

Un proverbio toscano

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Quesito (public)

Hello Dico, my neighbour in Toscana, an old lady, taught me the following proverb:

Per santo me cresce giorni quant' il gallo alza il pied
Per Natale quant' il gallo alza l'ali

I have tried to write what she said, she doesn't write herself, but I am sure I have mistakes.

I understand that 'per santo me' refers to the saints day, 21 December when daylight begins to increase, but I do not understand the reference to 'il gallo'.

Another version I found is as follows:
S'allunga di quanto gallo lia lunghe l'ali.
What does 'lia' mean?

I would be most grateful if you would help me to understand this country proverb.

Risposta (public)

I don't know the proverb, but I am sure that, in your second version, "lia" is a mistake for "lla" or "li ha", that means: "he has".
Toscan dialect must express the subject, in pronominal form, even when it appears as a noun. Very similar to English language. So the translation is something like: "the cock it has long wings. "Li" or "ll" stands for "egli" that means "he"; "a" stands for "ha" has. Lia > lla or li a = li ha, egli ha 'he has'.

From a quick check in the web, I found different proverbs in many Italian dialects, that mean: "from the 21 December (or about) the daylight start to get longer and longer". The most similar to your proverb is "Per San Tommé il giorno allunga quanto il gallo alza il pié": for Saint Thomas the day becomes longer as much as the cock rises its feet".
Fabio Rossi