

SAPPHO: SAPPHO'S 'AFTER-LIFE' IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND, 1550-1735

SAPPHO (*fl.* 630 BCE), GREEK POET. For a brief biography of Sappho, selections from her own works, an introduction to her early modern reception, reputation, and translation, as well as further texts concerning her early modern 'after-life,' see the print anthology, pp. 153-87.

EDITIONS:

For early modern and modern translations of Sappho's verse, see the essay 'Sappho' in "Classical Writers, their Early Modern Reputations and Translations" (*Online Companion*).

ANACREONTEA (FIRST PUBLISHED, 1554). The *Anacreontea* is a volume of approximately sixty lyric poems that was long attributed to the Greek poet Anacreon (c. 575-490 BCE), and was certainly believed to constitute his work in the early modern period. The first edition of the *Anacreontea* appeared in 1554 from the press of Henri Estienne; its verse was translated into a number of languages throughout the Renaissance and into the eighteenth century. For a brief biography of Anacreon and selections from his verse (i.e., largely from the *Anacreontea*), see the print anthology, pp. 187-90.

EDITIONS:

For selected early modern and modern translations of Anacreon and the *Anacreontea*, see the accompanying essay 'Anacreon' in "Classical Writers, their Early Modern Reputations and Translations" (*Online Companion*).

THE WORKS OF PETRONIUS ARBITER¹ [...] TO WHICH IS ADDED SOME OTHER OF THE ROMAN POETS (1714)

SAPPHO'S VINDICATION

By Anacreon²

Come golden-locks, come god of love,³
And take me up from this low crowd,
Carry me through the orbs above,

¹ *Petronius Arbiter* Petronius Arbiter (*fl.* 1st c. CE), Roman satirist. For selections from his *Satyricon*, see Petronius (*Online Companion*).

² Although Anacreon was living and writing some fifty years after Sappho's most productive period, he was sometimes presented by classical writers as Sappho's friend, rival, or lover.

³ *god of love* winged Cupid.

Enveloped in a purple cloud.
 Expand thy various-coloured wings,
 And that same way thy poet bear,
 The Cayster-swan a-soaring sings⁴
 When she divides th'harmonious air.
 For more and more thy philtres press,⁵
 Provoking still to wantonness.
 For the fair Lesbian maid I burn,⁶
 Who, peevish girl, makes no return.
 She rallies me, no wit she spares,⁷
 And falls a-pulling out gray hairs.
 But this rekindles fond desire,⁸
 Blows up a new and fiercer fire,
 In vain; and yet she is a lover,
 And pines and wishes for another.

ARISTOTLE (384-322 BCE), GREEK PHILOSOPHER. Born in Thrace, Aristotle was Plato's student in Athens. After Plato's death, Aristotle spent some time as the tutor to Alexander (later, the Great), son of Philip, king of Macedon. Back in Athens in 335, he founded his famous school, the Lyceum, where he taught until a year before his death. Although his works were edited very early (circa 1st c. BCE), his rebirth of influence in the Christian West had to wait until the Middle Ages, in texts transmitted through the Arabic philosophers and scientists who knew his work so well. Thomas Aquinas' treatment of Aristotle's ideas within a Christian framework ensured and extended their influence into a number of different areas. His works were translated numerous times in the Renaissance into Latin and various vernaculars.

EDITIONS:

Aristotle. 'Art of Rhetoric.' Trans. and ed. J.H. Freese. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1982.

⁴ *Cayster-swan* Swans were reputed to live on the River Caistros, sacred to the river god of the same name. Philostratus the Elder says that the swans sang to the son of Apollo, Phaethon, when he was cast from his father's fiery chariot to his death.

⁵ *philtres* love potions.

⁶ *Lesbian maid* Sappho of Lesbos.

⁷ *rallies* teases, mocks.

⁸ *fond* foolish.

RHETORIC, OR THE TRUE GROUNDS AND PRINCIPLES OF ORATORY (1686)⁹From BOOK 1, CHAPTER 9¹⁰

[...]

And let this suffice in general at present concerning virtue and vice, and the parts of both; and for the rest, they fall under an easy consideration. For of necessity those things that are the causes of virtue must be honest, as relating to virtue, and being produced by virtue, of which sort are the marks and works of virtue, now because the marks—and such like, whatever they be, which are the acts and sufferings of a good man—of necessity—whatever are the acts and signs of fortitude or whatever are acted courageously—are noble and honest. And so it is with the signs and acts of justice, but not in the sufferings, for in this one virtue alone not always that which is just is honest and laudable, for it is rather an ignominy to be condemned if justly than unjustly. And so of the rest of the virtues. And where honour is the reward, those things are virtuous and laudable; as also where honour rather than money; and whatsoever among those things that are desirable, which a man acts not for his own sake; and whatsoever are simply good; and whatsoever a man acts for his country's sake, contemning his own interest, and which are naturally good, and which are good, but not to himself—for what is good to himself he acts for his own sake—and which attend the memories of the dead rather than the living—for where fame and honour attends the living, they seem to act rather for their own sakes; also whatever acts are done for the sake of praise—for these¹¹ are done less for a man's own sake; also those things that are serviceable and profitable, not to himself but to others, and chiefly to benefactors.

Thus, justice and munificence are profitable to others; also the contraries to those things, of which we are ashamed, either speaking or acting, or about to speak, or do. For men that say, or do, or are about to commit ignominious actions, are ashamed, as when Alcaeus¹² said:

There's something I would tell thee, but for shame,
That will not let me the occasion name.

To which Sappho made answer:

Speak freely on, for if a true desire
Of good and virtuous does thy thoughts inspire,
And that thy tongue be not designed to frame
Report and calumny, beseeming shame
Will hover o'er thy brows, and awe thy pen,
To speak the truth; and I defy thee then.

⁹ Published anonymously.

¹⁰ The title notes that the book has been “made English by the translators of *The Art of Thinking*.” In this section of his *Rhetoric* (1366b 23-1367a 14), Aristotle is discussing the nature of virtue and vice and those things that characterize noble actions.

¹¹ *these* ‘these’ seems to refer back to acts done “which attend the memories of the dead.”

¹² *Alcaeus* ancient Greek lyric poet (b. c. 620 BCE), like Sappho a native of Lesbos, and like her the writer of passionate, personal verse, of which many fragments remain, more than is the case for Sappho; he was an important influence on and model for Horace's *Odes*. In classical sources and throughout Sappho's ‘after-life,’ Alcaeus appears in various guises in his relationship with Sappho: friend, rival, fellow poet, lover (M. Reynolds, *The Sappho Companion*, p. 3).

LADY MARY CHUDLEIGH (1656-1710), POET. For a brief biography, further selections from her poetry, and an extract from her essay 'On Love,' see the print anthology, pp. 415-20 and pp. 537-40.

POEMS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS (1703)

From THE RESOLUTION¹³

[...]

How well does he express unhappy love!¹⁴
 Each page does melt, and ev'ry line does move.
 The fair Oenone does so well complain,
 That I can't choose but blame her faithless swain.¹⁵
 Good Hypermnestra much laments her fate,¹⁶
 Forsaken Phyllis her deplored estate;¹⁷
 Her absent lord sad Laodamia mourns,¹⁸
 And Sappho for her perjured Phaon burns.¹⁹
 O wondrous woman! prodigy of wit!
 Why didst thou man to thy fond heart admit?²⁰
 Man, treacherous man, who still a riddle proves,
 And by the dictates of his fancy moves,²¹

¹³ 'The Resolution' constitutes a personal record of Chudleigh's reading of and response to both contemporary and ancient poets, although she spends far more space on the latter than the former. Praising poets from Horace to Ovid to Juvenal, Virgil, and Persius, she never comments directly on Sappho's verse, although translations certainly existed by 1703, but only on her representation in Ovid's *Heroides*.

¹⁴ *he* i.e., Ovid.

¹⁵ *Oenone ... swain* Ovid's *Heroides* is a collection of verse laments voiced by various ancient women; each woman usually writes to an absent lover, usually (but not always) one who has abandoned her. Oenone was the wife of Paris, son of King Priam of Troy; Paris abandoned her for Helen. 'Oenone to Paris' is the fifth of Ovid's *Heroides*.

¹⁶ *Hypermnestra* the only one of fifty daughters of Danaus to disobey her father's command that his daughters should kill their husbands on their joint wedding night; she and her husband Lynceus went on to inherit Danaus' throne. 'Hypermnestra to Lynceus' is the fourteenth of Ovid's *Heroides*, and in the letter she is in prison for having disobeyed Danaus' command.

¹⁷ *Phyllis* daughter of Lycurgus, king of Thrace. Demophoon, son of Theseus, arrived at her father's court and she fell in love with him; he apparently returned her affection, but later left to take care of urgent business, promising to return within the month. He never did, and she killed herself, some say by throwing herself off a cliff, others by hanging herself. 'Phyllis to Demophoon' is the second of Ovid's *Heroides*.

¹⁸ *Laodamia* wife of Protesilaus, king of Thessaly, one of the Greek warriors at Troy and among the first to be killed in that war; when Laodamia heard the news she killed herself. 'Laodamia to Protesilaus' is the thirteenth of Ovid's *Heroides*.

¹⁹ *Sappho for her perjured Phaon burns* Sappho's relationship with Phaon has no independent historical confirmation. Her tragic love for the faithless Phaon, a ferryman whom Venus had gifted with divine beauty, is recounted in 'Sappho to Phaon,' the fifteenth of Ovid's *Heroides*. For Turberville's sixteenth-century translation, see the print anthology, pp. 213-24. For two late seventeenth-century parodies, see 'Ovid,' Radcliffe and Stevenson (*Online Companion*).

²⁰ *fond* foolish; perhaps, also, 'tender, affectionate.'

Whose looks are snares and ev'ry word a bait,
 And who's composed of nothing but deceit?
 What pity 'twas thou shouldst to love give way,
 To love, to vicious love, become a prey,
 And by a guilty, inauspicious flame
 Eclipse the splendour of so bright a name.

[...]

SIR ASTON COKAYNE (1608-1684), POET AND PLAYWRIGHT. After having left Cambridge University about 1624, Cokayne arrived in London, and attended one of the Inns of Court, where he began to write poetry and plays, as well cultivate literary friendships (with John Donne, Michael Drayton, and John Suckling). He served on the Royalist side in the Civil War, and spent some time in Marshalsea Prison. His poems, mostly written between 1640 and 1660, range from verse letters to epigrams to lyric to translations. His poetic output was collected and published under the title *Small Poems of Divers Sorts* (1658; alternate title *A Chain of Golden Poems*). An enlarged collection, called simply *Poems*, was published in 1662.

A CHAIN OF GOLDEN POEMS (1658)

TO MY WIFE'S NIECE, MRS. ELIZABETH PEGGE

I thank my wife for my so near relation
 Unto a mine of virtue of our nation.
 To name your handsomeness I do decline,
 As to tell Ethiops the sun doth shine.²²
 You are as witty as the Lesbian lass,²³
 Who the Tenth Muse so oft accounted was,²⁴
 And chaster than the glorious Roman dame
 That killed herself for vicious Tarquin's shame.²⁵
 Thus I could prosecute your worths, but know
 Y'had rather Heaven than men should judge you so.

²¹ *fancy* amorous inclination; but also, 'whim.'

²² *Ethiops* Ethiopians.

²³ *Lesbian lass* Sappho, so-called after her dwelling-place, the island of Lesbos.

²⁴ *the Tenth Muse* so-called in an epigram attributed to Plato (c. 427-348 BCE); repeated by classical and contemporary writers, it is Sappho's most common, complimentary epithet.

²⁵ *the glorious Roman dame ... shame* The chaste Roman wife Lucrece killed herself after she was raped by Tarquin, son of the last Roman king.

HENRY GLAPTHORNE (b. 1610), PLAYWRIGHT AND POET. Educated at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, Glapthorne was the author nine plays, only six of which are extant. He also published two volumes of his own verse, and served as editor for the verse of Thomas Beedome. A close friend of the cavalier poet Richard Lovelace, Glapthorne was clearly a writer with some patronage connections to the court and the aristocracy. His plays are very heterogeneous: he wrote the city comedies *The Hollander* (1635-6) and *Wit in a Constable* (1639); a Neoplatonic, pastoral, romance / tragedy, his *Argalus and Parthenia*; and the tragedies *Albertus Wallenstein* (after 1634) and *The Parricide, or Revenge for Honour* (1653).

EDITIONS:

Glapthorne, Henry. 'Argalus and Parthenia' in *The Plays and Poems of Henry Glapthorne Now Collected*.
Ed. John Pearson. 2 vols. London: Privately printed, 1874.
—, 'Argalus and Parthenia' in Chadwyck-Healey's *English Drama Database*. ProQuest LLC.

From ARGALUS AND PARTHENIA (1639)²⁶

[The main plot of Glapthorne's play is based on a tale from Sir Philip Sidney's prose romance *Arcadia*, but the subplot concerning the loves of shepherds and shepherdesses, including the poet Sappho, is entirely the playwright's invention.]

ACT 1, SCENE 1

ENTER DEMAGORAS, PHILARCHUS.²⁷

DEMAGORAS.

Urge no more! 'Tis troublesome.

PHILARCHUS.

My lord, though I affect you
Almost with that religion I do our gods, yet
The constant motion of my will does fix
On noble Argalus, and I confess
His gracious merit challenges a wife²⁸
Fair as Parthenia, did she stain the East,
When the bright morn hangs day upon her cheeks
In chains of liquid pearl.

²⁶ The title page proclaims that the play was "acted at court before their Majesties: and at the Private-House in Drury-Lane by their Majesties' Servants."

²⁷ *Philarchus* from the Greek, meaning 'lover of rule.'

²⁸ *challenges* deserves.

DEMAGORAS. I must confess,
 I have not studied the nice rules of love,²⁹
 Nor can with flattering eloquence adore
 A lady's airy shadow, court her smiles
 With adoration, or with supple knees
 Cringe like a humorous dancer when the air
 Plays with her hair, or fret to see the sun
 Be oversaucy with her cheeks or lips.
 I speak this to my glory. The big war
 Has been my mistress, where in tented fields
 When I have seen a moving grove of pikes
 Advanced, as if the splendour of their heads
 Meant to obscure the sunbeam, gore the clouds
 'Till they wept aloud, and heard the fiery horse
 Neighing destruction to a host of men
 From their hot nostrils—there I did command
 With ample fortune; and to be repulsed³⁰
 In an effeminate skirmish wounds my soul
 Worse than a quiver of sharp Parthian shafts³¹
 Could prejudice my body.

PHILARCHUS. I could wish
 Both for your present peace, and to secure
 Your future quiet, you had still confined
 Your disposition to that warfare; this
 Is far more dangerous. He that means to win
 Love's bloodless battles must be strong in tears,
 Marshal his army in a field of sighs,
 Have for his ensign beauty in his looks,³²
 Under which colours ought to march kind smiles
 As ablest soldiers in the van. Smooth vows³³
 And amorous oaths will batter ladies' hearts
 Sooner than slings or iron rams demolish
 Resisting citadels.

DEMAGORAS. Canst thou conceit³⁴
 That I, Demagoras, to whose very name
 Laconian matrons have with early haste³⁵
 Paid tributary vows, her choicest maids
 Have left Pan's orgies to present soft hymns³⁶

²⁹ *nice* overly-exact, fussy.

³⁰ *fortune* success.

³¹ *Parthian* Parthians were well-known for their skill at archery.

³² *ensign* war banner.

³³ *van* the military division that leads an attack.

³⁴ *conceit* conceive, believe.

³⁵ *Laconian* Laconia was also known as Sparta, that Greek nation famous for its rigid warrior values. Spartan mothers (*matrons*) were just as committed to these values, reportedly telling their sons going into battle, 'Return with your shield or on it.'

To th' honour of my merit, can decline³⁷
 So much my great soul as with forced entreats³⁸
 To beg Parthenia's mercy? Let tame fools,
 Such as have hearts scarce fit to furnish doves
 Or spleenless lambs with courage, intercede
 For female favours by submissive prayers.
 My resolution grounded on the worth
 Of my desert shall with her mother's power
 Enforce Parthenia, were she cold as air
 In its most subtle motion, to become
 In her affection fervent as the day
 That she was born in was to gaudy light,
 Or ruin her best comforts.

ENTER *CHRYSALEA*.

CHRYSALEA. I am fain to be³⁹
 Your most industrious advocate. My daughter
 Thinks she offends in each familiar look
 Bestowed on manhood, but I hope time⁴⁰
 And counsel may convert her to become
 Love's proselyte.

DEMAGORAS. She's that already, madam,
 Or Argalus durst not without consent
 And patronage from her rival my love.⁴¹
 But if the boy oppose me in a thought,
 Borrow a smile, or pay an amorous glance
 As tribute to her eyes, were he defenced
 With some light bogge that dances to the wind's⁴²
 Loud whistling music, I would dart a frown
 Should ravish his mortality into air⁴³
 For the presumption.

CHRYSALEA. 'Tis, my lord,
 This rough demeanour—though it speak you man,
 Declares a spirit full of fire—which does fright
 Parthenia's softness. Virgins' loves are won
 (Like heaven's compassion) by submissive prayers.
 'Tis not the brave relation of a fight
 Can move the mild breast of a tender maid

³⁶ *Pan's orgies* secret rites or ceremonies (in early use, not necessarily implying sexual activity).

³⁷ *decline* degrade, dishonor.

³⁸ *entreats* entreaties, requests.

³⁹ *fain* willing, eager.

⁴⁰ *manhood* men.

⁴¹ *rival* verb: contest, oppose.

⁴² *bogge* not in OED with any meaning that fits the context.

⁴³ *ravish* make [it] dissolve.

To ought but terror; she will start at sight
 Of scars though bought with honour, bleed in tears
 When wounds are mentioned; for Lord Argalus,
 His affable and courtly carriage calls
 Respective blushes into the bashful cheeks
 Of every virgin, that my daughter's bound⁴⁴
 By a due justice to esteem his worth
 With more than common courtesy, yet my will,
 Seconded by a mother's kind entreats,
 Shall work upon her duty to accept
 You as her servant.

DEMAGORAS. Servant, lady!
 What mortal fool ambitious to out-vie
 The gods in honour dares presume to hope
 That glorious title from me? Have I stood
 (When armies timorous of a general death,
 Quaking with panic horror, have invoked
 Divine assistance) fearless, and not deemed
 Heaven's power deserving a religious prayer,
 After so many trophies as may claim
 Each its particular star, to be esteemed
 A servant to a woman?

[Parthenia enters, and Chrysaclea leaves to allow Demagoras to press his suit.]

DEMAGORAS. Now, lady,
 Are you in haste, or do you slight a presence
 May challenge your observance? I am come,⁴⁵
 Confident of my merit, to inform you
 You ought to yield me the most strict regard
 Your love can offer.

PARTHENIA. Sir, I am not
 (Though I affect no self-conceited boast)
 So ignorant of my worth, but I deserve
 From him who will enjoy me a respect
 More fair and court-like.

DEMAGORAS. The blunt phrase of war
 Is my accustomed language, yet I can
 Tell you' are handsome, and direct your looks
 With a becoming posture; I must speak
 In the heroic dialect, as I use⁴⁶

⁴⁴ *that* i.e., so that.

⁴⁵ *may challenge* i.e., may be deserving of.

⁴⁶ *use* am accustomed [to employ].

PHILARCHUS. You'll scarce
Conquer a lady with this stern discourse!
Mars did not woo the queen of love in arms,
But wrapped his battered limbs in Persian silks
Or costly Tyrian purples, speak in smiles,
To win her tempting beauty.⁴⁸

DEMAGORAS. I'll bring on
Well-managed troops of soldiers to the fight,
Draw big battalions, like a moving field
Of standing corn, blown one way by th' wind
Against the frightened enemy; the van
Shall save the rear a labour, and by me⁴⁹
Marshall'd shall fold bright conquest in the curls
Of their conducting ensigns, while grim Death⁵⁰
Shall on the feathered arrows with more haste
Than on his own shafts fly upon the foe,
While the shrill trumpet and each piercing fife⁵¹
Shall sing their dirges, and hoarse-mouthed drums,
War's fatal bells, with surly noise proclaim
Their sudden funeral. This brave resolve
Vanquish'd my steel winged goddess, and engaged⁵²
Peneian Daphne, who did fly the sun,
Give up to willing ravishment her boughs
T'invest my awful front: and this shall prostrate,⁵³
'Spite of all opposition, your nice soul,⁵⁴
To my commanding merit.

PARTHENIA.
These high terms
Were apt to fright an enemy or beget
Terror in flinty bosoms! Can you think
A timorous virgin can affect her fear?⁵⁵
Yield the security of her peace and life
To the protection of her horror?

⁴⁷ *Bellona* goddess of war.

⁴⁸ *Mars ... beauty* Mars, the god of war, had an ongoing sexual relationship with Venus, the goddess of love, even though Venus was married to Vulcan, god of the forge.

⁴⁹ *van* See n33. *rear* the military divisions at the back of an advancing force.

⁵⁰ *ensigns* banners or flags.

⁵¹ *fife* a small flute, traditionally an accompaniment for the military drum.

⁵² *steel-winged goddess* perhaps Nike, goddess of victory, although Bellona, goddess of war was sometimes also pictured with wings.

⁵³ *Peneian Daphne ... front* The nymph *Daphne* fled from the sexual pursuit of the *sun-god* Apollo; praying for escape, she was transformed into the laurel tree; its *boughs* were subsequently made the crowns of victorious generals and poets. *awful front* imposing forehead. *this* i.e., all this [all the circumstances Demagoras has outlined].

⁵⁴ *nice* overly-fastidious, coy.

⁵⁵ *affect* love, be attracted to.

You must not persuade my thoughts that you who
Vary so the scene of love can act it perfectly.

DEMAGORAS.

Slighted in this? 'Tis a contempt inhuman,
And deserves my utmost scorn!

[Demagoras leaves in a rage, and Chrysaclea reprimands her daughter for rejecting him.]

CHRYSAICLEA.

This excuse

Proceeds not from his merit, but your love
To Argalus, a stranger only known
For his brisk courtship; the queen supports
His wavering fortune; he depends on her,
And should she fail by death, his utmost hopes
Embraced a sudden ruin.

PARTHENIA.

Argalus,

Were he more abject in his fate than your
Imagination could conceit, deserved⁵⁶
My equal'st fancy; in his youthful looks⁵⁷
Sits a divinity able to enchant
Queens to admire, nay to adore, his worth.
Continued smiles make summer on his cheeks;
At his bright eyes does Cupid warm his wings,
When he intends to fly at women's hearts;
Music and rich perfumes are in his breath,
Aptly resembling aromatic winds
That sing the Phoenix' exequies.⁵⁸

CHRYSAICLEA.

Can my daughter

So much decline the greatness of her spirit,
Hereditary to her blood,
To affect a person merely for his smiles,
Effeminate carriage, without any proof
Of manly valour in him?

PARTHENIA.

You mistake

His character. Though he can tread in peace
An aery measure to the warbling lute,
Demean his actions with that sweet deceit⁵⁹
Can cozen ladies of their souls, yet when⁶⁰

⁵⁶ *conceit* conceive.

⁵⁷ *fancy* love, devotion.

⁵⁸ *Music ... exequies* The phoenix was a bird that was believed every 500 years to build a funeral pyre out of sweet smelling gums and herbs; it would mount the lighted pyre and be immolated, only to rise again young and renewed from its own ashes. *exequies* funeral ceremonies.

⁵⁹ *Demean* conduct, direct. *deceit* deception (flirtation, flattery).

⁶⁰ *cozen* cheat, defraud.

The glorious war does summon him to th' field,
 He does excel in feats of active arms
 The ablest youth of Arcady, instructs
 Old soldiers' martial discipline, that those
 Who had beheld his sweetness in the court,
 Pusled in faith, believed that conquering Mars⁶¹
 Had clothed his fierceness in a Cupid's shape
 To vanquish some more beauteous prize than was
 The blind god's mother.⁶²

[Chrysaclea leaves with Parthenia; the mother hopes to induce the local shepherds to put on some entertainment that will alleviate Demagoras' anger.]

ACT 1, SCENE 2.

[Two shepherds, Clitophon and Strephon, are discussing love, with Strephon accusing Clitophon of being in love, and Clitophon denying the charge. Clitophon, it would seem, is an indiscriminate and inconstant wooer of the shepherdesses, while Strephon rejects them all, at the same time that he is convinced that they are all dying of love for him. However, the shepherdesses' comments (below and throughout the play) simply mock him for his inflated ego; Strephon is an ugly, crude, conceited misogynist, whom the shepherdesses Sappho, Aminta and Florida set about making a fool of. Chrysaclea enters demanding an entertainment for Demagoras, and the shepherds innocently but impolitically perform the one they were preparing for Argalus. Demagoras sees his rejection by Parthenia portrayed and storms off, vowing a terrible revenge.]

ENTER SAPPHO AND AMINTA.

SAPPHO.

Strepho[n], you're well-met. Good Aminta, see,⁶³
 Is he not chaste and fair as young goats be,⁶⁴
 His head like to a cedar over-grows
 His studded cheeks and rich enamelled nose?

STREPHO.

⁶¹ *Pusled* perhaps, 'puzzled,' here referring to the observers' bewilderment over the seemingly contradictory nature of Argalus.

⁶² *the blind god's mother* Venus, goddess of love; like love itself, Cupid is sometimes depicted as blind.

⁶³ *Strepho[n]* a not uncommon name in early modern pastorals, such as Sidney's *Arcadia* (1593), C. Sedley's 'A Pastoral Dialogue' (1672), and Rochester's 'A Pastoral Dialogue between Alexis and Strephon' (1674). *Aminta* here, a shepherdess, but in Torquato Tasso's famous sixteenth-century pastoral play, *Aminta*, and in Thomas Watson's *Amyntas*, the titular character is a shepherd.

⁶⁴ *chaste ... be* said ironically, since young goats are not traditionally an image of natural beauty, and are usually associated with ruttish, sexual excess.

I would be loath to give my face for the washing, girl. Now, Clitophon,⁶⁵ do not you not imagine Venus' girdle was my swathband,⁶⁶ the maids so dote on my well-timbered limbs?

Here's a leg, Sappho, that's as neatly made,
 As any that o'er shepherdess is laid;
 A thigh proportionable I tak't,
 I know thou long'st to feel it nak't,
 A tail, some say, does hang thereby,⁶⁷
 Which none must know but thee and I.
 I have a back too, though I say't
 That should not, can bear any weight,
 Full limbs, with sinews strong and plump,
 A lusty chine, and for my rump⁶⁸
 'Tis so well made, and firmly knit,
 The nymphs are all stark mad for it,

Because they think the rest of my members proportionable.⁶⁹

CLITOPHON. What a quick flame
 Into my breast from Sappho's bright eyes came,
 Another from Aminta's; my desire,
 Erst cold as ice, grows active as the fire.
 Dearest Aminta, Sappho lend your ear
 To my just vows.

AMINTA. Fond Clitophon, forbear⁷⁰
 To swear in earnest. I do know your heart
 Was never wounded with the blind god's dart.

SAPPHO.
 See how bright Strephon does entice the air
 To play with the sweet bell-ropes of his hair.
 What a soft murmuring the tresses makes,
 As did Medusa's locks or Alecto's snakes.⁷¹

⁶⁵ *Clitophon* ironically, the name of the virtuous and constant young lover, Clitophon or Cleitophon, in Achilles Tatius's 2nd c. CE Greek romance *The Adventures of Leucippe and Clitophon*; in Sidney's *Arcadia*, Clitophon is the name of a knight, the son of the Arcadian nobleman, Kalander.

⁶⁶ *swathband* swaddling cloth, the material which was used to wrap up newborns.

⁶⁷ *A ... thereby* a play on 'tail,' as the common slang term for 'buttocks,' and on the common proverb, "Thereby hangs a tale" (Tilley T48), meaning there is an interesting story behind what a person has just been saying.

⁶⁸ *chine* a joint of meat including all or part of an animal's backbone with the adjoining flesh.

⁶⁹ *the rest of my members* the implication (of course) is that his sexual member in particular is extraordinarily large and virile.

⁷⁰ *Fond* dotting; foolishly amorous.

⁷¹ *Medusa's locks or Alecto's snakes* The horrific monster *Medusa's* face, including her hair (*locks*), would turn all who looked on her to stone; *Alecto* was one of the three Furies, who plagued those guilty of serious sins and crimes; she had serpents for hair.

⁷⁸ *adamant* a semi-mythic stone famed for its hardness and impenetrability.

You need not in contempt have thrown your heart
 On that effeminate Argalus. That wrong
 Fills my vast soul with horror, and invites
 My active thoughts to a severe revenge,
 Since he whom I can name but in contempt
 Usurps my lawful privilege; otherwise
 The injury with patience had been borne.
 Revenge's cause is an immediate scorn.

EXEUNT.

[Strephon, Clitophon, Sappho, and Aminta enter, Clitophon wooing the shepherdess Florida, but rejected by her. He proceeds to woo Aminta and Sappho in turn, but they both reject him as well.]

STREPHON.

'Tis her love to me makes her slight Clitophon thus. This 'tis to be a handsome man: I shall dote⁷⁹ shortly (seeing my lovely physnomie⁸⁰ in some clear spring, the shepherd's looking-glass) on my own shadow, and like Narcissus leap into the waves to embrace it.⁸¹

Which is she among the swains
 On whom the gentle Strephon deigns
 To cast a sheep's-eye, nod, or wink,⁸²
 But does herself immortal think?
 Who indeed has such a face,
 So full of a bewitching grace?
 My head Love's pillow, where he does rest
 As safe as magpie in her nest.
 My forehead sweetly is bespread
 With violets and tulips blue and red;
 The amber cowslip, and the coral rose,
 Precious complexion of my sweeter nose.
 My eyes are elements from which fall showers
 That make my cheeks a spring of several flowers.
 So is my head a nosegay growing on one stalk,
 My body is the garden, though it walk;
 And there's no woman but may well,

⁷⁹ *dote* be foolishly infatuated [with].

⁸⁰ *physnomie* physiognomy, the appearance of the face.

⁸¹ *I shall ... shadow ... it* a reference to the myth of Narcissus, a famously lovely youth who attracted the love of both girls and young men. He cruelly rejected them all, and in rejecting the devotion of the nymph Echo, he brought a terrible curse down on himself; gazing into a pool, he saw his own reflection, and falling in love with his own image, he pined away and died from unrequited love.

⁸² *sheep's-eye* amorous glance.

To th' worst part about it smell.
 My arms are dragons that defend all these:
 Now view in me living Hesperides.⁸³

SAPPHO.

Who looks on Strephon that will not suppose
 The blushing peony growing in his nose?
 The yellow primrose, that in woods had wont⁸⁴
 To flourish, springs up in his amber front.⁸⁵

STREPHON.

I had a face of brass⁸⁶ indeed should I deny this for truth. She'll praise me shortly into the stars, and then I shall (for a new planet) be set i' th' Shepherds Kalender.⁸⁷ What a gull's⁸⁸ this Clitophon! How long might he live ere he be in such favour with the shepherdesses?

[...]

CLITOPHON.

Oh, you are pleasant, Strephon. Sappho say,⁸⁹
 Are you as cruel as Aminta? Day
 Loves not the sunshine dearlier than my flame
 Is equally devoted to your name:
 To yours, Aminta, jointly. Oh, you two⁹⁰
 Are clearer, sweeter than the morning dew
 Falling in May on lilies, fairer far
 Than Venus' swans or spotless ermines are.⁹¹
 Which first vouchsafes me answer? There does fly
 Immediate comfort from Aminta's eye.
 Sappho speaks joy in smiles. But, virgins, here
 Comes beauty's abstract, who has no peer.
 Grace me, dear Florida, with one blest look.

ENTER FLORIDA.⁹²

FLORIDA.

Away, dissembler! Fishes scorn the hook
 They see laid bare before them; but prepare:

⁸³ *My arms ... Hesperides* The Hesperides, the daughters of Night, guarded a tree of golden apples at the edge of the world; a dragon helped them, but Hercules stole the apples with the help of Atlas.

⁸⁴ *had wont* was accustomed.

⁸⁵ *front* forehead.

⁸⁶ *face of brass* characterized by a look indicating the bold-faced ability to lie or deceive.

⁸⁷ *Shepherds Kalender* perhaps a reference specifically to the woodcuts that prefaced each of the twelve eclogues of Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar* (1579); each woodcut shows the constellations that were believed to dominate a particular month of the year.

⁸⁸ *gull* fool, simpleton.

⁸⁹ *pleasant* droll, facetious.

⁹⁰ *To yours, Aminta jointly* i.e., to both you, Sappho, and Aminta equally.

⁹¹ *ermine* an emblem of virginity.

⁹² *FLORIDA* meaning 'flowery' or 'flowers.'

The other shepherds hither coming are,
 Attending on my lady and her guests.
 This music does invite us to Pan's feast.

[The shepherds and nobles enter, preparing for the entertainment in honour of Argalus, but Parthenia is strangely absent. She enters, horribly disfigured, poisoned by Demagoras. Believing that Argalus will no longer want to marry her, she says she has decided to exile herself to the wilderness. Argalus protests that his love is to her inner self and not her beauty, but she still departs.]

ACT 3, SCENE 1.

[Act 3 opens with Demagoras preparing his men to attack Kalander's castle, his rage unsatisfied with destroying Parthenia's beauty. Argalus enters and challenges Demagoras to combat.]

ARGALUS.

You're happily encountered,⁹³

Do you know me?

DEMAGORAS.

Though such things as you are,
 Fit only for effeminacy and sport,
 Do seldom meet my knowledge, you are,
 If I mistake not, Argalus; I sent you
 A glorious present lately, your Parthenia
 Dressed in her new robes of beauty, such as might
 Entice your wanton appetite to love.

ARGALUS.

Villain! To glory in thy most detested act
 Shows that thy fiend-like nature has forgot
 All laws of noble manhood; but I sin
 To interchange a word with such a monster;
 Yet before thou dost fall by me, as, if heaven have not
 Lost all its care of innocence, thou must do,
 I'll force thee hear the blackness of thy mischiefs.
 What devil clothed in human shape, except
 Thy barbarous self, would have achieved the wrack
 Of so much matchless beauty?

DEMAGORAS. 'Twas too mean,⁹⁴

Too light a sacrifice for my revenge!
 Had her whole sex been there, attired in all

⁹³ *happily* fortunately.

⁹⁴ *mean* ignoble, unworthy.

The glory of their beauty, and you, sir, present,
 My anger had invaded them, and 'spite⁹⁵
 Of your defence converted their choice forms
 To the same loathsome leprosy!

ARGALUS. Peace, monster!

Each syllable thou utterest does infect
 The air with killing pestilence. It was
 Heaven's never-sleeping justice that directed
 My erring person hither to revenge⁹⁶
 Parthenia's murdered beauty on thy life.
 Nay, stare not on me, sir! Were you defenced
 With heaps of men as numerous as your sins,
 This sword should force a passage, and dig out
 Thy heart from that black cabinet of thy breast,
 And cast it a prey to vultures.

DEMAGORAS. You're very confident,
 Young gallant, of your fortune. Prithee, go,
 Poor boy, and fight a combat in the court
 With some soft mistress; dance or touch a lute.
 Thou art a thing so abject thou'rt not worthy
 The anger of Demagoras' arm. Begone,
 Lest I do frown thy soul away. My sword
 Will be a useless instrument 'gainst such
 A childish enemy.

ARGALUS. Glorious devil,
 My fury's grown to that unequal height
 'Twill not admit more conference; thy crimes
 Are now ripe for my punishment. Though fiends
 Guard your black breast, I'll pierce it.

DEMAGORAS.
 So valiant? I shall chastise your fury.

FIGHT. *DEMAGORAS FALLS.*

ARGALUS. Parthenia,
 Thou art in part revenged, and if mine own
 Death do succeed his, I shall go in peace to my eternity.

DEMAGORAS.
 Sure great Mars
 Has put on arms against me in this shape,
 For 'tis impossible mortality could
 Achieve Demagoras' conquest. Farewell light,
 'Tis fit the world should wear eternal night.

DIES.

⁹⁵ 'spite in spite of.

⁹⁶ erring wandering, seeking.

[Argalus grieves over his absent Parthenia; meanwhile another knight, Amphialus, is introduced; he has come to visit his friend Argalus. Amphialus has recently fallen in love with his cousin Philoclea, daughter of the king, and has kidnapped her when she refused to love him and accept his suit. Amphialus has told the king that he will release Philoclea and her sister Pamela only if the king's champion defeats him in single-combat.]

ENTER *CLITOPHON, STREPHON, ALEXIS.*

[...]

STREPHON.

'Tis your own flat foolery, Alexis;⁹⁷ you should with garb and gesture pastoral, with as much scorn as you would o'return your enemy at football,⁹⁸ contemn⁹⁹ the force of woman.

Why—

Women are shadows, fly away
When followed, or desired to stay;
But if you slight them, they will sue,
Follow, entreat, nay fly to you,
But if stiff and strong you stand,
You may tread them at command.¹⁰⁰
But lie down, the pretty elves¹⁰¹
Will straight fall under you of themselves.
Like my spaniel, beaten, they
Will lick your lips and with you play.
This is the reason why
They love me so doggedly;
You might by my example edify,
And live in peace, Alexis.

ALEXIS.

Why, Strephon, you usurp without a cause
The privilege of their love! Your carriage draws¹⁰²

⁹⁷ *Alexis* See 'Alexis' and 'Corydon,' Glossary (print anthology).

⁹⁸ *football* an early version of soccer, and at the time, an often violent and dangerous rural sport confined to country labourers.

⁹⁹ *contemn* despise, scorn.

¹⁰⁰ *If ... command* The sexual innuendo is obvious: 'stiff and strong' characterizes the attitude of the scornful man, but also the condition of his penis, while 'tread' means 'to have sex with' (although it is usually an idiom applied to animals).

¹⁰¹ *But lie down* i.e., 'If you simply lie down' or 'All you have to do is lie down and'

¹⁰² *carriage* behavior.

Their laughter not affection; you appear
To them for sport, not for your person dear.

STREPHON.

There's your foolery still. Thou hast commerced¹⁰³ it seems with none but thine own
sheep, and art far sillier¹⁰⁴ than they. Your woman is the greatest dissembler in the world,
and where they toy and jeer, they most affect:

Finally women are slippery, as at their tails are eels,
Their minds as light as are their heels.¹⁰⁵
And every one's for what she feels.¹⁰⁶
And so with my opinion, farewell.

[This section concludes with the disappointed Clitophon reciting verses he has composed on the hateful coldness of women. They exit, and Kalander and Philarchus enter, urging Argalus to try and forget Parthenia, but he refuses. The shepherd Alexis enters with a woman, whom Argalus, Philarchus, and Kalander immediately take to be Parthenia. She, however, denies that she is Parthenia, and indeed reports that Parthenia is dead, and that before she died Parthenia asked her to come and deliver a message to Argalus: that she died at peace, forgiving Demagoras, and sincerely loving her Argalus, and that Argalus should take the mysterious messenger as his wife, since she is so much like Parthenia. Argalus, overcome with grief, refuses to accept the messenger in place of his Parthenia. The messenger then reveals that she is indeed Parthenia, cured by the queen of Corinth of her "foul leprosy."]

ENTER SAPPHO, AMINTA, STREPHON and CLITOPHON.

STREPHON.

I'll try your impudence: have you the face
To deny your libel, Clitophon?

CLITOPHON.

Good Strephon, urge me not. I shall not want
Audacity to express them to recant.
My just opinion were unjust, and fit
To stain my resolution, and my wit.

AMINTA. Clitophon, how dare

You armed with boldness greater than despair
Venture to abuse women, or defile
That name with scandal to whose meanest smile
You have done worship?

¹⁰³ *commerced* communicated, associated [with].

¹⁰⁴ *sillier* more innocent.

¹⁰⁵ *light* wanton, given to sexual promiscuity and lasciviousness.

¹⁰⁶ *every one's* i.e., each and every one is.

SAPPHO. Praised looks with flatt'ring art,
 Each look, each lineament, as the best part
 Of Nature's choicest workmanship. But men
 Are more inconstant than light whirlwinds; trust
 The sea with feathers or March winds with dust
 Rather, and let their words, oaths, tears, vows pass
 As words in water writ or slippery glass.¹⁰⁷

CLITOPHON.
 This is more juggling. Oh, with these sh'as found¹⁰⁸
 A passage through my eyes to give a wound
 To my poor heart! It is their looks beget
 This sudden alteration, which as yet
 Does but with infant feathers strive to fly
 To heaven, tells Justice of th' injury
 I have done sacred womanhood. Thence,
 Thou scroll, detracting spotless innocence!¹⁰⁹
 Aminta, dear, forgive me. Sappho, see
 How my tears distil.

STREPHON.
 If they were every one as big as a turnip, it should not serve to feed my anger. Well,
 wenches, if you do pardon him, may your maidenheads be a burden to you till you be
 fourscore¹¹⁰ at least. Then may you turn witches, and some goblin get them, or else perish
 in your virginity, and lead apes in hell for't.¹¹¹ Nay, if you do forgive him, I will have you
 arraigned of treason against Venus, and Cupid shall be your blind judge, and condemn
 you for the fact to lose your heads—your maidenheads, I mean—and have a man of
 fourscore and ten for your executioner.

SAPPHO.
 Dear Strephon, do not frown. It does disgrace
 The sallow colour of thy withered face.

STREPHON.
 You would fain cog¹¹² yourself into my favour again, but till you be converted from this
 Clitophon, you shall not kiss the worst part about me.

SAPPHO. Oh, say not so!
 Thou art more sweet than yew or mistletoe.¹¹³

ENTER ALEXIS.

¹⁰⁷ *As words in water writ* Proverbial, "To write in water (sand)" (Tilley W114). Interestingly, inconstancy is generally attributed to women, not to men, in the period

¹⁰⁸ *juggling* trickery.

¹⁰⁹ *scroll* Earlier in Act 3, scene 1, Clitophon says, "I did late compose verses in hatred of them" [i.e., women]. He subsequently reads a poem that contains common misogynist slanders, stating that women are the curse of men, 'inconstant, cruel, false, unkind.'

¹¹⁰ *fourscore* 80.

¹¹¹ *lead apes in hell for 't* to suffer the curse of dying an old maid (unmarried).

¹¹² *fain cog* willingly or eagerly wheedle or flatter.

¹¹³ *yew or mistletoe* While the *yew* was an ancient symbol of sadness and death, the *mistletoe* does not seem to have any negative symbolic associations, but it is, however, a plant with sharp-edged leaves.

ALEXIS.

O Clitophon, Aminta, every voice
Be filled with admiration! Sing, rejoice
Till th' earth dance like our young lambs, till trees
Grow active at the music! All degrees,
Of grief are banished: all our flocks shall play
For joy! Parthenia, O Parthenia!

CLITOPHON.

What of Parthenia?

ALEXIS.

Is returned, her right
Beauty new shining like the queen of Night,¹¹⁴
Appearing fresher after she did shroud
Her gaudy forehead in a pitchy cloud,
Love's triumphs in her eyes—audacious I,
That durst name love, and fair Aminta by:¹¹⁵
Be dumb forever.

SAPPHO.

Stay, Alexis.
She shall now revoke that loving tyranny;¹¹⁶
Since our Parthenia's returned, I'll turn
My elegiac strains away, and burn in high love raptures.

ALEXIS.

She must straight be wed to Lord Argalus.
The bridal bed is in preparing.

SAPPHO.

At a verse of mine,
Hymen shall light his nuptial flaming pine;¹¹⁷
I will enchant them to embraces free,
With a devoted epithalamy,¹¹⁸
Till I sing day from Tethys' arms, and fire¹¹⁹
With airy raptures the whole morning quire,¹²⁰
Till the small birds their sylvan notes display
And sing with us, joy to Parthenia.

DANCE AND EXEUNT.

¹¹⁴ *the queen of Night* the moon.

¹¹⁵ *Aminta* in the original, 'Alexis,' clearly an error. *by* nearby, here.

¹¹⁶ *She* i.e., Aminta.

¹¹⁷ *Hymen ... pine* In the ancient world, the bride would be led in procession from her father's to her husband's new home, accompanied by revellers holding pine torches. *Hymen* god of marriage.

¹¹⁸ *epithalamy* i.e., an epithalamion; in the classical world, a song composed for and sung on the occasion of a wedding.

¹¹⁹ *Tethys' arms* Thetys was the goddess of the sea (i.e., until the sun rises above the sea).

¹²⁰ *quire* choir.

ACT 4, SCENE 1.

[ENTER] ARGALUS, PARTHENIA. KALANDER. PHILARCHUS.

KALANDER.

Sit, my most honoured cousin. You are lord
 Both of this house and feast. The honest shepherds
 Were taken too much o' th' sudden to provide
 A fitting entertainment; but they've strived,
 With their most early haste, t'express their duty.
 Sappho, inspired with her poetic fury,¹²¹
 Will speak your epithalamy.
 They do intend to dance too, I see;
 This music declares their purpose.

MUSIC.

ENTER SHEPHERDS AND SHEPHERDESSES.

SAPPHO. *The joys of health and what the spring
 Of youth, strength, happiness can bring
 Wait upon this noble pair;
 Lady, may you still be fair
 As earliest light; may you enjoy
 Beauty which age cannot destroy;
 May you be fruitful as the day,
 Never sigh but when you pray;
 Know no grief, but what may be
 To temper your felicity.
 And you, my lord, may truest fame
 Still attend on your great name.
 Live both of you espoused to peace,
 And with your years let love increase.
 Go late to heaven, but coming thither,
 Shine there two glorious stars together.*

SONG AND DANCE.

KALANDER.

Does these presentments please you? Our dull wits
 Are not so fortunate in rich conceits
 As your quick Cyprian intellects.¹²²

EXEUNT SHEPHERDS.

¹²¹ *poetic fury* a reference to the classical notion of *furor poeticus*, where the poet's excellent verse is assumed to arise from his or her possession by a god.

[Argalus tells Parthenia that he has been chosen as the king's champion to fight in single-combat with Amphialus. She tries to persuade him to refuse to fight, but he insists.]

ENTER *CLITOPHON, STREPHON, ALEXIS, SAPPHO, AMINTA, FLORIDA*.

CLITOPHON.

Sweet Sappho, will you still persist, and kill
Whom you might save?

SAPPHO. 'Tis your own various will¹²³

Enforces my contempt; but here's no place
T'afford our loves an answer: the kind grass
That decks the plains will smile when we do sit
On its green tapestry, and aptly fit
Our wild affections. Shepherdesses, let
Our woolly charge within our folds be set,¹²⁴
Lest the hoarse wolf to sate his ravenous thirst
With blood of lambs do through our weak flocks burst;
After let's meet upon the neighbouring plain,
And there determine of our loves. I'll strain
A little on your patience to rehearse,
On the late nuptials, this ensuing verse.

AMINTA. Do, my dear Sappho.

FLORIDA. Shepherds, attend her lays.¹²⁵

AMINTA.

They get us credit, and our Sappho bays.¹²⁶

SAPPHO.

The holy priest had joined their hands, and now
Night grew propitious to their bridal vow.
Majestic Juno and young Hymen vies
To light their pines at fair Parthenia's eyes.¹²⁷
The little Graces amorously did skip,
With the small Cupids, from each lip to lip.
Venus herself was present, and untied
Her virgin Love; when lo, on either side¹²⁸

¹²² *Cyprian* of the isle of Cyprus, Argalus's native land.

¹²³ *various will* inconstant desire.

¹²⁴ *woolly charge* sheep. *folds* pens.

¹²⁵ *lays* songs, compositions.

¹²⁶ *bays* those wreaths made of the bay or laurel tree that were the traditional crown for military conquerors and poets of exceptional excellence. Cf. Demagoras' boast (n53).

¹²⁷ *pin*es See n117.

¹²⁸ *untied* / *Her virgin love* referring to the classical ritual of the husband's unbinding of his wife's girdle on the occasion of their marriage's consummation.

Stood as her handmaids Chastity and Truth,
 With that immaculate guider of her youth
 Rose-coloured Modesty. These did undress
 The beauteous maid, who now in readiness,
 The nuptial tapers waving 'bout her head,
 Made poor her garments, and enriched her bed;
 While the fresh bridegroom, like the lusty spring,
 Did to the holy bride-bed with him bring
 Attending masculine virtues; down he laid
 His snowy limbs by a far whiter maid;
 Their kisses link their minds; as they embrace
 A choir of angels flew about the place,
 Singing all bliss unto this pair; forever
 May they in love and union still persevere.

AMINTA.

'Tis almost sung for the nuptials.
 Why was't not sung with music?

SAPPHO.

Castalia's voice would have been tired with it.
 Come, let's depart,
 Love though obscured still flames about the heart.

EXEUNT.

[After sincere protestations of friendship, with each mourning the necessity of the combat, Amphialus and Argalus make a pact: whoever falls in the combat will send the heart of the fallen to his beloved. Argalus falls, and Parthenia arrives to hold him as he dies. Instead of lamenting, Parthenia celebrates his heroism and transformation to the blessed realm; she intimates that she will soon follow him.]

ACT 5, SCENE 1.

[Alexis tells the miserable Clitophon, rejected by all the shepherdesses, that he is responsible for his own situation, while Strephon ludicrously celebrates his 'high' favour with the women, lamenting his bothersome popularity among them.]

ENTER SAPPHO, AMINTA, FLORIDA

CLITOPHON.

Still dearest Sappho, cruel tigers may
 By prayers and tears be moved though cruel they

Delight in murder; you do seem to take
 Your natural fierceness from them; there cannot be
 So much stern vigour in humanity
 As to condemn a suppliant, and prove¹²⁹
 To him most cruel who does truest love.

SAPPHO.

You are too sickle, Clitophon. You see¹³⁰
 Leaves in green autumn scattered from each tree
 By the rude winds; you are more light than they,
 More fading than the flowery dress which May
 Attires the prickly thorns in; lighter far
 Than frothy bubbles or dispersed smokes are.
 Yet I should love you, did not Strephon's eye
 Dart flames might fire a marble heart; they fly
 With nimble wings about me; Strephon, see
 She who refuses him will yield to thee.

STREPHON.

Would you could persuade me to't, my nimble-tongued Melpomene.¹³¹ I must not be
 unjust to wrong my friend, Clitophon. My friend's my friend, sweet Sappho, and you are
 a woman, of which gender (thanks be to heaven and my good parts) I have indifferent
 choice, a hundred or so. If you, Aminta, or you, Florida, love me,

The best comfort or course you can take
 Is to run mad for my dear sake,
 And hang yourselves, for you'll so prove
 True lovers hanged in chains of love.

AMINTA.

A cruel resolution, Sappho! Well,
 We must resolve not to lead apes in hell.¹³²
 And we have vowed never to match but where
 Strephon vouchsafes to give us; for you two,
 Unless he please, our wills can nothing do.

STREPHON.

Come hither, Clitophon. You love this witty rogue, this Sappho?

CLITOPHON.

Dear as my own eyes.

STREPHON.

That's dear enough; and you, Alexis, love Aminta.

ALEXIS.

I dare not name that word, yet there's in me
 A most severe and lasting constancy to fair Aminta.

¹²⁹ *contemn* despise.

¹³⁰ *sickle* sickly.

¹³¹ *Melpomene* muse of tragedy.

¹³² *We ... hell* See n111.

CLITOPHON.

Oh, be gentle, Strephon! Let kind pity move
Thy honest heart not to deprive our love
Of its true comfort.

STREPHON.

I shall be sure now to be famous for something. Your hands, your hands, my pretty pair
of turtles.¹³³

AMINTA.

Will you forsake us, Strephon?

SAPPHO.

Will you give me away? Whose heart desires to live only by your affection?

STREPHON.

I cannot help it, 'less I should distribute myself amongst you. I'm very glad the matter is
deposed into my handling; these wenches are in good hope now that I will have one of
them myself, and that makes them refer themselves to me. Here, Clitophon, take Sappho,
and you, Alexis, the beautiful Aminta. But be sure to confess you have but my
reversions.¹³⁴ You'll give me leave to kiss your wives, or so, when you are married. I'll
not go an inch further, as I am a true Arcadian; and so shake hands, and heavens give you
joy. Now, Clitophon, you're excellent at that sport, shall's not have a frisque¹³⁵ or so at
your wedding, ha?

CLITOPHON.

We're all your servants.

DANCE.

SAPPHO.

Now, Strephon, we have suffered you to play the fool all this while, receive our true
opinions of you.

STREPHON.

Aye, come, let's hear't.

SAPPHO.

Thou hast a face
So full of vileness it does disgrace
Deformity itself; there's not a woman,
Were she to filthy prostitution common,
That could affect thee.

FLORIDA.

Cease to torment him, Sappho. The pretty elf¹³⁶
Begins to see the beauty of itself:
We must attend our lady.

¹³³ *turtles* i.e., turtle doves, a common emblem of marital fidelity and harmony.

¹³⁴ *reversions* in legal terms, an estate which is granted or transferred to a third party, the implication being that the
two men only have claims to the women because Strephon has decided to surrender to them his ownership.

¹³⁵ *frisque* jig; vigorous dance.

¹³⁶ *elf* dwarvish, ugly person.

*Happy Arabians, when your Phoenix dies¹⁴¹
 In a sweet pile of fragrant spiceries,
 Out of the ashes of the myrrh-burned mother,
 That you may still have one, springs up another.
 Unhappy we, since 'tis your Phoenix nature,
 Why could not ours, our only matchless creature,
 Enjoy that right? Why from Parthenia's urn
 Should not Parthenia gloriously return?
 Oh, there's a reason: 'tis 'cause Nature's store,
 All spent on her, is now become too poor
 To frame her equal, so that on her hearse
 My trembling hand shall hang this funeral verse.*

*True love and beauty none can boast to have;
 They both are buried in Parthenia's grave,
 Who was love's, glory's, beauty's, virtue's pride,
 With her love, glory, virtue, beauty died.*

Now girls,
 Strew flowers upon the body, while our tears
 Embalm her memory, and whatever ears
 Shall hear this story may with justice say,
 'None loved like Argalus and Parthenia.'

FINIS.

ROBERT HERRICK (1591-1674), POET AND CHURCH OF ENGLAND MINISTER. Educated at Cambridge (BA, 1617; MA, 1620), Herrick entered the Church in 1623, serving briefly as a chaplain to the duke of Buckingham, before going on to become the minister of Dean Prior in Devon. Here, he wrote most of his lyric verse. It circulated in manuscript before Herrick decided to have it published; this decision, however, went unfulfilled initially, because the royalist Herrick was ejected from his parish during the Civil War, when Parliament replaced him with a Presbyterian minister. By 1648, Herrick was living in London and had seen through the press his verse collection *Hesperides: Or, the Works Both Humane and Divine*. In 1660 he returned as minister to Dean Prior, and it was there that he died on 15 October 1674. Although the nineteenth-century rediscovered Herrick as a writer of beautiful lyrics about women, nature, rural life, and the passage of time, more recent attention has turned to his focus on aspects of ritual, ceremony and continuity, all of which respond to the social and political chaos of the mid-seventeenth century.

Herrick's seduction poems and his more generally erotic poems are addressed to a variety of mistresses, whom modern critics generally agree are entirely fictional (i.e., not based on relationships with any actual seventeenth-century woman): Julia, Corinna, Silvia, Sappho,

¹⁴¹ *Phoenix* See n58.

Anthea, etc. These names (and others in the volume) are interesting: on the one hand, they are utterly conventional—sixteenth- and seventeenth-century lyric verse, after all, is littered with Julias, Corinnas, and Silvias; on the other hand, many of these names are also those of women from antiquity: some have sterling reputations in early modern England as poets (Corinna) and lovers of literature (Perilla), while others are famed largely for their sexual lasciviousness (Julia, Myrrha, and Ovid's Corinna). However, only Sappho's name gestures to a classical woman with so decidedly 'mixed' and sensational a reputation during the later seventeenth century: exemplary poet and tribade, Sappho sits uneasily among these other heterosexual mistresses.

EDITIONS:

Herrick, Robert. *Poetical Works*. Ed. L.C. Martin. Oxford: Clarendon, 1956.

—. *Hesperides: Or, The Works Both Humane and Divine* (1648). London: Scolar Press, 1969. [facsimile edition].

From HESPERIDES (1648)

UPON THE LOSS OF HIS MISTRESSES

I have lost, and lately, these
 Many dainty mistresses:
 Stately Julia, prime of all;
 Sappho next, a principal;
 Smooth Anthea, for a skin
 White and heaven-like crystalline;
 Sweet Electra, and the choice
 Myrrha, for the lute and voice.
 Next, Corinna, for her wit,
 And the graceful use of it,
 With Perilla, all are gone;
 Only Herrick's left alone,
 For to number sorrow by
 Their departures hence, and die.¹⁴²

¹⁴² On the ubiquity of some of these names in early modern love poetry (such as *Corinna* and *Julia*), see the headnote. *Julia* (39 BCE-c. 14 CE), most famously, the name of the emperor Augustus' daughter, who had an early modern reputation for sexual lasciviousness and adultery. *Corinna* the reference here is to the classical Greek poet Corinna (fl. 6th c. BCE), whose reputation amongst the ancients was very high, but whose verse has been largely lost; the name Corinna, however, also appears in Ovid's *Amores*: there, she is a lustful woman, compared to an expensive call-girl out on the town (2.12.1-28). *Anthea* another name for the goddess Hera, wife of Zeus, king of the gods. Hera was famously jealous of Zeus' many affairs with mortal women, often punishing mercilessly these hapless women. *Electra* the name of the daughter of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra; Electra helped her brother Orestes kill Clytemnestra in return for Clytemnestra's murder of Agamemnon. *Myrrha* In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Myrrha falls in love with her own father, tricks him into having sex with her, flees his murderous rage, and gives birth to Adonis, the lovely mortal with whom Venus later falls in love. In Ovid's account, *Myrrha* is turned into a tree for her crime. *Perilla* a daughter of Ovid, reportedly fond of poetry and literature.

THE SADNESS OF THINGS FOR SAPPHO'S SICKNESS

Lilies will languish, violets look ill,
 Sickly the primrose, pale the daffodil.
 That gallant tulip will hang down his head,
 Like to a virgin newly ravishèd.¹⁴³
 Pansies will weep, and marigolds will wither,
 And keep a fast and funeral together:
 If Sappho droop daisies will open never,
 But bid goodnight and close their lids forever.

UPON SAPPHO, SWEETLY PLAYING AND SWEETLY SINGING

When thou dost play and sweetly sing,
 Whether it be the voice or string,
 Or both of them, that do agree
 Thus to entrance and ravish me:¹⁴⁴
 This, this I know, I'm oft struck mute;
 And die away upon thy lute.¹⁴⁵

THE HEAD-ACHE

The head doth ache,
 O Sappho! Take
 The fillit,¹⁴⁶
 And bind the pain;
 Or bring some bane¹⁴⁷
 To kill it.

But less that part
 Than my poor heart
 Now is sick.
 One kiss from thee
 Will counsel be
 And physick.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴³ *ravishèd* deflowered; raped.

¹⁴⁴ *ravish* overwhelm with astonishment or ecstasy. But cf. n143.

¹⁴⁵ *Die away upon thy lute* Taken together with the word 'ravish,' 'die' and 'lute' create an obvious sexual double entendre, where 'die' glances at the meaning 'achieve orgasm' and 'lute' at a popular euphemism for the 'vulva or female genital area' (Williams 2.834).

¹⁴⁶ *fillit* an ornamental head-band.

¹⁴⁷ *bane* poison (here, perhaps, 'bitter medicine').

TO SAPPHO

Let us now take time and play,
 Love and live here while we may;
 Drink rich wine, and make good cheer,
 While we have our being here:
 For, once dead, and laid i'th' grave,
 No return from thence we have.

TO SAPPHO

Sappho, I will choose to go
 Where the northern winds do blow
 Endless ice and endless snow,
 Rather than I once would see,
 But a winter's face in thee,
 To benumb my hopes and me.

TO SAPPHO

Thou say'st thou lov'st me, Sappho; I say no,
 But would to Love I could believe 'twas so!
 Upon my fears (sweet Sappho) I desire
 That thou be righteous found, and I the liar.

UPON SAPPHO

Look upon Sappho's lip and you will swear,
 There is a love-like-leaven rising there.

ANNE WHARTON [NÉE LEE] (1659-1685), POET. Related by marriage to the courtier and libertine poet John Wilmot, earl of Rochester (1647-1680), Anne Wharton apparently first came to the attention of London's literary circles through her elegy on the death of Rochester, which circulated in manuscript in 1680. She produced around this time a verse play called *Love's Martyr, or Wit above Crowns*, and by 1682 had completed a verse paraphrase of the Lamentations of Jeremiah, and part of a verse paraphrase of Isaiah. Her verse output numbers some twenty-four poems.

¹⁴⁸ *physick* medicine; medical treatment.

THE TEMPLE OF DEATH: A POEM¹⁴⁹TO MRS. A. BEHN, ON WHAT SHE WRIT OF THE EARL OF ROCHESTER.¹⁵⁰

In pleasing transport rap't, my thoughts aspire¹⁵¹
 With humble verse to praise what you admire.
 Few living poets may the laurel claim;¹⁵²
 Most pass through death to reach at living fame.
 Fame, phoenix-like, still rises from a tomb,¹⁵³
 But bravely you this custom have o'ercome.
 You force a homage from each generous heart,
 Such as you always pay to just desert.
 You praised him living, whom you dead bemoan,
 And now your tears afresh his laurel crown.¹⁵⁴
 It is this flight of yours excites my art,
 Weak as it is, to take your Muse's part,
 And pay loud thanks back from my bleeding heart.
 May you in every pleasing grace excel,
 May bright Apollo in your bosom dwell;¹⁵⁵
 May yours excel the matchless Sappho's name,
 May you have all her wit without her shame.
 Though she to honour gave a fatal wound,
 Employ your hand to raise it from the ground.¹⁵⁶
 Right its wronged cause with your enticing strain,
 Its ruined temples try to build again.
 Scorn meaner themes, declining low desire,
 And bid your Muse maintain a vestal fire.¹⁵⁷
 If you do this, what glory will ensue

¹⁴⁹ This composite volume (2nd edition 1695) contains a translation of Phillipe Habert's *Le Temple de la Mort* by John Sheffield, marquis of Normanby; a translation of Horace's *Art of Poetry* by Wentworth Dillon, earl of Roscommon; and "The Duel of Stags" by Sir Robert Howard. A. Behn is Aphra Behn, playwright and poet.

¹⁵⁰ *Earl of Rochester* Behn was a close friend of Rochester and a member of his literary circle.

¹⁵¹ *rap't* engrossed, transported.

¹⁵² *laurel* in the classical tradition, the traditional crown bestowed as a sign of poetic or martial excellence.

¹⁵³ *phoenix-like* The phoenix was a fabled Egyptian bird. It lived on incense; immolating itself every 500 years, on a pyre of cassia, nard, cinnamon bark and other sweet-smelling spices, it would rise newborn from its own ashes (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 15.391-430); emblem of eternal youth and resurrection.

¹⁵⁴ *afresh* here, a verb, 'refresh' or 'enliven.'

¹⁵⁵ *Apollo* Greek god of the sun, music, and poetry.

¹⁵⁶ *it* presumably, both Sappho's honour and her name.

¹⁵⁷ *vestal fire* The vestal virgins were a group of virgin priestesses who served the goddess Vesta; they were responsible for keeping the sacred flame burning in her temple, and were sworn to strict virginity during their tenure as priestesses. The penalty for violating this vow was death.

To all our sex, to poesy, and you?
Write on, and may your numbers ever flow,¹⁵⁸
Soft as the wishes that I make for you.

¹⁵⁸ *numbers* verses.