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Epistola Acquarii		Letter from Aquario
EPISTOLIUM COLERICUM Magistri Acquarii ad Scardaffum Zaratanum Merlini poematis corruptorem.		An angry letter from Magister Aquarius to the Charlatan, Scardaffus, corruptor of Merlin's epic poem. ¹
Laudabilis et observabilis apud antiquos usanza fuit, ut in suarum frontibus epistolarum, aliquam salutationem, percipiant et ascribant recipienti eas condignam.	1.	There was a praiseworthy and exemplary custom among the ancients that, at the beginnings of their letters, they would strive for some greeting worthy of the person receiving them and insert it.
Quam igitur salutem ut huiusmodi mantineamus costumamentum tibi sbudellatissime Scardaffe convenientem mandabimus?	2.	What suitable greeting, therefore, shall we send to you, O most gutless Scardaffus, so that we might maintain a custom of this sort? ²
An dei gratiam?	3.	God's grace?
minime, quia Christum Sanctamque Mariam renegasti, an corporis bonam valetudinem?	4.	No way, because you renounced Christ and Holy Mary; to the good health of your body?
absit, es etenim (ut diu sbaiafasti) consumatissimus Herbolattus, et Avicenam, Hippocratem, Galienum Mesuen totum avantaris imprendisse, et ideo de sanitate conservanda non ullum tibi habes mancammentum, nam (teste plotino) male guaribit alios, qui sibi medemo infirmanti dare soccorsum nequit.	5.	Far from it, since you are a most consummate herbalist (as you have loudly claimed for a long time), and you have prided yourself on having fully grasped Avicenna, Hippocrates, Galen and Mesue, and therefore you have no shortcomings concerning the maintenance of your health, for (as Plotinus attests) he will heal others badly who does not know how to succor his own ailing self. ³
Verum tibi congruum illud disticon inveni. Dens tibi si caderet quoties fers ore bosiam lam tua non posset pane ganassa frui.	6.	In truth, I found that couplet apt for you: "If a tooth fell from your mouth each time you lied, already your jaw could no longer chew bread."
An tibi richezzam denariosque desiderem?	7.	Shall I desire riches and money for you?
Ad pro postum, nequaquam.	8.	To no purpose whatsoever.

Te namque per botegas toga brocata decorum, colana torquatum, supra Mullettam cavalcantem saepe sguaitamus observamusque, non tibi, Mullettaeque tuae polimenta desunt, non staffiles recamati, millibus et stringulis ornati.	9.	For we often spy and observe you riding past the shops, handsome on your little mule, with a brocade robe wearing a necklace; and neither you nor your little mule lack finery—no lack of embroidered straps or a thousand little decorative cords. ⁴
Qua propter richissimum te arbitramur.	10.	So we conclude that you are quite rich.
O si teipsum considerares, quam bellum nobis de te spectaculum praebes, quum passu portantino tich tach pedibus sonantibus hinc inde per Urbem cursitas.	11.	Oh, if only you could really see yourself, what a beautiful spectacle you make when you race this way and that through the city at a trot, with those hooves sounding tick-tock!
An tibi filios optabimus?	12.	Shall we wish children on you?
nec ita, quando quidem castratus es, nam dum in arte castratoria te peritum iactabas, quendam soldatum lergnam patientem eunichizare	13.	Not this either, since indeed you have been castrated, for while you were boasting about being an expert in the castrating art, you dared to turn a certain soldier suffering from a hernia into a eunuch,
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presumpsisti, credens (ut usaris) aliquem ditesticulare Porcellum, illi miserulo genitalia simul et animam cavasti,	(13)	believing you were removing the testicles of some pig (as you usually do), you plucked this poor man’s genitals and at the same moment, his life,
Porro soldati ceteri, non pocum tua pro imperitia sdegnati, te nasconditer pigliarunt ligaruntque, ac sine tantis tenais, ferrisque affogatis, tibi castronato baricocolos extirparunt, fadigamque filios generandi penitus abstulerunt.	14.	and later, other soldiers, not a little indignant over your lack of skill, secretly grabbed you and tied you up, and without so much as pliers and red-hot instruments, they tore off your balls, castrato, and completely eliminated the hassle of fathering children.
Hinc tibi supra pilastrum quendam carmen attacatum fuit, creditum poetae godii.	15.	Because of this, a poem was hung on some pillar for you, believed to be from the poet of Goito. ⁵
Legis adimpletor meritat Scardaffus honorem, Vult oculum pro oculo, pro pede vultque pedem. Sic, dum testiculos morienti taiat ab uno Milite, testiculos praebet et ipse suos.	16.	“Scardaffus deserves to fulfill the law’s function: it calls for an eye for an eye, a foot for a foot. So, since he cut off the testicles of a dying soldier, he supplies

		his own testicles.”
Ringratiandus tamen est magister Zucconus peritissimus castrator, qui rogatus, nisi tradidisset aiuttum, tirasses merito sursum* (ut aiunt) calzas,		Yet Magister Zucconus, the expert castrator, should be thanked, who was asked if he would help, by whose merit you coughed up (as they say) your last breath, ⁶
Ergo nec huiusmodi salutatio convenit homini docto, ricco, castratoque.	17.	therefore, a salutation of this sort is not fitting for a rich, learned and castrated man.
Tanta denique fantasticatione cerebrum gratavi, quod pulchra, quod sufficiens, quod omni laude dignissima, per me salus retrovata est.	18.	I scratched my head with so much pondering, that at last a beautiful, ample, and most praiseworthy greeting was found by me.
Accipe igitur frater mi Scardaffe, mi frater dico, quem super furcas tam filialiter et voluntariter appicatum viderem, et crocitanes cornachias effossis oculis nutrientem.	19.	Accept, therefore, my brother Scardaffus—my brother, I say, whom I with familial love would so happily and willingly see hanging on the scaffold, feeding cackling crows with your plucked out eyes.
Mi denique frater, cui cancarorum quattuor galeas desidero, cui quantas per contadinorum copias sentimus nominare giandussas angonias codosellas desideramus in corpore, talibus namque gratiis (sunt enim gratiae gratis datae) perfectior, et praticatior Herbolattus evaderes.	20.	And so, my brother, for whom I wish for four helmets full of cankers, for whom we desire such maladies of the body as we hear lots of peasants call boils, buboes, and the like, for with such favors (indeed these are favors freely given), you will carry on as a more accomplished and more skilled herbalist.
Sint itaque tua salus infrascripta mala, quae Merlinus noster in quartadecima macaronice loquens de Saturno ait: capitis dolor, Hydropisia, Mazzuccus, lancum, carbones, morbida pestis, Angonaia, malum costae, quartanaque febril, Flegma, tumor ventris, vermes, colicique dolores,	21.	Thus, may the bad things written below be your salutation, things which our Merlin mentions while speaking of Saturn in Macaronic Book 14: Headache, hydropsy, delirium, bovine pox, carbuncles, the black plague, inguinal swellings, flank pain, quartan fever, phlegm, stomach tumor, worms, acute colitis,
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Petra vesigarum, cancar, giandussa, bogrones, Franzosus, fersae, cagasanguis, Rogna, varolae, Defectus cerebro, rabiesque frenetica, clavus,	(21)	kidney stones, cancer, boils, buboes, French pox, measles, dysentery, mange, smallpox, microcephalia, mad rabies,

Stizza canina, dolor dentorum, Scrofa, Puvide*, Goltones, postema, tumor vel lergna vocatur Testiculi, brofolae, tegnosaque codega, lepra, Schelentia, gulae sicitas, tum pectoris Asma, Sanctique Antonii morbus, morena, podagra, tisica febris, Mugancae, tardaeque pedanae.		encephalitis, canine distemper, toothache, scrofula, pip, mumps, abscess, testicular tumor or it is called hernia, pustules and ringworm, leprosy, angina, dry throat, then bronchial asthma, St. Anthony's plague, hemorrhoids, gout, tuberculosis, rhagade, and slow-foot ailment. [cf. V 15.362-73]
Haec itaque Saturni familia tua sit salus, mi dilecte Scardaffe, quia iuxta meritum, dandum est precium, nec tantum haec eadem in tuo corpore desideramus.	22.	Thus, may your salutation be these relatives of Saturn, my beloved Scardaffus, because just as merit should be rewarded, we likewise greatly desire these things in your body.
Verum tum in famiglia et parentela tua, tum in amicis benefactoribus et tibi benefactoris appeto, quis non ista fideli percuperet familiari?	23.	In truth, I strive to be beneficial not only to you, but also to your immediate and extended family, to your friends and benefactors—who has not yearned for this for a trusted family member?
Ut autem sis felicior, haec irremediabilia fore velimus, et in his voluptatibus te nestoreos agere dies divi concedant.	24.	Moreover, so that you may be happier, we could wish these ailments to be beyond cure and in the midst of these pleasures may the gods grant you to reach the age of Nestor.
Vin scire quod tuum beneficium erga me sic bene tibi desiderare commovit?	25.	Do you want to know what your kindness towards me thus rightly moves me to desire for you?
arrige aures, bricone.	26.	Perk up your ears, you rascal.
Divinum quippe volumen Merlini Cocaii mihi furtim surripuisti, Mox omni latrina merdolatus imboazzanter ad lucem venire fecisti.	27.	Evidently, you furtively stole away the divine volume of Merlin Cocaio and then had it crappily brought to light more shitty than any latrine.
Audiat Terra, Coelum, Mare, Plutoque causam falsificationis eiusdem voluminis praeclari, et subtiliter universis tuae sceleraginis rebus fantasticatis, iratus aetheris arbiter te summo de troni solio fulmine devoret.	28.	Let the earth, sky, sea and Pluto hear the case of the falsification of this illustrious volume, and the heavenly judge, understandably enraged at all your wickedness and made up stories, will consume you with a lightning bolt from the highest seat of the throne.
Scelerate, proterve, Ribalde, Ladro, sacrilegiis plenissime, Venisti iam pridem ad me, nescio quibus lusenghis, petere veniam, ne te amplius	29.	Villain, ruffian, rogue, thief, full of blasphemies, you came to me already some time ago, with all sorts of

per expressum Zaratanum, subdolum, falsum, ribaldonem manifestarem,		flatteries, to ask mercy so that I would not continue to reveal you as a patent Charlatan, a double-crosser, a liar and a rogue,
quando quidem quotidie sentiebam te super bancos et pulpitos predicare et zaratanizare, ubi vendebas bissolos impiastros cerottos de stercore canis compositos, probans esse optimum ad expellendam rognam Cerottum.	30.	seeing that everyday I heard you up on pulpits and benches preaching and acting the charlatan, where you were selling vials, plasters, and ointments made of dog shit, demonstrating the ointment to be excellent for getting rid of mange.
Avantabas quin etiam te	31.	You prided yourself moreover on
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sanare absque bragherio rotturas, cavare dentes, foecundare mulieres, purgare oculorum pannos et catharates, extirpare petras, et omnia haec absque dolore faciebas, immo facere dicebas, quosdam componebas siroppos, pilulas, unguentos, confectos, quos falso appellabas Dragantes, Dyaquironem, elefanginas, crocias, aureas, sine quibus et cetera.	(32)	healing ruptures without trusses, on pulling teeth, on impregnating women, on purging eyes of films and cataracts, on extracting [kidney/gall] stones, and you did all these things without pain, or rather, you said you did; you concocted syrups, pills, unguents and confections which you deceptively called astragalus, ceruse, ivory plasters, saffron [oil], gold, sine qua non's, etc.
His ego tuis ribaldariis motus, per quas non modicas acquirebas pecunias et homines perimebas non tuli, imo te per strionem publicassem, ni subito venisses ad veniam.	32.	I was not taken in by these crooked schemes of yours, for which you acquired no small amount of money and destroyed people; on the contrary, I announced publicly that you were a warlock, so that you would be punished right away.
Ego benignus cessi, mox humiliter nostris in penetralibus accepi, ubi nostras lucubrationes aliquantillas ostendi.	33.	I kindly yielded, then I humbly accepted [you] into my inner sanctum, where I revealed a bit of my night-time labors.
Tu tamen fraudolenter me inadvertente poema praeclarissimi poetae Merlini Cocaii Macaronicum robasti, corrupisti, falsificasti, et multa non sua interposuisti, et plures libros surripuisti, quos tibi tribuere volebas, Manigolde, furcifer malignissime,	34.	But while I was not looking, you fraudulently stole the macaronic epic of the illustrious poet Merlin Cocaio, you defaced it, falsified it and inserted many things that were not his, and you secretly removed many books, which you planned to attribute to yourself,

		rapsallion, you most malicious gallows bird;
Esset enim sacrificium non modicum Deo gratum te scortegare, homo pessime, non homo sed bestia, diabolazze; praeterea sic imbozzatum, castratum, totum ab illo mutatum stampare fecisti.		it would indeed be a sacrifice rather pleasing to God to skin you, horrid man, not man but beast, you nasty devil; in the meantime, you had it published like this—defiled, castrated, and completely altered from that [which it was]. ⁷
Quid promerebat Vates inclitus sic a te viciari?	35.	What celebrated poet deserved to be damaged thus by you?
Utique causa vindicandi te, quoniam tuas insectabar malignitates?	36.	Undoubtedly it was in order to avenge yourself, because I aggressively pursued your wicked deeds?
Simulator pessime, quem de Ganelonis maganzesi natum iudico, et quem patefacturus sum per Barrum, per ladrum, per Rofianazzum.	37.	Wretched dissimulator, you whom I believe descended from Ganelon Maganzesi and whom I will expose as a swindler, a thief and a nasty pimp.
Vade in malam crucem et quantum Ovidius naso desiderat in ibin multiplicatum millies in te nunquam deficiens veniat.	38.	Go to a bad end, and whatever Ovid Naso desired in his Ibis may it be multiplied a thousand times on you, never letting up. ⁸

¹ *Zaratanus* means charlatan.

² *sbudellatissime*, from *budella*, intestines.

³ *sbaiaffare*, to talk about at length, to talk like a charlatan; *avantaris* is in Italian *vantarsi*, to brag about. Famous medical doctors: Avicenna (981-1037), Hippocrates (c. 460-c. 370 BCE), Galen (c. 130- c. 200) and Mesue, also known as Muawiyah (777-857).

⁴ to spy: *sguaitare* is dialectal for to observe carefully.

⁵ Goito, a small town northwest of Mantua.

⁶ *tirare le calze* is an Italian expression meaning to die (cf. V 20.496).

⁷ *imboazanter*, *boazza*, cow dung, *boazzare* (also *sboazzare*), to defile with manure.

⁸ Ovid's 644 line invective against Ibis was written early in the 1st century CE, and an edition of Ovid's works (including the Ibis) was published in Italy in 1471.