

O divina virgo, flore

Laudario di Cortona (Cortona, Biblioteca Comunale, MS 91), fols 32v–34v. SATB arrangement of the refrain by Leah Stuttard.

The Laudario di Cortona is the oldest surviving collection of laude with music, copied for the confraternity of Santa Maria delle Laude at the Franciscan church in Cortona in the later thirteenth century. This lauda is a litany of images for the Virgin: flower, standard, road, ladder, fountain, rose. The refrain (ripresa) returns after every stanza; our score sets the refrain in four parts with the first stanza as a solo line, and further stanzas can be sung to the same melody. The full poem is given here.

English translation

Italian (as sung)

Ripresa (refrain)

O divine Virgin, flower
fragrant with every fragrance!

*O divina virgo, flore
aulorita d'ogne aulore!*

Stanza 1 (in our score)

You are the flower that always bears seed;
great grace abides in you:
you carried the wine and the bread,
that is, our Redeemer.

*Tu se' flor che sempre grane,
molta gratia in te permane:
tu portasti 'l vino e pane,
cioè 'l nostro redemptore.*

Stanza 2

Hail, kindly virgin,
you who alone were worthy
to carry the high standard
of the most high Lord.

*Ave, vergene benigna,
tu ke sola fosti degna
di portare l'alta 'nsegna
de l'altissimo signore.*

Stanza 3

You are the holy, gentle virgin,
you, sweetest Mary,
you who are the straight road
by which salvation comes.

*Tu es sacra virgo pia,
tu, dulcissima Maria,
tu ke se' la dricta via
per venir de salvatione.*

Stanza 4

Through you God has won the victory
of heavenly glory:
your crown reigns
with Christ the emperor.

*Per te Deo n'ave victoria
de la supernale gloria:
la tua corona imperia
cum Cristo imperadore.*

Stanza 5

So many are your virtues
that they embrace heaven and earth and sea:
stripped bare of grace are all
who are in error about you.

*Tante sono li tue virtude,
ki cielo e terra e mare conclude:
tutti so' di gratia ignudi,
kiunque de te sie 'n errore.*

Stanza 6

Through you grace so abounds
that all heaven takes delight in it;
never do the angels tire
of singing your praises.

*Tant'abunda per te gratia
ke tuto 'l cielo se ne solatia;
unque de te non se sàtiano
l'angeli di far laudure.*

English translation

Italian (as sung)

Stanza 7

With that glorious song
they make a delightful choir:
you make everyone joyful
who has hope in your love.

*De quel canto glorioso
fanno coro delectoso:
ciascun rendi gaudioso,
speranç'à de lo tuo amore.*

Stanza 8

All bring reverence,
with great courtesy and obedience,
to you, lady of power,
in whom all honour reigns,

*Tutti portan reverentia
cum molta gent'et ubidença
a te, donna de potentia,
in cui regna tutt'onore*

Stanza 9

for your blessedness
in the everlasting light;
O fountain, you who are a river
of mercy, out of love!

*per la tua beatitudine
de lo sempiternal lumine;
o fontana, ke se' flumine
de pietade, per amore!*

Stanza 10

O sweetness, in you all is made perfect
by the divine majesty;
through your holy teaching
your splendour shines out so brightly.

*O dolçor, de te s'afina
per la maiestà divina,
per la tua santa doctrina,
sì reluce 'l tuo splendore.*

Stanza 11

You are the way of truth,
you are the ladder of humility;
from you he took his humanity,
Jesus, our Redeemer!

*Tu se' via de viridade,
scala se' d'umilitade;
de te prese humanidade
Iesù, nostro redemptore!*

Stanza 12

You are the glory of paradise,
ever radiant of face;
you (glory be to you!) are laughter,
you are the rose full of sweetness.

*Tu se' gloria del paradiso,
sempre parente di viso;
tu (glori'a te!) se' riso,
tu se' rosa cum dolçore.*

Stanza 13

Hail, crowned virgin,
hail, overshadowed by God,
you who are crowned in heaven,
mother of every sinner.

*Ave, virgo incoronata,
ave, Dio obumbrata,
ke 'm ciel se' encoronata,
madre d'ogne peccatore.*