

# **Lines of Love, Wine and Song: The Muses at Work**



**Translated by George Theodoridis**

Translated by George Theodoridis ©2001

All Rights Reserved

This work may be freely reproduced, stored, and transmitted, electronically or otherwise, for any non-commercial purpose, except for theatrical or cinematic use where permission must be sought.

## Contents

Anacreon .....	5
Odd Sandals.....	5
Prayer to Dionysius.....	6
Water and Wine .....	7
Anonymous .....	9
Thinking Mate .....	9
Asclepiades.....	10
Nicorete and Cleophon .....	10
Tryphera.....	11
Bacchylides .....	12
Happiness.....	12
Ode to Hekate .....	12
The Test of Virtue.....	13
Hedylus.....	14
Let Us Drink .....	14
Ibycus .....	15
No Rest for Love .....	15
Ion of Chios .....	17
Untamable Child.....	17
Melanippides .....	18
Wine after Water.....	18
Poseidippus.....	19
Archianax.....	19

Praxilla.....	20
Beware.....	20
To Adonis .....	20
You Look Great .....	22
Sappho .....	23
Ode to Aphrodite .....	23
Abandoned.....	26
And as for Me .....	28
But I Sleep Alone.....	28
It Seems to Me .....	29
Mountain wind.....	31
To Her Lyre .....	32
On Eros .....	33
The Stars around The Moon .....	34
Sweet Apple.....	35
Stesichorus.....	36
Quinces and chariots.....	36
Timotheus .....	37
Ambrosia .....	37
Old Songs .....	39

**Anacreon**  
(563-478BC)

**Odd Sandals**  
(Ed 15)

Today, Eros, of the golden locks used a  
purple ball to make me play  
with a child.

A girl, wearing odd sandals.

But she, born in beautiful Lesbos,  
looks at me, finds  
fault with my  
hair - it's grey, you see!-

and  
turns from me to gawk at some other child,

Another girl.

## **Prayer to Dionysius**

(Ed2)

Please, Dionysius!

Leader of all, whose friends are the omnipotent

Eros and the blue-eyed

Nymphs and the rosy

Aphrodite

and whose compass

is the high peaks of mountains.

Please, be kind enough to come to me and

hear my plea with a smile:

Go, God, and counsel Cleovoulos well and make him  
accept my love!

## Water and Wine

(Ed75)

### I

Boy! Bring water and bring wine  
and bring garlands of flowers

that I may do a round or two with Eros

### II

Boy! bring here a cup!

and

Boy! mix ten cups of water to five of wine

and

Boy! let me not shut my lips but let me drink

and drink and rage like

a frenzied Bacchus with

impunity.

### III

Come, friends! let's not shout and scream

like Scythian drunks

but

let us study our wine, friends

and

accompany its drinking with beautiful songs

**Anonymous**

(Ed 6a)

**Thinking Mate**

I hate a thinking, drinking mate!

## **Asclepiades**

290BC

### **Nicorete and Cleophon**

(Tr.166)

That sweet face of  
Nicorete  
much-touched by desire and  
much-seen through the shutters of her window  
high above us

was suddenly ravaged by  
Those sweet lightning bolts of  
Cleophon.  
His glances, dear Cypris,  
as he shot them standing by her gates

**Tryphera**  
(Trypanis167)

Go to the market Dimitri,  
to Amyntos' stall  
and  
get us three sweet fish -the little, cheap ones-  
and  
ten clams  
and  
twenty four cringing shrimps -let him count them for  
you himself-  
and  
come directly back.

Oh yeah,  
And  
on your way here get six garlands of roses from  
Thauvorious  
and  
quickly dash in and invite tender-shaped  
Tryphera

## **Bacchylides**

(c450bc)

(Ed 57)

### **Happiness**

No mortal is happy all the time

(Ed 2)

### **Ode to Hekate**

Hekate!

Carrier of torches,  
daughter of black-loined  
Night!

(Ed 25)

## **The Test of Virtue**

Whilst gold is tested by the  
Lydian stone,  
Man's virtue  
and  
Wisdom  
are tested by  
Truth

**Hedylus**

c 280bc

**Let Us Drink**

(HE5)

Let us drink, then  
And  
perhaps we'll find  
something new  
in our wine -

some eloquent, honey-coloured word.

So come!  
Fill me up with jugs of Chian wine and say,  
“Go ahead, Hedylus, play!”

I hate an empty life -  
empty of wine.

## **Ibycus**

(c 560bc)

### **No Rest for Love**

(Ed1)

The time  
for the river-watered quinces  
in the gardens of the chaste virgins  
and  
for the blossoms beneath the shady vine shoots  
to burst is  
Spring

But as for  
Me,  
Eros leaves me no time for resting

and,

Bursting with the fires of lightning  
He rushes from Aphrodite's isle  
inside northern gales  
Crazed,

Scorching,  
Cavernous and  
Bold  
and keeps a guard's firm hold of my  
heart.

## **Ion of Chios**

(c490bc)

(Ed 1)

### **Untamable Child**

Untamable child  
with the look of a roaring bull.

A youth and yet not a youth.

Beautiful servant of noisy loves  
of mind-spinning wine

## **Melanippides**

(c500bc)

(Ed 4)

### **Wine after Water**

So,

All those who had never before tasted wine  
fell into hating water

So,

Pretty quickly one lot of them was begging to

Die

whereas the other was stricken by a mania  
to shout out words of prophecy

## **Poseidippus**

(280BC)

## **Archianax**

(Tr. 170)

Three-year old Archianax was  
distracted from his playing by the  
silent image of his own form  
in the well. His mother

tore

the soaked child from the water  
wondering if he was still alive or which

fate

had him.

But the baby had not sinned against the Nymphs  
but fell asleep upon his mother's knees  
and there he still lies in deep

sleep.

**Praxilla**  
(c450bc)

**Beware**  
(Ed 4)

Beware, my friend of the  
scorpion  
beneath every stone

**To Adonis**  
(Ed 1)

The most beautiful thing I miss  
is the sun's light  
Second,  
the bright stars  
third,  
the moon's face

as well as the lovely gourds and apples'  
and wild pears

NOTE: The last line (in Greek) is the famous “wrong line.” Scholiasts and translators suggest that it is a silly thing to include gourds (or cucumbers) and pears in the same list of things “one misses most” which includes sunlight, bright stars and the moon’s face.

## **You Look Great**

(Ed 5)

You look great through the fenestrations:

The head of a virgin

The waste of a well married woman.

**Sappho**  
**Ode to Aphrodite**  
(Ed. 1)

Immortal Aphrodite of the splendid throne  
Daughter of Zeus, weaver of snares,  
Great Woman, grant me this:  
Let not my spirit be harnessed by this anguish  
and affliction  
But come here, by me as you did once before.

On that day,  
you've heard my distant voice and, nodding,  
you left your father's golden chambers to yoke your  
two swift companion birds at your glittering chariot.

They fluttered through the spreading sky and  
brought you hurriedly down here,  
by me,  
upon the black soil

Great woman!  
With a smile on your immortal face you had asked  
me

then  
about my sighs, what was it that made me call you  
yet again?

What was it that my despairing heart wanted you to  
do  
this time?

You asked,  
“Who is it this time, Sappho? Whom do you want  
me  
to bring you? Who, Sappho is hurting you now?”

And,  
at that time, you offered, “Tell me  
Sappho who she is and if she turns from you now,  
soon,  
by me,  
she’ll be turning towards you;  
and if she’s not close to you now,  
soon,  
by me,  
she will be -  
willingly or not!”

Come to me again now,  
Great Woman  
and  
release me from this great woe;  
grant me this, my heart’s greatest desire.  
Against all these pains, be my ally.

## Abandoned

(Ed 83)

I want to die  
honestly  
rather than be abandoned  
tearfully

Well, I was told all sorts of things  
such as,  
“Oh, dear, dear Sappho, what awful things we must  
endure!  
Truly,  
I’m leaving you against my will.”

To which I replied,  
“All right, then, go ahead, abandon me  
be happy!  
But  
remember me because I cared for no one else.

Because if you forget,  
I’ll remind you  
of the good things we lived through  
together.

Remember the many garlands of violets  
and roses I placed next to you  
and  
the many flower necklaces I weaved around  
your soft  
skin

and spread bountiful myrrh  
[.....]\* fit for a queen

and upon the gentle mattress,  
[.....]\* the passion you exuded

and neither the [.....]\*  
nor the singly sacred [.....]\*  
did we weave [.....]\*  
from which we stayed away.

Note: [..]\* Gap in the manuscript source (Lacuna)

## **And as for Me**

(Ed.118a)

And as for me, listen to this, I love luxury: the  
bright love, the sun and beauty are of one lot.

## **But I Sleep Alone**

(Tr 62)

Midnight!

And like the hour,  
The moon and the  
Pleiades have gone

And I,  
I sleep alone.

## **It Seems to Me**

(Ed 2)

It seems to me he's equal to the gods, the  
man  
who sits within the scope of your sweet voice  
and  
of your laughter which stirs the heart within my  
breast

Seeing you like this,  
even for a second,  
stops my sighs  
within.

Yet my tongue  
freezes  
and  
beneath my skin a fire rages  
and...  
my eyes are empty but  
my ears are full.

A torrent of sweat  
and  
a wild tremor  
overwhelm me  
and,

I've turned the colour of drying grass  
just before death.

## **Mountain wind**

(Ed 42b)

Just as the wind  
in the mountains  
blows the oaks  
assunder, so did  
Eros  
blow my mind.

**To Her Lyre**  
(Ed 80)

Come to me my Lyre,  
Sing loudly  
Divinely!

**On Eros**  
(Ed 40-41B)

a)

Again Eros, the  
sweet and  
bitter God who unfastens the limbs

Again he  
shakes me like a snake,  
omnipotent.

b)

And you, Atthi, you've learnt to  
hate me and ran off  
to Andromeda

## **The Stars around The Moon**

(Ed 3)

And again when  
the moon  
casts her brilliance all over earth  
The stars  
soften the blaze of their  
beauty

**Sweet Apple**  
(B93 &B94)

I

You're  
Just like the sweet apple reddening at the highest  
branch  
and missed by the apple pickers -  
No,  
They did not miss you!  
They just couldn't reach so  
high.

II

And,  
  
You're just like the mountain  
Hyacinth,  
trodden by the shepherds  
next to the purple  
blossoms

**Stesichorus**

(c480bc)

(Ed 15)

**Quinces and chariots**

So they overflowed the king's chariot  
with quinces  
and with leaves of myrtle  
and with garlands of roses  
and with well-wound wreaths of  
violets -

more of them than ever!

## **Timotheus**

(c400bc)

(Ed 12)

## **Ambrosia**

Then, he topped a cup made of  
ivy wood  
with the dark drops of ambrosia  
-froth raising-  
which he then poured into twenty measures of  
Bacchus' Blood.

A brew of tears  
freshly drawn from the eyes of  
Nymphs

(Ed 22)  
**I'm coming!**

I'm coming!  
Why are you shouting at  
me?

(Ed 24)

## **Old Songs**

I won't sing the old songs any more  
because

my new ones are far better.

The new king is

Zeus

and the old one is

Kronos.

His rule is over long ago

and so,

Let me abandon the old

Muse

Leader of men

