

Rusticatio Mexicana

Invocation to Apollo

As is conventional in epic poetry, Landívar begins with a formal invocation to Apollo, god of music and poetry. He uses familiar images partly because, as he warns, his revelations will be strange.

Tū, quī concentūs plectrō moderāris eburnō,
 Et sācrās cantāre docēs modulāmina Mūsās,
 30 Tū mihi vēra quidem, sed certē rāra canentī
 Dexter ades, grātumque melos largīre vocātus.
 Urbs erat occiduis procul hinc nōtissima terrīs
 Mexicus, ampla, frequensque, virīs, opibusque, superba,
 Indigenīs quondam multōs domināta per annōs;
 35 Nunc vērō Hispānī, populīs Māvorte subactīs,
 Sceptra tenent, summāque urbem ditiōne gubernant.

TRANSLATION

You, who bring forth music with an ivory pick
 And teach the holy Muses to sing melody,
 You be present (and) favorable for me singing true indeed but certainly
 unusual things
 Having been called, (be present) to give lavishly pleasing melody.
 There was at a distance from here in western lands a very famous city,
 Mexicus (Tenochtitlán), large, populous, proud in its men and resources,
 Once ruled by native people for many years;
 Now indeed the Hispanics, with the (native) people subdued by Mars (war),
 Hold the scepter, and they rule the city with the greatest authority.