6 To Gird Up (*Accingere*)

According to Hugh,[[1]](#endnote-1) those going to war are girded up, those going on a journey are belted up, and those going to administer are tucked up.

Concerning the first, [1] Macc. 3[:58]: “Judas said: Gird yourselves and be valiant men.” Therefore, Jacob said, Gen. 49[:19]: “Gad, being girded, shall fight.”

Concerning the second, it is read in Tob. 5[:15]: The angel appeared in the form of a young man “standing girded, and as it were ready to walk.” Again Luke 12[:35]: “Let your loins be girt,” etc.

Concerning the third, Eph. 6[:14]: “Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth.” And to the travelers as well as the administrators, therefore it is spoken judiciously to us, concerning this girdling, namely, therefore according to Gregory, 28 *Moralia*,[[2]](#endnote-2) that just as one thing is the lust of the flesh, another of the heart, so, some are girding up the loins of the flesh, others the heart.

¶ To the sense of which the Holy Spirit moves us, Isaiah 32[:11]: “Gird your loins, your breasts,” that is, your heart. Apo. 1[:13]: “And amid the seven golden candlesticks, one like to the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the feet, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.” Who in his heart is chaste from love not from fear. “A hairy man” met the servants of the king of Samaria, “with a girdle of leather about his loins,” 4 Kings 1[:8].

According to Aristotle, in the fourth of *Problematicum*,[[3]](#endnote-3) the hairy are naturally lustful, and such ones, if they restrain the body, they are girded about with a leather belt over their reins, because by their reins they are chaste. But the legal priests ought to be girded, the leaders with a belt, as is evident, Lev. 8[:8]: because they ought to be chaste in flesh and spirit. Samuel as a child served in the tabernacle “girded with a linen ephod,” 1 Kings 2[:18]. Tucked up with the rue of the sage garden the toad may not enter, thus the indolent boy ought to gird up with penitence lest the devil find an approach. Wherefore Jerome in an *Epistle*,[[4]](#endnote-4) in whatever virtue you flourish, you will drag the whole into the dirt unless you have the girdle of chastity. Therefore, says John [21[:18]: “When you were younger, you did gird yourself. But when you shall be old, another shall gird you.” Thus, it is necessary that the young man be voluntarily girded, the old man in truth is girded through his helplessness. It was commanded to the children of Israel that reins be girded in their going out of Egypt toward the promised land, Exod. 12[:11]. In the figure that whoever ought to go out of this world toward heaven, he ought to be girded in his reins.

¶ Here, however it should be noted that first one is to be girded by chastity, as Gregory says in some *Homily* on Easter.[[5]](#endnote-5) Luke 17[:7-8]: “But which of you having a servant plowing, or feeding cattle, will say to him, when he is come from the field, immediately go, sit down to meat. And will not rather say to him, make ready my supper, and gird yourself, and serve me, while I eat and drink, and afterwards you shalt eat and drink?”

Travelers are accustomed to being girded up lest for the dung and through the mud they be defiled, swimmers lest in the deep they drown, fighters lest they be hindered. Thus, also we are tucked up by the belt of chastity and cleanness, lest we be defiled by the vice of the flesh; by the tunic of poverty and patience,[[6]](#endnote-6) lest we be endangered by a worldly shipwreck; by the corselet of charity and constancy, so that we are not overcome in the assault. Concerning the first, Luke 12[:35]: “Let your loins be girt.” Concerning the second, 4 Kings 1[:8]: “A hairy man with a girdle of leather,” that is said of Elias, who was poor. Concerning the third, [1] Macc. 3[:3]: “Juda put on a breastplate.”

1. Huguccio of Pisa, *Derivationes* C 181 (2:235): [1] **Cingo** -gis -xi cinctum, vunde verbalia, et **cinctim**, id est scrictim, consertim, adverbium ... [8] Cingo componitur **accingo** -gis, valde cingere, preparare, adornare; **circumcingo** -gis; **discingo** -gis; **incingo** -gis, idest valde cingere; [9] **precingo** -gis, idest ante vel ab ant eriori parte vel sursum cingere; **recingo** -gis, idest discingere; [10] **succingo** -gis, subtus cingere, unde hoc **cuccinctorium** quo succingimur; et nota quod accingimur bellaturi, precingimur ituri, succingimur minitraturi. Cingo et composita ab eo sunt activa. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Gregory, *Moralia* 28.3.12 (PL 76.453): Accinge sicut vir lumbos tuos, id est, sicut fortis restringe luxuriam, nisi quia alia est luxuria carnis qua castitatem corrumpimus, alia vero luxuria cordis est qua de castitate gloriamur? [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Aristotle, *Problems* 4.4 876b33 (Barnes 2:1351): Why is it that man alone grows hair when he begins to be capable of sexual intercourse, whereas this does not happen in the other animals which have hair? ...because animals which emit semen become drier and rarer, conditions which are favourable to the growth of hair.

4.31 880a34 (Barnes 2:1358): Why are birds, and men with thick hair, lustful? ...the real reason that the natures both of birds and of thickhaired men are able owing to their heat to concoct a large quantity of moisture? This is indicated by the presence of hair and feathers. ....

Cf. *History of Animals*, 3.11, 518b24-25.

Cf. Augustine, *Sermo* 4.28.31 (PL 38.48): Sunt mali in Ecclesia pertinentes ad Esau: quia et ipsi filii Rebeccae, filii matris Ecclesiae, de utero ipsius nati, et pilosi in peccatis carnalibus perseverantes, de illius tamen utero nati. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Cf. Jerome, *Epistola* 60.9 (PL 22:594): Referret, inquam, alius, quod in palatii militia, sub chlamyde et candenti lino, corpus ejus cilicio tritum sit: quod stans ante saeculi potestates, lurida jejuniis ora portaverit: quod adhuc sub alterius indumentis, alteri militaverit: et ad hoc habuerit cingulum, ut viduis, pupillis, oppressis, miserisque subveniret.

Cf. *Manipulus florum*, Castitas et Continencie l: Quacumque virtute polleas, quibuscumque operibus niteas; si cingul castitatis careas, omnia per terram trahes.

<http://web.wlu.ca/history/cnighman/MFedition/Castitas/page2.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Gregory, *Homiliae in Evangelia* 22.9 (PL 76.1181): Tenentes baculos in manibus (Exod. 12:11). Quid lex per baculum nisi pastoralem custodiam designat? Et notandum quod prius praecipimur renes accingere, postmodum baculos tenere, quia illi debent curam pastoralem suscipere, qui jam in suo corpore sciunt fluxa luxuriae edomare, ut cum aliis fortia praedicant, ipsi desideriis mollibus enerviter non succumbant. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Cf. *Vita B. Aelredi* 3.22 (PL 195:204): Sed oblitus infirmitatis, et charitatis memor, praecepit illis abbas, dicens: «Nolite, quaeso, nolite, filii, Patrem vestrum tunica patientiae spoliare. Non sum commotus, non sum laesus. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)