CHAPTER I

"The some more vital equation"
Writing the Image between Hellenism and Modernism

> "He pruned my Hermes of the Ways, a rough transcription of a short poem from the Greek Anthology, into vers libre."
>
> (H.D., "Compassionate Friendship," 96)

> "Our uses are our illumination."
>
> (Robert Duncan, *The H.D. Book*, 590)

Imagism, as Pound would eventually conceive it, was an effort "to keep language efficient," a sweep-up operation prescribed to cure English verse from excessive rhetoric, archaism, and emotional slushiness – in short, from what Pound called the "corpse language" of the Victorians and, as he himself would later note, of his own early poems (*LE* 22; *L* 296). At its center was Pound's poetic art of phanopoeia, defined as a "casting of images upon the visual imagination" and characterized by "the greatest drive toward utter precision of the word" (*LE* 25). The image, as Pound understood it, is distinguished both from ornament and symbol since it is "itself the speech" and has "a variable significance" (*GB* 88, 84).

When Pound first explicitly advertised imagism to Harriet Monroe in the fall of 1912, he had not yet developed the theory of the image outlined above.[1] Though it is Pound's Chinese-inspired poems in *Ripostes* (1912) and later in *Lustra* (1916–17) that are generally considered the models for imagism – think of the paradigmatic "In a Station of the Metro" (first published in April 1913) – the original prototype was the Greek epigram. The poems he was sending Monroe in 1912 were, Pound claimed, "*modern* stuff … in the laconic speech of the Imagistes, even if the subject is classic…. Objective – no slither; direct … no metaphors

[1] See Longenbach, *Stone Cottage*, 31–55, and Tiffany, *Radio Corpse*, 37–64, for Pound's other "Theory of the Image." For the definitive history of imagism, see Carr, *Verse Revolutionaries* (esp. part VIII, on the movement's origin), to which I am indebted throughout the chapter.

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that won't permit examination. It's straight talk, straight as the Greek!" (*L* 11). These poems, which arguably prompted the creation of imagism and demonstrated both the "hellenic" and the "modernist" quality that Pound claimed he was looking for, were H.D.'s. – or rather were, precisely, not H.D.'s. "Hermes of the Ways," "Priapus, *Keeper-of-Orchards*" (later titled "Orchard"), and "Epigram (*After the Greek*)," published in *Poetry*'s January 1913 issue in a separate section under the title "Verses, Translations, and Reflections from 'The Anthology'" were all versions of Greek epigrams H.D. had found in J. W. Mackail's 1911 edition of the Greek Anthology.[2] Certainly, then, Pound's much-quoted phrase "straight as the Greek" did not simply suggest a generalized comparison to an abstract Greek model, but also must have referred to the particular texts that H.D.'s poems elaborated.

The tenets of this "new fashion in poetry," first published in *Poetry* in March 1913, are well known: immediacy or concreteness ("direct treatment of the 'thing,' whether subjective or objective"), economy ("to use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation"), and the use of the line, not the stanza, as the unit of composition ("to compose in sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of the metronome") (*LE* 3). Having set up Greek "straight talk" as the template for the first two principles of imagism in his 1912 letter to Monroe – and indeed he largely owes these to Mackail's account of the epigram[3] – Pound locates its third principle not in the strictly structured poems of the Greek Anthology, but in Greek tragic choruses, championing Euripides in particular as a paradigm for free verse, an idea he most likely owed to Richard Aldington (*LE* 93).[4] Though Pound was quick to disavow the link, the ties between imagism and Greek in general and the Greek Anthology in particular were clear to the contemporary reader of the *Egoist*, the little magazine for which Aldington was at the time the subeditor, and to which Pound and H.D. were regular contributors. The correspondence for the issue of June 15, 1914, includes a scathing poem

[2] Riikonen, "Ezra Pound and the Greek Anthology," 181–84, offers an overview of the Anthology's modernist reception. See also Nisbet, *Greek Epigram in Reception*, chs. 5 and 6, on Mackail's edition and its influence.

[3] See Babcock, "H.D., Ezra Pound, and the Greek Anthology," 213–15, and Baumann, "Ezra Pound's Classics Guru." The Greek origin is confirmed by Aldington, "Modern Poetry and the Imagists," 202, who uses a translation from the second-century BCE poet Moschus as an example for the imagist precept to use "as few adjectives as possible."

[4] Carr, *Verse Revolutionaries*, 425. Brown, "Metrical Innovations," 232, seconds Pound: "Euripides seems to be trying for an effect common in modern poetry, a dynamic tension between a line's ideal pattern (scansion) and the natural groupings of syllables and sense."

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by Horace Holley that mocks imagists as mice: "already you have eaten the Greek Anthology / And now your glistening white teeth / Gnaw the fat tomes of Chinese Wisdom."[5]

This chapter examines the conjunction of poetic innovation, translation, and Greek in Pound and H.D.'s early careers. Their close, detailed engagement with Greek lyric, I show, is central to the development of their early poetics and to their evolving understanding of "the image." I focus on the crucial period 1912–16, when their poetic projects converged in the foundation of the imagist movement and almost immediately seemed to diverge when Pound distanced himself publicly and rhetorically from a Greek-based imagism and thus apparently also from his former collaborators H.D. and Aldington. First for Pound and then for H.D. I outline three corresponding stages of engagement: the initial foray into the Greek Anthology in 1912 (Pound's *Ripostes* and H.D.'s three poems submitted to *Poetry*); the renegotiation of their relationship to the Greek tradition as expressed primarily in articles in the *Egoist* between 1914 and 1916 but also, for H.D., in *Sea Garden* (1916); and finally the shift in their poetic and translational practice that followed, as seen in Pound's *Lustra* (1916–17) and in H.D.'s retrospective presentation and theorization of her work as translator and imagist in the novella "Hipparchia" (1926). Comparatively tracing the two poets' movement through the Greek Anthology and through the lyric poetry of Sappho, who serves as a touchstone for both, allows me to highlight the extent to which they respond to each other's work beyond 1912–13 and to show some underlying commonalities in their approach to Greek despite surface disagreements. Both poets are skeptical regarding an absolute value of Greek and attempt to engage with it in a mediated, contextualized way: Pound by crosscutting Greek poems and themes with other literary traditions, H.D. by manipulating them in ways that foreground her intervention and her awareness of hellenist tropes while not departing from a "transcription," as she called it (see epigraph), of the poems themselves. Yet, while H.D. consistently works closely with her Greek originals, taking into account aspects of their language, sound, and structure – her first poems are indeed *translations*, I claim – Pound after a perceived failure to do so in *Ripostes* steps back; his later Greek-themed lyrics treat Greek as an attitude or idea, or as a link in a chain of cultural transmission, rather than as text to be translated. Throughout the chapter I contrast H.D.'s deft, self-assured, and sophisticated handling

[5] "Imagists," 236.

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of Greek materials with Pound's more tentative attempts, which, despite his rhetorical bluster, are often caught between conflicting prevailing positions.

"Caught at the wonder": Pound's Greek between Sound and Image

Pound's own poetic practice accounts for the marked shift in his overt rhetoric around Greek between 1912 and 1914. For whereas in 1912 he was as deeply involved as H.D. in translating from Greek in poems that were published in *Ripostes* that winter, by 1914 – perhaps as a result of H.D.'s success and his own perceived failure in this common pursuit – his interest has shifted to Chinese; though he continues to work with Greek lyric, his approach is more distanced. Throughout this period, and throughout his career, he consistently places Greek poetics in a comparative context, but his decisions change on what is significant to bring across from the Greek texts themselves. While in *Ripostes* he focuses on metrics, sound, and structural detail, in poems written between 1913 and 1916 and published in *Lustra* he renounces engagement with the Greek language, attempting to draw out the poems' or poets' essence, their "image" loosely speaking. He homes in on tone or central emotion, or, in the way pioneered by the poem that would become Canto 1, on the context of Renaissance reception, translating Greek through the medium of Latin. Leaving Mackail behind, Pound's imagism is honed through Fenollosa and loses its relation to Greek; still, it retains and amplifies its connection to translation broadly conceived.

Pound's Ripostes *to Greek Lyric*

"Sometimes I use rules of Spanish, Anglo-Saxon and Greek metric that are not common in the English of Milton's or Miss Austen's day" (*L* 4). So Pound wrote to William Carlos Williams on October 21, 1908, defending in a nineteen-page letter what seemed to his friend – and to many of his early reviewers – as "poetic anarchy" in his writing. In 1910–12 Pound turns away even from what was mistakenly considered the free verse directness of *Personae* and looks backwards more intently, trying to reproduce in English the formal complexities of Provençal troubadours and Guido Cavalcanti. His language becomes less direct, less spoken, and more archaic; while T. E. Hulme and others in his London circle are discussing *vers libre*, Pound's work focuses on two much earlier Romance-language avant-gardes. After the very negative reception of the resulting *Canzoni* (1911),

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he turns to even earlier models to find the clarity he was accused of lacking. He translates the Anglo-Saxon "Seafarer" and explores Greek poetics more seriously, a double gesture that would prove useful again a few years later in the writing of Canto 1. But it is *Ripostes*, published in December 1912, that first bears the fruit of those efforts, though by that point, after the launching of *H.D., Imagiste*, Pound was well on his way towards abandoning them.

Pound's own personal interest in Greek in late 1911 to early 1912 – that is, before seeing H.D.'s first poems from the Anthology – had been less imagistic and more metrical, as the letter to Williams suggests. Perhaps spurred by the 1909 publication of newly discovered manuscripts of Sappho, Pound composes "Apparuit" in 1912 in quantitative sapphic stanzas, and confesses to Dorothy Shakespear that "My one comfort is this sapphic affair" (*L/DS* 63). Showing how central Greek metrics was becoming in his poetic thinking, he adds:

> Surely all systems of metric since have been a vulgarity & a barbarism, and their beautiful results have been due to genius & accident & not to any virtue inherent in the "system." "melos" is compounded out of 3 things, speech music & rhythm … And unless you write in quantity (by intent or accident) those three things mean mess. (*L/DS* 63–64)

Pound's search for such a system in English had already begun with the intricate forms of Cavalcanti and Arnaut Daniel. But as he turns to the basis of the English language in Anglo-Saxon, studying it in the "Seafarer" original and writing a version of it in his translation, he seems to begin to wonder whether there can be such a system discovered *in* the language itself – similar to what he saw as the mostly fixed, rule-bound Greek quantities – rather than imposed on it.[6] Having tried the Romance model and failed, he turns then to the hellenic. It too would "mean mess."

In *Ripostes*, in the midst of poems whose titles are in French and Latin, refer to places in Egypt and America, and feature names of Italian or German artists, we have different modes of engagement with Greek lyric, they too among the plethora of Pound's "ripostes" to a mostly Mediterranean cultural tradition. The collection's third poem, "Apparuit" – its Latin title

[6] In his obsession with finding an appropriate metrical system for English, Pound is a heir to the debates traced by Martin in *The Rise and Fall of Meter*; see, for example, p. 205, and for the link to classics, 43, 105. See Glaser, *Modernism's Metronome*, "Introduction," for an account of modernism's misconceptions about the "metronomic" qualities of meter. For a brief primer on quantity and stress in relation to Pound, see Adams, "Metrical Contract," 57–58; on quantitative meter in English, see Hanson, "Quantitative Meter."

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(quoted from Dante, third Latin title in a row) belying its Greek form – is in quantitative sapphics. "Echoes" consists of two sections, the second one of which comprises translations of two Greek epigrams ("Asclepiades, Julianus Aegypt[i]us," as Pound cryptically notes, not clarifying the relationship). "Δώρια" has a Greek title, jagged lineation, a mostly triple rhythm, and many long vowels. "Pan Is Dead" reads like a light parody of Bion's "Lament for Adonis" (first/second century BCE), a poem much admired by Pound; Pan dies "upon such hollow season" that "there is no summer in the leaves" and therefore the mourning chorus cannot "weave a coronal, / Or gather floral pledges" (*P&T* 243). The sequence concludes with "The Return," whose relation to Greek is more nebulous; yet the poem was declared "an important study in a verse which is really quantitative" by T. S. Eliot (*CP* 1, 636) and proclaimed "translated at sight from an unknown Greek masterpiece" by W. B. Yeats.[7] With the exception of "Pan Is Dead," all of these poems were published in journals between January and June 1912, and thus were presumably written before Pound saw H.D.'s three poems based on the Anthology.

In "Villanelle: A Psychological Hour" Pound constructs a "metaphorical villanelle," as Christine Froula puts it, "in which the obsessive repetitions of the form are abstracted" into a series of "thematic obsession[s]": "I wanted the effect of a recurrence of a theme and meant 'Villanelle' to mean generally the feel of the villanelle form in a modern subject," Pound writes to his father.[8] We can read Pound's treatment of "Greek" in *Ripostes* in just this way. Without conventionally translating a single Greek poem, he nonetheless tries to convey aspects of Greekness in a variety of ways while moving along a roughly historical axis. We have Greece as poetic form/lyric (sapphic stanza in "Apparuit"); Greece as moral attitude/philosophy (Greek Anthology epigrams, one relatively early [third century BCE], one late [sixth century CE]); Greece as symbol or style or term ("Δώρια," intentionally timeless, focused on "eternal moods," heightened by the physical presence of Greek letters); Greece as paganism/religion (concluded by the death of Pan and leaving a scene so dire that he cannot even be remembered in song); and finally Greece as a ghost that nonetheless "return[s]."

At the same time, in almost every case, the "Greek" poem is linked to a different tradition. The Latin title of "Apparuit," as well as the poem itself with its presentation of a luminous, ethereal, ideal lady, quotes, then

[7] Yeats, "Introduction," xxvi. In the "Ripostes" section of the 1926 *Personae* these poems were reordered.

[8] Froula, *Guide*, 61; *L/P* 359.

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echoes Dante's description of Beatrice in *Vita Nova*. Pound points to a continuing tradition of love poetry from Sappho to Dante, with Greek mediated by Latin, where what miraculously appears in English is both the beloved and sapphic meter itself. He then attempts to juxtapose (rather than conjoin) a medieval mystical vision with an ancient pagan form in "Echoes." The poem's first section[9] consists in "Guido Orlando, Singing" a song of praise to the "Lady of Valour," while the combined Greek epigrams in the second section elaborate on a *carpe diem* theme. (That the Italian original of Guido Orlando is addressed to Cavalcanti, in response to *his* somewhat pagan poem, only amplifies the tension.) "Δώρια" contrasts that very Greek-seeming not-Greek word that may suggest a specific ethnic group or dialect or architectural rhythm with the abstract and non-human elements the speaker desires – "the eternal moods / of the bleak wind," "the strong loneliness / of sunless cliffs / And of grey waters" (*P&T* 241). Pound thus marks the dilution of Greek referential specificity into a modern sensibility that could be evoked in shorthand, Victor Plarr's book *In the Dorian Mood* (1896) no doubt in Pound's mind. The particular form of the word in the title, between Δωριεῖς [*Dōrieis*] 'Dorians' and δώρα [*dōra*] 'gifts,' unites the poem's expressed wish or invocation (that something be given) with the thing wished for: Doric clarity, simplicity, austerity.[10] Similarly, "The Return" plays with phrases that read like stock translations for Homeric epithets – "the 'Wing'd-with-Awe'" (complete with quotation marks though it has no other source) and "Gods of the wingèd shoe" – or transliterations of Greek exclamations ("Haie! Haie!"), while "Pan Is Dead" hits a very British note, turning the mourning "maidens" into clamoring Victorian ladies: "That I may not say, Ladies. / Death was ever a churl" (*P&T* 244, 245, 243). Already Pound is attempting to make sense of "Greece" through its previous cultural/literary mediations, as he will more famously do several years later in the first canto.

Yet despite the ambition evident in this rapprochement to Greek, the poetic results are uneven. The most successful and anthologized poems, "Δώρια" and "The Return," are the ones that treat Greek as a particular

[9] In its original publication (*North American Review* 195.674: 75) the first section is subtitled "(*Trecento*) Guido Orlando, Singing," the second "Two Cloaks." One stanza is missing from part I in this first appearance; it was added, as the poem's second stanza, in *Ripostes*, where the reference to "trecento," as well as the "Two Cloaks" title, was removed. In the 1926 *Personae* part I was omitted and part II was published on its own as "The Cloak." Unfortunately Pound's *Collected Early Poems* transposes the last stanza of part I to the end of part II, an error followed in *P&T*.

[10] In this association between the two words, Pound may not have been entirely incorrect; see Hall, *Hellenicity*, 87–89.

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idea, rather than as text. They are also the only ones that begin to move, if not towards spoken English, at least towards avoiding archaisms except as necessary for the poem (as suggested with the "Homeric" phrases above, or with the use of inversion in the same poem, which is essential to its performative rhythm).[11] Though "Apparuit" is a technical feat, its syntax is overly convoluted, and the lines, overloaded with *th-* articles and pronouns to facilitate quantitative scansion, feel stilted:[12]

> Green the ways, the breath of the fields is thine there,
> open lies the land, yet the steely going
> darkly hast thou dared and the dreaded aether
> parted before thee. (*P&T* 232)

What would become one of Pound's rhythmic signatures, the adonic line (the last line of a sapphic stanza, made up of a dactyl followed by a spondee or trochee), is here often rather weak in effect, partly because of its reliance on non-lexical words: "golden about thee," "faded about thee," "dar'dst to assume this" (*P&T* 232). In contrast, "The Return" uses versions of the adonic (usually plus an extra short/unstressed syllable) much more powerfully in its tight, declarative, noun-based lines:

> Gods of the wingèd shoe!
> With them the silver hounds,
> sniffing the trace of air!
> Haie! Haie!
> These were the swift to harry;
> These were the keen-scented;
> These were the souls of blood.
>
> Slow on the leash,
> pallid the leash-men! (*P&T* 245)

Just as the unnamed "they" who "return" are finally recognized and described in the poem, so this ancient way of organizing syllables comes most strongly to the fore here, allowing the quantitative and stress-based scansions to coincide.[13] Similarly, "Δώρια" evokes the wind's breath with its preponderance of long vowels, yet at the same time expertly modulates

[11] See Carne-Ross, "New Metres for Old," 222, 229, 231.

[12] "The," for example, can be relied on as a consistently short syllable, while "thou," "thee," and "thine" are always long. See Adams, "Metrical Contract," 57–60, for a quantitative scansion of "Apparuit" and a nuanced assessment of its success.

[13] For a quantitative scansion of the poem, see Adams, "Absolute Rhythm," 106, who argues that the alignment between the movement of the gods and of the meter is the poem's "*raison d'etre*"; for a metrically performative reading that reaches slightly different conclusions, see Patterson, "Time, Free Verse," 181–84.

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between a rising and a falling stress pattern, thus absorbing archaisms like "In days hereafter" or the final "Remember thee" into its hypnotic rhythm in a way that Pound's actual Greek Anthology translations do not.

The repetition that works so well in "The Return" loses its verve in the first stanza of "Echoes II," the translation of Asclepiades:

> Thou keep'st thy rose-leaf
> Till the rose-time will be over,
> Think'st thou that Death will kiss thee?
> Think'st thou that the Dark House
> Will find thee such a lover
> As I? Will the new roses miss thee? (*P&T* 239)[14]

As in "Apparuit," the repetition of the *th-* words, coupled with that of the overly consonantal "think'st," make the poem into a tongue-twister. Lexically, Pound's main effort here is to avoid the Victorian "maidenhood" (for the Greek *partheniēs*) used by Mackail and Andrew Lang in their translations, choosing to synecdochically replace it with the easily readable image of the rose.[15] But as the image expands into "rose-time" and the further metaphor of the "new roses," Asclepiades' directness is lost except, somewhat, in the tone of voice. Despite the freedom in word choice and image, Pound maintains some structural elements of the Greek poem – evidence that here too he is interested in form. The parallelism between Hades and Acheron, found at the ends of lines 1 and 3, is modernized into "Death" and "Dark House," roughly visually aligned with each other despite their different positions in the line. The return of the "rose" in the final line replicates that of παρθένε [*parthene*] 'virgin' in the last line of the Greek; the effect is nonetheless diluted because of its additional appearance in Pound's second line, where it is presumably standing in for κόρη [*korē*] 'girl.' Metrically, the epigram is in elegiac couplets, each made up of a dactylic hexameter and a dactylic pentameter line. This pattern is echoed by Pound in three ways: first through a more complex duple structure in the *abcdbc* rhyme scheme, which alternates unrhymed lines with spondaic endings with rhymed lines with feminine endings; then through the alternation between the rising rhythm in lines 1 and 2 and the falling one in lines 3 and 4 (imitating the advance and retreat effect of the elegiac couplet), sharpened in the final couplet; where, finally, there is also an

[14] Mackail 9.8/Loeb 5.85. Mackail had singled out the poem in his introduction, quoting the first line (p. 65). H.D. also marked this poem in her copy of Mackail (found in HDP).

[15] The license for the flower imagery may come from another epigram by Julianus Aegyptius (Mackail 11.43) lamenting the death of a very young woman who is referred to as "flower of the Graces."

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unevenness in the number of stresses, with three in line 5, as throughout, versus four in line 6.

Pound avoids the poem's final punch – "O maiden, we shall lie bones and dust" (trans. Mackail) – that also finally unites the speaker and the woman in death. His omission is partly remedied through his ingenious combination of Asclepiades' poem with the two-line Julianus epigram from about eight centuries later (roughly the same amount of time separating Julianus from Guido Orlandi of "Echoes I"), which allows him to turn the whole into a metapoetic statement:

> Prefer my cloak unto the cloak of dust
> 'Neath which the last year lies,
> For thou shouldst more mistrust
> Time than my eyes. (*P&T* 239)[16]

The Julianus epigram gives Pound a concrete image to focus his stanza, so he doesn't have to invent it as he did with Asclepiades in the first stanza: the dust which envelops us in death, and so metaphorically the "cloak of dust." The second cloak – the one offered by the speaker – is absent from Julianus's Greek, and may in fact be traced back to Asclepiades himself. The very second poem in Mackail's Anthology is by him and centers on this precise item of clothing: "but most sweet when one cloak hides two lovers."[17] The switch from the potentially shed and then indifferently generated rose-leaf of the first stanza to the spun robe – that is, from a natural to an artificial image (whose artificiality is emphasized through the very metaphor of the cloak of dust) – enacts the speaker's command that the addressee look away from earthly time and its circularity. The second stanza's tightened meter (clearly iambic, the first line a full pentameter) and rhymes both lend it a surer air and highlight its craftedness qua poetic object. The conclusion on "my eyes" added by Pound to Julianus and the replacement of the invitation to drink (an act) with the lovers' cloak (an object, and one borrowed from another poem no less) complete such a reading.

This self-consciousness has some roots in Julianus; after all, in the untranslated first line of his epigram the speaker refers to his having sung this motto in the past and proposes to continue doing so from beyond the

[16] Poem 12.12 in Mackail, 7.32 in the Loeb. Riikonen, "Ezra Pound and the Greek Anthology," incorrectly lists it as 7.39. *Contra* both Ruthven, *Guide*, and *P&T*, Julianus Aegyptius lived *not* in the fourth century BCE, but in the sixth century CE, as Pound no doubt knew (see Mackail 333) given the neatness in the intervals separating the three poets in "Echoes."

[17] Mackail 1.2, with the Swinburnian/Burnes-Jonesian title "Laus Veneris," trans. on p. 96; 5.169 in Loeb. Again, the poem is also marked in H.D.'s copy of Mackail.

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grave. That is, the promise of a poetic afterlife in the first line somewhat undercuts the *carpe diem* motif of the second ("Drink, before you put on this raiment of dust"), and especially so if Mackail is correct in suggesting that the poem was written for Anacreon, resurrecting the ancient poet's voice almost a millennium later (even if only to re-entomb it).[18] Mackail takes pains to emphasize the significance of Julianus's period: "At the court of Justinian, A.D. 527–565, Greek poetry made its last serious effort."[19] So Pound revives Julianus's Anacreontic message by embedding it into a very English poetic form, one which at the very end turns, through inversion, into a Greek one, the choriambic "Tíme than my éyes." At the same time, the counterforce of the march of time against the poet's efforts is felt most strongly in the very same line; the number of stresses has decreased from five to three to finally two as the poem dies out, while the inversion in the last line coupled with the consonance with "mis*t*rus*t*" turn "Time" into the stanza's most prominent word.

Seen in relation to the first stanza, and to the poem as a whole, or in relation to its Greek prototypes, the second stanza of "Echoes II" emerges as a sophisticated, thoughtful effort. But on its own, it is not particularly groundbreaking poetically. In fact, it represents a retreat – calculated though it may be – from the more experimental, Greek-inflected versification of the first stanza, while even its arresting central image of the "cloak of dust" loses some its impact by being explained in the second line. But what Pound is not able to bring through here, H.D. is. As we have seen, translating from Greek, and specifically from the Anthology, had clearly been in Pound's mind when he sent H.D.'s poems to Harriet Monroe, poems which had emerged from a pursuit very similar to his own. But H.D.'s clarity of purpose and intention and the sharpness of her language may have deterred him, and may explain his relative virulence against "hellenism" only a year later. After reading H.D.'s poems, Pound insists on the indirect, comparative route to Greek, now with a view of ultimately bypassing it altogether.

Beyond Greek: Provence, India, China

In the early imagist years Pound wavers between existing and emerging models of classicism in general and hellenism specifically. Struggling to articulate his own coherent position, he relies on others' assessments, from

[18] *Greek Anthology*, 289, 417.
[19] Ibid., 331.

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Mackail's to T. E. Hulme's to Dora Marsden's or Gilbert Murray's, and trades barbs with Richard Aldington on the pages of the *Egoist*. At the same time, he searches for other linguistic/cultural/literary paradigms that could be used to complement or even supplant the authority and pull of Greek over English letters. Starting in late 1912 and throughout his career, Pound chooses to tackle and implicitly advocate for the use (and usefulness) of Greek through a third language and, in so doing, he reveals the necessity – and fruitfulness – of a mediated relation to Greek. Besides the staged juxtapositions in *Ripostes* and the special case of Latin, in the 1910s Pound cycles through three main comparative paradigms – Provençal, Bengali, and Chinese – the last of which dislodges Greek and allows him to re-found imagism on a non-Greek basis. These larger-scale assessments begin to offer Pound a way to get beyond the detail-oriented, textually comparative poetics of *Ripostes* and towards the more expansive, ideogrammatically arrayed "tale of the tribe."

Even as he borrows Mackail's terms (and H.D.'s Greek-based poems), Pound is quick to disavow the connection of imagism to Greek, writing already in 1912 that Harriet Monroe was wrong in calling the imagists "a group of ardent Hellenists": "Imagism is concerned only with *language* and *presentation*. Hellenism & vers libre have nothing to do with it…. There is Imagism in all the *best* poetry of the past" (*L/ACH* 4). Yet, as his own work in *Ripostes* shows and as the comment about *vers libre* implies – when he himself would essentially make free verse, or at least verse that is not subject to the metronome, one of the three essential principles of imagism a few months later – Pound is in reality quite ambivalent about how exactly to connect the three terms. In an attempt to disentangle them, he pits the more straightforwardly hellenist imagism of Aldington against Hulme's evolving ideas on the usefulness of classicism; in the end, he resists both Aldington's too-easy admiration of classical Greece and Hulme's condemnation of it in favor of an older, archaic "classicism." Lacking, then, a positive model for hellenist work, he turns to other cultures.

Hulme's 1911 lecture on "Romanticism and Classicism" provided many of imagism's structuring oppositions: "slopp[y]," "damp" vs. "dry, hard," "vagueness" vs. "accurate, precise and definite description," etc., with the first term in each pair aligned with romanticism and the second with classicism.[20] However, this terminological distinction between the romantic

[20] These characterizations are found throughout the lecture; see, for example, pp. 66, 68, 61, 69. On Hulme's poetics and his relation to imagism, see Carr, *Verse Revolutionaries*, 141, 159–64; on Pound's indebtedness to Hulme's aesthetics, see also 389–91, and to his antihumanism, 635–39.

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and the classic, as well as the terms in which it defined the ancient world, proved less straightforwardly influential for Pound despite his borrowing of Hulme's vocabulary of hardness and masculinity. Already in 1910, Pound had dismissed the terms "classic" and "romantic" as "snares"; Pope's classicism seems un-Greek, while an excerpt from *Oedipus at Colonus* contains "all the paraphernalia of the 'Romantic' school," an assessment no doubt influenced by Richard Jebb's translation in which he probably read it (*SR* 13). Hulme himself came to reject all art since the Renaissance, including its classical sources. His changed position was part of a general turn against classical and classicizing art. Scholars like James Frazer and Jane Harrison had uncovered through the study of archaic Greek religion and art "a more complex and multifaceted view of the ancient world" and thus begun to "deliberately undermin[e] the ideological, religious, and institutional foundations of classical tradition."[21] Pound would mostly adopt this "primitivist" rhetoric after 1913.

When, then, in early 1914 Aldington took to the pages of the *Egoist* to offer a "'pleading' on behalf of the new unfashionable and unstudied Hellenic ideal of art," Pound responded by echoing both Hulme's condemnation of Greek sculpture for being representational and "humanist" and the critique of Dora Marsden, the feminist editor of the *Egoist*, "Concerning the Beautiful."[22] Six months earlier, in an issue that contained Aldington's Sapphic "To Atthis," H.D.'s "Sitalkas," and William Carlos Williams's Greek-themed "Postlude," Marsden had argued against the permanence of beauty, rhetorically linking beauty to Greek through Keats: "All that which has authoritatively been termed 'beautiful' may fail the purpose as likely as not, Grecian urns and all things beautiful, and Greek."[23] Instead, she claimed, one should define the beautiful not through its essence but through its effect: "in terms only of the thing it does, to wit, restoring coherence, oneness and composure to the soul."[24] Pound takes on exactly this rallying cry in his response to Aldington's espousal of hellenism: "Regarding this pother about the Greeks: Some few of us are at last liberated from the idea that 'THE BEAUTIFUL' is the caressable, the physically attractive."[25] (Of course H.D.'s 1912 poem "Priapus," with its refrain "spare us from loveliness," had preceded both Marsden and Pound

[21] Fiske, *Heretical Hellenism*, 151.
[22] Aldington, "Anti-Hellenism," 35; Pound, "New Sculpture," 67. On these Hellenist debates, see also Collecott, *H.D. and Sapphic Modernism*, ch. 4.
[23] "Concerning the Beautiful," 102.
[24] Ibid., 104.
[25] "The Caressability of the Greeks," 117.

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in its articulation of this critique.) Pound and Aldington each exaggerate their anti- and pro-hellenic stances in order to argue for what amounts to a *different* relation to the past. That is, the "modernist" Pound still compares Henri Gaudier-Brzeska's and Jacob Epstein's sculptures to "the gods of the Epicureans, apart, unconcerned, unrelenting," and calls for artists to turn "to the powers of the air … to the spirits of our ancestors," while the "hellenist" Aldington confesses his admiration for Picasso and more modestly concludes that hellenism could be a possible incitement to production of "a few good works of art" if looked at in the right way.[26] The difference between them is more in tone than in substance.

More revealing is the two writers' informal exchange in the correspondence pages of the *Egoist*. In response to Aldington's sarcastic putdown of his multifarious interests and know-it-all pretensions,[27] Pound frames as an advantage the inclinations his fellow imagist mocks, arguing that the only way to get away from Victorian hellenism is through comparative work that is even broader in scope than his own undertaking in *Ripostes*:

> We have come to recognise that Greek work was not a uniform and unattainable perfection, but that out of a lot of mediocre work; out of a lot of remnants and fragments there remain certain masterpieces to be set apart and compared with other masterpieces from Egypt and from India and from China.[28]

Unlike his friend and ally Gaudier-Brzeska, who disavows any "relation to classic Greek,"[29] Pound instead urges Aldington to begin such critical work: "do some service in defending specific Greek works from the general contempt which is beginning to be hurled upon 'the Greek,' the Greek 'as a whole,' the Paterine sentimentalesque Hellenism."[30] What Pound himself has excluded at this moment from Hulme's and Gaudier's outright rejection of classical Greek culture is tragedy. The genre's redeeming qualities are its intimation of a world outside humanity's mastery ("chaos and death and the inexplicable forces of destiny and nothingness and beyond") and its ritualistic aspect, which makes itself felt despite tragedy's representation of an agonistic relation between individual and objective worlds.[31] This remark follows the by then common view of the Dionysian aspect of tragedy, popularized through the work of Nietzsche, the maligned Pater,

[26] Pound, "Exhibition at the Goupil Gallery," 109; "New Sculpture," 68. Aldington, "Anti-Hellenism," 36.
[27] "The New Art," 97.
[28] "The Caressability of the Greeks," 117.
[29] "Mr Gaudier-Brzeska," 118.
[30] "The Caressability of the Greeks," 117.
[31] Pound, "New Sculpture," 67.

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and Frazer. It even recalls an observation by Gilbert Murray apropos of *The Bacchae*: "There are in the world things not of reason…. 'Things which Are,' things utterly non-human and non-moral, which bring man bliss or tear his life to shreds without a break in their own serenity."[32] Pound's ambivalence about Greek and its usefulness remains evident as he alternately parrots Hulme or Murray, two of the prevailing and to some extent opposing opinions of his time; he is able to articulate his own nascent mode of approach only in response to Aldington's calculated jeering.

For Aldington too is in the end interested in pursuing a comparative approach; he tackles neo-Latin poetry in his 1916 contribution to the Poets' Translation Series even though he had rejected it for its lack of simplicity in his hellenism debate with Pound in 1914.[33] Like Pound in what became Canto 1 (originally composed in late 1915), he wants to transmit a Renaissance emotion of discovery through his translation of pastoral epigrams by Marco Antonio Flaminio: "In reading these poems, you must try to imagine the enthusiasm of that earlier age for Hellenism," an excitement which in Flaminio coexisted with "the stifling folds of academic imitation," but has since been fully muted by academic study.[34] Aldington's recovery of this "side-track which led nowhere" would thus reorient his own contemporaries' response to the classical tradition, steering it away from pedantry and towards "genuine poetry."[35] Like Pound in the first canto but also in his Greek-inspired poems in *Lustra* (see below), Aldington suggests that in order to get rid of philology you have to go through it. But while Aldington ultimately wants to get back through his English, through Latin, to the "more alive, more essential, more human" Greek, Pound ends up seeking and celebrating the opposite movement: "out of Homer."[36]

In a 1913 essay titled "The Tradition," Pound attempts to disentangle his interest in "the sapphic affair" from the general praise (or disdain) of things Greek by specifying the exact contribution of Greek poetics to the English model he was trying to establish. Rather than imagistic "straightness," he now focuses on sound. He advocates for the interrelation between poetry and music that characterized both the Greek and Provençal lyric traditions as a reflection of a kind of universal harmony: "The man who returns to origins does so because he wishes … not pedagogy but harmony, the

[32] *Ancient Greek Literature*, 272. See also Fiske, *Heretical Hellenism*, 174.
[33] "Anti-Hellenism," 35.
[34] "Pastoral Epigrams," 180.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.; Pound, *Cantos* 1/5.

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fitting thing" (*LE* 92). Linking a poetic institution to something like a moral order, Pound, ironically, comes close to Matthew Arnold; like Arnold, what he finds lacking and what "a return to origins" ought to restore is the right measure, something that makes "nature and reason" cohere (92). And yet, unlike for Arnold, for Pound, perhaps on the basis of his own experience, there is no guarantee that one will be able to transpose or reproduce the "fitting thing," especially if it is so tied to the close relation between verse and music. As Pound would later write, "the *melopoeia* can be appreciated by a foreigner with a sensitive ear, even though he be ignorant of the language in which the poem is written"; it is, however, "practically impossible to transfer or translate it from one language to another, save perhaps by divine accident, and for half a line at a time" (*LE* 25). If, then, "the maximum of **melopoeia** is reached in Greek," it would seem that an actual poetic hellenism would be all but impossible (*ABCR* 42).[37] Even right after H.D.'s successful "versions" from the Anthology, Pound bemoans that "most English translations are hopeless," and recommends Mackail's prose (*L* 87). Writing to a young Mary Barnard in December 1933, he reveals how closely interwoven these strands remain in his thinking: "dig in DEEPER in greek, with a bit of Provençal," he advises, and specifically encourages her to "Get a metronome and learn HOW long the different syllables, and groups of them take." He also warns her not to tell others that this is what she is doing lest they smear the "NEXT 'movement.'"[38] Metrical experimentation with Greek is on the one hand implicitly distinguished from imagism (no *vers libre* here), but on the other, clearly aligned with it qua movement pried away from Pound by the "hellenists."

The sense already in the fall of 1912 that Aldington and H.D. were "claiming" Greek away may be what prompted Pound to pursue another comparison, more short-lived than that with Provençal, yet still revealing in terms of Pound's attitude towards Greek. At that time Pound met through Yeats the Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore; in October, Pound reported that they had spent the two previous evenings discussing "prosody" (*L/DS* 162). Pound builds up Tagore's poetry even though he cannot read it and can experience its music only separately from its signifying words. He proclaims Bengali "an ideal language for poets" because "it is

[37] Such emphasis on the "incomparable melody" of Greek was a common nineteenth-century topos (Prins, "Metrical Translation," 236).

[38] Mary Barnard Papers, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library; collection cited as "Beinecke" henceforth. YCAL MSS 524, Box 10.

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fluid, and the order is flexible, and all this makes for precision … since you can have a specific word for everything."[39] He thus finds in Bengali grammar what he would soon discover in the Chinese character and elevate into a principle of poetic construction: the possibility of doing a montage of different parts, be they words, lines, or historical periods, and of thus allowing a composite, but completely new whole to emerge – a whole, moreover, that is not general, abstract, or vague, but precisely and visibly articulated and still more or other than the sum of its parts. (An early attempt at such a thing was of course *Ripostes*' "Echoes.") Yet, as Pound himself notes, Bengali shares the two features that make for its precision – namely, inflection and capacity for word-combination, and, therefore, for neologisms – with Greek.[40] At the same time, like Provençal and Greek lyrics, Tagore's poems "are all songs to sing. The tunes and the words are knit together"; moreover, he adds, "no separate poem or song can seem a scrap or a disconnected performance, but must seem a part of the whole order of song and life."[41] These are not self-contained poems but ones pointing to and including a world and a context outside them. Calling, then, Tagore "our new Greece," Pound goes so far as to claim that "this beginning of our more intimate intercourse with Bengal is the opening of another period" similar to that inaugurated by the turn to Greek in the Renaissance.[42]

Pound both relies on the authority of Greek to justify his interest in Tagore and uses him to undercut that authority. Tagore's "Greece" is new on the one hand because Pound presents it as re-conceptualized through Provence, and on the other because it also represents for him (Pound) a supersession of the Western legacy of Greece, of the dominant kind of hellenism. That is, though Tagore is hellenic in the linguistic and musical form of his poems and recalls Sappho and Theocritus, he is not so in their content, and especially not in what concerns humans' place in the world: "There is in him the stillness of nature…. It is in contrast to the Hellenic representation of man the sport of the gods, and both in the grip of destiny."[43] Pound sees Tagore, this new Greece he is supposed to represent, as refreshment from the tired humanism that the previous Greek

[39] "Rabindranath Tagore," 124.
[40] The facility for forming compounds in Greek is one of the primary "Grecisms" in English poetry (Haynes, *English Literature*, 105–24).
[41] "Rabindranath Tagore," 124. Indeed, Pound begins his essay by likening Tagore to a troubadour and "Bengal" to Provence.
[42] Ibid., 125; "Tagore's Poems," 93.
[43] "Rabindranath Tagore," 126.

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refreshment had brought into being. And yet it is also clear that, through this comparison with the Bengali poet, he is trying to dissociate what he sees as the virtues of Greek as a poetic language from the use to which these have previously been put – or, more accurately, to dissociate Greek poetry, with its particular textual merits and difficulties, from the total cultural representation Greece stood for in the wake of Winckelmann, and so perhaps to claim a different, a more particular Greek legacy for his poetry than the one that the West had claimed.

But Tagore – Pound's first foray eastwards in the hopes of a new Renaissance – is quickly supplanted by Ernest Fenollosa. By mid-1917, this is explicit: "Fenollosa has given us more than Tagore has."[44] What Fenollosa has given Pound, in the case of Chinese especially, is precisely the system that he had been looking for in Greek. Since Fenollosa sees a homology between the structure of the Chinese language and nature – such that Chinese poetry would be by default mimetic or iconic, without even the recourse to the musical required by Tagore's Bengali – he offers Pound a visual, truly "imagiste," model for the "fitting thing." He allows Pound to re-conceptualize the "luminous detail" into the image qua "radiant node or cluster … a VORTEX, from which, and through which, and into which, ideas are constantly rushing" and turn the anti-philological "method of scholarship" adumbrated in 1911's "I Gather the Limbs of Osiris" into a method of poetic writing (*GB* 92).

Indeed, by promising linguistic transparency, an ideal of translatability between world and language, Fenollosan imagism also "solves" the problem of translation. Unlike the ambiguous "as" that characterized for Pound the relationship between H.D.'s poems and their Greek originals in the first articulation of imagism, this later theory of imagism expounded in "Affirmations: As for Imagisme" (1915) and in *Gaudier-Brzeska* (1916) is articulated more clearly as a theory of translation that applies first to the composition of the poem itself, and then also facilitates its "translation proper." Pound lays out two options: The poet either captures the moment "when a thing outward and objective transforms itself, or darts into a thing inward and subjective" or, conversely, the image may be produced when "emotion seizing up some external scene or action carries it intact to the mind; and that vortex purges it of all save the essential or dominant or dramatic qualities, and it emerges like the external original" (*GB* 89; *SP* 375). In the first case, the image-poem is able to record the precise relation

[44] Review of *Certain Noble Plays*, 8.

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between outside and inside, providing a full, complex picture and leaving no remainder. The modified theory of mimesis articulated in the second case offers a necessary supplement, ensuring the "impersonality" of the poem and helping distinguish Pound's previous emphasis on agency and emotion from the mushy subjectivism he was trying to avoid; "faces in the crowd" are a ghostly "apparition" only momentarily before setting into the objective solidity of "petals on a wet, black bough." At the same time, Pound's frequent rhetoric of purging and cleanliness emerges here as a method of radical translation, whereby "the external original" becomes more like itself through the poet's decontamination. When it comes to further transmitting these translational poems by interlingual translation, the prospective translator is in luck. Unlike the "melopoeia" of Greek and Provençal, "phanopoeia" is eminently translatable since it doesn't depend on the arrangement of specific words: "When it is good enough, it is practically impossible for the translator to destroy it" (*LE* 25). Pound's understanding of the new mode of writing poetry therefore becomes an essentially reductive, or reducing one. He mythologizes the birth of the imagist poem as a laborious process of slashing: going against words for the sake of finding the right ones, which themselves would have to disappear or recede as the image, or "the word beyond formulated language," shines through (*GB* 88).[45] But – in what will be one of this book's themes – the excised *logoi* always return, and especially the Greek ones.

Greek, Reduced

Pound's next set of Greek-inspired poems, collected in *Lustra* (1916–17), is markedly different from the experimentation visible in *Ripostes*, and aims at exactly this kind of imagist transparency. Though the same type of Greek ur-texts are used – Sappho and the Greek Anthology – each has been reduced to its presumed essence, "purge[d] … of all save the essential or dominant or dramatic qualities," and there is not the same attempt to approach them in their specific complexities. That is, the textual engagement is intentionally distant, and, at the same time, the historical footing or context of transmission – the set of "relations [which] are more real and more important than the things which they relate"[46] – is more prominent.

[45] For an astute analysis of Pound's poetics of the image in relation to the *mot juste*, see Dowthwaite, *Theories of Language*, 6–14, 73. On Pound's poetic categories and their intimate relation to translation, see Katz, *Labour of Translation*, 74–76.

[46] As Fenollosa writes apropos of the metaphorical nature of the Chinese character; *CWC* 22.

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The poems are brief but mostly narrative, their language is colloquial and direct, eschewing syntactical convolutions, and the tone, with the exception of the two Sappho translations, trenchantly mocking. (And this is very much in contrast to the more melancholic tone and image-based composition of *Lustra*'s Chinese-inspired poems.)

The intentional shift in approach is already suggested by the paired poems "The Faun" and "Tempora" (both published in *Poetry and Drama* in March 1914), playfully aimed at establishing Pound's dominance over the other "hellenists" by dismissing their endeavors. The first is a light reprimand of Aldington (nicknamed the faun) for "sniffing and snoozling about among my flowers" (the Anthology and, presumably, H.D. herself as Pound's former fiancée) ending with a "Δώρια"-like address to the winds Auster and Apeliota (*P&T* 287).[47] The second is a clear mockery of H.D. "Io! Io! Tamuz!," it opens, before translating the "plaintive, querulous crying" of "The Dryad" (H.D.'s nickname) into contemporary English: "Oh, no, she is not crying: 'Tamuz.' / She says, 'May my poems be printed this week?'" (*P&T* 288). In both cases Pound uses Greek references to put himself in a position of power over the others, reminding H.D. especially of her reliance on him for publication. His preference for the satirical, direct epigram is "explained" in the metapoetic "The Three Poets" (first pub. *Poetry*, September 1916):

> Candidia has taken a new lover
> And three poets are gone into mourning.
> The first has written a long elegy to "Chloris,"
> "To Chloris chaste and cold," his "only Chloris."
> The second has written a sonnet
> upon the mutability of woman,
> And the third writes an epigram to Candidia. (*P&T* 295)

This is a rejection both of genre – no classical (or classicizing) elegy akin to the Dryad's faux lament, no medieval or Renaissance sonnet – and of mode of presentation. The poem's subject ought neither to be masked and expressed in clichés nor to be allegorized (as, e.g., by Pound in "The Faun"), but stated plainly, directly – indeed, candidly. The woman's name is doubtlessly not an accidental choice, with its associations with both truth/honesty and brilliance/luminosity, elements so central to Fenollosan imagist aesthetics.

In general, the poems published, and presumably written, earlier – for example, the four-part sequence "Ladies" (*Poetry*, August 1914), "Phyllidula" and "The Patterns" (*Others*, November 1915), and "Epitaph"

[47] Indeed, "The Faun" was written while Pound was in Italy with Aldington and H.D. in spring 1913 (*L/DS* 212–13).

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(*Smart Set*, December 1913) – evoke the Greek Anthology through their brevity, wryness, and misogyny. Though some include Greek names and develop Anthological motifs, they do not cite, directly translate, or adapt particular epigrams.[48] For example, the first "Ladies" poem is titled "Agathas" and speaks of a woman of this name who once spurned many lovers but now "turns to me seeking love, / And her hair is also turning," while "Patterns" compares Erinna who "is a model parent, / Her children have never discovered her adulteries" to Lalage, "also a model parent, / Her offspring are fat and happy" (*P&T* 281, 282). These poems seem to belong to an intermediate stage, on par with Pound's "anti-hellenist" prose pronouncements in the *Egoist*; he is rejecting his earlier, fastidious Greek work but has not yet figured out a new way of approach.

The focus changes in the poems written in 1916 as Pound's interest in the history of textual transmission develops. This work most clearly showcases imagist poetry of the first kind, displaying the full relations between things "subjective" – in this case, texts or emotions appropriated or interpreted at different points in time – and "objective" (particular existing texts). "Homage to Quintus Septimius Florentis Christianus (Ex libris Graeca)," first published in *Poetry* in September 1916, and placed near the end of *Lustra*, three poems before the "Three Cantos of a Poem of Some Length," consists of six short poems. All but the first (by Simonides; Loeb 10.105)[49] and last are identified by their Greek authors: II is by Anyte (Loeb 9.144), III and V by Palladas (Loeb 10.59 and 11.381), IV is titled "Troy" and is by Agath[i]as Scholasticus (Loeb 9.153). Poem VI is titled "Nicarchus upon Phidon his doctor," and is attributed to Callicter in the Loeb (11.118) but not in Pound's source. All poems, as the sequence title suggests, are translated from the Latin of the French scholar Florent Chrétien, whose edition of the Anthology was published in 1608.[50] This suggests another reason for the choice of "Candidia," a Latinate name, in "Three Poets": "straight as the Greek" now means "through Latin," its relation to this first receiving language and sensibility necessarily registered. The Chrétien sequence combines both the technique used in the Divus canto, marking in this case the late Renaissance reception of Greek lyric rather than the early one

[48] One exception may be "Phyllidula" (*P&T* 279). Per Ruthven, *Guide*, 193, the poem's canceled subtitle identifies it as a translation from "Antipater of Cos," who does not exist. Neither Ruthven nor Riikonen, "Ezra Pound and the Greek Anthology," is able to find its source. It may be a combination of two epigrams by Philetas, who is from Cos and who is mentioned in both *Propertius* and by association in *Mauberley* and so definitely known to Pound: Loeb 6.210 and Mackail 12.22.

[49] In the *Poetry* publication, "Incerti Auctoris" follows the Simonides.

[50] See Baumann, "Ezra Pound's Classics Guru," 115–16.

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of epic, and the "Homage" technique to be perfected in *Homage to Sextus Propertius*. It is a rearranged combination of lyrics that reflects on the writing of the past, has a distinctly mordant tone, and includes provocatively playful translations of the kind that would be criticized in *Propertius*. We read, for example, of "barbecues of great oxen," of Troy's "profits" (Pound translating *moenera* rather than *moenia* [τείχεα] 'walls'), and of the "inane expenses of the funeral" (*P&T* 314; for the Latin "lucri funus inane").[51]

Given the selection of these particular poets, it is clear that Pound is once again tracing the history of the Greek lyric tradition, as gathered in the Anthology – the series of "subjective" reworkings that make it up. His overview is almost perfectly balanced temporally: from Simonides (556–467 BCE) – of whom Mackail writes, "Beyond the point to which Simonides brought it the epigram never rose" – to the Christian historian, poet, and anthologist Agathias (532?–580? CE), who was probably the first to have arranged the collection's poems by subject and who is thus responsible for the Anthology's modern-day form.[52] The intermediate stops are Anyte (third century BCE), "the woman Homer" of the second flowering of Greek lyric in the Hellenistic period and an H.D. and Aldington favorite, and the Alexandrian schoolmaster Palladas of the fourth/fifth centuries CE, who is "one of the last of the purely pagan world."[53] Pound goes back in time to end with "Nicarchus," whom Chrétien identifies as an Alexandrian of the first century CE – that is, placing him exactly at the beginning of the modern era. It is as if Pound is seeking a new (old) beginning, restarting not just the modern era by re-accessing Greek through Chrétien's Latin, but also, punningly, the "Christian" era itself.

The main motif in the selection is the inescapability and permanence of death:

I: "Theodorus will be pleased at my death, / And someone else will be pleased at the death of Theodorus"
III: "For after death there comes no other calamity"
IV: "Time's tooth is into the lot, and war's and fate's too"
VI: "I remembered the name of his [= the doctor Phidon's] fever medicine and died" (*P&T* 313–14)

A secondary theme is femininity, tied either to art/religion as in II (at Aphrodite's "place," "the sailors are cheered, and the waves / Keep small

[51] See Ruthven, *Guide*, 82.
[52] Mackail, *Greek Anthology*, 308, 20.
[53] Ibid., 329–30.

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with reverence, beholding her image"), or to death as in V (a woman pleases only when "dead, or asleep"), or to both as in IV: "Whither, O city, are your … gilded shrines / … / And the tall women walking your streets, in gilt clothes/ … / Where is the work of your home-born sculptors?" (*P&T* 313–14). Yet, just as what is left of Troy in IV is "your douth and your story," the Greek tradition, despite all its protestations that death is death, is made to speak clearly and directly from beyond the grave, like Julianus's Anacreon or Phidon's patient – and unlike in "Echoes II," this time in colloquial English (with the pointed and apt exception of "douth" itself, Pound's translation of that antique value of *kleos* 'fame, glory'). Its meters and its very words avoided through Latin, Greece is like Palladas's woman: "dead or asleep, she pleases."

Such a framework allows us to better understand Pound's versions of Sappho in *Lustra*: the four-word "Papyrus" ("Spring … / Too long … / Gongula …"; Pound's ellipses, *P&T* 289), based on Fragment 95, and the slightly longer "Ἰμέρρω,"[54] based on Fragment 96 and originally published as "O Atthis" in *Poetry* in September 1916 together with the "Homage" to Chrétien and the manifesto-like "Three Poets." If the Greek Anthology is distilled into wry pragmatism, Sappho becomes central to what Kenner calls a "poiesis of loss."[55] Certainly Pound had many one-line excerpts or newly discovered fragmentary poems of Sappho to choose from. What he does instead is further reduce poems that are actually much longer. That is, these Sappho poems are an aesthetic gesture: a condensation or purging even of the Greek poet most condensed by historical contingency. Like Pound's Homer in Canto I and like the "Homage," moreover, they are both mediated by a third hand, marking again a context of relations: "Ἰμέρρω" by Aldington, who had first translated Fr. 96 in 1912, and "Papyrus" by the scholar J. M. Edmonds, who longingly created a poem out of sole letters that are no longer read. For "Papyrus" translates the tentatively reconstructed opening of Fr. 95; this reconstruction has by now been rejected, and since it is no longer classed as readable, it is usually not printed, turning Pound's poem into a "translation with no original."[56] Similarly, "Ἰμέρρω" is much indebted to Aldington's "To Atthis" (in whose publication Pound was very involved), following both its readings and its errors.[57]

[54] See Kenner, *Pound Era*, 61n, on the incorrect rough breathing mark.

[55] Ibid., 56.

[56] Borrowing the phrase from Emily Apter, "Translation with No Original." See also Kenner, *Pound Era*, 54–55.

[57] Kenner, *Pound Era*, 55–58. Aldington studied the Greek text closely and must have discussed it with Pound. His notebook includes a transcription in Greek of Sappho 96, with vowel quantities marked for the first half, followed by an Aeolic to Attic Greek glossary, a prose translation, then finally the

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Even though Pound reduces them to a lyric utterance, both Sappho poems are quite substantial and complex in ways that should interest him. But choosing to start Sappho 96 at lines 15–16 – not coincidentally, the point at which the gaps in the parchment begin and Aldington's translation fades into ellipses – he erases Sappho's contestation of epic, as signaled through a Homeric simile in which she memorably calls the *moon* rosy-fingered. Pound would recall Sappho's dialectal βροδοδάκτυλος [*brododaktylos*] specifically – rather than the Homeric version ῥοδοδάκτυλος [*rhododaktylos*] – in the *Pisan Cantos* (80/531), suggesting that he noticed and intentionally ignored it in 1916. He also suppresses Sappho's evocation of the world of the sea and the suggestion of the protagonist's exile – again, motifs that are everywhere in Pound's work, especially at this time. The same could be said about "Papyrus": In Fragment 95, Sappho has a vision of death and the underworld, much like Odysseus in Book 11. Instead Pound cuts off the poem just as it builds up. Though his "Papyrus" grows from one to two to three syllables, its words and stresses increase to two in the middle line only to go back to one in the third; even the sounds of the third line, with the exception of the final *a*, perfectly repeat those of the second. Gongula, and Sappho's "papyrus" (actually parchment) appear only to disappear in these five words, offering a much-reduced version of the six-stanza "Apparuit." For Pound, then, Sappho must be a figure of loss, perhaps of his own loss.[58] After the inimitable Sapphic melopoeia, it seems more convenient to code Sappho as lyric absence – "dead or asleep, she pleases." Indeed, in Pound's "Hellenist Series," published two years later in the *Egoist*, Sappho is sandwiched between three long sections on Homer and two on Aeschylus; the brief installment devoted to her comprises almost entirely unearthed translations of her "Ode to Aphrodite" (Fragment 1) into English (1910) and Spanish (1832), with very little critical prose. The ground of lyric has been ceded, even as the newly developing *Cantos* may be said to operate as a "largely uncaptioned [A]nthology."[59]

H.D.'s Unlovely Greek

H.D. complained in 1949 that she "grew tired of hearing her first poems referred to, as crystalline. Was there no other way of criticizing, of

verse translation he published (RAP 9/6). Years later Aldington sent Sappho 1 in Greek to Pound upon his request, still functioning as his Sappho expert (EPP 1/28; the letter is undated, but is probably from the early 1920s).

[58] I offer a different perspective in "Translating the Greeks," 92–94. Whiteman, "Sappho; or, on Loss," provides an overview of Sappho's English translations focused on this motif. See also Liebregts, "Ezra Pound," 374–75.

[59] Slightly modifying Whittier-Ferguson, *Framing Pieces*, 146.

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assessing them?"[60] In this section I will offer exactly that. Much like Pound, whose detailed engagement with, for instance, Greek metrics in this period is generally recognized, H.D. too works closely with Greek texts, something that Pound himself already downplays in his initial advertisement of her poems to *Poetry*. Looking at her poems as translations, and highlighting her intentional manipulation and alteration of the source texts, I trace the complex relationship H.D. negotiates between Greek and English, and between hellenism and modernism, succeeding in what Pound had failed to do in his own versions of Greek lyric. Rather than being disembodied, timeless, or "crystalline," H.D.'s first imagist poems, I argue, contain specific critical interventions into their Greek originals, articulating already at this early time in a subtle yet potent way H.D.'s "experience of modernity,"[61] which is then developed more fully but again through Greek translation in "Hipparchia," a text I will examine at the end of this section.

While Pound drew out and repeated the didactic core from Mackail's edition of the Greek Anthology, H.D. took a synecdochic route, ignoring Mackail's editorial presence in favor of locating the traces of the Anthology's first compiler: Meleager of Gadara. In an unpublished essay on Meleager written in 1920, H.D. praises the first-century BCE Greco-Syrian writer for being both a fiery lyric poet and the first "editor" of an anthology, his so-called "Garland." H.D. transposes even further back the impulse towards textual preservation that Pound locates in the early Renaissance and celebrates in his first canto, but in so doing she emphasizes the anthologizer-poet's personal and idiosyncratic investment in the texts he selects. H.D. detects Meleager's strategy and conceit in the "Garland" – namely his attempt to gather the best poets known to him and assign to each a flower – already in his own early work, where "poem after poem holds a name of some of [his] friends, a jewel set here, set there."[62] Implying that, through his later re-figuration of this early gesture, Meleager urges us to remember each poet as we would a close friend, H.D. forges a link between the deeply personal and the cultural/historical by means of a formal or structural device. Unlike Pound, who would by that point scorn her "Alexandrine Greek bunk," H.D. claims this Hellenistic anthology as "the beginning," arguing that "Meleager's Garland in no way hints of decadence, of the end of the period of Greek creative impulse, as commentators for so long

[60] "H.D. by Delia Alton," 184.
[61] *Pace* Friedman, *Penelope's Web*, 64, and Gregory, *H.D. and Hellenism*, 3.
[62] "Garland," 3 (HDP 43/1117). In H.D.'s copy of Mackail, Meleager's proem to his "Garland" is the most annotated poem.

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would tell us."[63] Rather than espouse or promote a particular vision of Greece – and a particular attendant hellenism – H.D.'s poems examine in turn the possibility and nature of a relation to Greece. By turning to the time of "Greek" hellenism already in these poems, as she would do more explicitly in her narratives in the twenties, she evokes an expanded Greece that is foreign to itself, influenced as much as it is influential.

At the same time, H.D.'s not "purely Hellenic" poems are not even purely "imagiste."[64] That is, Pound saw in them – in the first letter to Monroe and in the articulation of the imagist precepts a few months later – what he wanted the new poetry to be. But he did not offer a proper account of the poems themselves and mostly elided their status as translations (as has scholarship ever since)[65] – a curious fact given the primacy of translation, including translation from Greek, in his own work already by that time. Though Pound applauds them for their brevity and "straight talk," they are all rather complicated, and unstraightforward elaborations of the original poems. Instead of replicating a putative Greek sparseness, they expand on it – this, the opposite of Pound's evolving poetics of reduction, will be H.D.'s lifelong strategy.

Chattering Greek(s): Hermes, Priapus, Homonoea

H.D. praises Meleager not only as the first anthologist and as a formally ingenious poet but also as the one responsible for a third innovation: the inclusion of women in his anthology and, what is more, the decision to open the Garland's introductory poem with women poets.[66] The first of these is Anyte of Tegea, an Arcadian poet who flourished in the early third century BCE and whom Mackail places at the end of "pure Hellenism."[67] Anyte is precisely the poet that H.D. also begins with in 1912, turning one of her epigrams into "Hermes of the Ways." Pound and Aldington would soon follow her: the former in the second poem of "Homage," as we have seen, the latter by translating Anyte's slim corpus in 1915.

[63] H.D., ibid., p. 8; her privileging of Meleager as not belonging to the "decadence" aligns her not with Mackail but with Symonds, against whom Mackail reacted (Nisbet, *Greek Epigram in Reception*, 246–47). Pound, *L* 157; his judgment may well come from reading between the lines in Mackail (e.g., *Greek Anthology*, 35); see Nisbet, ch. 5.

[64] For Jackson, "Reflections," and Babcock, "H.D., Ezra Pound, and the Greek Anthology," H.D.'s first poems are not "imagist" because they are not concise; see, however, Gregory, *H.D. and Hellenism*, 169, and, for an intermediary position, Laity, *H.D. and the Victorian Fin de Siècle*, 42–51.

[65] Yao, *Translation*, 90–92, also notes this, and nonetheless does not look at H.D.'s originals.

[66] "Garland," 7 (HDP 43/1117).

[67] "Classical Revival," 205.

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H.D. borrows from Anyte's epigram the image of the triple crossroads and of the three landscape elements specified: the orchard, the grey sea-shore, and the fountain of cold water. The closest she comes to a translation of Anyte's poem is in the fourth stanza of her poem's first part, where she gives us all of the elements of the Greek poem with the exception of the fountain:

> I, Hermes, stand here by the windy orchard in the cross-ways nigh the grey sea-shore, giving rest on the way to wearied men; and the fountain wells forth cold stainless water. (Anyte, trans. Mackail)[68]

> Dubious,
> facing three ways,
> welcoming wayfarers,
> he whom the sea-orchard
> shelters from the west,
> from the east
> weathers sea-wind;
> fronts the great dunes. (*CP* 38)

Most of the rest of H.D.'s poem is an exploration of Anyte's first two lines: the image of Hermes in a landscape both pastoral and marine. Though the orchard is not specified as a "sea-orchard," but only as a windy one, H.D. realizes the contrast that is implied in the Greek and merges the two. She does not, however, maintain the title ("The Orchard-Corner") assigned by Mackail to Anyte's poem; instead, she chooses to borrow that of another epigram by an unknown author.[69] In the Greek poem that Mackail has titled "Hermes of the Ways" the landscape is even less specific: a shady juniper tree and a fountain under a rock. What might explain this title switch is that, unlike in Anyte, H.D.'s speaker does not assume the persona of Hermes; instead, in the first section of the poem Hermes is presented in the third person, as he is in the anonymous poem, while in the second section, it is he and not the weary traveler who is addressed. In fact H.D. makes no mention of the traveler to whom Hermes or this landscape might offer respite. Though she writes that Hermes is "welcoming wayfarers," in the next few lines we learn that *he* is sheltered on the west by the sea-orchard. Rather than provide shelter, that is, Hermes himself is hidden and protected by (and from) a landscape that, as we see from what happens to the poem's speaker, is not a place of comfort but of exposure and violence. H.D. thus substitutes for

[68] Mackail 6.14, Loeb 9.314.
[69] Mackail 5.5, Loeb 10.12.

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the discursive appearance of a god his absence – and, if we take this poem as an index for her relationship to Greece, we may say she substitutes for an image of Greece and Greek texts as (to borrow from Aldington's translation) "a stainless spring" that is "a resting-place for weary men," an uncertain foray into shifting ground.[70]

Hermes nonetheless remains the poem's main image, its gathering force, as the poet intuits what the landscape hides:

> But more than the many-foamed ways
> of the sea,
> I know him
> of the triple path-ways,
> Hermes,
> who awaits. (*CP* 37)

Hermes, as the title indicates, is the focal point, yet he *is* not. He is "dubious" – whether in essence or in appearance at that moment remains dubious itself – and scattered ("facing three ways"), known then only in his unknowability. Hermes is not portrayed here in his usual capacity as the Greek messenger god – a persona that might have been fitting for a poetic adaptation of an old epigram. Instead, his divine trait, his transitivity, is embodied in the transitional, ever-changing land- and sea-scape, while Hermes himself is presented as oddly stationary.[71] As the one who waits for and welcomes wayfarers, Hermes' "activity" is a passivity, or at least a receptivity. By emphasizing that he is Hermes "of the triple path-ways," H.D. does not only point to his literal position in the space of her poem, but also recalls the Greek Hermes' double, the Neoplatonic Hermes Trismegistos, aligned with Thoth, the Egyptian god of writing, learning, and wisdom.[72] In the poem's first two publications, H.D. uses the archaic "Awaiteth" instead of "awaits," giving up the near-rhyme with "ways" in order to convey sonically the god's other name and other provenance: Hermes of the "triple path-ways" who "Awaiteth," Thoth. Approaching Greece via a third-century Hellenistic poet, and broaching the other side of Alexandrian Hellenism, namely

[70] *Medallions in Clay*, 16.

[71] As is of course the herm, the boundary marker or signpost, on which a head of Hermes has been carved, and to which the epigram presumably refers. But while the Greek reader (and scholar) pictures the herm through the mention of Hermes, the connection is much less salient for the reader of H.D.'s poem.

[72] "Hermes Trismegistus" opens H.D.'s 1945 poem "Tribute to the Angels," where he is described as "patron of alchemists" whose "province is thought, / inventive, artful and curious" (*Trilogy* 63). On Hermes in Pater and H.D., see Gregory, *H.D. and Hellenism*, 76–84.

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Egypt, H.D. signals already in this, her very first published poem, that her hellenism would eschew the at the time more dominant classical hellenizing trends, for the sake of drawing out the link between Greece and the occult, Greece and ritual.[73] Rejecting a straight line from antiquity to the present, H.D., through her poem of double origins, and her god of double provenance, shows already her interest in anachronism and syncretism.

In creating not a fragmented poem, but a whole out of two fragments sown together, and using one to determine her reading of the other, H.D. reflects or even anticipates Pound's own translation and composition method; it is not surprising that he would have responded well to such a poem. Yet one of the main features of this poem praised for its directness is its consistent resorting to periphrastic constructions, as seen in the first two stanzas:

> The hard sand breaks,
> and the grains of it
> are clear as wine.
>
> Far off over the leagues of it,
> the wind,
> playing on the wide shore,
> piles little ridges,
> and the great waves
> break over it. (*CP* 37)

Phrases like "And the grains of it," "Far off over the leagues of it," "But the shadow of them" would have been more direct and concise had H.D. opted for the possessive adjective. Obviously H.D., like Pound in the final couplet of the other "first" imagist poem, the repudiated "Middle-Aged,"[74] uses this construction for the sake of establishing a kind of rhyme, both acoustic and structural. Unlike in "Middle-Aged," which expounds the in-the-end ambiguous "it" in the poem's first line ("'Tis but a vague, invarious delight"), H.D.'s neutral personal pronoun does have a clear antecedent, "the hard sand." Yet its echoing in prepositional constructions throughout the poem's first stanzas suggests the speaker's inability to define or pin down this element's essence. The repetitions of "of" and "it" thus present us with the fragmentation and incompletion of what we thought had been defined as "hard sand." The poem becomes

[73] She thus echoes Pound's similar interest, though for him the key to exploring this link is initially western (Provence) and later far eastern (Japan), rather than near eastern in source.

[74] *P&T* 609. See Carr, *Verse Revolutionaries*, 485–86, and Tiffany, *Radio Corpse*, 57–58, 119–22.

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increasingly structured around a circular repetition of clauses, indicating an absence of transparency:

> The boughs of the trees
> are twisted
> by many bafflings;
> twisted are
> the small-leafed boughs. (*CP* 38)

Every word needs to be qualified, further broken down, or elucidated – needs to be made more precise. Paradoxically, that is, we find two of the imagist precepts in contradiction: the drive for directness and precision leads precisely to the absence of verbal economy.

Pound's much-praised compound words of Greek and Bengali appear in full force in H.D.'s English, also in the service of precision ("many-foamed ways," "sea-orchard," "sea-wind," "salt-crusted grass," "sea-mist," "sea-grass," "shore-grass"). What they designate is again the imprecise, a landscape which is blurred and in-between and therefore resists description: indeed, "many-foamed." As H.D. circles around, revisits and revises her image – the landscape she imagines, as well as the image that is the Greek epigram(s) – her English poem stutters, since the demand to render each emotion or motion with the right word is haunted by the inability to say anything at all. The second part of the poem offers us two such images of stifled, stunted, or useless growth: the apples "hard, / too small, / too late ripened / by a desperate sun" and the baffled (presumably in the sense of "restrained") boughs. Is the speaker projecting her own sense of untimeliness and confusion onto the earthly landscape? Or is she perhaps uncovering their shared feature? Not only the speaker, but also the sun itself – often associated with Apollo, the god of poetry, in H.D.'s poems – is powerless, "desperate," and "struggles through sea-mist."

At the same time, however, this "excess" or repetition that is both grammatical and semantic is what holds the poem together. H.D.'s prosody is based on the rhythm established by syntactic and phrasal repetition and periphrasis and is supplemented by those devices' sonic counterparts: assonance and alliteration. For example, in the lines "and the great waves / break over it," adjective, noun, and verb all contain the same phoneme, and are also similar structurally, "break" following "great" (b/g+r) and "over," "waves." Moreover, beginning with her third line, H.D. sets up an alliteration of *w*: "wine" becomes "wind," then turns into "ways" and finally "awaits." Anyte's poem also makes use of a similar device, ending on an alliterative note, with three repetitions of χ coupled with ρ in her

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last line (ψυχρὸν ἀχραὲς προχέει [*psychron achraes procheei*]), which echo back to the poem's crucial word ὄρχατον (*orchaton*, orchard) in the first. The tightly knit sonic structuring of H.D.'s poem, in which one word blurs with another, will become a consistent strategy in her writing; here it corresponds sonically to the visual impression of the landscape on the speaker, offered through the numerous compound words. In the two lines quoted above, for instance, H.D. uses four consecutive stressed syllables, all of which demand equal stress precisely because of the pause offered by the line break between "waves" and "breaks." She performs on the level of sound what the poem describes: the inability to discriminate, one monosyllable from another, sea (wave) from land (sand).

The poem is written in the present tense; we follow the speaker as she experiences the space in which she has found herself. By the end of the first section she has entered into a kind of conversation with the landscape:

> Wind rushes
> over the dunes,
> and the coarse, salt-crusted grass
> answers.
>
> Heu,
> it whips round my ankles! (*CP* 38)

As the wind's rushing elicits the grass's "answer," so that "answer" – namely the whipping of the speaker's ankles – in turn provokes another one, the exclamation "Heu." The second section, still in the present tense, is nonetheless riddled with past participles ("shaded," "ripened," "twisted" twice, "leafed," "torn," even "desperate" [etymologically]), most of which, moreover, semantically record the irreversible passage of time. When we reach the final stanza, which, like the last stanza of the first section, begins with an exclamation, the speaker herself has experienced such a temporal transition, as though she has been exiled from this world:

> Hermes, Hermes,
> the great sea foamed,
> gnashed its teeth about me:
> but you have waited,
> where sea-grass tangles with
> shore-grass. (*CP* 39)

The poem's final action is narrated in the past tense, used for the first time, as we are transported to a new present of utterance. The cry for Hermes

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is a response to the sea's speech, to its threat to swallow the speaker. This distance, temporal and perhaps spatial, is what allows the speaker to speak to Hermes for the first time and to locate him in time and in relation to her speaking present. He is no longer "Hermes, / who awaits" in the eternal present, but is addressed as *you* and thus constituted through this dialogue; the present perfect, also employed here for the first time, forges the relationship between past and present.[75] The poem thus dramatizes in a sense the birth of the modern(ist) poet, whipped by the Greek landscape into a sense of her own time (evidenced in the second part of the poem) and almost consumed by it before finding her own voice and her own mode of relating to it – which is Hermes, this personal Hermes of the ways, this poem. Hermes of the triple path-ways, holding himself still between the gnashing sea and whipping grass (the "but" that introduces the last clause clearly signals that his standing is in opposition or resistance to the violence that has just been described), tangled between Greek and English – as though the poem, the speech can only emerge from such a tangling.

In "Hermes of the Ways" H.D. uses Hermes to suggest that the origin of poetic speech might lie not in transit or action but in the "passivity" of waiting between extremes, and between times, while listening to the "speech" of both. The following poem in the series is another address to a god – "Priapus, *Keeper-of-Orchards*" – and also hides a surprising twist. It is easy to see why the Greek poem by Zonas, with its imagistic detail and precise syntactic articulation, might have appealed to both H.D. and Pound; it even appears transcribed in Greek in Aldington's 1911–13 notebook.[76] In Mackail's translation it reads:

> This fresh-cloven pomegranate and fresh-downed quince, and the wrinkled navel-fig, and the purple grape-bunch spurting wine, thick-clustered, and the nut fresh-stripped of its green husk, to this rustic staked Priapus the keeper of the fruit dedicates, an offering from his orchard trees.[77]

The first four of the epigram's six lines comprise a series of adjectives and nouns, listing the various fruits being offered – that is, the direct object. The fifth is dedicated to the fruit's equally adjective-laden recipient

[75] I rely on Benveniste, *Problèmes*, 260, who argues that the first- and second-person pronouns are fundamentally different from the third because they only have value in the unique instance of discourse in which they are produced; this dialogue, moreover, is what constitutes *I* and *you* as persons. On the present perfect, see ibid., 244.

[76] RAP 9/3.

[77] Mackail 2.31, Loeb 6.22.

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Priapus, the god of fertility and protector of orchards, while in the sixth we finally get the subject and verb, plus an object complement. The first four lines, moreover, are internally structured by parallelism. The first line is split between two fruits that are ἀρτι- (*arti-* 'fresh-') – even the second constituents of these compound adjectives differ only in their vowels (*artichanē* and *artichnoun*) – while each of the following three lines is devoted to a different fruit: Those in lines 2 and 4 are qualified by two adjectives, the one in 3 (grape, perhaps significantly) by three. In the poem's mere six lines Zonas manages to use nine compound words, many of them *hapax legomena*. Upon seeing this Greek poem, we might conclude that H.D. looks for epigrams that lend themselves to "translation" or reworking into the kind of poetry she wants to write: epigrams, for example, whose formal structuring is not solely dependent on their meter. Yet the poem she produces on the basis of Zonas is much more complex.

The Greek epigram's key word is the thrice-repeated *arti-*. It is key because it determines the poet's conception of time. *Arti* is an adverb that can be used with present, past, and future tenses to indicate something that has just now happened, is about to happen, or is happening. In the poem it forms the first component of three compound words, *artichanē*, *artichnoun*, and *artidoron*, to suggest just-completed natural processes. Mackail translates *arti* with "fresh" – "fresh-cloven," "fresh-downed," and "fresh-stripped" – to emphasize precisely the crispness, the high quality of the offered fruit. H.D. in contrast translates the word as "late" and "already." Rather than highlight the just-nowness, she highlights the pastness, creating the impression of fruit that is past its time, and its prime, an impression reinforced by her other lexical choices such as "fallen," "stripped," "broken," and "shrunken." This sense of lateness or delay is mirrored in the way that H.D. handles her Greek original: She does not even get to the "proper" translation of Zonas's epigram until her last stanza. All of the words cited above appear in that stanza; nevertheless, her decision on the meaning of *arti* silently guides the entire poem. Already in the very second line a pear "fell."

But why this shift, semantic and performative, of the poem's emphasis? Why have a three-stanza long introduction to the Greek epigram? First, it is worth noting that in "Priapus" H.D. inserts a first-person speaker rather than take it out as she does in "Hermes"; in Greek, the speaker refers to himself in the third person, as *karpophylax* (keeper of the fruit). It is this distraught first-person speaker's reception of the falling pear that concludes with Zonas's poem:

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I saw the first pear
as it fell –
the honey-seeking, golden-banded,
the yellow swarm
was not more fleet than I,
(spare us from loveliness)
and I fell prostrate
crying:
you have flayed us
with your blossoms,
spare us the beauty
of fruit-trees. (*CP* 28)

Contrasting herself with the "honey-seeking, golden-banded … yellow swarm" of bees who "paused not" and seem to respond instinctively to the just-fallen fruit, "The air thunder[ing] their song," the speaker seems unable to appreciate or use this gift: "I alone fell prostrate," she repeats.[78] H.D.'s "I" does not try to propitiate the orchard god through a sacrificial offering of fruit in order to ensure, as presumably is the case in the Greek poem, that the orchard will produce more fruit in the future. On the contrary, she appeals to the god as "rough-hewn" and "unbeautiful," and offering him the overripe, unbeautiful fruit – the "fallen hazel-nuts," the "pomegranates already broken," the "shrunken figs" – begs him to "spare us the beauty / Of fruit-trees!" and thus, again and now more confidently dropping the parentheses, to "spare us from loveliness" (*CP* 27).

The fact that in the poem the "fruit" that falls and is "used" too late is, performatively, the actual translation of the Greek epigram coming at the very end, suggests that the entire poem may be a meditation on the poet's relation to antiquity. "Loveliness" itself has particular resonances in Romantic hellenism. Keats's "Dedication" to Leigh Hunt opens with the statement that "Glory and loveliness have passed away" and proceeds to elaborate on that passing as precisely the absence of mythology/Greece.[79] *Endymion* famously opens on that loveliness, which is, moreover, ever-growing: "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever: / Its loveliness increases" (lines 1–2). The poem then continues aligning the poet's song with natural processes that are, as presumably in the original Zonas epigram, "just" completed and thus fresh, and new. Keats speaks of "each pleasant scene" as "*growing fresh* before me," so that "I will begin / … / Now while the

[78] On the bee qua poet see, for example, Mackail 4.6, 4.7, and p. 344.
[79] *Poetry and Prose*, 20. Further references are to this edition.

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early budders are *just new*," while "as the year / *Grows lush* in juicy stalks, I'll smoothly steer / … / With streams that *deepen freshly* into bowers" (quoting from lines 37–48, my emphasis throughout). Bees also make an appearance. Unlike in H.D., they are in league with the poet, serving as his timekeeper: "ere the bees / Hum about globes of clover and sweet peas, / I must be near the middle of my story" (lines 51–53). In rewriting Zonas, then, H.D. is also rewriting Keats, and the particular relationship to Greek antiquity imagined by Romantic hellenism.[80] Unlike Keats's, H.D.'s Greece isn't a permanent, or at least infinitely renewable resource, an origin always accessible just by virtue of "The very music of the name" going into one's "being" ("Endymion," lines 36–37), but a potentially harmful, rotten, already used-up fruit.

H.D. presents the Greek, her source and inspiration, only after a narrative context has been created for it, only after another, separate voice, a new "I" has been produced. She then introduces the epigram at the end, having first twisted it out of its presumably intended meaning; she even reverses the order of the offered fruits in her translation stanza, from pomegranate–quince–fig–grape–nut in Greek to hazelnuts–grapes–pomegranates–figs–quinces. Significantly, the context in which she places the poem reflects, in this case, the violence inflicted by this excess of beauty ("you have flayed us / with your blossoms"), the threat it poses to one's ability to sing (hence the contrast with the bees), or do anything other than "f[a]ll prostrate." As in her poem the speaker finally decides to use the fallen fruit as a sacrificial offering to stop its future production, so H.D. uses Zonas – but an interpreted, reversed, altered Zonas – to indicate to us what an alternative hellenism might be: a hellenism that would turn away from the perceived Greek loveliness as the poet herself distorts or exceeds the imagistic loveliness of this very source poem in order to give herself a voice.

The place of "Hermes," or of the orchard devoid of loveliness, is thus one from which ὍΟμόνοια (Homonoia, Homonoea) 'order, unity, samemindedness' is lacking.[81] In the third poem of the series, the one that is more conventionally a translation and for this reason marked "(*After the*

[80] Recall too Shelley's "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," with its address to an all-powerful loveliness: "O awful LOVELINESS, / Wouldst give whate'er these words cannot express" (lines 69–72). In Yeats' "He Remembers Forgotten Beauty," the clearly philhellenic context is absent, but the motif of haunting past loveliness remains. Both this poem and "Endymion" were included in Pound's late anthology *Confucius to Cummings*, which may strike us as less surprising if we consider that "loveliness" is a common motif in Pound's own early poems; see, for example, *P&T* 113, 114.

[81] On the concept of *homonoia* in the fourth century BCE, as used by Alexander the Great to foster the unity of peoples and "harmonize mankind," see Mauriac, "Politics of 'Homonoia,'" 107.

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Greek)," H.D.'s speaker's wish in "Priapus" seems to have been granted. It is perhaps no accident that it laments the death of a woman by that name.

> Epigram
> (*After the Greek*)
> The golden one is gone from the banquets;
> She, beloved of Atimetus,
> The swallow, the bright Homonoea:
> Gone the dear chatterer;
> Death succeeds Atimetus.[82]

Unlike "Hermes of the Ways," and "Priapus," this poem – the only one not to have been included in *Sea Garden* – is both more bare than the original Greek, and more repetitive.[83] H.D.'s translation places less emphasis on Homonoea's different attributes, focusing instead, through the proper-name word-rhyme, on the loss of the one presumably commissioning this epitaph the fittingly named Atimetus (one without *timē* 'honor'). She thus undoes the convention of the funerary inscription by again manipulating the speaker. Unlike in the Greek, here Homonoea does not speak from the dead on her (fictional) tombstone; there is no I. Rather, H.D. reveals what such epitaphs hide and try to restitute, namely the feeling of loss experienced by the person commissioning the inscription.

In contrast to the richness of description in the Greek, H.D.'s Homonoea seems, perhaps appropriately, absent from the poem. She is identified metaphorically (golden, swallow) and referred to Atimetus (and death) in the second and fifth lines, while her only actual quality to be remembered comes in the fourth line: her chattering (though here again she is "dear," implying a relationship to the speaker or writer of the poem). At the same time, her name's prominent vowel, the *o*, echoes throughout H.D.'s elliptical description ("golden," "beloved," "swallow"), as does its central sound *on*: We find it, with slight variation, three times in the first line ("gold*en one*," "g*one*"), then in the name itself at the end of the third line, right in the middle of the poem, and again in "gone" in the fourth line. To the extent that we hear Homonoea, then, we hear her as "gone." This stands in direct contrast with the attribute H.D. chooses to focus on, which makes her absence more poignant. Homonoea alive is not an image of beauty, compared to and found more

[82] Quoting from the original publication in *Poetry* ("Verses," 122).

[83] And, per Babcock, "H.D., Ezra Pound, and the Greek Anthology," 210, the most conventionally imagist. It is based on Mackail 3.46, an anonymous epitaph for Claudia Homonoea, not included in the Loeb.

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beautiful than Aphrodite (as in Greek), which can be remembered after death, but is turned into a chattering bird; her essence thus seems to be precisely the fleetingness of her speech and presence.

In the same way that we have an echo of Homonoea, but no assertion of presence (as we do in Greek with *keimai* 'I lie'), so in her "chattering" we have an echo of her language, and of H.D.'s original. H.D. takes out the comparisons the Greek makes between Homonoea, the Sirens, and Aphrodite (*ligyrōterē* 'clearer-voiced,' *chrysoterē* 'more golden'), but she maintains their grammatical sound since the comparative suffix *-terē* survives in the "-terer" of "chatterer." "Beloved" in turn echoes the phonemes of two Greek words, one which it translates in meaning (φιλίην [*philiēn*]) and one in whose position in the poem it stands (λειπομένη [*leipomenē*] – Homonoea is said to *leave* tears to Atimetus); the *l* is shared by all three words, while the *v* and *b* are in place of φ and π (the voiced in place of the voiceless fricative and plosive consonants respectively). "Succeeds," absent semantically from the Greek original, is clearly intended as a sound repetition of the equally central verb in the epitaph's last line, *eskedasen* 'scatter, disperse.' H.D.'s poem, moreover, maintains the dyadic structure of the Greek epigram in the sense that it alternates – instead of a hexameter line with a pentameter – iambic with trochaic openings if not lines (1 and 3 are iambic almost fully, while 2, 4, and 5 are trochaic). H.D., then, seems to be placing the Greek language itself in Homonoea's place: echoing, but no longer chattering.

When H.D. republished this poem in the anthology *Des Imagistes* in 1914, she cut the last line, perhaps for the sake of concision. In so doing, she eliminated the word-rhyme and, more crucially, she released Homonoea, who no longer appears circumscribed by death and Atimetus. The girl is still gone, only echoing; but that echoing, absent the statement of her death, does not make her departure seem irrevocable. It is such an echoing of Greek and Greece that H.D. will explore in almost all of her texts, an echoing of the loss of *homonoea* or loveliness – a loss of order, a loss of cohesion, a loss of uniformity, of common mind or culture, that may not be as grave or as lamentable as Aldington, Eliot, and sometimes Pound would seem to believe. And she does so by identifying, like Pound and Aldington, this *homonoea* with the Winckelmannian understanding of the classical period, and exploring its breakdown already in Euripides, as well as its immediate and distant afterlives in the Alexandrian world and in her own time. Rather than reject or idealize a version of Greek *homonoea*, either in the form of Western rationalism or of Pound's calm, ordered, and unified relationship of man to nature discovered in the poetry of Tagore at

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about the same time, she traces in very nuanced ways that complicated relationship between *homonoea* and the various, more or less, *atimetoi* who remember it.

From Wind to Wine: H.D.'s Evolving View of the Greek Tradition

Though we cannot be sure exactly when H.D. wrote many of the poems in her first collection *Sea Garden*, their mostly shared landscape (physical and tropological) is heavily indebted to these inaugural Greek Anthology poems. In some ways, the Anthology poems "explain" the rest, and perhaps for that reason are placed late in the volume.[84] For example, H.D.'s greater programmatic campaign against "loveliness" in *Sea Garden* may well have begun with the transfiguration of "Priapus." We have the imagery of overripe fruit in "The Gift," "Sheltered Garden," and "Mid-day," while the tension between loveliness ("scented pinks," "beauty without strength") and the "new beauty" of a "sharp swish of a branch" dominates the volume's sea-flower and garden poems (*CP* 19–20). The lost lover/companion poems, such as "Acon" or "Loss," could well be seen as emerging from "Epigram."

But it is "Hermes of the Ways," the poem in which the speaker is whipped to speech by Greek wind and by the landscape, that is most productively echoed and developed in the many wind poems in the volume; "Pursuit" also shares its specific landscape. In "The Helmsman" the speaker ambivalently regrets the choice to go "inland" and be "cut off from the wind / and the salt track of the marsh" after having temporarily forgotten the appeal of the latter because "tree-resin, tree-bark, / sweat of a torn branch / were sweet to the taste," just like the "sweet" water below the ground in the second section of "Hermes" (*CP* 5, 6, 38). In "The Shrine," "honey is not more sweet / than the salt stretch of your [= the shrine's] beach" (8). The sea-shore is now "not forgot," and as the shrine is "cut with the weight of wind" and responds to it, it comes alive, urged by the wind to participate in nature: "you shudder when it strikes, / then lift, swelled with the blast" (8). By the end, the shrine becomes fully divine: "your eyes have pardoned our faults, / your hands have touched us," as if Hermes has materialized at last (10). Similarly, in the "Wind Sleepers," the

[84] See Gregory, "Rose Cut in Rock," for an astute analysis of the arrangement of *Sea Garden*. H.D.'s care for the sequencing of her poems extended to the imagist anthologies, as is evident from her letters to Amy Lowell; see, for example, her letters in November 1915 and on February 22, 1916 (MS Lowell 19 (8), Houghton Library, Harvard University).

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speakers "no longer sleep / in the wind"; they awake to become not just speaking subjects, but gods instructing their addressees to "Tear – / tear us an altar / … / propitiate us" through song and dance (15). They are stirred to speech, and further transmit that impulse. In "Sea Gods," the heralded gods return as the sea itself, which suggests that finding the gods is only a matter of looking. This prepares the ground for "Hermes of the Ways," where Hermes, to the extent that he materializes and "shelter[s] us," does so as the sea whipping around the ankles. And, as "Sea Gods" insists, the gods are not "cut, torn, mangled, / torn by the stress and beat" – that is, they still return, *pace* Pound's own efforts in *Ripostes*, even in this stress/beat-based prosody (30).

H.D. thus succeeds in writing a set of modern poems that both transcribe or translate Greek (some more than others) and meditate performatively on the process of translation and on the poet's own temporal position vis-à-vis her originals, and in meaningfully using them for her "original" compositions. As we have seen, Pound similarly seeks a mediated or contextualized way through which to approach Greek lyric but can only produce satisfactory poems when Greek is an idea rather than a text, as in the case of "The Return" or "Δώρια" or of the poems in *Lustra*. It would seem, then, that with Pound's *Lustra* poems and H.D.'s successful transposition of her Anthology translations into *Sea Garden*, the two poets are set on different Greek trajectories in 1916. Yet despite the disagreements over imagism and the presumed cooling of personal relations between Pound and H.D., their work is still literally on the same page of the *Egoist*. Unlike the personal invective in the somewhat facetious hellenism debate between Pound and Aldington in 1914, this juxtaposition between Pound and H.D.'s work shows them attacking the same questions in ultimately complementary ways, even if they are sometimes pulling on different threads. Moreover, in her slightly later work with Greek lyric – her versions of Sappho and her oblique self-presentation as translator in the novella "Hipparchia" – H.D. responds to Pound's turn in *Lustra*, as well as to his eventual criticism of her work. H.D. shows Pound that ironic distance or reduction isn't the only way to approach Greek; rather, a complex and historically contextualized relation is possible at the same time as close textual engagement.

Much like the "Homage" to Chrétien in *Lustra*, Pound's prose work in 1916 also revisits earlier appropriations of antiquity, focusing on the eighteenth-century version of the quarrel between ancients and moderns: His translation of Fontenelle's "Dialogues des morts" started serial publication in the *Egoist* in May 1916. So, for example, in June 1916,

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H.D.'s Odyssean "Sea Gods" who "haunt men in ships" (*CP* 29) is followed by Pound's version of the dialogue between Dido and Stratonice, which offers a pragmatic, skeptical take on the truth and use value of epic. Though the mood of the two texts could not be more distinct, Fontenelle's/Pound's perspective is nonetheless consonant with H.D.'s own skepticism regarding the work the poets do and the truth (or falsity) of poetry in, for instance, the *Iphigeneia* Choruses published in late 1915 (see Chapter 3 below) or on the value of Greek "loveliness."[85]

In September 1916, Pound's Fontenelle dialogue between Socrates and Montaigne and H.D.'s review of poems by Charlotte Mew similarly seem to be cut from the same cloth.[86] Montaigne's damning statement about human progress – that "There is no one who does not enter life wholly new, the stupidities of the fathers are not the least use to their children" – is superseded by Socrates' leveling of the playing field:

> We are predisposed to antiquity because we dislike our own age, thus antiquity profits. Man elevated the men of old time to abase his contemporaries. When we lived we overestimated our forbears, and now our posterity esteems us more than our due. (133)

Before discussing Mew's work, H.D. seems to offer a development of the Fontenellian ideas translated by Pound:

> Originality is now rare, if not extinct. That is why we overestimate it. But in this, our present-day literary Alexandria, even the most 'original' among us may take a sort of perverse delight in finding a new writer daring to discard his personality to follow, remotely or unconsciously perhaps, the tradition of an earlier generation. (135)

Obviously H.D. is using this and subsequent reviews to develop her own poetics. But at the same time, it is as if she is updating Socrates' argument in Fontenelle: After all, he too begins in apparent eagerness to hear of progress – that is, a kind of originality – before conceding (as H.D. does here through her tone) that there may not be such a thing but that there may nonetheless be value in the right, or rightly viewed, use of one's literary ancestors. (We have in H.D.'s statement a version – down to the

[85] Similarly, in July 1916 (issue 3.7), H.D.'s "Cities" is followed by the dialogue between Anacreon and Aristotle, and in August 1916 (3.8), H.D.'s review of Marianne Moore is followed by the dialogue between Aesop and Homer. The pattern is broken in the September 1916 issue, where H.D.'s "Contest" and her review of Charlotte Mew appear separately from Pound's dialogue (on the page before and the page after, respectively), but resumes in December 1916 (issue 3.12).

[86] "Dialogues of Fontenelle V"; "The Farmer's Bride." Subsequent references in-text for both Pound and H.D.'s articles.

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emphasis on "personality" – of the later and much more famous Eliotic argument in "Tradition and the Individual Talent.") There is also a confluence in the two writers' imagery. Pound's/Fontenelle's Socrates claims that the changes adduced by Montaigne to show him the difference between ancients and moderns are superficial: "Clothes change, but that does not mean a change in the shape of the body" (133). So, H.D. claims,

> For *the body is more than raiment*, and the verse is more than its iambs, and the artist, if he be artistically mature, can follow a tradition – as Scopas, Polycritus, as Giotto, Masaccio – and remain as much Scopas, as much Giotto, as if he twisted his athlete into a gargoyle or reduced his angel into its original elements of an aureole and superimposed triangles. (135, my emphasis)

Perhaps tellingly, the details and chronology in H.D.'s examples are incorrect: It is Masaccio who follows Giotto, while Scopas follows not Polycritus but Poly*kleitus*. Still, the gist of her argument is that going "back" to "tradition" is no different than going "forward" to vorticist "superimposed triangles," which, she suggests, though seeming new are already a way of going back ("into its original elements"). This is, essentially, the conclusion of Pound's dialogue: "The general order of nature would seem to be rather constant," there being "at most an imperceptible inequality" in the distribution of virtues and vices in each age (134). Moreover, as Eliot would later suggest, the extinction of one's personality when submitting to tradition isn't complete: You must have one first (and therefore remain Giotto [Masaccio], Scopas, etc.) before you try to escape from it.

Yet while Pound is content with tracing the history of classical reception, having to some extent taken himself out of it at least as far as lyric is concerned, H.D. remains fiercely personally engaged. She uses another 1916 review – this one of fellow imagist John Gould Fletcher's *Goblins and Pagodas* – in order to make the case for why this must be so, and it is in this light that we should see her own engagement with Sappho in the following years. Defending his poetry against vorticism perhaps, Fletcher had argued for the superiority of figurative over abstract art through the metaphor of a Greek vase: "'the key-pattern on a Greek vase may be beautiful, but it is less beautiful … than the composition of satyrs and maenads struggling about the center.'"[87] H.D. pretends to "continue his apt metaphor" but in fact refutes it:

> the images so wrought upon the body of the vase – the maenad, poised for ever, quietly for all the swirl of draperies and of loosened head-band, or the satyr for ever lifting his vine-wreathed cup – are satisfying and indeed

[87] Fletcher quoted by H.D., "Goblins and Pagodas," 183; subsequent references in-text.

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> perfect. But how much more for the lover of beauty is the wine within the great jar beautiful – how much more than the direct image to him are the images suggested by shadow and light, the flicker of the purple wine, the glint across the yellow, the depth of the crimson and red? Who would stand gazing at a satyr and a maenad, however adroit the composition of fluttering garment and poised wine-cup when the wine itself within the great jar stands waiting for him? (183)

H.D. rejects Fletcher's distinction between human and abstract altogether, substituting for it one between surface and content/essence, raiment and body, we might say. What interests H.D., though, is not the latter over the former, but the interplay between the two: "the images suggested by shadow and light, the flicker of the purple wine" as reflected within the walls of the jar, and as the jar is moved, taken to a different place or to a different time. Critical of the static image, even if it is an image of motion – much as Pound might be – H.D. uses "perfection" literally: The images of the maenad and satyr are done, finished, caught still in that pose "for ever," and so eminently readable, obvious. She suggests that human figures and geometric patterns are equally decorative and beside the point, only an add-on to the vase's real function and use (here echoing Marsden's emphasis on beauty as dependent on use): to hold or frame a variable and always different-looking liquid that is meant to be consumed rather than looked at, and to intoxicate rather than be solely admired.[88] If the jar is a Keatsian urn, intended as a representation of antiquity *tout court*, H.D. is making here an early version of her argument about Euripidean tragedy and its words as portals – that is, antiquity is not to be gazed at and studied, but used, experienced (like the wind of "Hermes"), entered into.

It is in this way that H.D.'s speakers and protagonists enter Sappho's textual frames in the series of poems titled "Fragment [no.]" included in her poetry collections of the 1920s. H.D.'s Sapphic ur-texts are not avant-garde; unlike Pound, who, four years after Aldington first got to them, discovers for himself the aesthetic appeal of newly uncovered Sappho fragments, H.D. gravitates towards the single lines cited by other ancient authors. Extending them into hypnotic narratives spanning multiple pages isn't just what they allow, given their bareness, but what they demand. The form in which they have been handed down is not due to the accidental ravages of time and climate, but to a personal choice once made by another writer to both preserve, use, and build on (this line as an example of word

[88] Sullivan's account of Pound's attitude to the classics corresponds to H.D.'s idea almost exactly: "Pound would substitute for the bland spectator's indifferentism of the academic world a criterion of *experience*" ("Ezra Pound and the Classics," 216).

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usage or melodiousness, that one as support for an argument, etc.), and to discard. H.D. plucks her Sappho from a context of use and intentional, personal memorialization, where Sappho was more, or less, than "lyric poet," "lesbian," "woman," "lover," and where not she as an imagined person, but her words were an exemplum for something else – thus now they can become a new exemplum for H.D.[89] Choosing *these* fragments is part of H.D.'s constructed garland, in which she self-consciously places herself (much as Pound does in his "Homage") in the line of Sappho's "receivers." But unlike Pound, who, by 1916, performs a distant Greek reading, H.D. fully inhabits the textual, formal body of Sappho's poems even as she seems to depart from them.[90] It is "Hipparchia" that reveals most clearly the nuanced complexity of H.D.'s self-perception as a translator of Greek lyric, and specifically of Sappho, by dramatizing her practice.

Of Grapes and Hyacinths: Embodying Translation

In the 1920s critics and many of her contemporaries, including Pound, dismissed H.D. as a "hellenist" in both of the word's derogatory senses: a poet who, on the one hand, always strove for an unattainable and idealized Greece, choosing to populate her landscapes with its mythical characters rather than live in her own time (and thus an "escapist") and, on the other hand, a poet who turned to the wrong Greece, to Euripides, rather than to Aeschylus, to the small poems of the Hellenistic Greek Anthology rather than to any of the earlier stages. "Hipparchia" is H.D.'s response to these stereotypes. Set in 75 BCE Rome, the novella centers on a displaced Greek, ostensibly the daughter of the historical Hipparchia and her husband Crates, a pair of Cynic philosophers who actually lived several centuries before. The younger Hipparchia's ambivalent relationship to "Greece" is summed up in the two epigrams by Antipater of Sidon – who would have flourished only about fifty years before this fictional character – that form the novella's two refrains. The first is about the real Hipparchia, whose life of renunciation her "daughter" cannot follow, and the second laments the destruction and looting of Corinth in 146 BCE.[91] While Hipparchia

[89] The procedure is the opposite from that outlined by Prins, *Victorian Sappho*, 4: the desire to "hypothesize a living whole," the "real" figure of Sappho, "from dead letters."

[90] As I have argued elsewhere; Stergiopoulou, "Translating the Greeks," 95–96. Collecott, *H.D. and Sapphic Modernism,* 21, following a suggestion in Gubar, "Sapphistries," 53–58, argues that the Sappho references mask the poems' "lesbian content"; for a convincing rebuttal, see Rohrbach, "H.D. and Sappho," 189–92.

[91] Loeb 7.413 (not included in Mackail), Loeb 9.151 (Mackail 9.20) respectively.

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is stifled by her Athenian mother's example – an example that only exists in and through Antipater's poem and so is literally a poetic model[92] – she also constantly laments the Romanization of the Greek world and sees her own work, as poet and anthologist-scholar, as aimed squarely at recovery and reconstruction, at undoing Roman conquest. What Hipparchia is searching for – a productive, non-idealizing relationship to things Greek – aligns with H.D.'s own (already realized) ambitions that had remained nonetheless invisible to both her friends and critics and that she thus dramatizes here through Hipparchia's acts of translation, in which the story culminates.

The two poems by Antipater are woven deeply into the texture of the story though their translation is not thematized. They do, moreover, respond well to those selected by Pound in his "Homage." To the Palladas epigram, H.D. adds another "season" for acceptable femininity in the Anthology: namely, the woman, neither dead nor asleep, who rejects all feminine trappings in order to join a male tradition ("I cast my lot with cynics," "I kept no tunic with bright gem"), a version of the "H.D." who could be part of Pound's group of imagist men in, for example, his account of the poetic "Status Rerum" published in the same issue of *Poetry* as H.D.'s first imagist poems but making no mention of her. (The rest of the story will deconstruct this binary choice between the "hard," ascetic life of the philosopher and the luxurious, pampered life of the woman.) Antipater's Corinth epigram is actually located immediately before Pound's Agathias poem on Troy in the Anthology; given that Pound was thinking about Antipater in late 1915,[93] it is possible they had discussed them. In any case, where Pound hits a somewhat mocking tone, H.D.'s version, more pared-down even compared to Antipater (nothing is "gilded"), offers a real lament, and one that is sung by a chorus of Nereids and gulls rather than surviving as an impersonally recorded "douth and story." Instead of surveying from a distance as Pound does through Chrétien, H.D. places herself and her character in that exact moment of epochal change, of potential textual transmission and its failings, mapping it out from the inside.

When Hipparchia's lover, the Roman soldier Marius, argues in response to her recitation of Antipater on Corinth that Rome "builds rock upon the ruins of a decadent civilization," she refutes his emphasis on decay and offers one of the story's predominant metaphors for their personal

[92] Gregory, *H.D. and Hellenism*, 63.
[93] See n. 48 above.

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relationship, and for that between Greece and Rome, by comparing Rome's conquests to grapes that are

> shaken from the parent, broken, sometimes ruthless from the firm vine. Cast ruthless in one basket. Carried and flung indiscriminate, fine white by heady ruby of the vine into one huge vessel of destruction. Romans are wine pressers…. Rome battering upon Grecian citadels leaves foot mark of red, stain of its wine-treaders…. I mean you kill us, cut our city and our state to pieces. Do you kill the wine when you press heavy on the grape-bunch? (*Palimpsest* 4)

Hipparchia insists on the violence of Rome's appropriation of Greece, but her final question is about survival and metamorphosis – translation in a sense: Is wine, a product wrought by violence, an appropriate metaphor for the remains of the kind of destruction she is describing? That is, can these remains too survive, as we might say grapes do in wine, and even be more potent, have a different kind of effect, now that they have been ruined, scattered, or blended? Can destruction in the end be a positive transformation, producing something that might be more intoxicating than what it destroyed? Is the distilled idea, culture, or (literally) spirit of Greece more potent than whatever Greece itself was? Perhaps, but, unlike H.D. in her 1916 review of Fletcher, Hipparchia herself isn't quite ready to admit this, because of her investment in her Greek identity. The grape becomes the novella's central image, "a VORTEX, from which, and through which, and into which, ideas are constantly rushing" (to quote Pound's definition); it weaves together concrete image motifs of "Hipparchia" itself, ensuring the coherence of this story, H.D.'s own prior work in prose (Fletcher review) and poetry ("Priapus," "Fragment 113"), theoretical questions surrounding translation and the relation between antiquity and modernity, and, as we will see, Greek lyric early and late.

Near the end of the novella we realize that the story's grape imagery comes from yet another epigram, this one by Moero of Byzantium, who flourished in the late fourth/early third centuries BCE. That H.D. has "Hipparchia" appropriate this particular poet's voice does not seem accidental. Moero is remembered second in Meleager's proem to the Garland, right between Anyte and Sappho.[94] She is associated with additional evocative names: Moero was the wife of Andromachus Philologus and the mother of Homerus of Byzantium.[95] Of her poetry very little survives: a

[94] Loeb 4.1, lines 5–6.

[95] This per William Smith, *Dictionary*. Mackail says that the tragedian Homerus was her father. But, from her use of the Hipparchia epigram, it is clear that H.D. was by this point consulting sources other than Mackail; in her Meleager essay, she calls Moero "the later Byzantine" ("Garland," 7 [HDP 43/1117]).

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passage from her epic poem *Mnēmosynē* and two epigrams in the Anthology. So, the female poet who wrote of memory is also the one who gave birth to a son whose name is synonymous with the birth of poetry, and who came out of a marriage with "philology." Here is what H.D. often calls a "formula" – in this case, moreover, H.D.'s own formula: Memory plus meticulous love of words equals poetry. That Moero was born in Byzantium, a city unimportant in her own time and in Hipparchia's, but one in which the Roman Empire would become Greek again, is of course also very telling in the context of this particular story.[96]

Moero's poem, as seen by H.D./Hipparchia, recapitulates many of the novella's color and nature motifs and in Hipparchia's initial version emphasizes the desolation of the grape unprotected by its "mother-stalk."

> You rest upon a golden bed
> in Aphrodite's golden house, O grape (O Dionysus bled
> when you bled purple and grape-red)
> you lie within the golden place,
> and all the honey-grace and sweet
> of your vine, mother-stalk shall not
> protect you with its flower and leaf. (71)[97]

In the context of the novella's repeated wine-presser analogy, this short grape poem becomes a synecdoche for Greece, and it is thus Hipparchia herself translating it "into the heavier language" (Latin, but in fact English) that becomes the wine presser. Hipparchia may seem to be decrying destruction and deracination but is already, at the very moment of her confrontation with Marius early in the story, performing it insofar as she is, without acknowledgment, putting Moero's poem to work, transforming its terms and images into her own ("shaken from the parent … from the firm vine," "leaves foot mark of red, stain," etc.), and using it to articulate her present state to Marius.

This suspicion is confirmed when Hipparchia refers to her final version of the translation as her "triumph": "Hipparchia I have triumphed. I found it on the way home. It was written in authentic metre in the air above me" (78–79). She figures herself as a victorious Roman general getting his triumph upon his return, on the way home, to Rome; hence perhaps the superfluous use of her name here: hipp-archia, ruler of horses.

[96] In her essay "Euripides," probably written a few years before "Hipparchia," H.D. had waxed lyrical about Byzantium both as a conduit for the transmission of Greek knowledge to Italy and as a primarily textual space (HDP 43/1115, p. 6).

[97] Moero's poem is 6.119 in Loeb, 2.21 in Mackail.

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Moreover, etymologically *triumph* is connected to the Greek *thriambos*, a hymn to Dionysus, god of wine. That is, a triumph is literally Greek wine-poetry in military repackaging – precisely the things that Hipparchia has been ambivalent about but now conveys no hesitation over. The meter she finds is indeed the meter in H.D.'s air, an English meter. From the first to the second version, she radically condenses the description of the grape, which produces four tight lines of perfect stress-based iambic tetrameter:

> You rest upon a golden bed,
> in Aphrodite's golden house,
> grape, O cluster cold and pure
> your blood is honey, spirit-fire. (77)

It's as if she's performed the Poundian slashing on her own poem.

When, then, Hipparchia nonetheless demurs from translating Sappho, we may treat that with some circumspection:

> Sappho in Latin…. It was desecration to translate it. She decided not to re-render the hyacinth on the mountain side. She would let that rest flawless. She would quote it entire in Greek. The Greek words, inset in her manuscript, would work terrific damage…. Romans were wine pressers but they had to drain to the dregs the very soul of Athens. (72–73)

Hipparchia thus presumably preserves that soul by "preserving" Sappho in Greek, resisting the metamorphosis of grape to wine. Or does she? The Sappho poem in question, "the hyacinth and the shepherd which had so long escaped her" (72), is Fragment 105C: "like the hyacinth in the mountains that shepherd men / with their feet trample down and on the ground the purple flower."[98] The poem had not escaped H.D.: She had already used it, without acknowledgment, in 1916's "Pursuit," writing, "What do I care / that the stream is trampled, / … / But here / a wild-hyacinth stalk is snapped: / the purple buds – half ripe – / show deep purple / where your heel pressed" (*CP* 11).[99] Looking at 105C and Moero's poem side by side, together with H.D.'s versions of both, we may well surmise that H.D. wants to draw a connection between them, that she is suggesting perhaps the indebtedness of Moero's conceit to Sappho's: The purple grape, like the purple hyacinth, is torn from its natural context, the former for religious reasons which may excuse the (implicit) violence, the latter possibly for marriage (Sappho's poem has been considered a marriage poem). The fetishization of Sappho exposes Hipparchia's own incomplete reading; she

[98] In Carson's translation, who lists it, *contra* Loeb, as 105B.
[99] Collecott, *H.D. and Sapphic Modernism*, 266.

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is enraged at the Roman abuse of Greek culture when she is silently doing "the same" (and indeed using the sacred Sappho for her first version of Moero), and when the poem she is translating may *itself* be doing it.

And yet at this moment when Hipparchia is deciding to look away from Sappho in order to preserve Sappho's integrity, H.D. has her perform, reenact Sappho's whole poem (or at least our scholarly reconstruction of it). For 105C is paired with 105A: "as the sweetapple reddens on a high branch / high on the highest branch and the applepickers forgot – / no, not forgot: were unable to reach."[100] Fragment 105A is about the apple being unreachable, too good, and so not to be desecrated, just as Hipparchia says about Sappho; 105C is about the purple hyacinth's careless desecration, just as Moero may have done with Sappho and Hipparchia with Moero.[101] That is, in this case of Hipparchia's failed or forestalled translation in favor of letting "Greek" be, there is actually translation taking place that doesn't neatly fit into any received category. H.D. is embedding the translation alternatives laid out for her by her community of fellow poets and scholars – an appropriation of Moero into the "meter in the air" (whether the *vers libre* of the first version or the tight quatrain of the second) or an idealization leading to non-translation of Sappho – into a story that debates them, and in so doing *also* repeats Sappho's own ancient gesture. As in "Priapus," but even more so here, H.D. acknowledges, if not foregrounds, the present moment and the writer's own actions in shaping the past – a "present moment" that, as she had suggested in her review of Mew, is both old (insofar as the story takes place in 75 BCE) and contemporary, both hellenist and modern(ist). Hipparchia can follow Moero, Moero Sappho, and yet all three remain H.D.

[100] Trans. Carson. H.D. definitely knew of both poems; in a review of Edwin Marion Cox's translation of Sappho published just a year before *Palimpsest* she had quoted D. G. Rossetti's translation of both in "One Girl."

[101] I owe this line of thinking to a comment by Louis Ruprecht in response to my paper on H.D. and C. P. Cavafy at the 2017 Modern Greek Studies Association conference.

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