Caleno custure me

Arr. by Andrey Bondarev Anonymus



Caleno custure me (also spelled *Calin o custere me*) is the song mentioned in Shakespeare's "Henry V" (IV, 4). The context is on a Hundred Years' War battlefield, where an English soldier cannot understand his French captive and intending to answer in similar gibberish pronounces the title of the song.

French Soldier

Je pense que vous etes gentilhomme de bonne qualite.

PISTOL

Qualtitie calmie custure me! Art thou a gentleman?

what is thy name? discuss.

French Soldier

O Seigneur Dieu!

The song as preserved has English lyrics, with this single line of mock-Latin as its chorus. The origin of the line is not Latin, however, but is most commonly believed to refer to the Irish-language song Cailín Óg a Stór. It has also been claimed to be from the Irish *Cailín ó choist Siúre mé*, "I am a girl from the Suir-side", despite the fact that this is an incorrect sentence in Irish (it should be *Cailín ó chois na Siúire mé*), the chorus of an Irish song, attested in 1595 in "William Ballet's Lute book". A further claim suggests the line might be *Cailín óg a stiúir mé…* "A young girl who led me [presumably astray]".