

Alexandreis commentary passage

Level 5: 1.74-99 (59-84 Latin) ("The master, pale and wan..... I'll teach you how you may accomplish it") / level 6 1.61-99/(48-84: Latin) ("And so he spoke, declaiming to his heart... ,.... I'll teach you how you may accomplish it")

[61 Townsend (2015)] And so he spoke, declaiming to his heart.

Just as a lion cub perhaps may see
deer in Hyrcanian fields, their antlers raised,
going to pasture, but as yet his strength
has not filled out his limbs—though neither are 65
teeth set, nor claws sharpened, he trembles, and
his untried tongue strikes at his teething palate;
more quickly with his courage he sheds blood
than with his fangs, but adult will atones
for small, slow feet—so also did the boy 70
cavort, all up in arms, though weak of hand
bearing the lion in his inmost heart,
and headlong daring outstripped his tender years.

[74] The master, pale and wan, his hair unkempt—
nor poorly did his face reflect his zeal— 75
had chanced to come forth from the chamber where
he'd armed his disputatious propositions,
and finished all the corpus of his Logic.

How difficult not to betray that zeal
in countenance! His darkened brow evinced 80
the midnight lamp; his skin clung to the bones
as thin as parchment; in his hands, starved wanness
impressed the joints. Truly the work of study
afflicts the limbs and outer flesh with hunger:
the inner man receives the nourishment. 85

He saw the burning face of Philip's son—
its fiery redness betrayed his hidden ire—
and asked why his soul blazed, from whence had come
his grief, why such an angry fever raged.

The boy, in reverence for his mentor's face 90
cast down his gaze; fallen before his knees,
he poured the tale: his father's sad old age,
his native land oppressed by Darius' empire.

His anger mounted with his tears, until
he drank in eagerly his master's words: 95

"Put on a grown man's mind, boy, take up arms.

You have the stuff of virtue; bring its matter
to actuality. Lend me your ear—

I'll teach you how you may accomplish it.

[Latin] Walter Alexandreis 1.59-98

Forte macer pallens incompto crine magister
[60] (Nec facies studio male respondebat) apertis
Exierat thalamis ubi nuper corpore toto

Perfecto logyces pugiles armarat elencos.
 O quam difficile est studium non prodere uultu!
 Liuida nocturnam sapiebant ora lucernam,
 [65] Seque maritabat tenui discrimine pellis.
 Ossibus in uultu, partesque effusa per omnes
 Articulos manuum macies ieiuna premebat.
 Nulla repellebat a pelle parentesis ossa.
 Nam uehemens studii macie labor afficit artus
 70 Et molem carnis, et quod cibus educat extra
 Interior sibi sumit homo fomenta laboris.
 Ergo ubi flammato uidit Philippida uultu,
 Accusabat enim occultam rubor igneus iram,
 Flagitat unde animus incanduit, unde doloris
 [75] Materiam traxit, que tanta efferbuit ira.
 Ille sui reuerens faciem monitoris ocellos
 Supplice deiecit uultu, pronusque sedentis
 Affusus genibus senium lugere parentis
 Oppressum imperio Darii patriamque iacentem
 [80] Conqueritur lacrimans lacrimisque exaggerat iras,
 Atque hec dicentem uigili bibit aure magistrum:
 'Indue mente uirum, Macedo puer, arma capesce.
 Materiam uirtutis habes, rem profer in actum;
 Quoque modo id possis, aurem huc aduerte, docebo:
 [85] 'Consultor procerum seruos contempne bilingues
 Et nequam, nec quos humiles natura iacere
 Precipit exalta, nam qui pluuiialibus undis
 Intumuit torrens, fluit acrior amne perhenni.
 Sic partis opibus et honoris culmine seruus
 [90] In dominum surgens, truculentior aspide surda,
 Obturat precibus aures, mansuescere nescit.
 Non tamen id prohibet rationis calculus, ut non
 Exaltare uelis siquos insignit honestas,
 Quos morum sublimat apex licet ampla facultas
 [95] Et patriae desit et gloria sanguinis alti.
 Nam si uera loquar, auferre pecunia mores
 Non afferre solet; etenim inter cetera noctis
 Monstriparae monstro nichil est corruptius isto.

"Press these few precepts on your memory, 100
 I charge you. Shun the wicked, double tongues
 of princes' slaves; exalt none whom their nature
 dictates should, rather, lie abject—the flood
 torrential rains have swelled flows fiercer than
 a steady river. So a slave who rises 105
 to honor's peak and mastery's rank, when wealth
 has been shared out, is deaf to all entreaty,
 more vicious than a snake caught unawares.
 Yet reason does not bar the will to raise
 up those whom honesty marks out for praise,
 those whom honesty marks out for praise,

whom high morals exalt, though they lack wealth
and land and lineage; for, to speak the truth,
gold robs from virtue more than it has added,
and nothing more corrupt exists among
the monstrous creatures of prodigious night. 115