed sin can ever be erased:  
though belatedly, I would be just toward myself, and  
strong for his sake.

COUNSELOR

610 Lord, the more grievous every wrong,  
the worthier the place in which it dwells, for from  
its subject  
the offense takes on a different quality.  
And so it happens that often times a touch seems light  
on the shoulders and in the arms  
615 and which to other vigorous and strong limbs  
would be quite oppressive to the eyes  
and a sure painful cause of untimely death.  
And yet this wrong, which, if placed on a scale,  
would not by itself be of excessive weight,  
620 and would, perhaps, be rather light for an ordinary man  
and in those friendships, well known to the world,  
in which there is the narrow and mean measure of  
utility,

or in those others coupled by delight,  
becomes (this I must not, cannot deny)  
625 very grave in a gentle soul  
amidst the greatness of scepters and crowns,  
and in the rigor of those sacred laws  
that true friendship prescribed to the other.  
Yours was the error of a knight, of a king, of a friend  
630 against so noble a knight and king  
against a friend so dear and faithful;  
and it must be called an error,  
or if you wish, also, a sin and fault  
of ardent desire, of blind and foolish  
635 love--let's say impetuous affection:  
but the name of wickedness it does not deserve.  
Far from God, my lord, such an unworthy title,  
be it far and by no means connected with this deed and  
with you.  
Do not subject yourself to a burden not yours to bear:  
640 for if a man must not adorn himself with false praise,  
so must he not burden himself with false blame.  
Passion blinds you, but, no, you are not  
treacherous or wicked or impious.  
Wicked is he, if rightly I discern--  
645 who by his own nature overthrows and twists  
reason, a part of the divine and a dear precious gift of  
Heaven,

just as a stream is swayed from its own course;  
and who, then, bends it toward evil, with which it  
overflows,  
650 and, against the will of the One who gave it to him,  
uses it as a guide to wicked and impious actions,  
thus falling precipitously--and fraud is the name of the  
precipice.

But one who, without resisting false advice,  
runs, swept by perverted reason  
655 where his tyrannical desire leads him,  
is neither wicked nor blamable of grave fault  
if love, or even hate, carries him.

Our human nature abounds with greater  
rage and love--proud and powerful feelings--  
660 if greater is its vigor; and it seldom happens  
that a generous, noble, and aggressive soul  
is not driven and pushed back by them  
as a stormy sea by the wind.

Therefore, do not refuse to give your grief  
665 that curb which reason gives you.

I will not mention so many famous and clear examples--  
of Hercules, of Achilles, and of Alexander;  
nor will I mention the amorous raving of more recent  
kings, previously unvanquished and then won by love.

670 You saw a beautiful young woman,  
and soon she was in your grasp, and you were not moved  
to love by beauty: compelled, though belatedly,  
you responded to amorous allurements

by rejecting love countless times;  
675 you restrained your desire, your glances, your words.  
Finally love, fortune, place and time  
overwhelmed such constancy and such faith.  
You sinned, and it was Love's sin as well as yours;  
but he at least was not without excuses  
680 and examples: therefore he is not deserving of death.  
Nor does death, which man may hasten by his own hand,  
diminish an error already committed--it rather augments  
it.

TORRISMONDO

If death cannot be punishment or the right  
correction of sin, it will be, at least, a good remedy  
685 or the end to my sorrow.

COUNSELOR

Rather, a beginning  
and a cause of a great torment.

TORRISMONDO

How should I live then--as Alvida's spouse,  
or should I deprive myself of her? I cannot  
hold her, without laying bare, at the same time,  
690 my wavering faith: and if I send her away,  
how can my soul still remain with me?

Sorrow will do what the sword did not.  
This is, by no means, a way of escaping death,  
but choosing a more bitter manner of dying.

COUNSELOR

695 There is no pain so sharp and grave  
that is not finally appeased by time,  
comforter of afflicted hearts,  
medicine and oblivion of all evils.  
But it is not becoming to you  
700 to wait for a common remedy and its vulgar comfort;  
rather, to draw it from your inner worth  
and from yourself, and thus forestall another's advice.

TORRISMONDO

Help for the pain arrives too late,  
if time must bring it; and weak it will be  
705 if expected from my feeble virtue.

COUNSELOR

Virtue is never conquered, and time flies.

TORRISMONDO

It flies when it is a bearer of evils;  
but in bringing good things it is slow and lame.

COUNSELOR

Time with fair measure spreads out its wings;  
710 but in the unequal motion of our affections  
lies the excess of that measure,  
which we attribute to the sky above us.

TORRISMONDO

But if it happens that time and reason--  
reason, alas, now conquered and unarmed--  
715 shelters and defends me against pain,  
will she be Germondo's wife, and mine ?  
If the oath I swore to her--and I could have sworn  
it indeed--  
was sanctioned (as it pleased Heaven)  
only by the act of a secret marriage,  
720 she then belongs to me. If I abandon and yield her,  
I will give her up as a concubine to a lover.  
Therefore, will the bride of the king of the Goths  
lie, like a lustful mistress, in someone else's bed ?  
And will he bear such a thing ?  
725 A shameful union, a cruel divorce it will be,  
if I separate her from me; and, thus,  
I will join her to my friend, so that, mocked,  
he may never enjoy her pure and undefiled.  
As such he cannot have her, for my fury  
730 contaminated her by plucking her first flower.

But let him have, at least, the remnant of my lust,  
according to an ancient law, and let her go (at least),  
to her second nuptials as an honest bride,  
if not a chaste lady. Oh, God forbid  
735 that through my fault an illegitimate offspring  
of shameless love should be born to my faithful  
friend, and that a bastard successor  
should wear the crown of Sweden on his brow.  
This, this is that painful knot, oh me,  
740 which cannot be undone unless one cuts  
the knot whereby life  
is joined to these limbs.

COUNSELOR

Lord, a strong and veritable reason this is --  
because, as it seems, it is not honorable  
745 that, while you remain alive, Alvida should  
be joined in marriage to King Germondo;  
but this does not mean, nor can it imply,  
that, impious and pitiless against yourself,  
you should arm an injurious hand,  
750 and forcibly drive your soul out of your noble body,  
where, almost a keeper, God placed it,  
whence it must not leave until, having fulfilled  
its vigilance, He recalls it to Heaven.

No just reason that might push you to this  
755 could ever be found, for vainly do we seek  
on earth a right reason for a wrong deed.  
But if you must remain without life, or Germondo  
without his lady, now let King Germondo  
remain without his beloved lady.

TORRISMONDO

760 If he is left without his beloved and I without a friend,  
and, furthermore, at the same time devoid of honor,  
how shall we be able to live ? Oh cruel fate !

COUNSELOR

Cruel, yes: but one must bear on earth  
what necessity commands and inflicts--  
765 necessity, a queen, rather a tyrant,  
although equally free and unbridled is one's will;  
for to her unhappy mortals are subject  
as well as all the wandering and fixed stars in the sky  
and all their spheres; and in their oblique courses  
770 they eternally obey, though steady in their changing,  
her fatal orders and sovereign laws.

TORRISMONDO

Let my destiny do what is preordained.

COUNSELOR

Yet I see a good device that may save  
your fame and honor, which now are nearly sinking.

- 775 And if it is true that such unchangeable love  
has its deep roots in Alvida's soft breast--  
I mean, in her heart and body,  
she will not allow an unknown lover--  
an enemy lover and hateful lover  
780 stained with her blood--to lie beside her.  
By denying that she loves him--or that she ever will--  
and tenacious and inflexible in her requests,  
she will give you four and six and perhaps ten  
and even a hundred reasons why you should keep her.
- 785 And you will say: "It is forbidden, and does not behoove  
a cavalier to commit an outrage against a lady.  
With you, I will beg as a friend; and with you  
I will have to use each skill and talent;  
but, I cannot force her." Good Germondo,  
790 if he has a magnanimous and gentle heart,  
will see to it that love yields to reason.  
In this way alone, and finally, a bride, a friend,  
and honor will be saved.

TORRISMONDO

Honor

follows good deeds, as a shadow follows the body.

COUNSELOR

795 This, which the world often calls honor,  
and which comes to us from the exterior,  
lies, instead, in our inmost thoughts and words.  
Never does one's guilt bring hidden infamy,  
nor does any good hidden action augment glory.  
800 But so that honesty may live with honor,  
and both friendship and the kingdom live with your  
friend,  
let him have Rosmonda, your sister,  
instead of Alvida; and if old age  
can still judge a woman's beauty,  
805 she is far more beautiful than Alvida.

TORRISMONDO

Love does not bear  
exchanges, nor does it find rewards in the world  
for a dear lady lost.

COUNSELOR

Love would in such a way be  
forced out of a man's heart by new pleasure,  
as a nail is driven out of a board by another nail.

TORRISMONDO

810 Alas, my sister scorns and disdains



CHORUS

O Wisdom, eternal daughter of the great  
eternal Father, o goddess, born from Him  
before the heavenly gods,  
830 to whom no one else was second in Heaven:  
and from the starlit cloisters to Lake Avernus,  
and wherever dark Acheron floods  
or black Styx surrounds,  
nothing can equal your supreme worth.  
835 O goddess mighty and glorious in war,  
who loves and adorns peace, and defends her,  
if ever down here you fly and descend,  
you make the cold and frozen earth blessed.  
While the Empire still ravishes and wanders  
840 far from its high seat, and you suspend your favor,  
do not disdain this part of the earth,  
although here horrid Mars was born.  
And when he strikes and whips his steeds  
on the adamantine, hardened enamel,  
845 and brings on a fierce assault  
and turns the mountains vermillion and the ice bloody,  
oh, make him, as he himself facetiously  
admits, meeker and more affable,  
no longer wrathful and malevolent,  
850 you who are first, not second or third.  
You drive out mad discord and impious fury,

you drive out fright and horror, oh,  
and let every iniquity and every ruthless instance  
vanish and be still.

855 You, heavenly goddess, shall have altars  
and temples; you'll be prayed to, where it will please  
you to heed our prayers.

Oh, do not turn your back to us  
for, while still a pilgrim, you found shelter in Rome;  
but, standing before the throne from where your father  
beckons to us

860 with his eternal stars, and hurls his lightnings and  
thunderbolts  
through the blue fields,  
and flashing with rage, burns and blazes,  
appease him, and soothe the clouds and the storms,  
and with him come down to this unvanquished royal palace

865 so that we may honor you--  
we who are souls not rebellious to your glory.  
We are the valiant, ancient race  
of whom Rome still preserves a vestige  
and that proud one

870 who usurps its high and shining seat.  
Hence the East and West have great merit still--  
more glorious than any leaf or grass,  
because the fame and worth  
of our blood is not languishing yet.

875 And in this sky where the North wind resounds  
and, although with three suns, the day is dim,

they tried to outrage and scorn  
the sky again by raising other giants;  
And mountains placed upon mountains, tomb upon tomb,  
880 high boulders and cliffs in the sounding sea  
echoing with lightning bolts  
are works still worthy of a famous trumpet.  
Other children of other gods ruled our kingdoms  
once; other famous rewards  
885 were given to noble heroes  
and to those who tamed monsters and serpents.  
And there, where once with a thousand prows  
the ships would cleave the sea,  
carrying horses and war supplies, there the deep sea  
890 later bore the weight of armies in full war array.  
And now the king who releases and tightens his reins,  
can number a hundred of his ancestors  
laden with golden spoils from the West,  
and is the son of a mighty father.  
895 To him, who wields his sword for the sake of honor,  
oh, mercifully turn your eyes from Heaven,  
if danger is near,  
you who are ever helpful to the strong and the just.  
And if souls, finally ridden of their grievous burden,  
900 must serenely return to Heaven's seats  
from their earthly limbs,  
let him return to you, light and unburdened as late as  
can be.

And in his armor may he be feared, as well as the sound  
of his bow,  
by the ultimate Thule and the most distant sands,  
905 by the most barbaric horde  
and any others who oppose or trouble us.  
O goddess, no peaceful olive tree  
spreads out or lifts its sacred boughs towards you,  
nor are various garlands woven out of it;  
910 but let the king, instead, consecrate another  
sacred and happy plant;  
you, erase our errors, you, sage and saint.

ACT TWO

(SCENE ONE)

MESSENGER, TORRISMONDO, CHORUS,

[MESSENGER]

I like to follow my master,  
whether he treads on the ice of the whitened mountains,  
915 or the swamps even when winter hardens them.  
And now how dear and sweet it is to me  
to have come here with him to the sumptuous magnificence  
at famed Arana. He follows me; in the meantime  
I am here--a messenger to the king of the Goths,  
920 about to give him the news of his arrival.  
But I would like to ask of those men I see in a group,  
where the gilded palace of the king is.  
O knights, I come from Sweden  
to meet the king: where is the royal palace?

CHORUS

925 The one I'm pointing at, and the king himself  
is the one you see there, silent and pensive.

MESSENGER

O magnanimous king of the illustrious Goths,  
glorious Sweden's powerful king

sends you greetings and this letter.

TORRISMONDO

930 These are credentials. Convey, if you please,  
what he commanded you to.

MESSENGER

My master Germondo

has arrived within the boundaries of your kingdom,  
and is already near; and before the sun reaches  
its middle course of the bright east,  
935 he will be at your famous and noble Court;  
he wanted me to precede him  
both to inform and bring his request  
that he be welcomed as is due  
to friendship, to which  
940 all signs of honor and all the ordinary  
usages of others should be superfluous. He remembers  
the sweet time and the verdant prime,  
the wanderings, the travels and the jousts,  
the adventures, the prowess and the spoils,  
945 then common glory and war;  
but, most of all, your love. But,  
perhaps, it is not necessary,  
that I remind one who keeps this stored in his mind.

TORRISMONDO

O memories, o time, how happy am I  
to hear news of my loyal friend!  
950 Then he will soon be here. O, I sigh  
for my breast can hardly hold so much delight  
that overflows and scatters in one place.

CHORUS

Excessive joy and excessive pain,  
winds adverse to tranquil life  
955 blow almost equally and cause our sighing;  
and many are the inner feelings still  
from which spring--or, rather, our tears derive  
as from a truly copious fountainhead--  
together with pity, pleasure, pain, disdain:  
960 so that never certain is the outward sign  
of the emotion that abounds within.  
And now boundless joy  
is stirring our lord (so it seems to me)  
just as grief is wont to stir in other men.

MESSENGER

965 Lord, if with such ardent and pure affection  
you love our king, I can swear  
that his love is just as great, and one responds to  
another;

and that as long as the sun illuminates and warms  
he does not have a more faithful friend.

TORRISMONDO

I have proofs to believe it.

970 Therefore, I'm sure you are telling the truth.

MESSENGER

He is so happy about your wedding  
that your joy, imparted to him, overflows  
like heavy rain or a torrent.

He rejoices at the news of the lofty praises  
975 either of your arts of peace or those of war;  
he rejoices if someone extols the character  
and narrates the travels, the lengthy wanderings,  
the beauty, the merits and worth of the bride,  
and often he asks about her father and you.

TORRISMONDO

980 He will hear cheerful news, while I, too, well pleased,  
listen to yours; but, weary as you are of your journey,  
do not tire yourself with further talk.

King Germondo will be welcomed by me  
as he wishes. His is the kingdom of the Goths  
985 no less than he is mine: let him, however, command me.  
You, rest now. And you, take him

to his chambers, and at the same time, make sure  
that he is honored: for honor suits him, and well he  
deserves it--  
for his worth, the office and the occasion,  
990 and the high dignity of the one who sends him.

[SCENE TWO]

TORRISMONDO (alone)

At last he is silent, and at last this man  
is far from my sight. By talking to me  
he almost pierced my heart with pointed darts.  
O guilty conscience, how  
995 each word pierces me! Unhappy me!  
What will happen if I hear Germondo's voice?  
The peril of the rock hanging over Sisyphus  
is much less grievous than that of his  
coming to me. O Torrismondo,  
1000 how will you be able to hear him? or with what  
expression  
bear his presence? or with what kind of look will  
you lift  
your glance towards him? O heaven, o sun,  
why don't you roll up into an eternal night?  
or why don't you turn your course back,  
1005 so that I may neither be seen nor see?  
Wretched that I am! At that time, I would have wished

that a dark veil of murky horror  
and gloom had covered my eyes as I held them  
riveted on the beloved face  
1010 of my lady. Then they derived a delight  
they were not entitled to; now it is right  
that, exposed to shame, they should be weeping  
and that from there they'd draw the remorse that  
is theirs,  
so that the firm hand resorts to the sword.  
1015 But here is the fatal hour and the moment  
I'm trying to shun; and vainly I seek it,  
unless the aged mother constrains  
her daughter with her maternal power,  
as I have begged her to do and she has promised.  
1020 And I know that at my bidding Alvida will be ready.  
But who assures me, alas, that Germondo's  
heart can yield to a new love?  
And if the most reliable counsel proves to be futile,  
evil has no remedy other than death.

[SCENE THREE]

ROSMONDA

1025 Happy is she--whether lady or servant--  
who passes through her mortal life,  
unsoiled along her road, and not besmeared  
by its black, and marshy, slimy soil!

But who's not besmeared by it? Ah, on this earth  
1030 our accompanying riches and honors, are nothing  
but black tenacious mud around the soul,  
because of which, it often stops on its way.  
I whom the favorable wind of fortune  
raised to sublime height,  
1035 and placed in the worthiest abode,  
in the midst of unvanquished, glorious kings;  
I, who am called king's daughter and sister,  
would run, like a bird, free and released,  
to the humble poverty of a green cloister  
1040 away from pleasure, from honor and pomp,  
and from this royal proud existence.  
Yet now among many banquets and balls  
against my will I spend entire days,  
and add a great part of the night to the day,  
1045 because of which I am at times ashamed of myself,  
since a virgin consecrated to God at birth  
cannot without shame ever love an earthly thing;  
but who can be guarded or protected against love?  
or who does not catch fire next to a flame?  
1050 Poor me, against my will I love and burn  
next to my lord, whom I both shun and seek  
after I've fled him; afterwards, I repent,  
doubtful of my own will and of his as well.

And I know not what I'm searching for or long for,  
1055 and whether it's more unbecoming and less convenient  
to love him as a sister or as a servant.  
But if he should scorn a sister's ardent love,  
let being a servant be of some help to me,  
and to call myself a maid and humble servant.

(SCENE FOUR)

QUEEN MOTHER, ROSMONDA

[QUEEN]

1060 Daughter, to you alone it's perhaps not yet known  
that today king Germondo is due to arrive here.

ROSMONDA

On the contrary it is well known.

QUEEN

One would not think so.

ROSMONDA

What should I do? I don't know  
1065 of any special task.

QUEEN

O daughter,  
together with the queen-bride you, too,  
must welcome him. If he is that gentle lord,  
that king, that knight whom everyone speaks of,  
shortly he will be here to honor you.

ROSMONDA

1070 I think so.

QUEEN

How is it, then,  
that such a great king, on this great and festive day,  
you think of welcoming so casually?  
Why don't you adorn your charming limbs  
1075 with a precious dress? and accentuate  
with elegant clothes that beauty  
which kind and generous heaven gave to you,  
by accepting, dear daughter, as our custom  
demands, the golden crown, or the golden sash?  
1080 Beauty, if neglected and hidden in a humble dress,  
is almost like a rough, ill-polished gem  
that in worthless metal shines a little still.

ROSMONDA

This beauty of ours, whence females,  
happy and proud, so much boast of--  
1085 I deem it a harmful gift of nature,  
which damages its possessor as well as its admirer.  
A sensible maiden should hide it  
rather than flaunt it often to others  
in a carefree dance or at theatre.

QUEEN

This beauty

1090 is women's own prerogative, and dowry,  
and gift, dear daughter, and praise,  
just as courage and strength are man's very virtues.  
This, instead of boldness and eloquence  
or cunning mind, nature has given us;  
1095 and by this one gift she was more lavish  
than by the countless ones that she dispenses and grants  
to others;  
and with this we are made equal to--or, better yet, we win  
the wealthy, the wise, the eloquent, the industrious and  
the strong.  
ours are victories and triumphs and spoils and palms  
1100 and they are dearer and more beautiful  
and greater than those man boasts about--  
man stained with blood and full of wrath:  
for the bitter enemies defeated by them

hate such victories and those who win them;  
1105 instead, our lovers are vanquished by us,  
and they love the winners as well as the victory  
that made them surrender. Now, if man is foolish,  
if he refuses the ornament of fortitude,  
you must not call a woman wise  
1110 for scorning the title of being beautiful.

ROSMONDA

On the contrary, I used to think that  
modesty and shyness were our virtues--  
purity, pity, faith;  
and I thought that a woman's golden silence  
1115 equalled the merits of blissful eloquence.  
But, if another's beauty is,  
as you say, so dear, it is as dear to me--or so it seems  
to be--in so far as it is virtue's ornament and crown.

QUEEN

If it is an ornament, then it should not be neglected.

ROSMONDA

1120 If it is ornament to others, then it is its own also.  
And although, in my opinion, beautiful I am not  
as I may seem to you, who look at me  
with sweet maternal eyes, I must adorn myself,

and so if not beautiful, at least I will be adorned.  
1125 Not because of any new desire or pleasure  
but only to please you, it is most right  
that I should make your will my only law.

QUEEN

You speak the truth and you judge rightly and you  
think better.  
And I'd like to hope that to a noble guest  
1130 you'll look as you do to me, so that he often, sighing,  
may say to himself:  
"So beautiful and so lovely  
the daughters of Swedish princes can never be."

ROSMONDA

God forbid that anyone should sigh or weep for me  
or love me, or even pretend to love me.

QUEEN

Then  
you would not like, dear daughter,  
such a worthy king, so powerful in war,  
to sigh with such pure love for you  
as would make him long to crown  
1140 your hair and your limpid brow  
with a greater crown and a golden mantle,  
and make you (may Heaven hear our prayers)  
the noble queen of magnanimous people?

ROSMONDA

Mother, I don't want to deny it, deep-seated in my mind  
1145 this thought is already secret and firm-  
to live an unattached and solitary life  
in chaste freedom; for I would rather keep  
the precious worth of my virginity intact  
than gain crowns and sceptres.

QUEEN

1150 Young lady, it is clear that  
you hardly understand how grave  
and wearisome mortal life's burden is.  
Our humanity is like a heavy  
yoke, which nature and Heaven impose,  
1155 which no woman or man yet single or alone  
can ever bear; therefore, one leans  
on to the other, whenever love joins  
husband and wife with a concordant will,  
dividing between them tasks and toils,  
1160 And one, then, receives life from the other  
almost with equal share, and so they make their burden  
light,  
their load pleasant, and their yoke delightful.  
Tell me, who ever saw an unmatched ox  
pulling alone the once common load,  
1165 and wearily plough on, lowing along the long furrows?

But a stranger thing seems to me the sight  
of a woman isolated who treads  
happy life's sweet fields in vain;  
and experience, teacher of good deeds,  
1170 teaches it well to the one who is concerned with truth,  
because the noble lord, for whom Heaven  
chose me as his companion--and its will was one with  
my own--  
helped me, while he was alive,  
to bear whichever hardship and trouble  
1175 nature and chance are wont to bring, in such a way  
that I nearly felt relieved of it; nor did my soul,  
afterward,  
suffer anything that seemed excessive grief.  
But since death separated us--ah death,  
which I will always honor, always call bitter--  
1180 having been left alone and under a heavy burden,  
I fear that I may fall while on my path,  
and with much pain and oppressed by worries,  
through the last days of my life,  
I can hardly drag this old, weak body of mine.  
1185 Alas, nor do I ever press again  
my disconsolate, widowed bed,  
without bathing it with nocturnal tears,  
remembering that there I used to see,  
well marked, dear signs of my beloved  
1190 lord, and that it heeded and welcomed

pleasures, rest, sweet sleep,  
soft whispers, kisses, words,  
as faithful confidant of my faithful love,  
of secret thoughts, and lofty counseling.

1195 But where are you forcibly taking me,  
my still enamored mind?  
Let me return where my duty compels me to go.  
If my dear beloved lord  
gave me joy and honors,

1200 often I, too, made his anxieties easier;  
and just as his good counsel worked in me,  
in the same measure (if I'm not mistaken) my comfort  
worked in him, and so my desire to dress  
in the same color as his and to bear together

1205 all that is most grievous and most bothersome  
in the course of life. And while he was intent  
on tightening or slackening the reins  
of the victorious Goths, or on taking up arms,  
on arousing or extinguishing the fires

1210 of civil strife or even of foreign war,  
he was pleased to place upon me  
his whole domestic burden. And for a while with him  
I spent  
this mortal life, if not in happiness  
(for happy our mortal state cannot be),

1215 at least in gladness and in fortune;  
only unfortunate because that day

was not also my last as well, and did not shut  
these tired limbs in that tomb  
where he took with him our love and my delight,  
1220 and keeps them ever buried.  
Oh, may an equal companion and an equal life  
be destined for you; and such,  
judging by what I think of him, king Germondo would be.  
You, if it should happen that he bows and bends before  
you,  
1225 do not appear loath to welcome such a lover.

ROSMONDA

If, of all of us still in our prime,  
the wisest is the one who thinks she knows the least,  
and places her aged mother's wisdom  
before the advice of the young  
1230 in measuring things, I, too, shall meanwhile  
dare confide what, talking to others, I learned.  
A man's company can somewhat lighten  
anxiety, and lessen the burden  
that makes a woman's life so grave.  
1235 But if in certain things it brings relief  
it presses us more in others, and almost crushes us,  
and brings, rather than removes,  
a greater pain to a wife. And still  
it is possible to deem  
1240 a husband's will--or, rather his ruling--

whatever it may be, severe or sweet--a very heavy burden.  
Now is not the care of children  
a very heavy care? To an unhappy mother  
do not their nocturnal travels  
1245 and their journeys in the coldest winter,  
and each wandering that entangles wayfarers,  
poverty, exile, and other risks,  
and pale deaths and long illnesses,  
illnesses of sides and stomach, fevers, seem heavy  
enough? And if I hear the truth,  
1250 pregnancy, also, is a heavy burden,  
and a long one, and painful is childbirth.  
So that a child, who is scion of the marriage,  
is scion only to his father, but a burden to his mother--  
a grave burden before, and during birth,  
1255 nor is it lighter afterwards. Even because of all this,  
with which virginal life is unburdened,  
marriage debases and encumbers us.  
What will I say, if it should ever happen  
that husband and wife disagree, or if a woman  
1260 meets a proud, crude, and foolish man?  
Unhappy slavery and a rough yoke  
must be called hers then. But even if they're in harmony  
in soul, in will, and in counsel,  
and one lives in the other: what's the result?  
1265 Is this, perhaps, not a life of apprehensions?  
Therefore, the more she loves, the more she knows

that she is loved, a noble woman  
is subject to countless thoughts  
and adds to her own feelings the hidden cares  
1270 of her faithful spouse, as if her very own.  
She fears with his fear, suffers for his grief,  
grieves and weeps with his tears,  
and with his yearning she sighs and moans.  
And although she's safe in a closed room  
1275 or on a high mountain or in a strong and lofty tower,  
often she's also exposed to adverse chances  
and to the dangers of an uncertain battle.  
Examples of this I need not look for anywhere else,  
for I have a lavish abundance of our own.  
1280 And I take them from you, who at times  
offer me as arms against your judgement  
other reasons.  
But if, after the final passage the husband  
at last returns to the mighty Ancient Mother,  
1285 she feels the pangs of bitter death;  
and dies at once along with him  
to pleasure and delight, and lives in mourning.  
Thus, I would conclude with undeniable proofs  
that marriage is painful and burdensome  
1290 For in it, sterile or fecund life--  
whether it be loved or hated, brings on  
prompt apprehensions, vexations and pangs

almost in equal measure.

And I do not shun and scorn it  
solely to avoid human sorrows;

1295 but a more noble desire, a more chaste zeal  
induces me to a virginal life.

It would please me more to hurl lances  
at times in the hunt, and draw the bow,  
and chase with shouts the steps and course

1300 of a foaming wild boar, and having severed its head,  
bring it instead of a celebrated palm;  
since in war I cannot cover my hair

with a shining helmet, nor bear the shield  
that with its pure silver resembles the moon,

1305 while curbing with one hand a noble steed  
and with the other brandishing the sword and the spear,  
just as, in ancient days, those ferocious women did  
who from this famous and cold earth  
waged war against the farthest realms.

1310 But if I'm not allowed to hope so much,  
at least by living free I shall resemble  
a doe free in a solitary place,  
not an unyoked ox in a badly ploughed field.

#### QUEEN

There is no mortal state so tranquil--

1315 whatever it may be--as not to allow a cunning tongue

to enumerate countless miseries about it:  
however, leaving aside models and ages  
of different lives, firmly I declare  
that you were not born solely for yourself.

1320 For me, who gave you life, for your brother  
who was born from the same womb, for this undefeated  
glorious city, you were also born.

Now why, then (oh let your futile feelings cease!)  
do you wish, to live wild and cold  
1325 and lonesome in the manner of a solitary wild beast?  
The good of our kingdom  
and of your dear brother demands that you bend your neck  
to the sweet yoke on such a happy day.  
Will you place your will before your country,  
1330 your brother and your mother? Oh, does not love of your  
mother  
compel you? Can you not see that I  
am reaching the end of my mortal course?  
Why then is what delights me refused?  
Do you not want me to see, before I come to my end,  
1335 my weary life renewed in my own  
image, in my grandchildren  
born from both my beloved children?

ROSMONDA

Let me not be the one who takes away from you  
the happiness of lovely grandchildren. It is meet

1340 that a daughter obey her sensible mother.

QUEEN

Worthy of you is your answer, and dear to me.

Now go; adorn yourself and put on your diadem, dear  
daughter.

[SCENE FIVE]

QUEEN MOTHER (alone)

A grieving woman is not unhappy  
if in her children she can find comfort to her grief,  
1345 and lean on them: and through them it is as if she  
extends herself,  
as well as the doubtful course of her life;  
thus she lays down her troubles, her heavy burdens  
like an excessive useless load  
that hinders or, rather, upsets one's journey.  
1350 Because of her children she is neither seen  
or considered to be scorned or alone or abandoned  
or a hateful or loathed old lady.  
And the number of children is dear and sufficient  
if one of them is a male, female the other.  
1355 In such a number my happiness  
is fulfilled today, or it renews itself  
if ever it was lacking. Happy mother  
of lucky progeny, and happy day!

[Certainly children are God's great gift;  
1360 and He who granted them to us still preserves them,  
watches over them, defends them, rather augments them.]  
[Oh, how I see mine, grown now to the peak  
of valor, fortune, and beauty.]  
But here comes the king: I see a light  
1365 of my own eyes that shines with purple and gold,  
while the other adorns itself with different luster.

[SCENE SIX]

QUEEN MOTHER, TORRISMONDO.

[QUEEN]

After much reasoning and many prayers  
Rosmonda finally yields to our will,  
but not as if she felt any pleasure.  
1370 Rather, I saw her sighing, as she was leaving,  
half sad, half cheerful. Oh, let nuptials  
to nuptials be tied, from which pleasure may grow,  
and let parties and games and dances multiply!  
Let her be happy (so I hope) to have listened to  
1375 both--her old mother, and her brother.

TORRISMONDO

He is not wise who matches

so stubborn a maiden with so powerful a king  
against her will; but, if I'm not mistaken,  
it would be a like madness to bring unwilling dogs  
1380 to the hunt. But let it be as it must: let him have her  
if he wants her.

QUEEN

But with a happy result.

TORRISMONDO

Let her be happy, if she can. But nothing should  
be lacking  
to our greatness and our merit--  
elegant clothing, wealth and pomp.  
1385 Let a hundred illustrious maidens deck themselves  
with golden crowns and golden belts,  
and let as many equally noble matrons  
also wear golden crowns and golden belts,  
following Alvida. She must shine with gems and gold,  
1390 like the clear sky scattered with stars,  
happy among her followers.  
Let her have sceptre, necklace, crown and cloak,  
and whatever new ornament, whatever artifact  
of ancient clothing may augment her beauty.  
1395 But this is your care and makes you worthy of praise,  
for, while waiting for the king you took  
nocturnal hours from sleep for so lovely a task.

Now to you, o knights, to you I turn,  
bold youths. Let some raise a high,  
1400 sublime castle of cold and solid snow,  
and crown it with walls all around;  
let them prepare its defense, and reinforce it with four  
lofty towers at its four corners;  
and from the white pile, let a black ensign  
1405 rise to the sky and flutter in the air,  
and let some defend it while others assault it.  
Let others show their worth in the race,  
others in jumping, others in hurling  
balls of heavy and hard marble,  
1410 others the skill and art of the iron  
which pushes and ejects powder and fire.  
Let another be seen as the master of shooting arrows  
at a lofty target; and at a high mark  
fixed on the top of a revolving pole  
1415 like a flying bird, let him aim and shoot  
rebounding arrows, until they fall  
loose to the ground. Let others, in quick fencing,  
strike or dodge the blows, and on their opponent's  
forehead  
inflict a wound with the blow, a shame  
1420 to the eyelid of him who is hit.  
Let others arm their right hands with heavy lead  
and let them be wrapped around with rough, hard leather,  
so that their enemy groans under the hard weight.

Let another on the tightrope venture his steps  
1425 and turn and balance himself suspended in air.  
Let another be sent on high spinning around  
as though on a wheel; another pass from hoop to hoop  
gliding, to resemble a fish in water;  
another play, naked, among sharp swords.  
1430 Let others, in the form of a wheel or a great bow,  
lead and start a merry dance anew  
while singing the great deeds of ancient heroes:  
at the king's order, whose voice directs  
and commands the dance; and ringing timbrels  
1435 with other cheerful sounding metals  
and bells tied together behind the right knee  
will mingle with the piercing voices and the clear song.  
Let another leap, armed, to the sound  
of a shrill trumpet, or a melodious bagpipe, now slow,  
1440 now quick, causing during his various leaps  
the swords to sound and flash when struck.  
Let others, where in the bitter cold a burning fire  
of fir-wood blazes, crackles and sizzles,  
turn in a long ring around it:  
1445 so that the last one falls into the scorching fire,  
when the chain is broken, and rising again  
is lifted on a high seat by his comrades.  
Let others, there, where ice is hard and thickened,  
lead their almost-flying horses.

1450 Let others, in a contest, on the snowy ice  
push the beasts now tamed but wild once,  
who have such long and branched horns  
and can conquer the wind and the air in a race.  
Let others, armed with breastplate and helmet,  
1455 joust striking against the chest and the back,  
trying to pierce the hard coat of mail  
and break through the iron and break the spear.  
And I (since king Germondo is almost near  
the royal seat) I'll ride to meet him  
1460 with thousands and thousands of knights in full array,  
wearing my colors crimson and white,  
which, as a trial, I have chosen among the rest.  
Meanwhile my other various glittering squadrons  
on horseback or on foot will be gathered  
1465 by my good commander-in-chief around the lofty royal  
palace,  
and my metal steeds, whence thunders  
the flame that comes out of the burning mouth  
with black smoke, and my speedy chariots;  
and let them cover a large stretch of country,  
1470 under my victorious and great banner.

(THE END OF ACT TWO)

CHORUS

Generated in Heaven above,  
the sovereign laws that govern  
sage and chaste works and words  
that maintain decorum are not extinct:  
1475 for here, among the deep snow and hard ice,  
and among shields and spears,  
it has its home and seat,  
and lives in safety among ministers and servants.  
Vain and arrogant thoughts  
1480 do not ever nest in a noble soul;  
nor, even though reason may free itself of the rein  
which love uses for others,  
does it strip the soul of its noble daring--  
but, rather, it inspires it with ancient examples.  
1485 And she (Rosmonda) could even press a shiny helmet  
upon her forehead, and pursue in the hunt  
not only a stag or fallow-deer,  
but the hostile throng of a foreign nation,  
like Ippolita by Termodonte's banks,  
1490 pressing against the armed back of a large steed  
with her left breast--  
a high queen, proud of her glory.  
But if she herself is a warrior,  
who will ever have her as a trophy?

1495 or who will be able to bring her bound or a captive?  
Like Hercules or Theseus  
who will have the everlasting fame of a noble endeavor,  
if no spark of love is lit in her?

O may golden hope's ancient daughter,  
1500 immortal fame, who prolongs time and years,  
and from the dark tomb  
removes man at times, snatching him from death,  
tell this lady, who resembles them so much,  
about the ancient women and the illustrious modern ones  
1505 who, under sluggish Arcturus,  
had purity of heart as well as strength.  
Although over the tangled roads  
along its circular course the sun takes  
its steeds turned away from this unconquered palace,  
1510 it is not ever so clouded or so far,  
that with its rays riveted on us  
it may not still admire uncommon merits.

May a chaste mother's  
chaste prayers win over her virgin daughter,  
1515 and may evil fortune now aim her bow elsewhere.  
And let one couple hold on tight  
and be bound to the other, and be more inflamed,  
and let high virtue shine in time of doubt still more.



1540 ready to sail with any wind  
as it pleases the king. I must speak  
with the leaders of Sweden and with Germondo,  
so that he turns his heart away from his first aim;  
and I shall speak to him. But, while the king is  
expected,

1545 I'll let the others rest. In the meantime  
many things I think over within me.  
A demanding condition and hard law--  
this is for us, who are ministers and servants!  
All that is grievous and harsh down here

1550 we must do, and often we give  
severe judgments and stern punishments.  
Delight and pleasure kings reserve  
to themselves together with the dispensing of graces  
and gifts,

Nor do I regret trying a dubious ford

1555 that looks less turbulent and less resounding  
to one who gazes less attentively and expects less:  
for each toil and each risk  
will be made light by my king's love and merits.  
But often I dread to attempt it vainly,

1560 if he himself does not, sooner or later, cross it.  
Let fortune favor my advice;  
Let the king of Sweden yield to the king of the Goths  
this love, this day and this marriage:  
the first honor belongs to the ancient Goths;



[SCENE TWO]

ROSMONDA (alone)

O mighty Fortune, with a deceiving appearance  
now you flatter even me,  
who by your favor was brought high,  
1590 and from height to height, you still seem  
to bring me almost from mountain to mountain,  
there where I fear the greatest fall. And I almost see,  
or think I see, appearances and forms  
of deceits, fears and perils.  
1595 Oh, how many precipices! The time is approaching  
when I must renounce your deceiving pomp  
and your false gifts. Why do I delay?  
Why don't I leave behind the false pretences  
and the false person and the true name,  
1600 if my valor does not give me safety and defense?  
It was enough for me to be called a king's sister  
and a king's daughter. Must I usurp even the nuptials  
of a high queen, a daring bride  
and feigning wife and not a truthful lover?  
1605 Could I bend a fierce king's soul  
that perhaps is turned elsewhere, and thus  
in the end annul my real mother's vows  
at whose tomb I often wept  
looking for praises of true mercy?

1610 O let it not be so. I give back, I finally give back  
that which fortune and fate lent me.

I have enjoyed it for a long time. I lived a proud  
and fortunate maiden, and now, happy about my lot,  
I will live in a verdant cloister.

1615 Let someone else, if it suits her more, let someone  
else take

this gift of yours, Fortune, and you dispense it  
to someone else, as you wish, or as is just.

[SCENE THREE]

TORRISMONDO, GERMONDO

[TORRISMONDO]

On earth, hostility of mortals  
should be equally mortal and come to an end;

1620 but friendships should be eternal.

Now let the wrath and rage all be extinct,  
together with the valiant ones who, dying in war,  
once stained the earth and dyed the waves  
three and four times with blood. And here,

1625 let the peace and union of these kingdoms begin  
or be re-established and welded together again.

GERMONDO

You were already the better part of me,  
now no part is mine, but all is yours,  
or it will be: unless true friendship  
1630 scorns all that love yearns for,  
because love, which wins everything, is won only by  
friendship.

You give me to Alvida. And at the same time  
you alone give Alvida to me. My blissful love  
and my life are thus your gift.

1635 For now I live for you, and a lover am I,  
and will be a groom. And if, because of your prayers,  
she becomes my lady and my wife,  
and I gather love where there was just disdain,  
what could be a greater gift? Crowns and sceptres  
1640 or triumphs and palms I value much less.

TORRISMONDO

But I am also yours. And by giving myself  
and the one who believes herself to be mine, in part  
I fulfill  
my duty; but I do not give the gift  
that exonerates me from my obligation and you from your  
embarrassment.

1645 Could I but give you a noble woman's,  
haughty heart, which she keeps hidden from me,  
as I will try to make mine open before you.

So that all these promises may not prove vain  
let Alvida love Germondo because of me  
1650 and let Germondo love me. In vain she awaits  
revenge of outrage and shame on my part.  
You, avenge her, for you have boldness  
and strength to do it.

GERMONDO

Your outrages

I'm ready to avenge. From the cold Chariot  
1655 you will see first Vulturinus and Auster move  
and Boreas blow from the blazing deserts  
and the sun will set in the East,  
and will rise from famous Calpe  
and from the other sublime high column,  
1660 and the first ray will be seen to light up  
Atlas' proud forehead,  
and the ocean in its salty, ample bosom  
will house bears, contrary to its custom.  
and the rivers will return to their ample sources  
1665 and the great monsters of the sea will be seen flying  
on top of beech-trees or on top of elms  
along with fishes deer live in water,  
before I plunge such friendship into Lethe  
for a new love. To merits, name, and deeds  
1670 an almost eternal remembrance is due,

and I such a deed recall, as well as others:  
for grace ever engenders grace.

[SCENE FOUR]

TORRISMONDO and ALVIDA

[TORRISMONDO]

Queen, to honor your nuptials  
has come Sweden's king Germondo,  
1675 a brave knight of high renown,  
and, what is more important, he's our friend,  
nor less yours than mine; nor did his noble  
right hand cause the Norwegians so much harm  
as he now hopes and longs to serve you.  
1680 May it please you, then, to offer him your right hand  
as a token of faith and lasting peace.  
Do it because he is mine and he is yours,  
and because he loves you so dearly and because he  
deserves it.

ALVIDA

It is enough that he is your friend: I ask no more.  
1685 For a woman must consider friends  
only those that her husband esteems. And merit and esteem,  
worth and love, unnecessary for me  
because of you only are dear to me. For I am yours,  
and I must do only what pleases you.

TORRISMONDO

1690 This is the faith and hope I place in your love  
and good judgment. Let not bitter memory  
upset, today, such a lofty and happy day,  
or your demeanor or your heart.

ALVIDA

Never in my heart will enter pleasure  
1695 or annoyance that is not also yours.  
For my will is also yours, and I gave it to you  
when I gave myself to you; and yours is my soul.  
I can, if I displease you, hate myself,  
I can, if you love him, love Germondo.

TORRISMONDO

1700 Let our love extinguish all hate,  
and let no hate extinguish our love.

[SCENE FIVE]

MAID, ALVIDA

[MAID]

The good king, my master and your servant,  
sends you these gifts, noble queen:  
he does not consider his kingdom worthy of serving you  
1705 nor would he think so even if his proud sceptre  
made Garamanths, Ethiopians and Indians  
tremble, and, with them, also Euphrates and Tigris,  
Acheloos, Nile, Orontes, Hydaspes and Ganges,  
Athos, Parnassus, Taurus, Atlas, Olympus,  
1710 and whatever other famous horrid mountain rises so  
or is so rocky far away from us.

QUEEN [ALVIDA]

These are the lovely and precious gifts  
of a valiant king and a kind bearer.

MAID

No gift can match your worth;  
1715 but do not feel any disdain toward the donor  
who now presents to you the crown and cloak  
and this image sculptured in a precious  
jewel.

ALVIDA

In a contest, richness and art  
compete, or the work surpasses the material;  
1720 and so his courtesy equals  
the illustrious renown of its bright worth;  
nor did he consider me unworthy of such honor.  
But what praises or thanks can I give  
your master? Or who will render them for me?

MAID

1725 'T is kindness to accept them; and the welcomed gift  
binds the giver with eternal obligation.

[SCENE SIX]

ALVIDA, NURSE

[ALVIDA]

What gifts do I see? What words do I hear?  
What image is this? Whom does it resemble?  
Me. It is I, I recognize my face,  
1730 not my dress. It does not seem  
Norwegian or Gothic. And why did he have  
the crown and the shiny helmet engraved at my feet,  
and why is the right hand armed with piercing arrow?  
And the crowned lion is submitted to the yoke--

1735 what sign is on the other side, and the frieze around it  
made of myrtle and palm tied together?  
These sewn and scattered on the cloak,  
are arrows and lamps and intricate knots--  
a masterful work; and by a wondrous master  
1740 marvelous honor of a lofty crown  
as it shines in its vermilion enamel!  
They are drops of blood. I know the gift.  
The dear prize of the sweet revenge  
as well as the signs of my weeping  
1745 once more I see, and I can also remember the time and  
place.  
And you, dear nurse, do you recognize the gift  
of a famous joust? This is the prize  
--only this--and this is the crown offered  
to the winner of the perilous game  
1750 who is, consequently, invited to another fight.  
And I gave it, for such was the will of my unfortunate  
father and my dead brother.

NURSE

I recognize the crown, and I remember the day  
of the famous tournaments, and the uncertain tourney  
1755 once resounding with trumpets and arms;  
but, of the other things you have spoken of,  
some are manifest, others are hidden.  
For the first five years of your tender age had not

yet passed when your old father,  
1760 handed you over to me, so that I could nourish you,  
saying: "You will nourish her on your chaste breast  
the revenge for my ancient kingdom  
for my tribute and the insult and deceits  
and snares. It is fate decrees it".  
I knew afterwards that the most famous magicians  
had predicted high revenge to the king.

ALVIDA

But first a new insult augmented the grief  
and increased my blind father's loss.  
1770 Because in sending help to the Danes at war  
with his son, who in spite of his inexperience,  
became a leader of brilliant squadrons  
against the strong Swedes, in whom Germondo,  
already famous for action, inculcated more courage,  
1775 my brother, oppressed and wearied by the ferocious  
enemy, fell at the first assault.  
He, adorned in silk and golden spoils,  
which I had woven with my own hand,  
was all sparkling, as he rode on a steed  
1780 that seemed to have been born of fire and wind;  
and he was wearing the crown on his brow still,  
which the powerful warrior broke and pulled from him;  
and he killed his horse and scattered his arms,

and made him fall on a bloody mound,  
1785 where, alas, he died in his early youth.  
And the proud winner of his spoils  
went from there; and the sorry, sad sound  
and tearful cry spread all around.  
Other losses, other wars, other battles,  
1790 other deaths followed in a brief time;  
nor did certain, reliable peace follow afterwards,  
nor were hearts ever still, or wrath extinct.  
Here, at the joust the king my father  
is gathering knights, and as the herald  
1795 proclaims in one place and another,  
a rich prize is promised to the winner.  
Famous knights come to the test  
from strange kingdoms to ours,  
and from far shores come to our beaches,  
1800 knights adorned in fine silver and gold, in jewels  
and purple,  
in other colors and lovely emblems.  
The land of ample Nicosia is all sparkling  
with arms and soldiers. The field all around  
echoes with various shouts and diverse sounds.  
1805 The king dwells outside of the high city,  
on the high throne sitting with his counselors;  
I, among noble women, on the opposite side.  
A thousand lances are broken in a thousand clashes,  
and a thousand swords make sparks come out

1810 from helmets and coats of mail: the ground is  
encumbered  
with fallen warriors and falling ones:  
doubtful is the victory, and uncertain the merit.  
And while the palm was undecided still,  
there appeared a knight in dark armor,  
1815 who seemed a stranger, with gray feathers  
scattered and loose as they blew in the air,  
who seemed in his first charge a dreadful lightning  
bolt  
suddenly followed by a bleak tempest.  
Having already broken new lances, the king beckons  
1820 that I bring a new pole as a gift to the knight.  
With this, with a fierce and hard blow  
he cast to the ground the one who was winning.  
Afterwards, not less powerful in its many assaults  
did the cruel sword appear in its whirling. He won,  
1825 and then was crowned to the sound of trumpets.  
I wanted to place on his head a golden crown  
but he refused to show us his head uncovered:  
so, as I placed it, he took it on his helmet.  
With courtesy he managed to conceal  
1830 his face and his name, and suddenly left.  
Nor was he ever seen again. But in talking about him,  
warriors and women were at odds.  
I only was told--and well remember how--  
that the afflicted knight was leaving

1835 as my servant, and as fortune's harsh enemy.  
Now I recognize his crown and his merit.  
Was it Germondo then? Did Germondo dare  
against the Norwegians in dangerous joust,  
within Norway, expose himself to death?  
1840 Such boldness, such heart in a useless deed?  
Then such secrecy and such love?  
And so little faith in a true lover?  
And if he was not the one, whence, how and when  
did he receive the crown? Or whom did he take  
it from?  
1845 Who gave it to him? And why does he send it now?  
What meaning has the cloak and the sculptured jewel?  
Or what thoughts are these, and what words?

NURSE

I do not know; but time hides many things,  
others it reveals, while in part it changes or disguises  
itself;  
1850 it changes hearts, thoughts, customs, and works.

ALVIDA

Do you know the sign of a changed will?  
Are the dear gifts those of a lover or a friend?  
Who tempts me--Germondo or his loyal friend?  
Does he tempt a wife or a friend; a lover or a bride?  
1855 Should I keep them, or send them back?

And, if I keep them, shall I keep them hidden?  
Or in the open? Uncovered or locked,  
can they offend my dear master?  
Will speaking or my silence offend him?

1860 Will fear or boldness annoy him?  
Will he be pleased by my esteem or my contempt?  
Must I perhaps fail so that he should not err?  
Or should I perhaps love so that he does not love?  
Or rather hate so that he does not hate?

NURSE

1865 What contempts, what hates, what loves  
do you speak of, my child? And what fear encumbers  
you?

ALVIDA

I fear his fear, not mine alone;  
the mere suspicion--rather, the foreknowledge, alas,  
of his jealousy makes me jealous;  
1870 If too much trust deceives my master,  
let trust fail in him, or let it grow in me,  
or let it believe in me alone: let him keep it for me,  
for mine is his trust, and was given to me.  
Who took it away from me, or who usurped it?  
1875 Or who makes it common or divides it?  
O how can anyone equal me in his trust?

But perhaps it is not excessive trust.  
Perhaps it is jealousy, that disguises itself  
under false appearances. Oh, poor me,  
1880 oh, what other reason is there for my grief  
if not his fear? If he does not fear,  
why does he avoid me?

NURSE

'T is your own fear that makes you see fear in him,  
or better still, it creates it for you; and if you  
abandon it  
1885 he will not--I cannot believe he will fear.

ALVIDA

Which lover does not fear another lover?  
Which love does not harm another love?

NURSE

Faithful love, I believe, and a faithful lover.

ALVIDA

But faith was upset by faith, at times,  
1890 and love by love. If she was first to love  
Germondo, a powerful and famous king,  
knight of great excellence and fame,  
and, as others see him, handsome and graceful;

if she loved him like an enemy, or if he loved me  
as his enemy,  
1895 she kept her love hidden from her friend  
this is no light reason for grave suspicion.

MAID

If the rare beauty, value and clear fame  
of the knight who gave you these wealthy gifts  
cannot, O queen, make you love him,  
1900 of course they will not make your king jealous.  
For pity's sake, clear the anxiety and doubt from  
your heart  
which now, almost, blur your delight.  
Not long ago, your sleep was perturbed  
by a deceptive dream which never entirely keeps  
1905 its vain promises or menaces,  
and the nocturnal nightmare terrified you  
with roaming ghosts or phantoms;  
and now that you are awake, new ghosts you imagine,  
and suspect friends and even your master;  
1910 you suspect the gifts, the one who brings them,  
and the one who sends them, and the figures and  
the signs;  
you alone are the cause of your own fear.

ALVIDA

For which revenge, then, does dreaded destiny  
still keep me? And which fraud  
1915 or which deceits must I avenge?  
Which is the deceiver? Where is the fraud?  
Alas, who covers it, or who hides it?  
Let it be at once uncovered, or let it be hidden  
eternally. I fear, I fear, alas!  
1920 And if I'm the cause of my own fear,  
then it's myself I fear. And I find trust only  
in the sweet glance of my dear master  
and in his happy features and handsome looks.  
Let him comfort and assure me.  
1925 Let him clear away the fear, scatter the ice.  
Let him make me think dear the gifts and the behavior  
and the givers and the messengers and the words and the  
works;  
and, if so he wishes, hateful. I will adorn myself for  
him.

[SCENE SEVEN]

ALVIDA, QUEEN MOTHER

[ALVIDA]

They are gifts from Sweden. King Germondo  
1930 sends them--he who is your son's friend,  
and, if so he wills, even mine. And I welcome  
whatever delights and pleases the king, my master.

QUEEN

In giving, a courteous high tradition  
is maintained by the king our friend; but such wealthy  
1935 are extraordinarily, exceptionally beautiful,  
O queen, and quite become your merit.  
And we will have crowns and jewels  
to give in exchange. The gift is an honor;  
he should be honored as he is honoring:  
1940 for friendship is firm and faith steady  
if they arise from honor; all else is unsure.

ALVIDA

Sure is the love, sure is the honor I owe  
to my high master, sure is the faith  
that compels me to honor those who are dearest to him.

QUEEN

1945 Often we honor the king himself by honoring his friends  
and his most faithful servants. Today is a solemn day,  
a joyful, lofty day, and the royal palace,  
adorned, already shines and so does the sacred temple.  
King Germondo has arrived with the illustrious leaders  
1950 of our kingdom and the eminent knights,  
a messenger from the Heruli and one from the Huns;  
the king of Dacia has also sent messengers and gifts.

[END OF ACT THREE]

CHORUS

Love, you have hate confronting you and with  
him you fight,  
with him you fight, o Love,  
1955 and in another turn  
him you destroy, and the eternal world is born.  
A new clearer splendor,  
that does not shine to our eyes,  
and new, more beautiful forms  
1960 of shining sun and limpid stars appear.  
New victories in a high and supreme kingdom,  
other palms you value  
than bloodied spoils or vanquished kings,  
other glory, free of wrath and contempt.  
1965 Love, undefeated in war,  
why don't you conquer and triumph on earth?  
Why don't you embellish, o powerful conqueror,  
with happy trophies  
this earthly enclosure  
1970 with happy pomp, there where is torment and pain?  
Why do proud disdain and burning wrath  
down here and among the gods  
fail to vanish and melt away  
since neither god nor man can fly faster or save  
himself from you  
1975 Whatever wrath upsets in us, now you assuage:

you extinguish its sparks,  
light your flames and keep them tranquil.  
Love, tighten the knots of the ancient chain  
with which the world is still bound,  
1980 after you chain and nearly slay rage itself.

Oh, let not your unworthy enemy be your equal  
though fortune turns  
and turns again these things,  
by alternating sweet life or bleak death.

1985 Whether, inconstant, it gives him his unsteady  
kingdom,  
whether it binds or loosens the bonds  
in high or in low places,  
hate will never equal your sublime worth.  
You, stronger in pleasure and pain,  
1990 bring better luck,  
and these and other spheres you adorn and command.  
Whether the firmament's luminous doors open or close,  
as the sun goes or returns,  
such is the unequal power that nights and days  
possess.

1995 Against fierce discord, Love, you compete,  
as light with shadow.  
But how could you ever take up arms  
against friendship? Ah, who ever has heard such a  
thing?  
If friendship you offend, you offend yourself;

2000 if your worth sends it away,  
you drive yourself away, and tear yourself  
if friendship you divide and send away from you.  
Aim your bow for it, kind Lord:  
let it arm itself for you  
2005 and grasp and whirl the sword for you.  
Let no new wrath and new offence begin,  
and may neither affection  
upset the two kings' valiant breasts.  
Ah, Love, make every thought a friendly thought.  
2010 Love, be at peace with yourself,  
for true friendship is true love.



as does your valor, which equals  
your greatness and your name;  
and your eminent knights and illustrious leaders.  
2035 I omit so many ministers and so many servants,  
so many ancient and new riches of yours.  
Without you, so great and powerful,  
the humble populace would be poorly defended  
by a fragile tower, whereas you are war's  
2040 lofty towers and towering rocks.  
He who makes alliance then with you gives these shores  
a new defense, and newly supports them  
with your honor, assuring and arming them  
against perils and most cruel assaults.  
2045 We will not fear that from a remote place  
a greedy throng may come, plowing the sea  
to plunder us, or that a high fire may burn down  
the already ripe ears of wheat or set our homes aflame.  
For your virtue repressed and drove  
2050 outrage and shame far from us.  
Threatening, you went out, o unconquered kings,  
and one coursed toward the sunset, the other toward  
the dawn,  
divided at first, joined in war afterwards,  
like two torrents in mid-winter,  
2055 or two winged thunderbolts following the lightning,  
when the sky lights up and resounds soon after.

But nobly you left the traces of your uncommon valor  
scattered around, whether injured, dead,  
broken, defeated, wounded, oppressed and exhausted,  
2060 leaders, soldiers, kings, famous heroes.  
And in a thousand souls scorn still flares up,  
and the desire for high empire and revenge,  
which soon lights up, and dies down slowly,  
and hides during more peaceful times,  
2065 but reveals itself during troubled ones, showing  
itself  
the greater the longer it lay hidden.  
Now what do the Germans or the Greeks think?  
Or what terrible birth will Pannonia, pregnant  
with anger and arms, nourish in disdain?  
2070 On these things often within myself I muse.  
And already I do not see a safer way out  
or a wiser piece of advice, before the risk,  
than to unite the three famous kingdoms  
which great father Ocean almost surrounds  
2075 and separates from others and joins into one.  
For every nation prospers through harmony,  
and through discord totters and ultimately falls.  
Two kingdoms are already united; and this day  
that ties and knots Alvida and Torrismondo,  
2080 could unite you and Rosmonda  
who's her equal as I reckon. But in all this glory,

it will be highly meritorious not to abandon yourself  
to feelings.

Between you, there are many bonds and ties  
of friendship, love, steady trust;

2085 and none must be missing. Let this new  
and dear bond be added to those first ones. And let  
nothing now

be lacking of happy peace, now that it descends from  
Heaven

to three nations of archers expert in war.

No one in them has loved you more than I,

2090 though advanced in years. And this also strengthens  
my trust--

your goodness, your grace and wisdom:

so that I dare be first to speak about it.

But I am not alone in begging you. Along with me now  
begs

this old and venerable mother,

2095 this ancient earth, adorned with triumphs.

And these are her words and her prayers:

"O my children, o my glory, o my might,

because of my spoils and ancient palms of victory,

because of my famous victories in the world,

2100 because of the high deeds which make fame eternal,

because of the crowns of your ancestors,

who were my own children and did not come from other  
countries,

I, old and weary, this favor now ask of you;

and that favor is right that's granted at the right  
age."

GERMONDO

2105 The wise thought of a wise old age  
is that which you now ponder, and I praise your words,  
and I appreciate your wishes, love and action.  
But so real, so firm and so constant  
is our friendship, and so did  
2110 love, trust, and valor bind two wandering kings,  
that no new nuptials could ever bind  
with a stronger or firmer knot.

COUNSELOR

If a knot was never loosened by another knot,  
but if being similar they grow and strengthen each other,  
2115 true friendship will not be undone by  
legitimate love: it will rather be made more firm.

GERMONDO

Let love, that can do this, confirm and strengthen  
faithful friendship.

COUNSELOR

I value more  
nuptials found on friendship:  
2120 others are dangerous.

GERMONDO

Great praise is often  
found there where risk is great.

COUNSELOR

Avoiding danger often is praised,  
when it is avoided by others.

GERMONDO

Boldness I esteem more,  
if a single daring man can make others dare.

COUNSELOR

2125 Now it is time for boldness, now it is time for counsel,  
and if audacity and counsel become one,  
injurious fortune vainly opposes  
or favors a mighty endeavor.  
But this still clear and peaceful time  
2130 requires swift foresight from you.  
The king of Norway joined his daughter  
to the king of the Goths. And today is the happy and  
sacred day  
that opens to others the way to lasting peace,  
as it was opened to you. Join nuptials to nuptials,  
2135 and be not the last to partake of so much love.

GERMONDO

I am the first in loving. I loved my friend,  
worthier in deeds but second in love,  
and I shall love him as long as my fighting spirit  
supports these quick or tired limbs.

2140 And I still remember that with an oath  
I gave him my faith, and he joined his to mine--  
that we'd each be ready to avenge outrages  
to the other. Now, let not a new pact  
upset or break the old one.

2145 And if, because of his joyful nuptials, he is satisfied  
with peaceful and tranquil conditions,  
I am happy for him. Because of him, I take shelter  
in peace's haven, and leave the battlefield  
and the awful storm and the adverse winds.

2150 Let true friendship, then, make the sea calm  
or resounding; the sky clear or cloudy;  
or let it wrap and surround me in iron,  
and dye mountains and waves with blood  
or, if it so wishes, let it dry and wipe the blood,  
2155 and remove the sword from my defenseless side.

Let true friendship make me also a lover,  
and, if it wishes, a husband; and let it extinguish  
all the burning torches of Love and Hymen,  
or let it augment Mar's flames and fire.

2160 You'll say this to the king: I approve and confirm  
that my true friend may release or bind me.

[SCENE TWO]

GERMONDO (alone)

It is not right that without proof a good man  
should be judged evil, or the evil good,  
for to lose a good friend  
2165 or one's precious existence is equally harmful;  
but in time these things will be known,  
for only time can prove that a man is just.  
But even if days, hours, years and decades,  
show Torrismondo to be a true friend,  
2170 I will not change my mind--and do not wish to--  
rather, my heart's inmost feelings I close off and shut up  
as much as I can; and I gather reasons with which to  
block suspicion, which is so easy and ready  
because of such obvious causes.  
2175 Oh, may not only this day but a long course of flying  
years  
confirm ever more my true  
and steady faith so that  
the unconquered king of the Goths and his Germondo  
may be an eternal example of friendship.  
2180 Yet the welcome and the rather odd manner of it

perturbs me still, and his mien, less calm  
than it used to be, and, after a few words,  
his long silence about his promised trust,  
our friendship, and our wanderings,  
2185 about the beloved lady and her disdain;  
and so does his brief stay after so much anguish.  
Thus the weight of scepter and of crown  
weighs a man down more, and often bends him over  
with a troubled forehead, and encumbers him with worries.  
2190 Only love is ever young, or grows old late.  
Neither a kingdom, hoped-for or attained,  
nor harm inflicted nor threatened war,  
ever caused me so much sighing,  
as love draws by the thousandfold  
2195 from my heart in dismay. O happy jousts,  
o my cherished trophies, crowns and arms,  
o victories, o toils, o wandering steps,  
to my thoughts you do not bring one tranquil hour  
without my lady. Wise counsels,  
2200 a different tranquillity, other nuptials, and other  
of true love, and new signs of friendship ways  
I praise. But, to unite us together,  
I lack neither a sister, a kingdom or a crown.  
But let Torrismondo decide. To him I have entrusted  
2205 the rule over my soul: so let him rule it.

[SCENE THREE]

ROSMONDA, TORRISMONDO

[ROSMONDA]

Easy is the speech that bares truth.

Therefore, to speak the truth,

I will not wrap myself in lengthy coils of  
adorned words. O king, I am your servant;

2210 and as your servant I was born and raised in my  
swaddling clothes.

TORRISMONDO

Are you not Rosmonda, then?

ROSMONDA

I am Rosmonda.

TORRISMONDO

Are you not my sister?

ROSMONDA

I do not deny it,  
high master.

TORRISMONDO

You rave too much, foolish one!  
What fear, what nonsense so burdens you

2215 that you dread so much to be my servant?  
Is this what makes you begin to refuse?

ROSMONDA

If one is born a woman, one is born a servant,  
by nature, by law and custom,  
of her father's and her brother's will.

2220 But among all others on earth the first and only  
sweet servitude is to serve one's father  
and mother, whose duty it is to divide  
their authority over the children. Neither age nor wisdom  
makes a brother's authority grievous.

TORRISMONDO

2225 Obey your mother, if you wish.

ROSMONDA

My mother is also my queen and my lady.

TORRISMONDO

Are you not Rusilla's only daughter?

ROSMONDA

I do not boast being either daughter or the only one  
of the queen of the fierce Goths.

TORRISMONDO

2230 And yet you are Rosmonda, and my sister?

ROSMONDA

I am a different Rosmonda, a different sister.

TORRISMONDO

Explain now your words, explain  
these confused anxieties.

ROSMONDA

My mother  
was your nurse, who also nursed Rosmonda.

TORRISMONDO

2235 Something strange and secret you are telling me,  
and something that displeases and vexes me.  
But lying is the vice of a servile soul:  
thus you are not a servant if you are not lying.

ROSMONDA

It was my old parents' ill luck  
2240 that made me a servant.

TORRISMONDO

Your own fortune or, rather, your merit

amends the fault of your father's luck.

ROSMONDA

My merit is in speaking the truth: the prize of freedom  
I await, if freedom is a fitting prize.

TORRISMONDO

2245 If this is true, it is truth with modesty,  
for a proud boasting would be less believed,  
if wise and prudent men must believe what is evil  
when not believing it would serve better.

ROSMONDA

There's little harm  
in the loss of one's opinion, which is almost a shadow,  
2250 and a false deceit of a feigned sister:  
it seems, rather, a great and undoubtedly certain gain.

TORRISMONDO

As if it were nothing to lose the kingdom of the Goths,  
which can be made so wealthy by its race of warriors,  
its generous women and illustrious leaders.  
2255 But say, how can you be the real Rosmonda,  
and my feigned sister, and false daughter  
of the queen of the ancient Goths?  
Who planned so great a deception, and kept it hidden

for so many, many years? And what destiny or force  
2260 compels you to reveal such fraud and conniving?

ROSMONDA

Briefly I'll answer for my mother and for myself.  
The deceit was brought about by gentle compassion,  
not by fraud,  
and compassion discloses it.

TORRISMONDO

Obscure are your words,  
for you bind many things in a small bundle.

ROSMONDA

2265 How can I begin to make known  
what silence overshadows and time hides?

TORRISMONDO

That which is hidden, finally time uncovers.  
But start from the very beginning.

ROSMONDA

You should know that, already advanced in years,  
and weary  
2270 after the death of both her sons,  
after the servitude which often, in lofty courts,  
adorns others with purple and gold,

my mother was carrying me in her womb  
with heavy pain and great danger.

2275 Therefore, the one who was to be born, she consecrated  
to God  
in a vow; and he listened to her prayers.  
So that my descent into this low world  
did not make her hard parting grievous,  
nor the clear day when I was born a mournful one for her.

TORRISMONDO

2280 Then your mother's vows, and not your own,  
you wish to fulfill, beautiful virgin?

ROSMONDA

Her vows are my vows, and, soon after,  
my own will joined hers  
on that ever bitter and honored day  
2285 when she lay lifeless and gave up her soul to Heaven,  
while mourning I sat on the edge  
of her husbandless bed, and in tears  
I held her icy, dear hand  
in mine. And her final words,  
2290 I remember well (and remember I must)  
among cold kisses and tears of grief  
were just these: "It is true pity, my daughter,  
not to deny your true mother,

who only for a brief time will be mother to you.

2295 I carried you in my womb, and as my dear offspring  
I gave you to the world, rather I offered you  
to that God who rules the world and saved me in my peril.  
Fulfill, if you can, your mother's vows,  
and by releasing her, release yourself."

TORRISMONDO

2300 I know and praise your sincere compassion.  
But what merciful or what praiseworthy deception  
gave you to me as my sister, and hid the other  
who was my real sister, and the true daughter  
of a generous king, and of noble queen?

ROSMONDA

2305 My mother wrought the deceit--your father rather;  
and it was the pity of one, and the counsel,  
or luck, or fate, or force of the other.

TORRISMONDO

Whom was this amazing fraud addressed to?

ROSMONDA

To your chaste mother the queen,  
2310 who still believes I'm her beloved daughter.

TORRISMONDO

After so many years, is this deceived lady  
still unaware of the truth, and has heard nothing of it,  
and is a mother  
who does not know her daughter, or does she pretend?

ROSMONDA

She does not pretend to love, nor to be a mother,  
2315 if it is love, which often equals natural forces  
and even surpasses them, that makes a mother.  
Nor did I dare to uncover the piteous art  
that spared her weariness and gave her joy,  
and now gives her delight and spares her grief.

TORRISMONDO

2320 But how did she at first believe  
in the novel deception, and not become aware  
of her lost daughter, and of the exchange afterwards?

ROSMONDA

Nature and age, that did not differentiate  
me from your sister, and the time and place  
2325 where my real mother nursed both of us  
aside and far from the high royal palace,  
deceived your mother so; but more the trust  
she had placed in the nurse and her husband.

TORRISMONDO

If faith deceived, the deceit is right.

2330 But where did she nurse you?

ROSMONDA

Next to a cave

that has many layers, of polished stone  
and has inside not only dark cells  
of rare pumice, but a beautiful theater and temple  
and high columns among hanging, boulders--

2335 a shady, venerable, secret place.

But it is made cheerful by grass and lively by springs,  
and climbing ivy, pine and beech-trees,  
weaving their branches and evergreen leaves,  
so that the hot rays cannot penetrate.

2340 In the same place inside the forest  
stands a royal palace among green glades.  
There your sister and I lay in the cradle.

TORRISMONDO

The reason for that exchange you're hiding still.

ROSMONDA

The reason was your father's high decree,  
2345 or some deep fear encumbering his soul.

TORRISMONDO

What fear, and of what?

ROSMONDA

Of harsh luck--  
that his kingdom might pass to other kings.

TORRISMONDO

And how was this fear born in him  
of so remote an evil? Or who aroused it?

ROSMONDA

2350 The words of sagacious nymphs who ever foretell  
the eternal fates to men, aroused it.

TORRISMONDO

He believed then, the vain magic  
that did not come true for twenty years?

ROSMONDA

He did, and gave the babe still in swaddling clothes  
2355 to those alpine or even wild maidens,  
and so among those shades, in the horror  
of a dark cave the child was raised.

TORRISMONDO

Why was this hidden from the lofty queen?

ROSMONDA

That palace, that cave and those nymphs,  
2360 and those ancient customs, and the magic arts  
became suspicious to the loving mother,  
to whom I was shown, when the sun was already  
turning to the second year of my life,  
yet she did not recognize me as her daughter,  
2365 and the king planned the deception and kept it hidden.  
And by his will my true mother  
pretended and kept silent, she who was then as a captive  
in war  
taken by him from Ireland, her country  
where she was born of noble blood.

TORRISMONDO

2370 Does my other sister live in the cave still?

ROSMONDA

She stayed there just until the end of the same year,  
and then, the counsel of other soothsayers  
increased that fear and that suspicion  
so that he sent her to more distant lands  
2375 by a discreet and reliable messenger;  
nor did I know how or where.

TORRISMONDO

The servant, at least,  
you should recognize.

ROSMONDA

I do not know him,  
nor do I know if I heard his name correctly;  
but often I heard one Frontone mentioned--  
2380 a name I still keep in my mind.

TORRISMONDO

Has the king kept  
the exchange and the fraud always hidden from his wife?

ROSMONDA

He kept it till he was seized by untimely death,  
while he was engaged in a bitter battle with the Danes.  
So I was told by my ill and poor old  
2385 mother, who even in dying followed him.

TORRISMONDO

You are telling me things truly worthy  
of absolute silence, and deep in your heart  
you must keep them concealed:  
for secrets of kings are not to be entrusted  
2390 to the foolish populace, and often a loquacious--

rather a false-rumor spreads them abroad.

I want the Soothsayer and then Frontone to be brought  
to me.

[SCENE FOUR]

TORRISMONDO, SOOTHSAYER, CHORUS

[TORRISMONDO]

Alas, from one side Fortune and Love from the other  
ever hurl a thousand sharp darts at me  
2395 nor do they ever shoot or let fly in vain.  
Thoughts are arrows, and my heart is the target,  
and the prize of victory is my very life,  
the judges are my will and my destiny,  
and neither archer is tired yet.  
2400 What will happen, wretched me? By chance or by design  
my own sister is almost kidnapped  
and stolen from me, and refuses to be mine,  
and the other, alas, I cannot find and recover,  
nor do I restore or make good my loss,  
2405 and the exchange is missing where faith was lacking,  
so that I cannot offer King Germondo  
anything worthy of him, while every other project  
remains utterly vain just like the promise.  
You have now substituted a sister for a sister,  
2410 o unfair fate, in her cradle and swaddling bands,

and now you take her from me before the grave,  
and the other you don't give back. O cave, o forests  
where lovely nymphs once raised her,  
o icy, horrid mountains of the earth,  
2415 o alpine passes, o mysterious valleys  
where does she hide? Or on what deserted shore,  
in what lonely, solitary island,  
o great father Ocean, in your vast bosom  
do you keep her? Shall I go wandering still,  
2420 shall I go furrowing the sea, searching  
not for lost faith and the one who teaches it,  
but how I may at least remedy such wrong?

#### CHORUS

Here he is, master, the Soothsayer now comes to you,  
the only person among mortals to whom is known the truth  
2425 hidden by mist and darkness.

#### TORRISMONDO

O Sage, you who (thinking of everything  
thought or shown in the world) know  
the secrets of heaven and earth,  
tell me if my sister lives in this kingdom.

SOOTHSAYER

2430 Alas, alas, how harmful and grievous is the knowledge  
that is of no use to the wise. And well I foresaw  
that I would come here to find but peril and blame.

TORRISMONDO

Why do you look so perturbed?

SOOTHSAYER

2435 Let me go, do not search, it is not important  
whether my thought be uncovered or hidden.

TORRISMONDO

Tell me if my sister is in this kingdom.

SOOTHSAYER

She is where she was born, and where she was born now  
rests,  
if there can be any rest and not any rest on earth.

TORRISMONDO

She's not on earth, then?

SOOTHSAYER

2440 She has no peace on earth,  
but will have peace where you will rest.

TORRISMONDO

What dark veil do you wrap around  
such obscure words, or what deceit or art?  
Tell me if my sister is in this kingdom.

SOOTHSAYER

It is yourself you are deceiving. Yours is the fraud  
2445 because you committed it, and within you it lives.

TORRISMONDO

If your wisdom is not as vain as a shadow,  
unveil the fraud, and reveal  
if my sister now lives among the Goths.

SOOTHSAYER

She lives among the Goths.

TORRISMONDO

And where, and how?  
2450 Is she the one I thought or another?  
If another, where is she hidden or where can she be found?

SOOTHSAYER

She is another, and where she is now she hides still,  
and you will find her, if you start with yourself  
and keep faith.

TORRISMONDO

Still you are tangling

2455 your dark meaning with doubtful words,  
so as to augment the fraud, and with it the price  
of your lies. You had better talk,  
so that in your words falsehood may be detected.

SOOTHSAYER

Your destiny is certain, your faith uncertain.

2460 But if you offered me the worth of all the gold  
that miserly earth hides in its veins,  
I could not tell more, for fate hides  
from our knowledge the other things you're asking for;  
concealing them within deep night.

2465 And yet I see at his birth the great Centaur  
shooting from the sky and bending his bow,  
and the cruel beast, bellowing in wrath,  
with frightful looks coming out of the cave,  
and frightening the Old Man, and fierce Mars  
2470 raising his shield and blazing with his helmet,  
and threatening with his sword and his spear.  
I see, or seem to see, near old Atlas'  
circle, the great hidden Dolphin,  
and the slowest, laziest star threatening.

2475 And I see Virgo, friend to the arts,  
visibly upset, and celestial Libra

with less happy and less limpid rays  
and the Crown drop into the waves.

Nor does the one who thundering from the clouds shakes  
the sky

2480 show a benevolent, happy mien,  
or even his meek and gentle daughter.  
But the proud warrior looks at her and troubles her.  
And I see also the lustful animals  
near whom is Mars, hurling his iron weapon;  
2485 and the two Pisces with shining backs,  
one rising to Boreas and the other descending  
to Auster, and the sky alit with three turns  
and three flames and three times wound around  
with that knot, and menacing close behind  
2490 the proud god who rules the fifth wheel;  
and, full of horror and fear, all the others,  
impious tyrants of the signs and their dwellings  
going around in swift chariots,  
whether they dominate the highest sky or fall.

#### CHORUS

2495 Whether he speaks the truth or not, he alone understands  
his words, and his judgment is uncertain  
no less than ours. And if man could give  
knowledge in exchange for knowledge,  
he could have sagacity and wisdom  
2500 enough to converse with kings.

TORRISMONDO

Let him go. Let him find the caves and mountains,  
where nothing can hinder his view  
of the sky at night. Let him there attempt  
to measure it, and number the stars,  
2505 and with less harm deceive himself,  
if so he wishes.

SOOTHSAYER

Before one  
of those cycles which I've now shown  
reaches its end, whose figuring I've imprinted  
with this cane, on which my weary life leans,  
2510 my predictions, now sneered at,  
o proud Arana, o ancient royal palace,  
that now cast me away, will be known to you.

[SCENE FIVE]

FRONTONE, TORRISMONDO

[FRONTONE]

What luck or what chance now recalls me  
after so many years of friendly tranquillity  
2515 to the tempest of the royal palace?

Which it often troubles and stirs up.

Happy the one who so lives as to be able  
to hide from others either on a high mountain,  
or on a hill or knoll or in a deep and marshy vale  
2520 But where does it not look? Where does it not go?  
What lonely place does it fail to reach?  
Here it is, drawing me from my narrow home  
and bringing me to the king. Let at least  
this wind of fortune that blows on my tired age  
2525 be favorable and tranquil.  
At your command, now here I am,  
indomitable king of the Goths.

TORRISMONDO

You arrive in time  
to save me from a deception. Now speak the truth.  
Is this woman my sister, as she was believed to be?

FRONTONE

2530 She was not born of your mother.

TORRISMONDO

And did she remain  
enveloped in this mistake for so many years?

FRONTONE

So it pleased your father, and pleased fate.

TORRISMONDO

But after she brought me into the world,  
did she bear other children? Or did she, weary after  
the first delivery,  
2535 become a barren and sterile mother?

FRONTONE

Not sterile yet, for with her second delivery,  
she made the king happier still with a daughter.

TORRISMONDO

What happened to her?

FRONTONE

Because of cruel destiny,  
she was feared while still in her cradle by her own father.

TORRISMONDO

2540 And what fear of a little child  
could a strong and wise king have?

FRONTONE

He feared  
the menace of the hostile stars.  
For the fateful song of the far-sighted nymphs  
who raised her in the cave

2545 predicted death for you and servitude for us  
while she was growing in beauty and in years.

TORRISMONDO

Who took her away from the green cave?

FRONTONE

I did: as your father and heaven willed it.

TORRISMONDO

In what part of the world?

FRONTONE

2550 Where I did not wish to  
nor where the king ordered. Rather, we were both  
taken there forcibly, she and I, for another will  
and another force is more powerful than the king's.

TORRISMONDO

But where did my father the king send her?

FRONTONE

2555 As far as Dacia's kingdom. And there he thought  
to keep her hidden from her destiny.  
But on the third day the ship that was carrying  
us both through the salt waves, was captured

by four armed vessels, in which, disturbing  
the deep ocean's salt realm,  
2560 with a swift, rapacious course  
proud Norwegians, thieves of the sea, sailed.  
And then the conquered booty was divided,  
and I was put on one ship, she on another,  
I among prisoners, she among women,  
2565 I bound with chains, she free.  
And as we turned our route toward Norway,  
in an inlet of the sea we found hidden  
many ships of the Goths, also accustomed  
to prey on the vast wavy fields,  
2570 from whom the light ship  
where the girl was barely escaped, flying  
like a winged arrow, whereas suddenly  
the other where I was lying bound, was captured.  
And then the captain of those untrustworthy people,  
2575 remained there bound in my place.

#### TORRISMONDO

Do you know what refuge or way out  
the ship which carried through the waves  
such an unhappy and noble booty may have found?

#### FRONTONE

It fled to Norway, if I heard correctly  
2580 from that captive.

TORRISMONDO

And what happened to her?

FRONTONE

This I do not know. For at that time  
the king was struck by untimely death,  
and later new deaths and new sorrows  
upset the kingdom of the Goths and the Norwegians.

TORRISMONDO

2585 But, could you find out who the corsair was?

FRONTONE

Of them I had news. For they were both brothers  
and of noble blood, and were driven by force  
into bitter exile. Aldano too remained a  
prisoner and Araldo withdrew far away.

2590 But the one who remained lives among us.

[SCENE SIX]

[MESSENGER, CHORUS, TORRISMONDO, FRONTONE]

[MESSENGER]

Our king's timely death  
must hasten, not delay, the nuptials.

For he the day before gathered before him  
the leaders of Norway and all wise and strong men,  
2595 and asked them that they should keep their allegiance  
to his daughter Alvida along with the kingdom  
of which he made her his heir while alive.  
Thus let not my arrival bring you pain,  
but happiness, or let it be mixed with pleasure at least.  
2600 Since good is always mixed with ill  
and ill with good. And in such a varied order  
pain and joy are ever mixed.  
But where is the beautiful high queen,  
daughter of fortune and still the daughter  
2605 of the dead king? To her the friendly stars  
now render subject the two powerful kingdoms  
which the foaming ocean surrounds and bathes,  
and if she wants, the third once hostile, now friendly.  
Will you tell me how to find the royal palace  
2610 of the undefeated king of the Goths, and where  
his queen lives?

CHORUS

There is the lofty roof:  
she lives within, and our master the king  
is walking outside.

MESSENGER

Be ever happy and with the happy,

2615 o most worthy king of an august queen.

TORRISMONDO

The same to you, who wish us well, and are worthy  
of all best wishes still. But explain and tell me  
what reason brings you or what news you bring to us.

MESSENGER

News not bad at all for this ancient kingdom,  
2620 for this high queen, for these nuptials,  
and good for you, to whom heaven has been so kind.

TORRISMONDO

Tell it to me.

MESSENGER

I am the messenger to the queen.

TORRISMONDO

Whatever you reveal to me, I will tell her,  
for there's no dividing barrier between us.

MESSENGER

2625 Norway keeps its sceptre for her.

TORRISMONDO

Why, does old Araldo not rule still?

MESSENGER

Certainly not; the sepulcher hides him.

TORRISMONDO

Then, is Araldo dead?

MESSENGER

You heard the truth.

TORRISMONDO

Was he killed by a long or sudden assault  
2630 of cruel death that kills everyone?

MESSENGER

Illness rapidly fells old bodies.

TORRISMONDO

He yielded to iniquitous and greedy Nature,  
which restrains and bounds mortal life  
within small and too narrow borders,  
2635 when life is much smaller than its merit.

MESSENGER

To her his body, to both of you he grants his kingdom.

FRONTONE

My lord, this man is the one we were speaking of,  
for I have not yet lost my old recollection  
of his features and of his name.

TORRISMONDO

He arrives in time.

2640 But does he recognize you, if you recognize him?

FRONTONE

Do you remember having ever seen me?

MESSENGER

I don't remember.

FRONTONE

I will make him remember,  
and I will make him aware of what he does not know,  
and well I know that he knows. Do you remember, friend,  
2645 having captured with four vessels one ship  
that was crossing the difficult sea  
with her high poop turned  
toward Gothland's shores in the West,  
having the Danes and their lands before you?  
2650 I, too, was captured on that ship: do you recognize me  
now?

MESSENGER

Fortune often changes and so does time,  
and often avaricious, spiteful luck  
is the deep reason for our faults.

FRONTONE

But what did you do with your noble prey--  
2655 with the girl, I mean? He is mute or dead.  
Don't you know that we have your brother not far away?  
Let him speak for you, or speak yourself.

MESSENGER

Blame fate for all past deeds.  
That was its fault, but ours was the merit  
2660 that gave to the girl such a noble parent.

TORRISMONDO

Alas, too late or too much I understand,  
and still I fear to know more.  
But to know impious destiny before hand  
2665 is a solace to grief. Now tell  
the truth, whatever it may be: for truth usually  
finds a high reward, besides forgiveness.

MESSENGER

I gave the tiny baby to the king, still grieving

for the death of his daughter, and gave him comfort  
so that he would assuage his mourning and sorrow:  
2670 therefore the dear slave became a daughter to him:  
from Rosmonda she was afterwards named Alvida  
with the name of the other, and as such she's known now.  
The story, known to few, is hidden from the many.

TORRISMONDO

Alas, too much is finally revealed, o wretched me!  
2675 What other advice shall I find or look for?

[SCENE SEVEN]

GERMONDO, TORRISMONDO

[GERMONDO]

Is there, then, a dearer intermediary between us,  
placing itself between and joining us together?  
Or does it separate us? And will Germondo not be able  
to know from the king of the Goths himself  
2680 what he is thinking of?

TORRISMONDO

The king of the Goths is yours,  
my lord, as he always was, and yours is the kingdom.  
But another's firm will, your love,  
and his hard luck, make him grieve.

GERMONDO

I did not come to you here in Gothland to upset your  
nuptials;

2685 and if my presence disturbs you  
someone else must be blamed for the error of my coming;  
even if I go back I'll not return in time,  
nor can one departure remedy two errors.

TORRISMONDO

Fortune erred, that changed happy games  
2690 into sad mourning and unexpected death  
whereupon, if the messenger is worthy of such trust,  
Norway has lost its king, Alvida her father.  
If you surrender these sad days to tears  
and avoid the sorrow of the first meeting,  
2695 I will not stop you; nor will I bar your way  
if you wish to go back to your delight.

GERMONDO

Do you know me so little? Could I show  
dry eyes before your mourning?  
Could I ever remove my back from your burden?  
2700 If my tears can relieve your sorrow,  
I will shed tears; and, if revenge, my blood.

TORRISMONDO

I knew, Germondo, your valor,

that shone like a sun: now it shines even more,  
nor am I blind to its light. Impious fortune  
2705 can make my dawn troubled and black,  
and the ocean cover me with a dark cloud,  
or the sky hide me even at midday;  
but it will never make me not see your worth  
and my duty. I wished it once, and swore it;  
2710 now I don't change my mind, or my words.  
Alvida is yours and so is the kingdom  
of Norway, and will be if I am strong enough. But  
I owe you more.  
Because I do not lose mine, nor do I shed and spill  
my life and soul as I should.

(THE END OF ACT FOUR)

CHORUS

2715 What hidden art or what knowledge  
of the celestial spheres  
fills languishing mortals with horror and fear?  
Are there loves and hates and monsters  
and pitiless, impious beasts up there,  
2720 the cause of wicked death or torment?  
Are there tyrants up there? And do not the air and  
the wind  
and the salt kingdom with its wild mien  
and the fecund earth, vex us  
less than human minds?

2725 Do so much rage and so much scorn  
wage so fierce a war within us?  
Or are they words that make the mob covet and err;  
and is all that revolves  
meant to give beauty to the world and adorn the sky?

2730 But even if on the other hand fate threatens us,  
and from its realm wages a war  
of wicked fortune against our kingdoms,  
Leo, Taurus, Scorpio, the celestial Bears,  
here where the world freezes,

2735 and great Centaur and armed Orion,  
let no unconquered soul yield because of the signs  
in the sky and let it show no weakness;  
may it, rather, with its valor repel the hard blows:  
for fate is not immutable

2740 before a dauntless shield.  
Born above the lofty stars, human fortitude,  
not to be blamed but to exonerate  
heaven of unjust accusations,  
descended into man's heart and made it her home.

2745 Is there anything not allowed to fortitude? In great  
danger  
who surer and swifter than she  
can aspire to Heaven and aim so high?  
Where Boreas hardens the rivers,  
or where the scorching sun burns the sand,  
2750 who has readier arms and counsel?  
No mist or heat injures fortitude,  
nor iron or flame or winds or opposing cliffs  
or hard rocks can bring harm to it:  
even though ships are sunk  
2755 and others are scattered  
by hostile storms on their great journey,  
and every shining ray is extinguished in the sky.  
And with the firmest spirits  
it ever scorns fortune in the midst of rocks and shoals.

2760 Fortitude does not leave on earth or in the waves  
any ford or passage unattempted,  
or any concealed hiding-place doubtful path.  
Before it the forests and hard stones open themselves up,  
just as in the deep waters

2765 the mountain opens to the sea, opened itself to the ships.  
Finally Argus' fame and Jason's  
merit will be obscured: illustrious leaders  
will bring other ships to worthier enterprises.  
The ocean, who stretched  
2770 his arms around,  
will have received its laws. And with the passing of  
the years  
it will happen that their glory will illuminate the  
world,  
like a sun, who, turning,  
drives the clouds and storms into exile.

2775 Fortitude descends to Hell,  
safely crosses Styx and Acheron,  
along with the horrid wood and the steep mountains.  
Fortitude returns to Heaven,  
and, where it was first born, there finally it abides.

ACT FIVE

[SCENE ONE]

ALVIDA, NURSE

[ALVIDA]

2780 To what part of the world has my fortune  
now taken me, and among what hostile people,  
or the sky's highest top?

NURSE

You still fear,  
and are still in pain.

ALVIDA

I do not fear any longer,  
nor can I, for evil is certain,  
2785 as certain as the damage with shame and disgrace.  
I'm already betrayed, rejected, rather, banished  
for suddenly the king, my father, is dead  
and my husband's faith is extinguished at once.  
He on the other hand commands everyone  
2790 to keep the sudden death hidden from me,  
and, on the other hand, he comforts me and compels me  
to think about a new husband or a new lover,

and calls me sister, thus driving me away  
with such a name.

2795 O sea of Gothland, o shores, o ports, o royal palace  
that welcomed ancient queens,  
where do I take refuge, alas, where do I flee?  
where can I ever hide? In my own kingdom  
where my enemy will occupy the high throne  
2800 so that I serve him? Or do I, a betrayed lover  
or rather a betrayed bride, hope to find pity  
in a more hateful place?

NURSE

Is it ever possible that such deceit  
and such fraud abide in Torrismondo?

ALVIDA

2805 It is possible, it is true, it is certain; certain is  
his fraud as well as my disgrace and my father's death;  
violence, rather, is certain and at the same time  
my own death, o wretched me!

NURSE

From uncertain and doubtful you make it certain,  
2810 thus going toward the ultimate evil;  
and yet never was fortune so troublesome,  
wicked, inexorable and haughty,

nor with such scorn and pride did she  
disturb a day happy for cheerful lovers.  
2815 But with your father's death, are all  
his friends, faithful servants and dear relatives  
extinct with him? And also extinct as well  
honesty, shame and justice?  
nor is faith safe anywhere?  
2820 Already we are all betrayed and almost dead  
if your fear and doubt are not in vain.

ALVIDA

O justice died the same day  
as that very righteous old man, and vanished with him,  
and flying with him returned to Heaven.  
2825 And force and fraud and treachery  
took over each soul and encumbered the earth.  
Faith does not dare raise her right hand  
and honor does not attempt to raise its head.  
And reason is mute--it rather flatters  
2830 powerful fortune. Wisdom and counsel  
surrender to adverse fate, and the grandeur  
of feared ancient laws surrenders to the sword  
while like thunder and like the resounding din  
of arms and threats it frightens others.  
2835 The strong man is called king. The kingdom is  
imploringly offered  
to the powerful--though others may object--

and whatever the strongest man likes is right.  
He does not like me, and I alone trouble  
his pleasure; and now that the kingdom of the Norwegians  
has been seized,  
2840 the queen refuses the sublime king  
of the magnanimous Goths.

NURSE

Perhaps you believe  
false rumors too much; for a troubled and sad soul,  
languishing from love, often does not know  
right from wrong, nor does it distinguish  
2845 true from false, taking instead one for the other.

QUEEN (ALVIDA)

Let this news and message,  
Norwegian loyalty and my kingdom  
and his orders confused and broken  
be according as my luck and my enemy wish;  
2850 it's enough that he refuses me, and I hear the truth  
of the cruel refusal. I myself, I myself,  
with these very ears have recently heard:  
"Alvida, your bridegroom is King Germondo;  
let it not offend you to exchange one king for another  
2855 and one valorous friend for another,  
and let your will not dissent from ours,  
which is firm and in agreement." This is the way

he gives me to his friend, rather to the enemy  
of my race. Thus he wants me to resign myself  
2860 to the will of a lover and tyrant.

Thus one king buys me and another sells me,  
and I'm the servant, rather the merchandise,  
in the midst of so much greed and such contempt.

Did you ever hear of such a faith? Did you ever hear of an  
exchange  
2865 in the world so unusual and so unjust?

NURSE

Without contempt perhaps and without disdain  
is this exchange. To some high hidden reason  
the good king is surrendering. For often the good sense  
of a doubtful deed is concealed from others.

ALVIDA

2870 The reason he gives is feigned and empty  
and increases the scorn in me, and the shame in me,  
while thus the cruel one drives me away,  
and partly makes fun of me. "Your husband"  
he said "is good Germondo, and I'm your brother."

2875 And he adorns lies and fables  
with an old abduction and an old deception.  
And he describes and depicts to me a forest, a cave  
of nymph enchanters. And the false deceit  
is the true reason for his unjust refusal,

2880 and maybe worse. And this is Torrismondo--  
the one who sends me away, and rather kills me,  
the one who had the first spoils of me,  
and now expects the last; and already he rejoices;  
and this man is my delight and life.

2885 Today I am the despised daughter of a deceased king,  
and, therefore, rejected. O country, o native land,  
o heaven,  
shall I live rejected? Shall I live scorned?  
Shall I live with such shame? Do I still delay?  
Do I still fear? And what? Death, or dying slowly?

2890 And do I still love? Am I still sighing?  
Still weeping? Is it not a disgrace to weep?  
Why all these sighs? Timid hand,  
most hesitant heart, what are you waiting for?  
Is anger lacking in weapons, or the soul in anger?

2895 If you do not wish vengeance, and Love does not wish it,  
one moment is enough for death. Die, then, and love  
while dying; and if death extinguishes love,  
let it extinguish also the soul, for it would not be  
real death, if love and the soul should live on.

NURSE

2900 Ah, leave this cruel and impious thought behind.  
No one is forcing or driving you out as yet;  
but everyone honors you, and you are still in control  
of yourself, and of us all  
you are and always will be the high queen.

[SCENE TWO]

QUEEN

2905 After so many years and so much time, fortune brings  
a tranquil, clear and happy day.  
Everything there within has been adorned  
and made cheerful--shining as it is with jewels and gold.  
Two happy weddings in a single day,  
2910 two kings and two queens joined together,  
two children, rather four; and on both sides  
I shall be happy to see my blood mixed  
with other royal blood, and beauty and strength  
and glory and pomp and many friendly people  
2915 in one royal palace and gift and jousts  
and dear and merry dances. Ah, man's mind,  
who can satisfy you or who can please you on earth,  
if not even by weeping can one alter the stern law  
of impious, immutable destiny,  
2920 nor rescue one's reason from cruel death?  
Wretched me! Neither this bloodless and wrinkled  
forehead  
nor this hair now turning white and thin  
or my bent shoulders and my trembling feet  
can lessen my pleasure. But you alone are missing,  
2925 you, once king, once bride-groom to me, from these  
nuptials,  
you, father and master of my children.  
Oh, if you ever from bright Heaven look down

on the beloved home of your pleasures and mine,  
and if you ever return to comfort me in my dreams,  
2930 be present, if you can. Look upon your children,  
o father, and may the honor of a famous  
and illustrious race please you, friendly spirit.

[SCENE THREE]

ROSMONDA (alone)

I'm still living uncertain of my state,  
I fear and hope and long and keep silent still,  
2935 and I regret having spoken and been daring,  
and then I repent having repented.  
What will happen I do not know, for it is not our will  
that rules these mortal things  
but the will of the One who rules all things.  
2940 Yet, on this solemn and happy day  
devoutly I shall visit the sacred altars  
and offer to the temple these garlands  
of virgin violets and other flowers,  
grey, yellow, purple, azure and white,  
2945 that at dawn I gathered and then wove together  
with my own hand. Now may the king of Heaven  
deem my devout and chaste mind worthy of acceptance,  
and may He turn his eyes to the North  
pityingly and with a benevolent glance.

[SCENE FOUR]

STEWARD, CHORUS

[STEWARD]

2950 O Gothland, o unconquered Northern kingdom,  
o ancient native land, today your glory is at its  
lowest,  
today your support is fallen and dispersed,  
today fierce reason for eternal grief  
is being offered you.

CHORUS

O, what a sorrowful voice  
2955 strikes my ears and reaches my heart!  
What can it be?

STEWARD

Wretched mother and sad day,  
unhappy royal palace and equally unhappy whoever  
dies and lives in it! Horrible happenings!

CHORUS

Tell me, and let my sorrow begin.

STEWARD

2960 The unhappy king had already told

grieving Alvida that she must be the wife  
of his faithful friend Germondo, with brief prayers  
compelling her, as was fitting to calm  
her heart, happy with this love,  
2965 for she would know the rest in due time.  
But kept her father's sudden death  
secret for a mysterious reason,  
increased her suspicion, her pain and scorn,  
which then turned into fury and new rage,  
2970 as if she were already a mocked lover  
given as spoils to her enemy, hence she killed herself,  
with her own hand plunging a pointed blade  
into her tender breast.

CHORUS

O much too hasty! O cruel death,  
2975 the ultimate of all ills!

STEWARD

You don't know yet  
the entire evil. The king killed himself  
in the same way, and lies lifeless next to her.

CHORUS

Alas, alas, cruel death and cruel fate!  
What other graver outrage or harm  
2980 can fortune or hostile heaven inflict upon us?

STEWARD

I do not know. But one sorrow is added to another,  
one disaster to another. And in a difficult moment  
today is her line severed and cut off.

CHORUS

Wretched and bereaved mother, on what does  
2985 her failing old age lean, and who upholds her?

STEWARD

The afflicted lady does not know that today  
she has found a daughter and lost two children at once,  
and, happy perhaps, she utterly forgets  
all past anxieties, and not only comforts and soothes  
2990 her breast, but fills it with joy and pleasure.

CHORUS

Now who will reveal her dead children's  
harsh fate to her?

STEWARD

I do not dare  
to pierce her heart with this news.  
But there within, her royal palace is already  
2995 filled with horror and fright,

and its roofs and broad galleries  
are heard to resound all around with women's weeping,  
and with sad complains and laments  
as they strike their breasts with their hands;  
3000 such fear, such sorrow weighs on  
Norwegian women. And they would feel less grief  
if in a savage war they had been made  
slaves by fierce and impious enemies  
and were now in fear of death and shame.  
3005 And the other disconsolate and sad women  
cannot comfort them, rather by weeping  
they would in turn cause a wild heart to mourn  
at their sorrow, and the rocks to shed tears.

CHORUS

And we, who take part in so much suffering,  
3010 shall we not know more clearly the manners  
of the one and the other death?

STEWARD

The king found her  
wan, deadly pale, whence he said: "Alvida,  
Alvida, my soul, what do I hear, alas,  
what do I see? Oh what thought, oh what deceit,  
3015 what sorrow, what fury drove you  
to strike yourself? Oh me, are these  
wounds by your own hand?" Then, death-encumbered,

with a tearful voice she answered:

"And did you expect me to live as someone else's,  
3020 and by you rejected?

And could I have lived with your hate and your contempt,  
if I lived with your love?

It's much less grievous to reject life,  
and less grievous to die.

3025 In no other way could I have escaped  
such pain."

He continued with his sorrowful words:

"Will I be able to bear such sorrow while living?  
or in what other way would I then die, Alvida,  
3030 if you died? Oh, let Heaven not allow it!

Could I leave you alone, Alvida, in death?

With your wounds you pierced  
my heart Alvida.

And this your blood is my blood,  
3035 oh sister, Alvida,

this is what I must call you." And the truth he told her,  
and confirmed with his swearing and weeping  
the deceit and the mistake of her bold hand.

In part she believed him, and already  
3040 she seemed sorry to leave the bright light

in her prime as, groaning, she replied:

"As much as I can, I will be yours  
so long as this soul of mine will last,

and, later, still yours, I will die.

3045 My only regret is that my death pains you,  
and brings you a reason for a bitter life."  
Still weeping, this, too, he said to her:  
"As a brother now, not as a lover,  
I take your last kisses. For your husband

3050 I pray you to keep the others  
for such a hard blow will not be mortal."  
But vainly he hoped: for, breathing her last breath  
into his mouth she said:  
"O more than brother and more than lover,

3055 this cannot be, for death dims  
my eyes already".  
As soon as she was dead, the king stood  
still for a short while; and speechless and sad,  
dazed with pity and horror,

3060 he pressed his pain deep down into his heart.  
He said then: "Alvida, now that you are dead am I  
still living  
without my soul?" And he spoke no more.  
He wrote this letter, and gave it to me,  
saying: "Bring it to King Germondo,

3065 and what you have heard and seen of me,  
tell him everything, and excuse my fault."  
Thus he ordered. And while pensively I waited,  
he took the sword from his left side  
and pierced his heart with his right hand,

3070 without saying one word, without changing expression,  
as if he were happy to take his revenge.  
I shouted, I ran, I grabbed his arm in vain,  
not yet weakened. He pushed me back  
with that fortitude that has no equal on earth,  
3075 saying: "Friend, resign yourself to my will,  
and to your destiny. Dying, I bequeath  
to you the dearest, most praiseworthy of all tasks and,  
a happier lord, a worthier king,  
and my memory.  
3080 Everyone can take another's precious life,  
but no one one's death."

[SCENE FIVE]

GERMONDO, STEWARD

[GERMONDO]

What doleful sound is upsetting this happy day?  
and what turmoil of confused voices  
and high screams is heard? And are these  
3080 the doubtful signs of great sorrow or of fear?  
Is an enemy perhaps inside, or is one awaited?  
But be what it may, I will not have arrived in vain;  
and no Norwegian or Dane will be able to boast  
of his deceitful, proud boldness.  
3090 What madness or what deceit gives them such impudence,

if Torrismondo has his faithful friend beside him?

STEWARD

Alas, Torrismondo never had any enemy  
save himself and his own loyalty.

GERMONDO

What enemy are you speaking of, or what are you talking  
about?

STEWARD

3095 He himself, my lord, explains it, and here he tells you  
about it.

For this is his letter, and I his faithful servant.

GERMONDO

Alas, what things I read, what things I discover!

Hear his words and my own pain.

"I write before dying, and I write belatedly,

3100 just as belatedly I die. Another preceded me,

and her death teaches how to die,

so that I may die more sad and more sorrowful,

following a woman, and so that the blood

that should have been shed first be the last

3105 not to wash away, but to escape the guilt

which now I will carry like a heavy load

along this final road. I will die leaving to you

instead of a wife, my grey-haired mother,

for my sister took away from me my faith  
3110 or my being able to keep it, from herself her own life  
and herself away from you. O my true friend,  
if death can make me a true friend,  
a true friend I am. Take the kingdom,  
do not refuse now the crown and the mantle  
3115 nor the name and deeds of a true friend.  
Be a staunch support to a failing old lady,  
instead of me. Do not scorn my prayers,  
do not disdain that in this horrible pass  
I should so call myself and honor with such a name  
3120 my untimely death, which resolves everything  
save my obligation that bound me to you.  
Live, for your valor, your friendship  
and merit are worthy of eternal life.  
Dying I ask this grace of you."  
3125 O painful beginning, o sorrowful end!  
But what does he intend? Where is he? Does he not  
live still?

STEWARD

He lived, he left a wife, now leaves a kingdom;  
and one is yours, the other was claimed by fate.

GERMONDO

What you tell me is obscure, and what your master

3130 alludes to.

STEWARD

He recognized Alvida  
as his real sister, and then he killed himself,  
as I believe, to amend his crime  
against you.

GERMONDO

She was his sister, then?

STEWARD

She was, and you'll know how.

GERMONDO

Oh, too wrongly, then,  
3135 he mistrusted his faithful friend so much  
that he condemns my loyalty, not his,  
with his death. Alas, is there such grievous fault  
that friendship cannot forgive or explain?  
He would have offended me less had he turned his sword  
3140 against my breast. I should have died instead  
for it was I gave him the reason for bitter death.  
O fortune, o promises, o faith, o faith,  
is this the way he keeps you; the way he gives me his  
kingdom?  
Is this the way he begs me?

STEWARD

Heaven made the gift lacking,  
3145 and so did his Fate and his hostile fortune,  
not his last wish: for he gave all  
that he could.

GERMONDO

He took everything  
by taking himself away from me. Cruel love,  
you are the cause of my pitiless anguish,  
3150 you take my friend and the woman I loved from me  
and you kill them both, and pierce my heart  
with two mortal blows. I lose all  
for I lose him. O painful acquisition,  
injurious acquisition, in which the new bride  
3155 loses herself, and the king loses himself and others,  
and the mother her son, and the true friend  
his friend, nor did he find his beloved;  
the army lost its honor and thus became blind;  
this kingdom, its master; I, my hope  
3160 of all my glory and all delight.  
The sky should lose the sun,  
and the sun its rays, and the day its light  
and out of pity the dark night should hide  
man's fault in its gloomy cloak;  
3165 the sea should lose its shores, and the flowing rivers

their high banks, and once more cover the ungrateful  
earth, now that it fails to hear and recognize  
its own fault, and does not get angry and eradicate  
beeches, ashes, pines, holms and ancient oaks,  
3170 high tombs, and unhappy death's  
sorrowful and sad dwellings, and does not even shake  
this great royal palace and the haughty towers,  
and does not strike mountains against hard mountains  
and does not break their ridges, and does not sweep  
3175 the heavy rocks from the rough cliffs to the bottom,  
and in her lap enfold high ruins  
of buildings, of colossi, of columns,  
so that it would not be a narrow, unworthy tomb  
and from valleys and from woods and from caves  
3180 does not roar loudly with frightful voices,  
to perform last rites with the final tears,  
that will still give the world perpetual unrest.

[SCENE SIX]

QUEEN, STEWARD, GERMONDO, ROSMONDA, CHORUS.

[QUEEN]

Oh, what is kept unsaid? What is being hidden from me?  
Will I, a despised old lady, be the only one not to know  
3185 whose mother I am, or if I'm even a mother?

STEWARD

Queen, today fate uncovers the truth  
that for many years was hidden from us all.  
But do not blame our counsel,  
which was no cause of any deceit to you;  
3190 but here let your mature wisdom be shown.

QUEEN

If this is not my real daughter,  
which one is it, then?

STEWARD

You gave birth to another,  
first named Rosmonda, and then Alvida,  
by the good king your husband and our master;  
3195 but afterward she was raised by the Norwegian king as his  
daughter.

QUEEN

So much sorrow for a daughter found again  
and for a found sister? I fear for worse  
than interrupted nuptials. Something else.

STEWARD

O wretched me!

QUEEN

Why all this silence?

3200 Where is my Rosmonda?

STEWARD

Where she wanted to be.

QUEEN

And Torrismondo?

STEWARD

In the same place,  
where he wanted to be.

GERMONDO

Other blows  
of hostile fortune you have sustained before;  
now these graver blows, which  
3205 are not the first, you must suffer,  
o my wise queen and wise mother.  
For, though other children you had, now I'm your son;  
do not disdain me, though so grave is the loss.

QUEEN

Oh, oh, oh, you say: "You had"; I do not have them,  
then?  
3210 Are my two dear children, then,

breathing no more?

GERMONDO

Oh, see that she does not fall!

Oh, on one side Torrismondo and on the other Alvida,  
on one side true friendship and love on the other,  
make of my eyes two copious streams

3215 of most bitter tears, and my heart a dwelling place  
of endless sighs. And in such anxiety

and among so many griefs compassion for this lady  
has such a great part. O wretched old woman,  
and, O more wretched mother! Alas, on the very day

3220 that she hoped to know her greatest happiness  
she has become an extreme example of misery.

I shall be her comfort, rather her support.

I shall, while weeping

and sorrowing, perform this dutiful task

3225 with the utmost compassion. Let her agree at least  
that she should lean on me.

ROSMONDA

O, would I had I died while still  
in my swaddling clothes,

or at least on this day, which is troubled and dark,  
while it was still so happy and calm.

Beautiful and sweet would death had been, then, when

3230 I had not yet made it grievous and sad.

It is I, alas, who trouble it, and fill the high royal  
palace

with horror and dread.

I dropped the crown and shake the throne.

I was the reason for the error, now I am death

3235 to my master. Now I will offer myself as a daughter

to this bereaved queen, bereaved mother,

whom I a while ago rejected as a mother.

And, wretched me, I refused love,

and refused honor,

3240 a very unhappy servant,

who would have fared much better if she had died,

an innocent babe, in her cradle.

#### CHORUS

We learn to weep for your misery

in the common sorrow that afflicts all.

3245 To our lord, now what other honor

can we give, save our sorrowful tears?

To our master, who was the light and mirror

of virtue and honor, who will deny tears?

#### QUEEN

Oh, who keeps me still alive?

3250 O lively old age,

what are you keeping me for?

Not for the longed for wedding

of my sweet children,  
not for the happy birth  
3255 of grandchildren do you keep me.  
For bitter pain, for mourning,  
for death, for the tomb  
of my two dear children,  
now my fate keeps me.  
3260 Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh,  
I look for them, and cannot find them.  
O wretched me,  
in vain I try to see them.  
Oh, where are they?  
3265 Oh, who hides them?  
Living, or dead,  
ah, surely dead.  
Oh me,  
oh me!

GERMONDO

3270 Calm your grief, for time will unveil everything.

QUEEN

Lord, if cruel death  
extinguished my children--  
for this you cannot deny to me,  
and certainly you do not deny it,

3275 with tears, rather, and with sad sighs  
you confirm it,  
I beg you, have pity  
on me: pierce my heart,  
and allow me to follow now

3280 the one and the other son--  
me, weary already and a slow old woman,  
a poor and disconsolate  
mother.

GERMONDO

If I could, O queen, with my own death  
3285 return your children to life,  
I would do it without delay, for I believe  
I could not die happy in any other way.  
But, since the stern and proud law  
of ruthless destiny denies it, I will live, though  
in tears,  
3290 only for your support and safety.  
And with funereal and noble pomp  
your children will both be enclosed  
in a great marble sepulcher:  
for this is the last homage to the dead;  
3295 though to unvanquished kings, famous in war,  
the universe is tomb and Heaven home.  
For you then I will live, my queen and mother:  
you will be queen, I will be your servant

and yet your son, if you do not hold me  
3300 in too much disdain. I wear my sword for you,  
for you I do not cast away this crown or tread on it,  
I do not lay aside my arms, once so happy,  
nor do I breathe my last or shed my blood.  
Ready at your service, at your nod,  
3305 as long as this soul sustains my limbs,  
king Germondo will be with his kingdom.

QUEEN

Oh me, my life  
has almost reached its end,  
and I live still  
3310 so that this bitter sight  
may make me  
more eager to die  
with my sweet children  
oh, oh, oh, oh!

GERMONDO

3315 Alas, don't let her die. O women, o women,  
take her inside, and see  
that pain does not kill her, or poison or the sword.  
O my life, no life at all, but smoke, or a shadow  
of real life, o mere image, o death!

(END OF ACT FIVE)

CHORUS

3320 Oh, tears, oh, grief:  
life passes, vanishes and flies,  
like melting frost.  
Every height bows down, and scatters every firm  
support to the ground,  
3325 every powerful kingdom  
in peace finally fell, if in war it grew.  
And as a gleam in winter, the glory  
of another's splendor darkens and dies;  
and like a swift alpine torrent,  
3330 like a flash lighting  
in the clear night,  
like a breeze or smoke, or like an arrow, swiftly  
our reputations fly, and every honor  
seems like a languishing flower.  
3335 What else does one hope for or what does one await?  
After triumph and victory,  
here nothing for the soul  
remains but mourning and wailing and tearful laments.  
What avails friendship? What avails love?  
3340 O tears, o grief!



to climb to the sky, or to Mount Olympus, using  
as steps Pelion and Ossa--mountains of Greece).

- 50-54 behind me; wherefore, if I fear sleep  
and rest, nay the awful war  
of the nocturnal specters in the darkness,  
rising, often, to meet the dawn,  
it is no wonder at all, dear nurse.
- 65 Araldo, King of Norway, was believed by Alvida to be  
her father. Alvida swore to him that she would give  
her love only to the man who would avenge her  
brother's death, killed by Germondo, King of Sweden--a  
death left unavenged.
- 76-77 in which he had been born and when by propitious  
fate  
he took the crown and the adorned cloak,  
  
(The first he refers to Alvida's brother, the  
second he to Alvida's father. As a matter of  
fact, Alvida's brother's birthday coincided with  
the day in which her father celebrated his crowning  
as king of Norway).
- 78 The subject of this line is 'each year'.
- 86 Alvida is irate for having forgotten her vows.
- 99 In Maier's edition we read "Arane" on line 99, "Arana"  
on line 918, and "Aarana" on line 2511. In my  
translation I have consistently used the spelling  
"Arana". Arana or Arane is the royal palace near  
Lake Venus (found in Olao Magno XI, 21 as Aarane).
- 114 This line recalls Dante's 'conosco i segni  
dell'antica fiamma' [Purgatorio XXX, 48].
- 138 Germondo was king of Sweden.
- 139-140 The reason for the delay of the wedding offends  
Alvida, because it is due to Germondo's arrival,  
he who killed her brother.
- 146 Olma is described by Olao Magno, XI, 28, as: "città  
regia, e notabilmente fortificata da l'arte, e da  
la natura."
- 154 Thus if only I could extinguish some spark  
159 nor am I still in need of chastity belt  
  
Maier explains 'pungente ferro' as 'cintura di

- castità,' but Olao Magno, in describing an old custom of the women of the Northern regions, says that in order to avoid getting close to their husbands, for some time, new brides would place a sword in bed betwixt them: "nel letto tra esse e 'l marito mettono una spada ignuda, per la quale tra loro si vietano l'accostarsi" (XIV, 4).
- 162 This line recalls Pier della Vigna's 'disdegnoso gusto' in Dante's Inferno XIII, 70.
- 169 he shivers, and his face grows wan with a paleness.
- 175 The Nurse addresses Alvida as 'figlia', 175, instead of 'regina', I.i, 125. See also Act III Scene vi.
- 182 The Nurse, who has been speaking to Alvida with the formal 'voi', suddenly shifts to the familiar 'tu'.
- 234 A note in the Italian editions explains 'Tana' as a Norwegian river; I think that Tasso is thinking of the Tanais (the Don, in Russia) which often goes with the Rhine and Danube in Latin poetry. Also in Petrarch's Rime (CXLVIII 3-4) these three rivers are mentioned together.
- 235-6 'The unfriendly sea' is explained as the Barents sea (Maier and Sozzi) and as the Black sea, known as Axenus (Ariani); there follow the Red Sea and the Caspian sea (as in Petrarch's Rime CCX 3 "dal lito vermiglio a l'onde caspe").
- 258-9 See my introduction, 26. The original verse 'solingo, errante ...' echoes Petrarch's theme in the sonnet 'Solo et pensieroso'.
- 259-60 The Ercinian Forest extended into the Black Forest as far as Harz in Germany.
- 261 mountains in the extreme North.
- 264 and from the stars and the serene night.
- 269 See my introduction, 24.
- 276 Maier, Sozzi and Ariani explain 'squille' (bells) as the 'campane dell'Avemaria' (as in Petrarch's Rime CIX 6).
- 279 Cerberus and Scylla are monsters of the Classical tradition.



- 477 my lady: Alvida.
- 496 it is an ancient law: as found in the word's of Dante's Francesca (Inferno V, 103). See my introduction, 22.
- 504 whirling wind: as described by Olao Magno (I, II).
- 509-10 all the others: referring to opposing winds; Boreas...Auster: winds blowing from North to South; Zephyr: wind blowing from the West; Eurus: wind blowing from the East.
- 514-5 See my introduction, 23.
- 532 Olao Magno (II, 10) describes the power of the Northern winds and how tree trunks end up in the sea and cause the destruction of ships.
- 546 our ship: Torrismondo's and Alvida's ship.
- 550-4 Olao Magno (II, 27) gives us a description of these ports on windy and stormy days.
- 561 The original verse: "la notte amica de' furtivi amori," echoes Tasso's Gerusalemme Liberata (VI, 89 and XVI, 27).
- 564 See my introduction, 22.
- 579 Furies: Megera, Tisifone and Aletto.
- 605-6 In punishing myself I would avenge my dear friend.
- 667 The three heroes (Hercules, Achilles and Alexander) were examples of famous lovers.
- 717 the oath or 'la fede' is the promise of love (I,i, 89-90).
- 733 to her second nuptials: after Torrismondo's suicide.
- 756 The original verse "giusta in terra cagion d'ingiusto fatto." echoes the theme of suicide as presented by Pier della Vigna "ingiusto fece contra me giusto" in Dante's Inferno (XIII, 72).
- 769 oblique: or the original 'corsi obliqui' of the planets recall "l'oblico cerchio" in Dante's Paradiso (X, 13).

- 780 Germondo was accused of killing Alvida's brother.
- 800-1 In order to save outward honor and inner feelings of friendship.
- 802 Rosmonda is believed to be Torrismondo's sister.
- 809 The original verse 'come d'asse si trae chiodo per chiodo.' echoes Petrarch's Triumphus Cupidinis (III, 66) and Ariosto's Orlando Furioso (XXVIII, 98).
- 812 severe or 'rigid' nymph (part of Diana's cult)
- 823 The original verse 'porto de le miserie e fin del pianto,' echoes Petrarch's Rime (CCCXXXII, 70).
- 827 Wisdom is identified as Minerva or Athena, born from Jove's head.
- 830 no other goddess is worthy to be at your side;
- 831 Lake Avernus: located in the underworld.
- 832 Acheron: one of the infernal rivers.
- 833 black Styx: infernal swamp surrounding the city of Dis (See Dante's Inferno VII, 103).
- 839-40 The Roman Empire still ranges from Rome to Byzantium.
- 841 this part of earth: Gothland.
- 842 Although the Goths are warriors (followers of Mars-- god of war).
- 843 The subject is Mars.
- 844 hardened enamel: hard icy ground.
- 858 Wisdom, you found a home in Rome.
- 859 Wisdom should pray before God's throne.
- 875 The North wind is referred to as 'Aquilon'.
- 878 other giants: different from the classical myth; giants according to Olao Magno's account of the Northern regions (V, I).
- 883-5 We had our gods and heroes.
- 904 Thule: Europe's most distant Northern land.

- 907-8 In our soil no olive tree grows. (Wisdom is here identified as Pallas, to whom among the Greeks the olive was sacred).
- 921 those men I see in a group: the Chorus.
- 929 Germondo is preceded by a letter announcing his arrival.
- 942 the verdant prime: youth.
- 979 The subject is Germondo, who often asks about Alvida's father and about Torrismondo.
- 997 **Sisyphus:** mythical lord of Corinth, whose soul was eternally condemned to push a rock uphill.
- 1017-8 unless the queen, Torrismondo's mother, can convince Rosmonda to marry Germondo (in place of Alvida).
- 1037 Rosmonda knows that she is not Torrismondo's real sister.
- 1047-53 Rosmonda is secretly in love with Torrismondo.
- 1066 **queen-bride:** Alvida.
- 1083-6 See my introduction, 36, footnote 38.
- 1120 If beauty is an ornament to others, it is an ornament to itself.
- 1129 Germondo is 'the noble guest'.
- 1147 **in chaste freedom:** free from marital bond.
- 1179 The Queen has an almost sacred remembrance of her marriage. The original verse: 'per me sempre onorata e sempre acerba,' echoes Virgil's "Semper acerbum, semper honoratum" Aeneid, V, 49-50.
- 1183-4 The original verses: 'per l'estreme giornate di mia vita/ trar posso questo vecchio e debil fianco.' echoes Petrarch's Rime (XVI, 5-6)"indi trahendo poi l'antiquo fianco/per l'estreme giornate di sua vita".
- 1190 **it:** the widowed bed of line 1186.
- 1195 in the original verse 'memoria innamorata' echoes Petrarch's Rime (LXXI, 99).

- 1197            **my duty:** the Queen's duty is to convince Rosmonda to marry Germondo.
- 1203-4         The Queen says that her thoughts were the same as those of her husband.
- 1216           **that day:** the day in which her husband died.
- 1241           **it:** a husband's 'ruling'.
- 1247-49       See my introduction, 24.
- 1284           **mighty Ancient Mother:** earth (echoes Petrarch's Triumphus Mortis I, 89).
- 1297-1309     Rosmonda would like to be a traditional Amazon (like Virgil's Camilla or Tasso's Clorinda). Olao Magno tells us about Northern women who were warriors, and pirates (see my introduction, 37 footnote 41).
- 1318           **different lives:** the lives of married women and those of single women.
- 1332           The original verse 'del mio corso mortal tocco la meta?' echoes Ovid's Tristia (I,ix,i: "Detur inoffenso vitae tibi tangere metam").
- 1359-63       In the Italian edition (Maier and Ariani) a note explains that these verses were probably to be omitted by Tasso, but were left in the text. These verses are, however, necessary for the two verses that follow.
- 1366           **the other:** refers to light (1364): Rosmonda.
- 1371-2         The wedding of Torrismondo to Alvida and the one of Germondo to Rosmonda.
- 1374           Let Rosmonda be happy.
- 1400           **castle:** Olao Magno (I, 23) describes how young men engage in the construction of castles of snow and decorate them with flags (in black or other colors); he adds that afterwards, these young men divide themselves in different groups, some guard the walls, others assault the walls. This is how they train for war.
- 1407-9         Olao Magno (XV, 14-15) describes how these young men keep themselves in shape: racing, jumping and hurling rocks. He describes a race with horses or with skis (I, 24-25).

- 1411 Olao Magno gives an account of exploding weapons.
- 1413-7 These games are described by Olao Magno as part of war training (XV, 6).
- 1421-7 In the Aeneid V, Virgil describes similar games for the anniversary of Anchises' death (boxing is included with these games).
- 1424-37 These games are described by Olao Magno (XV, 24).
- 1438-41 See Olao Magno (XV, 23).
- 1442-7 For the dance of fire, see Olao Magno (XV, 27)
- 1448-50 Olao Magno tells us about horse races on ice in two different chapters (I, 24; XI, 35-37).
- 1454-7 Magno recalls tourneys for happy events (XV, 18).
- 1466-8 Magno describes metal steeds with fire coming out of their mouth (IX, 4).
- 1471-88 The Chorus praises Rosmonda as honest, wise and strong.
- 1489 Ippolita: Hippolita, queen of the Amazons (women warriors living in Asia on the banks of the river Thermodon).
- 1491 In order to easily draw the bow, the Amazons had their right breast removed.
- 1493 she: Rosmonda.
- 1496 Hercules and Theseus fought against the Amazons. Theseus married Hippolita.
- 1498 Unlike Hippolita, Rosmonda will not be conquered unless she will bend to love.
- 1505 Arcturus is the main star of the Northern constellation of Boote (as in Ariosto's Orlando Furioso XXXI, 26).
- 1507 The original verse: 'Se per le vie distorte' echoes Petrarch's Rime (XXXVII, 24) "per vie lunghe e distorte".
- 1509-12 Although the sun on his horses wanders far from these Northern countries, he can still admire these people's worth.

- 1513-8        The Chorus ends this invocation hoping that  
Rosmonda will marry Germondo.
- 1527        The Counselor hints at Torrismondo's victories.
- 1536        The subject is Torrismondo.
- 1543        Germondo should cease to love Alvida.
- 1544        **the king:** Germondo.
- 1560        The subject is Torrismondo.
- 1564        Of the ancient Goths, Torrismondo is the worthiest  
(an echo of Tasso's Rinaldo XI, 83).
- 1568        **this one's:** Torrismondo's.
- 1576        The four horses pulling the sun's chariot.
- 1579        let stormy atmosphere give in to clear sky.
- 1590        In marrying Germondo she would become a queen.
- 1598        Why don't I leave behind the magnificent clothing.
- 1599        A note in the Italian texts explains 'the true  
name ' to be the one she would take on in entering  
the monastery.'
- 1605        **king:** Germondo.
- 1606        **elsewhere:** toward Alvida (whom Germondo loves).
- 1615        **someone else:** another woman.
- 1631        Only friendship can be superior to love.
- 1636-8       If Alvida will love me, it will be because you  
were able to change her mind.
- 1650        **In vain she awaits:** Alvida.
- 1652        Avenge Alvida against me who abused her with my  
disloyalty.
- 1653        Germondo is ready to avenge any outrage that may  
come to Torrismondo from the king of Norway.
- 1655-7       **Vulturnus** is an Eastern wind, **Auster** is a  
Southern wind, **Boreas** is a Northern wind.

- 1658           **Calpe:** the promontory of Gibraltar's strait (one of Hercules' columns).
- 1659           Hercules' other column is Abila (on the African coast).
- 1668           **Lethe:** one of the rivers, in the underworld, whose waters had the power to make one forget the past.
- 1671           **such a deed:** what Torrismondo has done to have Alvida marry him.
- 1702           **The good king:** Germondo.
- 1704-6          Germondo considers the kingdom of the entire world inferior to serving Alvida (**Garamanths:** ancient people of Africa; **Ethiopians:** indicate the Southern boundaries, whereas the **Indians** represent the Eastern boundaries).
- 1707-8          Listed are rivers of Asia (Euphrates, Tigris, Orontes and Ganges), of India (Hydaspes), of Greece (Acheloos), of Africa (Nile).
- 1709           The mountains of Athos, Paenassus and Olympus in Greece, the Taurus in Asia, and the Atlas in Africa.
- 1718-9          An echo of Ovid's "Materiam superabat opus" (Metamorphoses, II, 5) and of Tasso's Gerusalemme Liberata (II, 93 and XVI, 2).
- 1730-1          Alvida is depicted in Swedish clothes.
- 1732-3          A symbolic representation of Germondo's love for Alvida.
- 1736           **myrtle:** is symbolic of love.
- 1738           **arrows and knots** symbolize love.
- 1742-5          Her brother's blood. Alvida understands that the unknown soldier was Germondo, who is in love with her. Germondo offers Alvida the glory he gained in killing her brother (the crown is depicted under her feet).
- 1775-6          **the ferocious/ enemy:** Germondo.
- 1782           **The powerful worrier:** Germondo.

- 1784 a bloody mound: bodies of wounded or dead soldiers.
- 1786 the proud winner: Germondo.
- 1796 a rich prize: the golden crown.
- 1802 Nicosia: a city in Norway.
- 1822 Germondo defeats the winner.
- 1835 Germondo was hopelessly in love with me.
- 1840 Since Germondo did not reveal himself, he did not gain glory from the deed.
- 1965 in war: in war against hate.
- 1987 in Heaven or on earth.
- 1998 friendship: the friendship of Torrismondo for Germondo.
- 2007 neither affection: love and friendship.
- 2010 be at peace with friendship and you'll be at peace with yourself (since love and friendship are one).
- 2016 The subject is still your coming (of line 2012).
- 2023 your renown: Germondo's and Torrismondo's.
- 2026-7 Thule: coincides with the present Greenland. Its location is antithetical to the river Bactrus (in the extreme eastern part of the world).
- 2039 as a fragile tower would give.
- 2049 virtue: valour at war.
- 2052 one toward West, the other toward East.
- 2053 divided: each on his own path.
- 2056 resounds soon after: thunders.
- 2069 Pannonia: the ancient Roman province, north of Dalmatia (it coincides in part with Hungary).
- 2073 the three famous kingdoms are Gothland, Sweden, and Norway.

- 2078 Two kingdoms are already united: Gothland  
and Norway, because of the marriage bond  
between Torrismondo and Alvida.
- 2081 equal: Rosmonda is just as worthy as Alvida.
- 2082 let reason prevail (and not your feelings).
- 2085 this new/and dear bond: his marriage to  
Rosmonda.
- 2094 ancient mother: earth.
- 2105 wise thought: because it comes from an old man.
- 2113 The verse: "Se nodo mai non s'allentò per nodo"  
echoes Petrarch's Rime, (XLVIII, 1-3).
- 2127 The original verse: "fortuna ingiuriosa in van  
contrasta" echoes Petrarch's Rime (LIII, 86).
- 2134 Join nuptials to nuptials: to Alvida and  
Torrismondo's wedding, add your wedding to  
Rosmonda.
- 2137 Torrismondo is superior to me in worth, but  
inferior in love.
- 2141 faith: promise
- 2147 leave the battlefield: by renouncing Alvida.
- 2150-1 Germondo's future will be decided by Torrismondo.
- 2153 The original verse: "mi tinga in sanguigno i  
monti" echoes Dante's Inferno (V, 90).
- 2158 Hymen: the god of matrimony, depicted with Love,  
holding burning torches. See Ovid's  
Metamorphoses (IV, 758).
- 2159 Mars: the god of war.
- 2168 The original verse "Però se i giorni e l'ore e  
gli anni e i lustri" echoes Petrarch's Rime  
(XII ii and LXI, 1-2).
- 2171 I will not allow suspicion ( as in line 2173)  
about Torrismondo's friendship to enter my heart.
- 2185 Alvida's disdain in accepting Germondo to be  
her husband.

- 2194 The original verse "ch'amor non tragga al tormentoso fiaco" echoes Petrarch's Rime (CXXV, 57).
- 2203 **sister:** Germondo has a sister that he could give as wife to Torrismondo.
- 2211 Rosmonda is, in fact, her real name.
- 2216 **to refuse:** marrying Germondo.
- 2224 **grievous:** unbearable.
- 2231 Rosmonda had two brothers (2270).
- 2235 **strange:** new, never heard of before now.
- 2245 **modesty:** yours is a sign of modesty (in revealing the truth Rosmonda will lose her royal position).
- 2299 Rosmonda will find her freedom in filling her mother's vows.
- 2323 **Nature and age:** resemblance and the same age.
- 2329 If she was deceived by trust, the deceit is understandable.
- 2350-1 Olao Magno tells us about nymphs who predict the future (II, 10).
- 2371 **the same year:** the one in which the false Rosmonda was brought to the royal palace.
- 2393-6 The theme of **Love and Fortune** echoes Petrarch's Rime (CXXIV; LXXVI, 2; CCLXX, 104; CXXII, 9).
- 2405 I don't have a sister to substitute to Alvida.
- 2411 **the grave:** before I die.
- 2422 how can I find my lost sister in order to give her as a bride to Germondo.
- 2423 From this point on, the tragedy takes on a reminiscence of the time when the Chorus announces to Oedipus that Teiresias is coming in Sophocles' Oedipus.
- 2444-5 It was you who deceived your friend (Germondo).
- 2458 so that by speaking, you'll reveal your lies.

- 2459            **your faith uncertain:** your loyalty to Germondo.
- 2465            **Centaur:** the Zodiac sign of Sagittarius.
- 2467            **the cruel beast:** the Zodiac sign of Taurus.
- 2469            **the Old Man:** the Zodiac sign of Aquarium; Mars:  
the planet of Mars.
- 2472            **old Atlas':** the earth.
- 2473            **Dolphin:** a Northern constellation.
- 2474            **laziest star:** the constellation of Bootes (as  
in 1505).
- 2475            **Virgo:** one of the signs in the Zodiac (a  
constellation) that takes the name from Pallas-  
Athena or Minerva, goddess of the arts.
- 2476            **Libra:** another Zodiac sign.
- 2478            **Crown:** a Northern constellation.
- 2479            **the one who...shakes the sky:** Zeus, Jove, or  
Jupiter.
- 2481            **daughter:** identified by some as Venus (Maier,  
Sozzi) and as Diana (Ariani).
- 2483            **animals:** Aries and Capricorn.
- 2484            **Mars:** god of war.
- 2485            **Pisces:** Zodiac sign.
- 2487-90        **Mars is the subject.**
- 2491            **others:** the other Zodiac signs.
- 2492            **impious tyrants:** in opposition to **proud god**  
(2490); **signs:** Zodiac signs; **dwelling:** their  
seat.
- 2507            **cycles:** astral combinations.
- 2508-9        Olao Magno tells us about the function of canes  
and calendars "bastoni notati e scritti di lettere  
gotiche" (I, 34).
- 2516            **it:** luck.
- 2520-3        **The subject is luck.**

- 2552            **another force:** destiny.
- 2554            **Dacia:** see note 1952.
- 2586            **of them:** of the two brothers (Aldano and Araldo, as explained in 2588-2589).
- 2589            **withdrew:** ran.
- 2591            the tragedy continues to be reminiscent of Sophocles and brings forth a Messenger with the news of death of the king of Norway (believed by Alvida to be her father).
- 2608            **the third once hostile:** Sweden (Norway's enemy).
- 2626            **old Araldo:** king of Norway (not the Araldo of 2589).
- 2645-9          the ship was crossing the dangerous waters between the Western coast of Gothland and the coast of Denmark.
- 2656            **your brother:** Aldano (see 2589).
- 2674            Unlike Oedipus, Torrismondo immediately understands the incestuous nature of his love.
- 2676            **intermediary:** Alvida.
- 2682            **another's firm will:** Alvida's
- 2686            **someone else:** Torrismondo (who promised him Alvida).
- 2687            no matter how quick I leave , it will not be fast enough.
- 2688            **two errors:** my error and the error of those who misinformed me. (Ariani's Edition explains it as: my error and yours; see 2686).
- 2689-90          The original verses "Fortuna errò, che volse i lieti giochi/ in tristi lutti e inaspettate morte," reminds us of Dante's Inferno XIII, 69 "che ' lieti onor tornaro in tristi lutti".

- 2693-5        If you...stop you: if you allow Alvida to mourn her father's death, and if you wish to avoid meeting her during these days of sorrow, you may leave.
- 2701        my blood: if revenge can relieve your sorrow, I will shed my blood.
- 2709        I wished it...: I decided it and gave you my word.
- 2713        mine: my kingdom.
- 2718-9       monsters...beasts: the Zodiac signs believed to affect men.
- 2727        Are they superstitions in which the populace believes and wonders?
- 2728        all: the moving planets.
- 2733-5       These constellations are divided in the Northern Zodiac ("here where the world freezes," 2734) and the Southern Zodiac (the Centaur and Orion depicted with a sword), as in Petrarch's Rime XLI, 10.
- 2740        the one who can challenge destiny.
- 2748        Boreas: the Northern wind that turns rivers into hard ice (see 914). This verse reminds us of Tasso's Gerusalemme Liberata XIV, 34 and Ovid's Tristia III 13-14: "nix iacet, et iactam... Indurat Boreas"
- 2751        mist or heat: cold or hot.
- 2763        it: fortitude.
- 2764-5       A man-made canals allowing the passage of ships between two seas.
- 2766        Argus: the mythical ship of the Argonauts led by Jason.
- 2775-6       Styx...Acheron (see note 832-3). (These lines echo Dante's Inferno IX, 80-1)
- 2799        my enemy: the Italian texts explain 'my enemy' as Torrismondo.
- 2802        in a more hateful place: in Sweden (as Germondo's wife).

- 2810           ultimate evil: wishing your death.
- 2823           old man: the King of Norway (believed to be Alvida's father).
- 2840           the queen: Alvida; king: Torrismondo
- 2850           he: Torrismondo.
- 2882           first spoils: my virginity.
- 2883           the last: my death
- 2907           there within: in the royal palace.
- 2924           The regret for her dead husband is the theme of the Queen (as in 1178) along with the hope of seeing her future grandchildren from the marriage of both her children (1336).
- 2929           The original verse "e se ritorni a consolarmi in sonno" echoes Petrarch's Rime CCL, 1 "Solea lontana sonno consolarme" and CCLXXXII, 2.
- 2939           the One: God (the original verse: "ma 'l voler di colui che tutto regge." echoes Dante's Paradiso I: "La gloria di colui che tutto move").
- 2950           Northern kingdom: the original verse says "Aquilone" (a Northern wind).
- 2983           her: The Italian texts explain 'her' as 'of the queen' (Maier, Sozzi) and 'of Torrismondo' (Ariani).
- 3038           her mistake of wounding herself thinking that Torrismondo did not love her.
- 3049           husband: Germondo.
- 3077           to you...praiseworthy: the task of carrying out my will.
- 3078           a...king: Germondo.
- 3100           Another: Alvida.
- 3128           and one: the kingdom; the other: Alvida.
- 3129           your master: Torrismondo.
- 3126           The original verse: "Ma che pensa? Dov'è?" reminds us of Cavalcante's questions to Dante

(see Inferno X, 68). A similar question with a similar echo is in 3209.

- 3153-4      **acquisition:** his desire to wed Alvida.
- 3158      without Torrismondo the army lost its honor.
- 3177      **colossi:** majestic statues and other ancient Roman constructions.
- 3209      See note 3126.
- 3229      The original verse "Bello e dolce morire era allor quando" echoes Tasso's Amita (III, ii, 1430) and Perarch's Rime CCCXXXI, 43.
- 3239      **honor:** the title of queen.
- 3250      **lively:** because is prolonging life.
- 3318      The original verse: "O mia vita non vita, o fumo, od ombra" recalls Petrarch's Rime CLVI, 4.
- 3321      The original verse: "passa la vita e si dilegua e fugge," echoes Tasso's Gerusalemme Liberata XVI, 15, and Petrarch's Rime CV, 28.

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