

I. LIPSI
DE CONSTANTIA
LIBER SECVNDVS.

CAPVT I.

*Occasio & repetiti sermonis.
itio ad Langij amoenum hortum, eiusque laudatio.*

Sequenti die, visum Langio abducere me ad suos hortos, quos impenso sane studio duplices colebat: alteros in colle, e regione aedium: alteros paullo longius sitos, in depressiore loco, ad ipsum Mosam,

Quod per amoenam urbem leni fluit agmine flumen.

Itaque cum occupasset me satis mane in cubiculo, "Ambulamusne, Lipsi?" inquit, "an quies tibi magis cordi & sessio?"

"Imo ambulatio, Langi," inquam, "si tecum; sed quo imus?"

"Si placet, ad hortos meos," inquit Langius, "qui ad flumen. Non longa via est; corpus obiter exercueris: urbem videris: denique grata ibi in hoc aestu frigerans aura."

"Placet," inquam ego, "nec te duce via mihi vlla molesta, non ad extremos Indos."

Et cum dicto pallia poposcimus, sumpsimus; iuimus, iniuimus. Cumque in ipso aditu, oculos circumtulisses vago quodam & curioso adpectu: miratus animo elegantiam & cultum loci, "Mi senex, quae haec amoenitas est!" inquam. "quis splendor! Caelum hic habes, Langi, non hortum. Nec astrorum illi igne profecto magis nitent in serena nocte, quam hi tui scintillantes micantesque serie flores. Adonidis aut Alcinoi hortos loquuntur? nugae, ad istos comparati, imagines muscarum." Et simul propius accedens, & flores quosdam nudi-

BOOK II

Chapter 1

An Opportunity for resuming the discussion. A stroll through Langius' delightful garden and its praise.

The following day, Langius got the idea of inviting me into his gardens. He actually cultivated two sets of gardens with great diligence and zeal, some on a hill in the area of the house, and the others placed a little further away, in a lower spot right beside the Meuse: "Because a river flows with a gentle current through a lovely city."¹ And so when he had approached me quite early in my bedroom, he asked, "Shall we take a walk, Lipsius, or is sitting around in quiet more to your liking?"

"I prefer a walk, Langius," I replied, "if I can take it with you, but where shall we go?"

"If you like," he answered, "to my gardens by the river. It's not far to go, and along the way you can get some exercise and see the city; finally, the breeze there is delightful and cool in this heat."

"It sounds good to me," I said, "and with you as my guide, not any route would bother me—not to the distant Indies."

Having said this we called for our coats, and, having put them on, we set out on our way. Upon our arrival at the garden, I let my eyes roam all around in a wandering, curious inspection. With heartfelt astonishment at the elegance and cultivation of the place, I said, "What a delight this is, my dear sir, what splendor! You have heaven here, Langius, not a garden. The fiery stars surely do not shine more brilliantly on a calm night than these variously sparkling and glowing flowers of yours. Do they talk about the gardens of Adonis and Alcinous? They are trifles compared to these, and husks of flies."² At the same time approaching me and drawing some flowers to my nose and eyes, I said, "What should I

¹ Ennius, *Annals* 5, quoted by Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 6.4.4. See *The Annals of Q. Ennius*, ed. Otto Skutsch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 85, where the line is numbered 161 in Book V. In *Remains of Old Latin*, ed. E.H. Warmington (London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1935), 1: 64, it is numbered V.171; and in *Ennianae Poesis Reliquiae*, ed. J. Vahlen, 2nd ed. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1907–1908), it is numbered V.173.

² Literally "images of flies." Lipsius is alluding to Petronius, *Satyricon* 135, where an old woman, bent on conjuring involving beans, becomes impatient with the narrative's humanness in shelling them: "she seizes the beans herself and tears the shells off all at once with her teeth, and spits them out on the ground as if they were husks of flies."

oculisque admovens, "Quid primum voueam?" inquam. "oculos cum Argo fieri, an nasus cum Catullo? Itaque vtrumque sensum pariter permulcet mihi et titillat haec voluptas. Ite, ite omnes Arabum odores, qui nautea mihi prae halitu hoc ingenuo & vere caelesti!"

Langius manum mihi blande premens, nec sine risu, "Praefiscine, Lipsi," inquit, "non ego, non haec rustica mea Flora agnoscimus tam scitam, tam vrbanam laudem."

Ego iterum, "Tamen, Langi, veram. Blandiri me putas? serio hoc dico & ex intimo meo sensu, Campi Elysii, Elysii non sunt, prae hoc tuo rure. Ecce enim, quae hic vbique nitela est! quis ordo! quam apte omnia in areolas suas puluillosque disposita! vt non elegantius tessellae aliquae in pauimento! Iam quae florum herbarumque copia! quae raritas & nouitas! vt videatur in exiguum hunc locum Natura conclusisse, quidquid eximium habet noster aut alter orbis."

CAPVT II.

Hortorum in genere Laudatio. Cultum eum antiquum esse, & a natura. Reges & viros magnos usurpasse. Denique delectatio eorum ob oculos posita, & non improbum meum votum.

"Et profecto egregium & laudabile hoc tuum studium, Langi, in re hortorum: studium ad quod, ni fallor, optimus & modestissimus quisque trahitur a natura ipsa. Cui argumentum, quod non facile voluptatem aliam dixeris, in quam ab omni aevo tam cupide consenserint selecti inter gentes. Sacras litteras lustras? videbis vna cum orbe nato natos hortos: quos Deus ipse primo homini domicilium attribuit, & velut sedem beatæ vitæ. Profanas? ecce Adonidis, & Alcinoi,

pray for first, to become all eyes with Argus, or all nose with Catullus?³ In such a way this pleasure caresses and teases both of my senses equally. Away with all the perfumes of the Arabs, which are nauseous to me beside this natural and truly heavenly fragrance."

Taking me gently by the hand, Langius said, not without a smile, "Knock on wood! Lipsius, but neither I nor this country Flora⁴ of mine allow such fine, such urbane praise."

"Still it is true praise, Langius," I insisted. "Do you take me for a flatterer? I say this in earnest and from my deepest feeling, that the Elysian Fields are not Elysian beside this land of yours.⁵ Just look at what a glow is here and everywhere! What order! How suitably all the plants are arranged in their own beds and mounds, so that the tiles in a mosaic are not more elegant! Moreover, what an abundance of flowers and shrubs! What rarities and novelties! It would seem that Nature has enclosed within this scanty space whatever exceptional thing our own or the new world holds."

Chapter 2

Praise of Gardens in general. The Cultivation of Gardens is ancient and natural. They have been enjoyed by Kings and great men. Finally, the delight of Gardens is set before the eyes, along with my not unworthy longing.

"And surely your diligence in the matter of gardens, Langius, is noteworthy and admirable. It is an undertaking to which, unless I am mistaken, whoever is most noble and modest is drawn by nature itself. As an argument for it, you will not easily mention any other pleasure in which the most eminent persons among nations from every age have so avidly agreed. Do you survey holy writ? You will see gardens born together with the birth of the world. God Himself bestowed them upon the first man as a dwelling, as the setting of a blessed life. What about

³ For the Garden of Adonis, see Pliny, *Natural History* 19.19.49. For the Garden of Alcinoos, see Pliny, *ibid.* and Homer, *Odyssey* 7.112–132. For Argus and his hundred eyes, see Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.625–627; Statius, *Silvae* 5.4.11–13. For Catullus, see his *Poems* 13.13–14.

⁴ Flora was the Roman goddess of flowers and spring. See Ovid, *Fasts* 5.195–378. For a thorough summary of her place in antiquity, see H. David Brumble, *Classical Myths and Legends in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: A Dictionary of Allegorical Meanings* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), 121–22. "Knock on wood" is an effort to render in modern idiom the Latin word *Praefiscine*, an expression (used humorously here) to ward off bad luck or evil consequences of praise arising from spirits offended by human

& Tantalii, & Hesperidum hortos prouerbia & fabulae loquuntur: & in veris certisque historiis, reperies Cyri regis manu plantaria instituta, & Semiramidis aërios pensilesque flores, & Masanissae nouum & celebrem cultum, Africa mirante. Iam, inter priscos Graecos Romanosque, quot illustria capita tibi proferam, qui positis aliis curis, soli in hac cura? in illis quidem: vno verbo, plerosque philosophos & sapientes, qui remoti ab insano foro & vrbe, hortorum se spatiis sepiusque clausurunt. At in istis; Tarquinium regem video iamtum prisca illa Roma, in hortis molliter ambulantiem, & papauerum capita resectantem: Catonem Censorium agnosco, in re hortensi deditum, & de ea serio scribentem: Lucullum, post Asiaticas victorias, in iisdem otiantem: Sullam, abiecta Dictatura, suaviter hic senescentem: & Diocletianum Principem, olera sua & lactucas ad Salonam, purpurae & omnibus sceptris praefertentem. Nec abiuit ab hoc meliorum iudicio vulgus: in quo ipso, simplices omnes & sine mala ambitione animas, scio fuisse in hoc cultu.

“Est enim profecto arcana quaedam & congenita nobis vis, cuius intimas causas non facile reddo, quae ad hanc innoxiam & ingenuam delectationem trahit non nos tantum, qui propendimus; sed illos ipsos serios & seueros, qui renitentur et irrident. Atque vt caelum et aeternos illos ignes nemini adspicere fas, sine occulto horrore quodam & religione: non item Terrae sacras opes, & hunc inferioris Mundi mundum, sine tacita quadam gaudij titillatione & sensu. Animum tuum mentemque percontare: capi se hoc adspectu dicet, imo pasci. Oculos

secular literature? See how proverbs and myths talk about the gardens of Adonis, Alcinous, Tantalus, and the Hesperides.⁶ Among true, reliable histories you find young trees set out by the hand of Cyrus, the airy hanging flowers of Semiramis, and Masinissa's novel and celebrated plantation, the wonder of Africa.⁷ Already, among the ancient Greeks and Romans, how many illustrious individuals shall I produce for you, who, with their other cares set aside, cared only about this? Among the former there are, in a word, most of the philosophers and sages, who, detached from the raging forum and city, sequestered themselves within the hedges and walks of gardens. Among the latter, I see King Tarquin already in that bygone Rome, walking placidly in his gardens, lopping off the heads of poppies. I recognize Cato the Censor, devoted to the business of gardening and writing seriously about it, and Lucullus, after his Asian victories, relaxing in these same pursuits; Sulla, having set aside the Dictatorship, gently living out his declining years here; and the Emperor Diocletian, preferring his cabbage and lettuce in Salona to royal purple and all his tokens of authority.⁸ And the better part of the common people has not departed from this opinion. I know that among them all the innocent spirits without wicked ambition have engaged in the cultivation of gardens.

“It is assuredly some mysterious, inborn force in us, whose intimate causes I do not easily bring to mind, which calls us to this harmless, innocent pleasure—and not only us who have the inclination, but even those serious, stern types who resist and ridicule it. And just as it is right that no one gaze upon the heavens and those eternal fires without a certain inward shudder and religious awe, even so one should not look at the sacred treasures of the Earth, the cosmetics of this lower Cosmos, without a kind of quiet stirring and sensation of joy. Plumb the depths of your own mind and soul: they will say they are captivated

⁶ For the gardens of Adonis and Alcinous, see above, n. 3. For the garden of Tantalus, see Homer, *Odyssey* 11.588–592; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 4.458–459. For the garden of the Hesperides, see Hesiod, *Theogony* 215–216.

⁷ On the gardening of Cyrus, see Xenophon, *Economy* 4.12–14. On the hanging gardens of Semiramis' Babylon, see Diodorus Siculus, *Histories* 2.10. On Masinissa as the founder of farming in Libya, see Polybius, *Histories* 36.16; Strabo, *Geography* 17.3.15.

⁸ Lipsius seems once again to be indulging in a certain degree of irony at the expense of his own character in the dialogue. King Tarquin, lopping off the heads of the tallest poppies, was indicating to a messenger that his master should murder the most prominent patricians in his kingdom. See Livy, *Early History of Rome* 1.54.6. Cato the Censor (234–149 B.C.), author of *On Agriculture*, is generally regarded as an exemplar of the austere virtues of the Roman Republic, and L. Lucinius Lucullus (117–56 B.C.) is likewise a generally admirable figure, although he ended his days in luxuriant dissipation (see Plutarch, *Lives: Lucullus*). Sulla (138–78 B.C.) was, however, among the bloodiest of Roman dictators (see Plutarch, *Lives: Sulla* and Aurelius Victor, *De viris illustribus* 75),

sensumque: fatebuntur non alibi libentius se acquiescere, quam in his hortorum areis & puluillis. Circumsiste, quaeso te, paullulum haec agmina florum & augmenta: vide mihi illum e calyce, hunc e vagina, alium e gemma protuberantem; vide hunc morientem subito, alium subnascentem; denique inspice in vno aliquo genere cultum, formam, faciem, mille modis paria & diuersa.

“Quae illa tam rigida mens, quae inter haec non flectat se molli aliqua cogitatione, & liquescat? Iam ades curiose tu oculo: defigere paullum in nitores istos & pigmenta. Inspice hanc nativam purpuram, hunc sanguinem, hoc ebur, hanc niuem, hanc flammam, hoc aurum: & tot colores, quos artificii cuique penicillo aemulari fas: aemulari, sed non imitari. Denique quis exhalans ille odor! quis penetrans spiritus! & nescio quae pars aetherae aurae infusa ab alto! Vt non vane poetarum nostra gens, flores plerosque natos finxerit, e succo aut sanguine immortalium deorum. O gaudij & liquidae voluptatis vere fons! o Venerum & Gratiarum sedes! mihi in vestris vmbraculis quies & vita sit; mihi fas remoto extra ciuicos tumultus, inter has herbas, inter hos noti ignotique orbis flores, hilari & hiante oculo oberrare: & modo ad hunc occidentem, modo ad illum exorientem manum vultumque circumferre: & cum vaga quadam allucinatione, curarum hic omnium falli & laborum.”

CAPVT III.

Contra curiosos quosdam disertum, qui hortis ad vanitatem & ignaviam abutuntur. Quis verus eorum vsus. Sapientibus & doctis idoneos esse: & Sapientiam ipsam altam in iis & educatam.

Cum dixissem haec acrius, & voce vultuque accenso: remisso ore ad me Langius, “Amas certe, Lipsi,” inquit, “amas floridam hanc purpureamque Nympham: sed vereor, vt ames immodeste. Hortos enim laudas, sed ita, vt vana pleraque in iis mirere, aut externa: vera & legitima eorum gaudia omittas. Colores enim dumtaxat auide inspicias, & in puluillis quiescis, & flores petis ab noto ignotoque

by this sight, or rather nourished by it. Question your eyes and senses: they will confess that they would not more willingly take their ease anywhere else than in these garden beds and borders. Stand around a little, I beg you, among these rows and embankments of flowers: look, for me, how one is pushing out of its calyx, another out of its sheath of leaves, and yet another opening out of a bud. See this one suddenly dying, another bursting into life. Finally, observe in one or another species of flower growth, form, and feature alike and different in a thousand ways.

“What mind is so rigid that among these it does not bend and relax in gentle pensiveness? Come near now, curious eye, to focus for a little on these textures and colors. Behold this native purple, this blood red, this ivory, this snowy white, this flame, this gold—so many colors, which any artist’s brush would justly emulate—emulate, but not match. Finally, what a breath of fragrance! What a pervasive aura! And I don’t know what part of the heavenly aether is infused from on high! Not vainly has our race of poets imagined that most flowers have their birth in the juice or blood of the immortal gods.⁹ Oh, you authentic source of joy and melting pleasure! Oh, you home to the charms of Venus and the Graces! Let me have quiet and live in your shades: it is right for me, withdrawn from civil strife, to ramble wide-eyed and cheerful among these plants, among these flowers of the known and unknown world; and to turn my hand and gaze now to this one drooping, now to this other springing up—and so here to be tricked by a kind of wandering fancy out of all my worries and toils.”

Chapter 3

An Argument against certain fastidious persons who abuse gardens for the sake of vanity and sloth. What their true use is: to be fitting for the Wise and the learned. Wisdom itself was first nurtured and raised up in gardens.

When I had said these things so vehemently, with my voice and visage enkindled, Langius replied to me with a gentle countenance: “Certainly, Lipsius, you are in love—you are in love with this purple, flowering Nymph; but I worry that you love immoderately. You praise gardens indeed, but in such fashion that you admire in them what is useless and superficial. Their real and proper joys you neglect. For your avid attention is directed merely at colors, you take your ease in the borders, and you go in search of flowers from the known and the unknown

⁹ More commonly, in fact, flowers find their mythical origins in the blood of mortals fatally associated with the gods. See, for example, the tales of Echo and Narcissus, Apollo and Hyacinth, and Venus and Adonis in Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 3.402–510, 10.162–219, and 10.708–39. For an account of the diverse implications of these myths see

orbe. Obsecro vt quid? vt ne te quoque esse sciam in hac secta, quae exorta hodie, male curiosorum hominum, male feriatum, qui rem optimam simplicissimamque, instrumentum duorum vitiorum fecerunt, Vanitatis & Torporis. Hac enim fini habent hortos. Herbulas aliquot & flores exoticos ambiciose conquirunt: & quae sita ita anxie fouent & tuentur, vt nulla mater suum gnatum. Hi sunt, quorum litterae in Thraciam, Graeciam, Indiam discurrunt: idque seminis exigui aut bulbuli caussa. Hi, quibus aegrius sit florem aliquem nouum mori, quam veterem amicam. Romanum illum riserit¹ aliquis, qui piscem suum attritus luxit? isti plantam. Iam si quis ex his Florae candidatis nouius aliquid aut rarius nactus est, vt ostentat! vt alij competitores aemulantur, inuidet! e quibus non nemo tristior domum discedit, quam olim in Praeturae petitione victus Sulla aut Marcellus. Quid dicam? nisi hilarem hanc quandam insaniam esse: nec absimilem illi puerorum, pallentium et rixantium circa pupas suas et sigilla? At eorumdem industriam in hortis etiam cognosce. Sedent, circumambulant, oscitant, dormiunt: nec aliud, prorsus vt non otij sui secessum hunc habeant, sed desidia sepulcrum.

“Profanum genus! & quos iure arceam ab orgiis veri arcanique horti, quem modestae voluptati natum scio, non vanitati: quieti, non torpori. An ego tam leuis, quem efferat aut deprimat herbula aliqua rarior, siue adepta siue amissa? Imo aestimo res suis pretiis: & seposito lenocinio illo novitatis, scio herbas esse, scio flores: id est breuia quaedam et fugacia, de quibus aptissime poeta princeps

Ζεφυρίν πνεύουσα τὰ μὲν φύει, ἄλλα δὲ πέσσει.

[Zephyri spirans aura alia quidem gignit, alia concoquit.]

Itaque non sperno eas siue delicias siue elegantias (& exemplum vides): sed hoc a mollibus Hortensijs istis muto, quod sine cura haec talia conquiram: sine cura habeam: sine cura amittam. Nec idem ille ego tam marcidus, imo tam mortuus, vt recondam & velut sepeliam me in his hortorum vmbris. Negotium etiam in illo otio reperio, & inuenit ibi animus, quod sine actione vlla agat, sine labore vlllo

world. Why do I ask? So that I know you are not also of that sect, sprung up nowadays, of wickedly curious, wickedly idle men who have made of the best and most innocent thing the instrument of two vices, Vanity and Sloth. For they keep gardens to this end. They ambitiously seek out some plants and exotic flowers, and these special finds they anxiously foster and guard as no mother ever did her own child. These are the men whose letters run to and fro into Thrace, Greece, and India, and that for the sake of a few seeds or bulbs. These are the men for whom it would be more distressing should some new flower die, than an old friend. Will someone laugh at the Roman who went into mourning for his fish?¹⁰ These do the same for a plant. Now if one of these suitors of Flora has chanced upon something newer or rarer—how he shows it off! How his rivals are beset with emulation and envy, and some of them slink home more sadly than Sulla or Marcellus, when they lost the election for the Praetorship.¹¹ What shall I say, except that it is a charming kind of insanity, not unlike that of children who become livid and squabble over their puppets and dolls. But take account also of the exertions of these men in their gardens. They sit, they amble about, they yawn, they sleep, and nothing else: so that, in short, they have in this garden not a retreat for their leisure, but a tomb for their sloth.

“What an unholy tribe! Let me lawfully ban them from the rites of the true, mysterious garden, which I know came into being for moderate pleasure, not vanity, for repose, not apathy. Am I so frivolous that whether I gain or lose some unusual little plant will puff me up or depress me? I esteem things rather at their own price. When the pandering allure of novelty is set aside, I know them as plants and as flowers; that is, as things brief and fleeting, of which the foremost poet has aptly written, ‘Zephyr’s gentle breath brings some to birth, others to ripeness’.¹² And so I do not scorn either those delights or charms (you see the example here), but I refuse the fickle indulgence of these followers of Hortensius: I collect plants without worry, I keep them without worry, and I lose them without worry.¹³ And no more am I so withered, or rather so dead, that I will put myself in storage and, as it were, inter myself in the shadows of these gardens. I find out activity even in that leisure, and the mind discovers there something to do

¹⁰ See Pliny, *Natural History* 9.81.172, for an account of Hortensius (114–50 B.C.), who mourned his fish. For an account of Lipsius’ own involvement with the Dutch tulip craze, see Anne Goldgar, *Tulipmania: Money, Honor, and knowledge in the Dutch Golden Age* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 34, 36–38, 56.

¹¹ On Sulla’s race for the praetorship in 99 B.C., see Plutarch, *Lives: Sulla* 5; it is not clear to what episode regarding Marcellus Lipsius here refers.

¹² Homer, *Odyssey* 7.119.

¹³ Hortensius (see above, n. 10) is associated by Varro, *Rural Economy* 3.310, 3.6.6, 3.13.2, 3.17.5–7, with the extravagant display of fish and wild animals. I am unacquainted

elaboret. *Numquam minus solus sum, aiebat ille, quam cum solus: numquam minus otiosus, quam cum otiosus.*

"Vox egregia, & quam ausim dicere natam in hisipsis hortis. Scilicet menti parati illi, non corpori: ad eam recreandam, non ad hoc laxandum: & ad salubrem quemdam secessum a curis aque turbis. Homines tibi molesti? hic apud te eris. Occupatio exhaust? hic replebere, vbi animo quietis illud pabulum, & ab aura puriore velut inspiratio nouae vitae. Itaque vides veteres illos Sapientes? in hortis habitarunt. Eruditas hodie doctasque animas? hortis delectantur. & in ijs diuina illa pleraque scripta procusa, quae miramur, & quae nulla temporum series aut senectus abolebit. Viridi illi Lycaeo tot dissertationes de natura debemus: vmbrierae Academiae, de moribus: & ex hortorum spatijs diffusi vberes illi Sapientiae riui quos bibimus, & qui faecunda diluuie orbem terrae inundarunt. Scilicet attollit se magis erigitque ad alta iste animus, cum liber & solutus videt suum caelum: quam cum aedium aut vrbium carceribus tenetur inclusus. Hic mihi vos poëtae duraturum aliquod carmen pangite; hic vos litterati meditamini & scribite; hic vos, Philosophi de tranquillitate, de constantia, de vita et morte disputate. En, Lipsi, quae vera hortorum vsio et finis: otium inquam, secessio, meditatio, lectio, scriptio: & ea tamen omnia velut per remissionem & per lusum. Vt pictores, longa intentione hebetatos oculos, ad specula quaedam & virores colligunt: sic nos hic animum defessum, aut aberrantem.

"Et cur celem te meum institutum? Pergulam illam topiario opere vides? Haec Musarum mihi domus est, haec Sapientiae meae gymnasium & palaestra. Illic aut seria arcanaque lectione pectus impleo: aut semente quadam obsero bonarum cogitationum. Et vt tela quaedam in armamentarium, sic ex ijs praecepta in animum recondo: quae prompta mihi mox contra vim varietatemque Fortunae. Intra eam quoties pedem penetravi, emanere viles omnes seruilesque curas iubeo:² & erecto quantum licet capite, studia profanae plebis despicio, & magnum hoc in rebus hominum inane. Hominem imo ipsum exuere mihi videtur, & in altum rapi igneis Sapientiae quadrigis. An illic angi me censes, quid

without being busy, to accomplish without toil. 'I am never less alone', one man said, 'than when alone, never less leisurely than when at leisure'.¹⁴

"It is a notable remark, which, I daresay, was born in these very same gardens. Without a doubt, they are devised for the mind, not the body; for restoring the former, not relaxing the latter; for a wholesome withdrawal from worries and crowds. Do men bother you? Here you will be at home. Has your employment drained you? Here you will be replenished, where there is the food of quiet for the soul and, so to speak, the inspiration of new life from the purer air. And then are you looking to the ancient sages? They dwelt in gardens. What of today's learned, accomplished minds? They are enjoying gardens. And in gardens were forged the greater number of those divine writings that we admire, and that no succession of times or old age will efface. How many treatments of nature do we owe to the green Lyceum? How many discourses on ethics to the shaded Academy? And out of the walkways of gardens are spread the rich rivers of wisdom that we drink, and that drench the earth in a fertile flood. Undoubtedly the mind grows more upright and brings itself nearer to the heights, when free and unbound it sees its own heaven, than when it is held prisoner in the dungeons of buildings or cities. Here, you poets, compose some ode that will last. Here, you men of letters, meditate and write. Here, you Philosophers, debate about tranquility, about constancy, about life and death. Take a look, Lipsius, at what is the real use and purpose of gardens: leisure, I say, withdrawal, meditation, reading, and writing—and yet all these by way of relaxation and amusement. Just as painters, having dulled their eyes by prolonged application, restore them with certain mirrors or green colors;¹⁵ so we bring here the mind that is weary or distracted.

"And why should I conceal from you my own customs? Do you see that gazebo with its ornamental hedge? This is my house of the Muses, this my gymnasium and wrestling-ring of Wisdom. In that place I fill my heart with grave mysterious reading, or I sow it with a crop of good thoughts. And so, like weapons in an armory, I store these precepts in my mind, which are immediately at hand for me against the violence and vicissitude of Fortune. As often as I set foot in that place, I order all base and servile worries to depart, and, holding my head as high as possible, I despise the concerns of the ordinary crowd, and the great emptiness of human affairs. Rather, I seem to divest myself of mere humanity, and to be carried on high in the fiery chariot of Wisdom. Perhaps you think me in anguish over what the French, over what the Spanish have set in motion? Over who may

¹⁴ Cicero, *On Moral Obligations* 3.1.1, quoting Cato quoting Scipio Africanus the Elder.

¹⁵ On the use of the green gem *smaragdus* to restore dimmed vision, see Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 37.16.62–64. The reference to mirrors seems to be a misunder-

Celae, quid Celtiberi moliantur? quis sceptrum Belgicae teneat, aut amittat? Asiae tyrannus classe nobis an terra minetur? aut denique

— *quid sub Arcto
Rex gelidae meditetur orae?*

Nihil horum. Munitus & clausus contra externa, intra me maneo: a curis omnibus securus praeter vnam, vt fractum subactumque hunc animum rectae Rationi ac Deo subijciam, & animo ceteras res humanas. Vt quodcumque fatalis ille & meus dies venerit, fronte composita nec maestus eum excipiam: abeamque ex hac vita non vt eiectus, sed vt emissus. Haec muginatio mea in hortis, Lipsi, hi fructus: quos non permutem (quamdiu sana mihi mens) cum omni gaza Persarum aut Indorum.”

CAPVT IIII.

*Ad Sapientiam igitur adhortatio. per eam ad Constantiam veniri.
& serio monita iuuentus, vt serias Philosophiae litteras
cum amoenioribus illis & liberalibus coniungat.*

Dixerat Langius: & postremo illo tam alto & constanti sermone, vere fateor, dederat me in stuporem, quem tamen abrui, “O te felicem,” inquit, “otij pariter & curarum! & o vix humanam in homine vitam! quam vtinam parte aliqua imitari mihi fas: & per vestigia ista serpere, etsi longo interuallo.”

Langius velut castigans, “Imitari?” inquit, “imo superare: nec sequi tibi solum hic ius, sed praeire. Parum enim, Lipsi, parum in hac Constantiae & Virtutis via ipsi nos promouimus: nec fortibus bonisque pares adhuc sumus, sed proiecte mollibus aut malis paullo fortasse firmiores. At tu cuius vegeta & alta insoles, accingere, & me duce, viam hanc ini, quae recta ad firmitudinem & Constantiam ducit. Via quam dico, Sapientia est, cuius aequabilem & tranquillam or-

hold the scepter in the Low Countries, who lose it? Whether the Asian tyrant may threaten us with his fleet or by land? Or finally,

What the King of the frozen shore
Is plotting in the far North?¹⁶

None of this bothers me. Armed and fortified against all external concerns, I stay within myself, secure from all concerns save one: that I may subject this mind of mine, broken and subdued, to right Reason and to God,¹⁷ and subject other, human matters to my mind. So whenever that fatal day should come, I may, not sorrowing, accept it with a calm expression, and leave this life, not as one who has been thrown out, but as one who has been released. This is my garden reflection, Lipsius, these its fruits, which I would not change (so long as my mental faculties are sound) for all the wealth of Persia and India.”

Chapter 4

An exhortation, therefore, to Wisdom: through it we come to Constancy. A serious admonition to young men that they combine the serious literature of Philosophy with the more charming liberal studies.

Langius had spoken, and with that last discourse, so deep and constant, I was reduced, I must admit, to a stunned silence. I broke out of it, all the same, with these words: “Oh, how equally favored you are, both in leisure and in troubles—with your life as a man surpassing the merely human! If only I were allowed to imitate some part of it and creep along in your footsteps, even if at a great distance behind!”

“Imitate?” Langius replied, as if reproving me. “Surpass, rather, and it is right for you not only to follow me here but to push on ahead. Very little, Lipsius, very little progress, indeed, have I myself made in this path of Constancy and Virtue; and I am still no match for resolute, good men; but perhaps I am a little stronger than the blatantly weak or wicked. But you, whose nature is lively and deep, gird yourself, and with me as a guide, enter upon this way, which leads straight to strength and Constancy. The way, which I mean, is Wisdom, and I urge you and admonish you not to step outside her even and tranquil path. Until now has literature been dear to you, and its nine goddesses? Good, for I

¹⁶ Horace, *Odes* 1.26.3–4. Most modern editions read “metuatur” (“is feared”) rather than “meditetur” (“is meditating” or “plotting”). Horace’s “Asian tyrant” might well make sixteenth-century Europeans think of the Sultan of the Turks.

¹⁷ The phrase “and to God” (*ac Deo*) was added after the 1584 edition. I am grateful to Dr. J. Schiavone for calling this to my attention and providing me with a photocopy of