HORACE (QUINTUS HORATIUS FLACcus) [65-8 BCE], LATIN POET. For a biography of Horace, other selections from his poetry, and a few comments on his reception, reputation, and translation in the early modern period, see the print anthology, pp. 144-146 and pp. 191-93.

EDITIONS AND CONTEXTS:
For selected early modern and modern translations of Horace’s verse, as well as further information about his reception, reputation, and translation in early modern England, see the essay ‘Horace’ in “Classical Writers, their Early Modern Reputations and Translations” (Online Companion).

THE ODES OF HORACE, 1638-1730

I have arranged these poems sequentially, but each has an initial footnote identifying the translator and date of publication. Full bibliographic information for each can be found in the brief essay ‘Horace’ (see EDITIONS AND CONTEXTS, above).

ODE 1.4 IN EARLY MODERN TRANSLATIONS. Ode 1.4’s last three lines have been contentious for some early modern translators. Smith (1649) amends Lycidas’ name, giving it a feminine ending (Lycida), although he does not otherwise disguise the boy’s gender or the desire that both men and women feel for him:

Nor Lycida admire
Whom all young-men desire,
And virgins in their turn
Straight with his love shall burn.

The anonymous All Horace his Lyrics (1653) also temporizes in this way: “Nor dote on dainty Lycidae, whose beauty’s darts / Now flame all young men’s, and will virgins’ hearts.” Richard Fanshawe in Brome (1666) goes further, transforming the boy into a girl, erasing the homoerotic content altogether:

Thou canst not there
Call for the music and good cheer
Nor in soft Chloris gaze away thy sight,
Her sex’s envy, our delight.

The censorious John Harington (1684) does the same (“Thou shalt not there soft Chloe admire nor love, / Whose charms th’inflamed youth does prove”), and adds the marginal note: “*Changed on good grounds.” Likewise, ‘Lycidas’ becomes ‘Phyllis’ in the imitation of this poem in Odes and Satires of Horace (1730).

However, like Rider (below), other translators have refused to censor the poem outright, although they sometimes choose language that allows the reader to see Sextius and the youths as admiring and loving Lycidas in a way
that is distinguished from the virgins' sexual desire for him. Coxwell (1718), for example, says, "Nor shalt thou then fair Lycidas admire, / The young men's love, e'er long the maids' desire." Similarly, The Odes of Horace in Latin and English (1712-1713) has, "Then Lycidas no longer shall be thine, / Whose charms our sex at present win, / For whom a thousand virgins soon shall pine," while Creech (1684) says,

No Lycidas, no fair surprizing boy,  
Or to admire, or to enjoy:  
No Lycidas, who now our youth does charm,  
And soon shall all our virgins warm.

1.4 To L. Sextius
A Description of the Spring, an Exhortation to Mirth from the Common Condition of Man's Mortality.

By spring and west-winds' gentle change-about  
Sharp winter's gone; the engines now launch out  
The long-dry keels, nor do the beasts desire  
The stable, nor the husbandman the fire,  
Nor do the fields with hoary frosts look gray.  
Now Cytherean Venus leads the way,  
While the moon 'gins to shine, and sweet-faced Graces  
Joined with nymphs shake the earth with mixed paces,  
While the flame-scattering Vulcan now doth fire  
His Cyclops-toiling forges. Now to tire  
The head with myrtle green, and with the bud  
Which the earth now unprisoned bears, is good.  
Now fit to sacrifice in groves close hid  
To Faunus, whether he crave lamb or kid.  
Pale death with the same foot knocks at the bowers  
Of the poor men and at the princes' towers.  
O happy Sextius, this our lives' short scope  
Forbids us to conceive a lasting hope.  
Now, now will death, and ghosts held fabulous  
Seize upon thee, and Pluto's fairy house;  
Whither being gone, you shan't at dice acquire  
The rule o' th' wine nor Lycidas smooth admire,  
For whom our youths now all on fire grow,  
And maids ere long in their desire will glow.

1 Rider (1638). L. Sextius i.e., Lucius Sestius, a supporter of Brutus; he was pardoned after Brutus' defeat at Philippi; later he was made a consul.  
2 husbandman farmer, rural labourer.  
3 Cytherean Venus an epithet for the goddess of love (Venus, also called Aphrodite, was born from the ocean near the Greek island of Cythera).  
4 tire attire, dress.  
5 myrtle a plant sacred to Venus.  
6 Faunus a rural god, sometimes identified with Pan.  
7 held fabulous believed to be mere fictions.
1.8  To Lydia

HE DOTH SHOW HOW YOUNG SYBARIS WAS WRETCHEDLY WASTED AND DESTROYED WITH THE LOVE OF LYDIA.

I do conjure thee by the gods above,
Thou tell'st me, Lydia, why thou with thy love
Young Sybaris spoilst? why he the fields doth shun,
Being sometimes patient both of dust and sun?
Nor soldier-like doth with his equals ride,
Nor with sharp bits the rough French steeds doth guide?
And why he fears to swim through Tiber’s flood?
And shuns the olive more than viper’s blood?¹
Nor with arms blue with harness weight doth go,
Nor doth beyond the mark the discus throw;
What, lies he hid? like wat’ry Thetis’ son,
A while before Troy’s sad destruction,
Lest in man’s habit they should find him out,
And thrust him forth into the Lycian rout?²

ODE 1.32 IN EARLY MODERN TRANSLATIONS. Like Creech, some translators obscure or are at least somewhat unforthcoming about the male gender of Alcaeus’ beloved. Smith (1649): describes the male beloved in the following way: “And Lycus, comely with black locks and eyes, / With merry notes he chanted to the skies,” while Odes and Satires of Horace (1712-1713) has, “Lycus was his chieffest care, / Armed with jetty eyes and hair.” Similarly, the anonymous All Horace his Lyrics (1653) hedges on the beloved’s gender: “And Lycus for black eyes and hair, / Of presence rare.” Predictably, Harington (1684) simply changes the sex of Alcaeus’ beloved: “[Alcaeus] Did Liber, Muses, Venus sing, / And boy which still to her doth cling / Choice Myrne too, black-haired, and eyed; / Thence beautified” [a printed marginal note appears beside the line containing the replacement of ‘Lycus’ by the woman’s name ‘Myrne’: “*Changed on good grounds”].

1.32

TO HIS HARP, WHOSE ASSISTANCE HE DESIRES.

If underneath a myrtle shade,³

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⁸ Smith (1649).
⁹ olive  i.e., the olive oil that was traditionally applied to the ancient Greek athlete’s body prior to training and contests.
¹⁰ What ... rout  See ‘Achilles,’ Glossary (print anthology).
¹¹ Creech (1684).
¹² myrtle  See n5.
When free from business, I have played
What may this year, and more command;
Begin, sweet harp, a Roman strain,
Those measures and those tunes maintain
First struck by great Alcerus’ noble hand.\(^{13}\)

He fierce in arms, yet mid’st his cares,
When dangers pressed, and noisy wars,
And stained his charming harp with blood;
Or when he stemmed the angry seas,
Or when arrived he sat at ease,
And laughed at all the fury of the flood:

The muses he in sounding verse
Would sing, and Venus’ praise rehearse,
With her attending wanton boy;\(^{14}\)
Or Lyco’s face surprising fair,\(^{15}\)
With lovely eyes and auburn hair,
By nature fitted to entice to joy.

Great Phoebus’ glory, Phoebus’ love,\(^{16}\)
And welcome to the feasts of Jove;
Thou great reliever of my care;
Whene’er I beg thy aid, attend;
Assist the verses of thy friend,
And tune my songs for mighty Caesar’s ear.\(^{17}\)

\(^{13}\) Alcerus  i.e., Alcaeus (b. c. 620 BCE), Greek lyric poet, native of the island of Lesbos, also famous for his political and martial opposition to the tyrants that sought to control his homeland.

\(^{14}\) her attending wanton boy  i.e., Cupid (Glossary, print anthology).

\(^{15}\) Lyco  more commonly ‘Lycus,’ Alcaeus’ youthful male beloved.

\(^{16}\) The harp or lyre is Phoebus’ glory and Phoebus’ love, because Phoebus Apollo is the god of music.

\(^{17}\) mighty Caesar’s ear  here, the Emperor Augustus (63 BCE-14 CE), Horace’s most powerful patron.

\(^{18}\) Coxwell (1718). Only Rider is as emphatic as Coxwell about Lycus’ masculine gender: Rider (1638): “And Lycus beautiful with his black eyes, / And his black hair.”
Thou Phoebus’ glory, sweet’ner of Jove’s feast,
Cares are by thee remové d from my breast,
O thou my soft retirement and rest.

1.38¹⁹

HE WILLS HIS BOY TO PROVIDE NOTHING BUT MYRTLE²⁰ TO THE SETTING FORTH OF HIS BANQUET.

Boy, I do hate the Persian nicety.²¹
Their garlands bound with ribbons please not me,
And do not thou molest thyself to know
In what place the late springing rose doth blow.
I chiefly do take care you should provide
To the plain myrtle nothing else beside;
Myrtle will not shame thee my boy, nor me
Drinking beneath the shadowing vine-tree.

1.38²²

HE IS BEST PLEASED WITH SMALL EXPENSE IN BANQUETS.

When I, my boy, beneath the shade
T’enjoy my friend sit down,
Let not thy wreath be shining made,
Like Ariadne’s crown.²³
With modest myrtle from the grove
Thou shalt appear as fair,
As he that nectar serves to Jove,²⁴
With rubies in his hair.
No pearls, nor costly diamonds place,
Nor roses on my brow,
Green myrtle both our heads shall grace:
No richer garland know,
When I with my companions quaff
Under the shady vine,
And toast some pleasant healths, and laugh
’Twixt each brisk glass of wine.

¹⁹ Rider (1638). This translation is very close to the sense of Horace’s original, and most early modern translators do not seem to have had difficulties with the poem’s content.
²⁰ myrtle  See n5.
²¹ Persian nicety  an excessive luxuriousness associated by ancient Greek and Latin writers with the Persian empire.
²² Coxwell (1718). This poem is more strictly an imitation, perhaps, than a translation; the reference to Ganymede, for example, does not appear anywhere in the original, nor does Horace ever explicitly say that myrtle will make his boy appear just as fair as more costly ornaments would.
²³ Ariadne  betrayed by the hero, Theseus, Ariadne was later the wife of the god Bacchus; he gave her a crown of seven stars, which were transformed into a constellation after her death.
²⁴ As ... Jove  See ‘Ganymede,’ Glossary (print anthology).
ODE 2.5 IN EARLY MODERN TRANSLATIONS. Most early modern translators who have attempted Ode 2.5 have had some significant difficulty with it. Typically, Harington (1684) simply refuses to deal with this poem, noting that "Ode V, for some good reasons is omitted." Interestingly, it is not so much the reference alone to the male Gyges' erotically attractive sexual ambiguity that seems the problem, but in addition the original's use of this figure in the climactic place in the list of the young man's beloved objects, as well as its very clear statement that to the young man the virgin Lalage is more beloved than Phoeloe, Chloris, or even Gyges. In addition, early modern translators who attempt to manage Gyges' erotic allure often face an untenable choice in terms of their culture's sexual norms: leaving this allure situated in the figure's gender ambiguity (is Gyges a man or a woman?) draws attention to the sexual and erotic equivalency of the female and male/female love objects for the young man of the poem, but shifting this allure into a more emphatically 'feminine' register (i.e., Gyges is erotically compelling precisely because he is indistinguishable from the female Phoeloe and Chloris) does pretty much the same thing. Creech (1684) decides to do both, emphasizing the indeterminacy of Gyges' gender, and locating his erotic allure in his femininity, his "smooth" looks and "womanish" hair. At the same time, Creech's syntax focuses on the comparison of Lalage's attributes with those of Phoeloe, Chloris, and Gyges, rather than on the weighing of the young man's relative love for and attraction to these figures:

Soon Lalage, shall soon proclaim
Her love, nor blush to own her flame.
Loved more, for she more kindly warms
Than Phloe coy, or Chloris charms,
So pure her breast, so fair a white
As in a clear and smiling night,
In quiet floods the silver moon,
Or Cretan Gyges never shone;
Who, placed amongst the maids, defies
A skilful stranger's prying eyes;
So smooth his doubtful looks appear,
So loose, so womanish his hair.

For Creech, the solution to the poem's uncomfortable erotic charge is to emphasize that Lalage is more loved because (for) she exceeds Phoeloe's passion, Chloris' charms, and Gyges' shining beauty. For Creech and other translators, however, the poem's obvious implication that the young man enjoys erotic beauty and sexual pleasure regardless of the love object's biological sex cannot be entirely elided.

The anonymous Odes and Satires of Horace (1730) focuses similarly on the way Lalage's beauty exceeds that of Horace's trio of beloved objects. Chloris, Phyllis, and Gyges, here, exist in the poem only as foils against which Lalage shines:
Nature in her has her whole self outdone,
And robs the sex, to crowd them into one,
Chloris and Phyllis something fair,
Are but as foils, should they with her compare,
The moon herself when at the full,
Is in respect but gloomy, dark and dull,
Nay pretty Ned’s most amorous grace,
Can’t reach the bright perfection of her face,
Though to a miracle so neat,
You’d swear he were a cheat.

Coxwell (1718) engineers a similar division, saying that the young man sees Lalage as being as “amiable” as Chloris or “chaste Pholoe,” while her bright face is like that of the moon in the sea,

or beauteous Gyges, whom if you insert
Amidst the fair nymphs, for to act his part
With locks displayed, it scarcely could be said,
Whether ‘twere Gyges, or a beauteous maid.

In each of these cases, the translators transform the original’s straightforward assertion that Lalage is simply more beloved than Chloris, Pholoe, or even Gyges. Hanway (1730) stands in contrast to this trend, with his bald statement:

And Lalage more loved shall be,
Than Chloris, or coy Pholoe;
Whose shoulder shines, and seems to be
Like moonlight glistening on the sea:
Or Gyges, who, among the fair,
With his smock-face and flowing hair
Deceives you so, you scarce can tell,
Whether he’s more the beau or belle.

Lest the reader assume, however, that eighteenth-century translations are generally more reflective of the sense of Horace’s original Latin, the version in *The Odes of Horace in Latin and English* (1712-1713) has the distinction of erasing the spectre of the young husband’s desire for Gyges at the same time that it introduces a sexual double entendre in the final line:

Not Pholoe the coy and fair,
In beauty shall with her compare;
Not Gyges shall more conquest own,
Whose form outshines the silver moon.

Him if among the maids you place,
His flowing hair and blushing face
Would hide his doubtful sex so well,
Who only looks, could never tell.

2.5

HE DEHORTETH SOME ONE OF HIS FRIENDS, FROM THE LOVE OF LALAGE, A RAW VIRGIN, AND NOT RIPE FOR A HUSBAND.

On her tamed neck she yet can’t undergo
The yoke, nor office of a bedfellow
Can yet perform, nor bear the heaviness
Of the bull that unto his lust doth press.
Thy heifer’s mind is for the flow’ry fields,
That now near streams the toilsome parching shields,
Now loves ’mong calves in osiers moist to play.26
Put the desire of the sour grape away.
Ere long the autumn will display to you,
His bluish clusters mixed with purple hue.
Ere long she’ll seek you; for strong age makes haste,
And those years, which it takes from thee, shall cast
All upon her; thy Lalage anon
With fretted brow her mate shall set upon;
So amiable as not Pholoe,
So swift of foot nor Chloris ere could be:
She being with her ivory skin as bright,
As the clear moon shines in the sea by night,
Or Cnidian Gyges: whom if you would set27
’Mong troops of girls, he wondrously would cheat
The prying guests (the difference scarce found out)
With his loose hairs and looks still moving doubts.

2.5

THAT THE MOST BEAUTIFUL VIRGIN LALAGE, BEING NOT FIT FOR A HUSBAND, SHOULD RECALL HER MIND FROM THE DESIRE THEREOF.

To bear the yoke thy neck is not yet fit,
And for to wive it thou wants strength and wit.29
Within green meadows, thou shouldst pleasure take,
And in cool floods thy burning thirst to slake.
With tender virgins in moist sallow groves,30

25 Rider (1638).
26 osiers willows.
27 Cnidian Gyges i.e., Gyges is a native or inhabitant of Cnidos, Cnidus or Gynidus, a town in Doris (Caria); its chief deity was Venus, surnamed the Cnidian, and there was a famous marble statue of the goddess there, reputedly the work of the famous Greek sculptor Praxiteles. The statue was such a masterpiece that travelers came to the town for sole purpose of seeing it.
28 Smith (1649).
29 wants lacks.
30 sallow willow (see n26).
Do thou contend to o’ercome with chaste loves. 
Desire not then the unripe grapes to press,
’Till that with purple autumn doth them dress.
Though cruel time doth swiftly fly away
To follow thee, ’twill make no long delay.
And for those years, which he from thee did seem
To snatch away, thou shalt again redeem;
For lovely Lalage with a merry view
Will give at last a lover his full due,
Whose shoulders will more beautiful appear
Than when on seas, the moon by night shines clear.
Nor so much can false Pholoe, Chloris coy,
Nor Gnidian Gyges, that sweet smiling boy,
Whom if amongst fresh virgins thou shouldst place,
He might deceive all strangers with his face:
For with his doubtful aspect, and long hair,
It’s hard to judge him male or female fair.

2.5
UPON LALAGE

ARGUMENT,
Since beauteous Lalage’s unfit
For Hymen’s rites, or Venus yet:
He will with continency’s rein,
All wild concupiscence restrain.

As yet with neck subdued she cannot ’bide
The yoke, nor answer th’ office of a bride;
Nor sustain the eagerful,
Fierce rushes of a pond’rous bull.
Thy heifer ’bout the verdant meadows roves;
Sometimes in brooks t’allay her thirst she loves;
And sometimes she’s much rejoiced
To sport with calves ’mongst sallows moist.
Restrain all longing for grapes immature:
Straight gaudy autumn decked in purple pure
Will to thee ripe clusters send.
Straight she thy footsteps will attend.
For fleet-heeled Time with rapid motion flows,
And years subtracted from thy date bestows
On her. Straight with brazen brow
Will Lalage a husband woo,
More loved than Chloris, or nice Pholoe:
Her candid shoulders glittering, like the sea
In the night with moonshine dyed;

31 All Horace His Lyrics (1653). Rept. in Brome (1666).
32 ’bide i.e., abide, endure.
33 Straight immediately, at once.
Or Gyges sprung from th’ Isle of Cnide:
Whom if thou rankst among the virgin file,
His scarce-spied difference eas’ly might beguile
Quick-eyed strangers, for his grace
Of shev’led hair, and dubious face.

2.6

TO SEPTIMIUS: HE WISHES FOR A QUIET RETREAT IN HIS OLD AGE.

Septimius that wouldst stem the main, And go with me to distant Spain; To fierce Cantabrians never broke, As yet unlearned to bear our yoke: And Syrtes’ sands, where th’ocean roars, And rolling waves wash swarthy Moors; May Tibur’s walls the Tuscan seat Afford my age a safe retreat. Oh! there, now tired with wars and seas, May I enjoy a happy ease! If Fate denies this small desire, My hasty steps shall soon retire Where smooth Galesus cuts his way, Around whose banks, white fleeces play, And felt Phalantus’ easy sway. Oh, how those little plains do please! How fit for happiness and ease! Where honey fills the combs, and strives With fair Hymettu’s sweetest hives, Where olives from the fruitful soil, Nor yield to the Venafrian oil; Where springs are long, and winters mild, Nor hoary frost deforms the field; Where Bacchus friendly mountains spread, And Almon rears his fruitful head; Where choicest grapes in clusters twine, Nor envy the Falernian vine.

34 Creech (1684).
35 Septimius a friend of Horace, but otherwise unidentified.
36 stem the main make headway against.
37 Cantabrians a people of northern Spain, reputedly wild and war-like. broke tamed (defeated, conquered).
38 Syrtes two large sand banks in the Mediterranean, off the North African coast.
39 Moors here, inhabitants of Mauritanian.
40 Tibur ancient town, about 20 miles north of Rome, near the Tuscan seat, Horace’s beloved farm.
41 Phalantus legendary Spartan founder of the town of Tarentum (Calabria, Italy), near the mouth of the Galesus River. easy sway gentle and confident control or governance.
42 Hymettus a mountain in Attica (Italy), famed for its bees and honey.
43 Venefiran oil Venafrum, a town in Campagna (Italy) was famed for its olive oil.
44 Almon i.e., Aulon, a mountain and its adjacent valley in Calabria, near Tarentum; famed for its grapevines.
45 Falernian vine universally acknowledged as producing the choicest Italian wine grapes, grown in Falernus (Campagna).
These happy seats must us receive,  
There you and I, dear friend, must live,  
’Till death’s approaching hands surprise,  
And close thy poet Horace’ eyes.  
Then you a little tomb shall rear,  
And cool my ashes with a pious tear.

2.7
TO POMPEIUS VARUS: HE CONGRATULATETH HIS FELLOW SOLDIER, POMPEIUS VARUS, HIS RETURN FROM WAR.\textsuperscript{46}

Pompey, the chief of my associates,  
That to the utmost hazard of our fates  
Hast oftentimes along with me been led,  
When Brutus of our armies was the head;\textsuperscript{47}  
With whom in wine I oft the long day spent,  
Crowning my bright hairs with my Syrian scent:  
Who hath restored thee a citizen  
Unto our gods and Roman air again?\textsuperscript{48}  
With thee I tasted of Philippi field  
And swift flight (having basely lost my shield)  
When our foil’d powers (and menacing before)  
The foul earth with their bodies covered o’er,  
But trembling me swift Mercury did shroud  
Thorow my enemies in a thickened cloud:\textsuperscript{49}  
But the flood, sucking thee to war again,  
Once more committed to the raging main.  
Now then to Jove thy vowed offerings pay,  
And thy corpse, wearied with long warfare, lay  
Under my laurel tree, and do not spare\textsuperscript{50}  
My wine tubs that for thee appointed are.  
With care-removing wine the smooth bowls fill,  
The oil from the capacious jars distil.  
Who will take order to make up for me  
Wreaths of moist parsley or the myrtle tree?\textsuperscript{51}

\textsuperscript{46} Rider (1638).  \textit{Pompeius Varus} a friend of Horace, but otherwise unidentified.  
\textsuperscript{47} Marcus Junius Brutus (85-42 BCE) famous assassin of Julius Caesar and commander of the forces against the Second Triumvirate; Brutus and his men were defeated at Philippi in 42. Horace and Pompeius had served under Brutus.  
\textsuperscript{48} Who ... citizen ... again There was a political amnesty declared in 30 BCE.  
\textsuperscript{49} But trembling ... Mercury ... cloud Horace plays here upon the god Apollo’s rescue of the Trojan hero Hector from the heat of battle in \textit{Iliad} 20.443-44; Apollo spreads a thick mist or cloud over Hector, preserving him from the assault of the furious Achilles. Horace’s modern critics have suggested many reasons why Horace substitutes Mercury for Apollo here in this allusion to this famous moment from the \textit{Iliad}; perhaps Horace aims at emphasizing the unheroic nature of his own escape from battle of Philippi, since Mercury was the god of thieves, famous for his stealth and wiliness.  
\textsuperscript{50} Most of the available early modern translations are roughly similar to Rider’s, although Smith (1649) emphasizes Horace’s love for his friend by expanding on the speaker’s invitation to banquet: “Therefore to Jove thy promised offerings give, / And tired with wars now safely with me live.”
What arbiter will the Venerean throw?
Allow us for our healths? I will not now
Be less wild than the Thracians: I delight.
Now my friend’s safe returned, to be foxed quite.

ODE 3.20 IN EARLY MODERN TRANSLATIONS. The description of Pyrrhus, which offers insight into the precise nature of his motivation in attempting to separate his male beloved Nearchus from Nearchus’ mistress, has posed problems for early modern translators, as has the representation of Nearchus himself. In describing Pyrrhus, Horace’s Latin “inaudax raptor” translates most literally as ‘fearful or timid ravisher,’ (i.e., someone who seizes and carries off another person, often but not always on account of sexual desire). While Brome is more straightforward, perhaps, than Rider (see below), terming Pyrrhus a “scar’d ravisher,” his translation tends to downplay the mistress’ sexual aggressiveness. Smith (see below) chooses to represent Pyrrhus as a soldier routed by the fierce mistress, while Creech (see below) attempts to recast Pyrrhus from Nearchus’ jealous lover to the youth’s devoted friend, trying to wrest the young man away from a woman Pyrrhus clearly considers unsuitable. Creech’s translation is also the only one to transform the group of young men surrounding Nearchus from a protective male coterie (in which Pyrrhus has placed his male beloved for protection from the mistress) into an admiring group of heterosexual rivals to Nearchus. The punctuation leaves ambiguous the meaning of “to seize the fair”: it should refer to the mistress’ action of seizing Nearchus and taking him out of this male group, but it could also refer to the attempts of these men to seize her (the fair woman). Unsurprisingly, Harington (1684) transforms Pyrrhus into a woman (Pyrrha), and thus makes Horace’s homoerotically charged conflict into a ‘catfight’ between two women for the love of Nearchus (see below).

Descriptions of the male beloved Nearchus also vary significantly, and the original lines clearly posed problems for translators, perhaps partly on account of the erotic power and feminized beauty of the youth. All the translations follow Horace in suggesting that Nearchus is well aware of and enjoying his role as the real winner of this contest between his male lover and his mistress, since he has conquered them both. The translations differ, however, in the attitude they assume towards Nearchus’ consciousness of his erotic power: while Rider and Smith are relatively neutral and stick closest to Horace’s understatement, Creech is perhaps the most condemnatory, employing language that suggests Nearchus’ awareness and enjoyment of his erotic dominance over both Pyrrhus and the mistress, as well as his tendency to licentiousness and promiscuity, “gloating” over the spectacle and casting “amorous glances” on everyone gathered. Coxwell (1718) goes even further, and includes the following details, turning a satiric eye on Nearchus’ enjoyment of the fight and his victory over his male and female lover, placing

51 Wreaths of moist parsley or the myrtle tree Parsley was often made into a festive wreath to wear at banquets; for myrtle, see n5.
52 Venerean throw Traditionally, the Lord of the Banquet was decided by casting dice; the best throw was thought to signal the favour of Venus.
53 Thracians a reputedly savage and war-like people who lived south of Scythia.
54 foxed intoxicated, made drunk.
a misogynist construction on this enjoyment, which for Coxwell is simply ‘unmanly’:

After all, ’tis said by some that he
Does little value either her, or thee,
But powders, and perfumes, and dresses gay,
Caressed by all the ladies at the play;
As fine as Nereus, or the youth that Jove
Made choice of for his cupbearer above.

Coxwell implies that Nearchus is so ‘unmanly’ that he finds his own erotic pleasure in cross-dressing and being the centre of ladies’ attention. The version in The Odes of Horace in Latin and English (1712-1713; see below) also apparently finds the whole spectacle of Nearchus’ triumph as somehow so ‘unmanly’ that it also expands on Nearchus’ stereotypically ‘feminine’ erotic appeal: as a heartless, “gay” and “careless boy” he tosses his “fragrant locks,” employing a glance that is compared in its power to that of Nireus or Ganymede.

3.20: TO PYRRHUS: HIS DANGER IN DRAWING NEARCHUS FROM HIS LOVE

See you not with what danger you do press
The whelps of the Gerulian lioness?Qt
O Pyrrhus, thou a fearful thief shalt flee
The dangerous combat afore long time be,
When she shall run through armed troops of young men,
Fetching the fair Nearchus back again;
A grand contention, sooth, whether the prize
Unto thyself or her would greater rise.
In the meantime while you do ready get
Your flying shafts, and she her dire teeth whet,
He that might arbitrate the war is said
The conquest under his bare feet t’have laid,
And recreate with a mild fanning air
His shoulders covered with his powdered hair:
As beautiful as Nireus, or the boyQT
Was stol’n away from river-stor’d Troy.

55 Rider (1638). Pyrrhus perhaps the young man’s name here is meant to remind the reader of the more famous historical Pyrrhus, king of Epirus (319-272 BCE), a courageous general, but one whose defeat of the Romans at Asculum in 279 was so disastrous for his side that his name came to be attached to victories that were gained at too great a cost to the winners: a ‘pyrrhic victory.’
56 Gerulian i.e., Gaetulian (North African).
57 sooth truly.
58 Homer’s Nireus was acknowledged the most handsome of the Greeks in the army at Troy, after (of course) Achilles.
59 As ... Troy In one version of the myth, Ganymede is a Trojan prince, carried off by Jove to be his cupbearer. See ‘Jove and Ganymede,’ Glossary (print anthology).
3.20
**TO PYRRHUS: WHOM HE PERSUADETH THAT HE WOULD NOT DRAW NEARCHUS FROM THE LOVE OF HIS MISTRESS.** 60

*To Thomas Peyton, Esquire.* 61

Seest not with what great danger thou mayest press
The whelps of the Gerulian lioness?
After hard conflicts, Pyrrhus, thou shalt fly,
And like a faint-heart soldier seem to cry.

When through th’opposed troops of young men she
Shall go, and fair Nearchus bring from thee,
’Twill prove a doubtful conflict whether shall
The greater prey to thee or her fall.

In the meantime whilst thou dost arrows get,
She presently her fearful * teeth doth whet, 62
He, * umpire of the field, is said to put 63
The palm of glory under his bare foot,

And his fair shoulders spread with perfumed hair,
He’s said to fan it with the wanton air.
Even such was Nireus, or that lovely boy, 64
Snatched from the watery Ida near to Troy. 65

3.20: **HE ADVISETH HIS FRIEND NOT TO STRIVE TO PART A LOVER AND HIS MISTRESS** 66

Dost see what dangers must attend,
Thy pious duty to thy friend?
’Tis hard to rob a tigress of her young:
Ah baffled, thou shalt soon retreat,
And midst the shame of a defeat,
Unequal foe, confess her force too strong.
When she with fury raised shall move
Through throngs of youth that offer love,
And strive to win her heart, to seize the fair,
Then shall we see who wins the day,
And who shall seize the beauteous prey,

---

60 Smith (1649). For Pyrrhus, see n55.
61 *Thomas Peyton* unidentified, perhaps related to Thomas Peyton (1595-1626), poet?
62 Footnote: “*Or Nails*” (Smith, p. 82).
63 Footnote: “*Nearchus*” (Smith, p. 82).
64 Nireus See n58.
65 *lovely boy / Snatched ... Troy* See ‘Ganymede,’ Glossary (print anthology).
66 Creech (1684).
And in Nearchus have the greatest share.
Whilst you your wingéd arrows draw,
She whets her teeth and spreads her paw;
Whilst he that must bestow the prize
Sits unconcerned with gloating eyes;
On all around his amorous glances spread,
His perfumed loose and wanton hair,
Permitting to the waving air,
As sweet as Nireus or as Ganymed.\(^67\)

\(^3.20\)^\(^68\)

Would you a lover and his nymph divide?
As well you might attempt a lion’s den,\(^69\)
And seize his whelps, in some wild forest hid;
You dare not stand the fight, but must escape unseen.

The savage she through crowds of hunters goes,
Searching for what she loves with curious eyes;
And only hopes to meet amidst her foes
You, who avoid her rage and should dispute the prize.

She grinds her teeth and glows with martial flame;
You aim your pointed darts with wondrous skill;
Thus you contend, and thus the jealous dame;
Nearchus holds the palm, and gives it where he will.\(^70\)

Proud of his charms, the gay, the careless boy
Tosses his fragrant locks, with such a look
As Nireus had, or the young prince of Troy,\(^71\)
Whom Jove, by passion urged, from wat’ry Ida took.

\(^4.10\)^\(^72\)

**BY MR. MANNING.**

Lisetta, who so wond’rous coy,
When youth invites to pleasure:
Think you that love’s a lasting joy,
That one may taste at leisure?

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\(^67\) Nireus  See n58.
\(^68\) Odes of Horace in Latin and English (1712-1713).
\(^69\) attempt  attack.
\(^70\) palm  the ancient sign of military victory.
\(^71\) Nireus  See n58.  young prince of Troy  See ‘Ganymede,’ Glossary (print anthology).
\(^72\) Odes and Satyrs of Horace (1730). 4.10 is one of the homoerotic odes addressed to beloved youth, Ligurinus.
See the print anthology (p. 193) for Rider’s translation that preserves the male gender of the beloved.
Consider better, I advise,
The question I am stating:
That beauty fades, occasion flies,
While you’re the point debating.

Though now insensible as fair,
And all my vows disdaining,
You take delight in my despair,
And mock my fond complaining.

When age shall seize you yet a maid,
And all those lovely tresses,
Where Cupid sits in ambuscade,
And scatters thousand graces,

Shall fall defenceless from your head,
And Love his camp remove;
Those sparkling eyes look sunk and dead,
That now so fatal prove;

When that vermillion on your face,
That does the rose outvie,
To deadly paleness shall give place,
And lose its crimson dye;

Then (mark me) as the faithful glass
The dismal change betrays,
You’ll cry, “How mad I was to pass
So ill my youthful days!

“But oh, too late my fault I own,
(None can past youth renew)
I’m ever destined to bemoan
The joys I never knew.”

APPENDIX 1: Ode 4.1, Lines 29-40: Translations from 1653-1730
NB: For Rider’s translation of Ode 4.1, see the print anthology, pp. 191-93.

From All Horace His Lyrics (1653); Translator: Richard Fanshawe?

ODE I: To Venus

[…] 

No woman, nor young youth love I,
Nor am I prone to vain credulity,
Nor in carousing to contest,
Nor with fresh flowers my temples to invest.
But why, ah Ligurinus, why
Glide liquid tears thus slowly from my eye?
Why in the midst of language trips
My eloquent tongue with unseemly slips?
I, when surprised with gentle sleep,
Do thee (methinks) in my embraces keep:
Now o’er woods, and Mars his plain,
O hard of heart! thee prosecute amain.73

From CREECH (1684)

4.1: TO VENUS

1. HE IS NOW GROWN OLD AND UNFIT FOR LOVE.
2. DESIRES HER TO GO AND VISIT YOUNG PAULUS.
3. YET HE STILL THINKS ON HIS LOVELY BOY, LIGURINE.

[...]

No maids, no wanton boys,
No empty hopes of mutual love
My feeble passions move,
Or quicken my dead soul to joys.

E’en crowns and wine displease,
I cannot roar and drink all night,
Old age doth cramp delight,
And lead me down to lazy ease.

But ah! what’s this, my dear,
Dear Ligurine? Ah, tell me why
These drops forsake my eye,
And tender sighs fan every tear.

Why doth my flowing tongue
In unbecoming silence fall?
And why do sighs prevail,
And in the midst surprise my song?

Thee, thee, my lovely boy,
Now, now I clasp, and now in dreams
Pursue o’er fields and streams,
Thee, thee, my dear, my flying joy.

73 amain  hastily, at full speed.
From HARINGTON (1684)

TO C. ASINIUS POLLIO. ODE I. 74

Horace is now of that age that he should be averse to amorous things, and lighter poems.

[...] 

Me womankind nor pleases now, 
   Nor credulous hope of faithful, answering love, 
Mutual flames, nor girded brow 
   With odorous flow’rs, nor strifes in wine to prove.

[The rest on good grounds omitted.]

From ODES OF HORACE IN LATIN AND ENGLISH (1712-1713)

BOOK IV, ODE I: TO VENUS

[...] 

Whilst I, unfit for amorous joys, 
   Alike neglect the nymphs and boys; 
No garlands round my temples bend, 
   Nor can I with with my jovial friend 
In laughing bumpers long contend. 75

Yet tell me, Ligurinus, tell, 
Why do these tears thus gently steal 
Along my cheeks with sorrow drowned? 
Why are my lips thus fault’ring found, 
   With an imperfect broken sound?

Thee in my dreams each night I chase, 
Thee oft with eager arms embrace; 
As o’er the dusty plains you stray, 
Or in the flowing waters play, 
Ah, youth! more swift, more false than they.

From COXWELL (1718)

ODE I. TO VENUS

His age is no way suitable to Love’s purposes.

74 C. Asinius Pollio consul (40 BCE), literary patron, writer, and soldier.
75 bumpers Large draughts of wine consumed in turn by the members of a company, often as part of a drinking contest.
[...]  
For me, I know not what’s befallen now,  
Nor love, nor wine, nor flowers cheer my brow;  
Why do the falling tears bedew my face?  
Tell, Ligurine, how it comes to pass,  
Why do my words in stupid silence fall,  
Nor can I my last sentences recall?  
’Tis thee I catch pursuing thy swift flight,  
In the mistaken phantoms of the night,  
I trace the camp, and cut the curléd stream,  
To follow Ligurinus in my dream.

From HANWAY (1730)  

ODE I. TO VENUS  

[...]  
My hopes are past of mutual joys  
From love of women or of boys;  
Nor am I proud of drinking most,  
And pledging healths to ev’ry toast;  
Nor do I take a pleasure now,  
In wreathing chaplets round my brow.  
But tell me, Ligurine, tell me why  
I’m so much moved when thou art by?  
Why does a tear so silent seek  
Its way, and travel down my cheek?  
Whilst I am speaking, tell me why,  
I’m interrupted with a sigh?  
Why seem to hold thee in my sleep,  
And fast in my embraces keep?  
Or chase thee, cruel fair, in dreams,  
Through Mars’s fields, and Tiber’s streams?  

---

76 trace the camp  range over or traverse the Campus Martialis (named in honour of Mars, god of war), a large field outside Rome used for exercise, athletic games and military drills.  

cut  pass sharply and swiftly through.  

77 Mars’s fields  See n76.  
Tiber’s streams  the waters of the river Tiber, on the banks of which Rome was built.