

It is said that we must pour execrable things
 Into the wells of forgetfulness and into sealed tombs,
 1085 And that evil, revived by writing,
 Will corrupt the ways of posterity:
 But the mother of vice is not wisdom,
 And virtue is not the daughter of ignorance;
 Ignorance is the warm dung under which filthy sins
 1090 Fatten and grow if they are not torn out,
 And the steel of even intellectual virtues
 Cuts and destroys error, and history does so by them too.¹
 It is better openly to show the infection
 With its stink and its punishment.
 1095 The good African father² wisely teaches us
 That tyrants must be painted in all their parts,
 To show how impure are those who condemn
 The family of God to the sword and to the fire.
 My rage consumes itself in the tale of these rages,
 1100 I leave this subject, my hand quits my pen,
 My heart is amazed in itself; my scowling brow,
 My mind retire far from their subject.
 Here I will wash the paper with my tears;
 If you lend your eyes to the rest of my songs,
 1105 Still keep with me this flowered picture,
 Which rejoices over a true subject in these colors:

¹History will destroy error by use of the intellectual virtues.*

²Either Saint Augustine or Saint Cyprian.*