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presents

the Annotated Popular Edition of

MIDAS

by John Lyly

Written c. 1590

Earliest Extant Edition: 1592

Featuring complete and easy-to-read annotations.

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MIDAS

By JOHN LYLY

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

Midas, King of Phrygia.

Sophronia, daughter of Midas.

Counselors of Midas:

Eristus.

Martius.

Mellacrites.

Celia, daughter of Mellacrites.

Petulus, Page to Mellacrites

Licio, Page to Celia.

Pipenetta, Maid to Celia.

Ladies of the Court:

Camilla.

Amerula.

Suavia.

Other Phrygian Mortals:

Motto, a Barber.

Dello, his Boy.

A *Huntsman*.

Minutius, a Page.

Shepherds:

Menalcas.

Coryn.

Celthus.

Driapon.

Amyntas.

Gods and Other Deities:

Bacchus.

Apollo.

Pan.

Erato, a Nymph.

Thalia, a Nymph.

Other Nymphs.

Scene: Phrygia and Delphi.

INTRODUCTION to the PLAY

In *Midas*, John Lyly dramatizes a pair of myths told in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* about the legendary King of Phrygia, who made the twin mistakes of first asking for the gift of the golden touch, and then in judging a contest of musical skill against an Olympian god. In addition to having to bear with Lyly's baroque euphuistic style, readers should also be prepared to digest the copious amount of dense wordplay which permeates the entire comedy!

OUR PLAY'S SOURCE

The text of this play was originally adapted from the 1902 edition of Lyly's plays edited by Warwick Bond, but was then carefully compared to the original 1592 quarto. Consequently, much of the original wording and spelling from this earliest printing of the play has been reinstated.

NOTES ON THE ANNOTATIONS

Mention in the annotations of various editors refers to the notes supplied by these scholars for their editions of this play. Their works are cited fully below.

The most commonly cited sources are listed in the footnotes immediately below. The complete list of footnotes appears at the end of this play.

Footnotes in the text correspond as follows:

1. *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) online.
2. Crystal, David and Ben. *Shakespeare's Words*. London; New York: Penguin, 2002.
5. Daniel, Carter A. (ed.). *The Plays of John Lyly*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1988.
6. Latin translations by Quintus, whose services may be found at <http://the.latintranslator.com/>.
9. Bond, R. Warwick (ed.). *The Complete Works of John Lyly, Vol. III*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1902.
12. Humphries, Rolfe, trans. Ovid. *Metamorphoses*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983.
14. Lancashire, Anne Begor (ed.). *Gallathea and Midas*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1969.
16. Fairholt, F.W., ed. *The Dramatic Works of John Lilly, Vol. II*. London: John Russell Smith, 1858.

Notes.

A. Midas as Allegory.

The first half of John Lyly's *Midas* recounts the Phrygian king's ill-considered acquisition of his famous golden touch. Once attached with the power to turn anything he came in contact with to gold, Midas used his new-found wealth to take over much of Asia Minor, both directly through military intervention, and indirectly by bribing high officials into toppling their kings. The one nation he could not conquer, however, was the small island of Lesbos, which lies off the western coast of Asia Minor.

Editors have long recognized that Midas' frustrated attempts to capture Lesbos served as an allegory for late 16th century Spain's political and military intrigues against England in general and Queen Elizabeth specifically. Thus, when Midas laments how the king of Lesbos is "*protected by the gods...and his subjects' obedience...Is he not through the whole world a wonder, for wisdom and temperance?*", it was understood by all that he was really describing his own queen.

The various kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula were first united in the 15th century, but Spain's rise to a great power, fueled by the immense wealth it harvested in the Western Hemisphere, came to fruition on the ascendancy of Emperor Charles V to the throne. His successor, Philip II (reigned 1556-1598), made Spain a champion of the Catholic Church, which led to Spain's involvement in a great war in the Netherlands, where Philip, a stubborn enemy of Protestantism, had been trying with mixed success to put down a rebellion of Calvinists since 1566.

Elizabeth entered the war in 1585, when she sent the first English troops to the continent in support of the rebels. Political tensions between the great powers remained high through the rest of the 16th century. Rumours of Spanish intrigues against Elizabeth herself, including plots to assassinate the queen, appeared regularly in the English capital throughout this period. The climax of the conflict, at least from the English perspective, took place in July 1588, when the English navy defeated the invading Spanish Armada in a series of battles off the coast of England.

Editors of *Midas* have read into the king's various speeches numerous references to specific events that occurred in the long period of hostilities between England and Spain. While we have not included in the annotations every possible allusion, we do include explanations for a number of them, at least enough to give the reader a flavour of the allegorical speeches, without over-burdening the reader with too many mind-numbing details.

B. Early Quartos.

Lyly clearly wrote *Midas* after the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. The earliest extant copy of the play is from 1592. While in this early edition stage directions are provided to indicate when the actors should sing songs, the songs themselves are omitted, as was the usual practice at the time.

Midas appeared in a second quarto in 1632, in which lyrics were printed wherever a song was indicated. It has been a tradition amongst editors to incorporate these lyrics into modern editions of the play, and we have followed suit.

C. Wordplay.

Midas is saturated with wordplay. To make a note of every bit of such punning and linking of similar-sounding words (*idle* and *addle*, *pity* and *pit*, etc.) and parallel phrases would be to overwhelm the reader with tiresomely repetitive annotations. Hence, while we will indicate some of the more interesting and representative examples of Lyly's linguistic wit, we will leave it to you, gentle reader, to identify the wordplay for yourself as you peruse the play.

D. Lyly's Euphuism.

In 1578, John Lyly wrote and published a romantic novel called *Euphues, or the Anatomy of Wit*. The book was a sensation in Elizabethan England, but not so much for its story as for its language. Lyly, inspired by a similar style employed by the Englishman George Pettie in his novel, *A Petite Pallace of Pettie His Pleasure* (published in 1576), wrote in a highly affected manner that became the rage of London's upper crust.

The style, which was called *euphuism*, consisted of three key elements:

- (1) the regular employment of short parallel phrases with lots of word play;
- (2) frequent use of alliteration; and
- (3) references to fantastic creatures and clearly fictitious "facts" about the natural world, borrowed from works such as Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*.

Euphuism, like anything else that becomes suddenly fashionable, had a short shelf-life, but Lyly continued to use the style throughout his dramatic works.

Lyly's works are fun to read, but not for long periods of time, as euphuism can become ponderous and tiresome after a while. Taken in small bites, however, euphuism can be amusing, and represents a delightful and interesting peek into one of the more unusual episodes of English literary history.

E. Acts, Scenes, and Stage Directions.

Midas was originally published in a 1592 quarto. As usual, we lean towards adhering to the wording of this earliest volume as much as possible.

Words or syllables which have been added to the original text to clarify the sense are surrounded by hard brackets []; these additions are often adopted from the suggestions of later editors. A director who wishes to remain truer to the original text may of course choose to omit any of the supplementary wording.

Unusually for the era, *Midas* was, in its original printing, divided into both numbered Acts and Scenes. Suggested scene settings, however, are adopted from Bond.⁹

Finally, as is our normal practice, some of the quarto's stage directions have been modified, and others have been added to the text, usually without comment, to give clarity to the action. Most of these changes are adopted from Bond.

THE PROLOGUE IN PAUL'S.

1 GENTLEMEN, so nice is the world, that for
2 apparel there is no fashion, for music no instrument,
3 for diet no delicate, for plays no invention, but
4 breedeth satiety before noon, and contempt before
night.

6 Come to the tailor, he is gone to the painters, to
7 learn how more cunning may lurk in the fashion, than
8 can be expressed in the making. Ask the musicians,
9 they will say their heads ache with devising notes
10 beyond Ela. Inquire at ordinaries, there must be sallets
11 for the Italian, picktooths for the Spaniard, pots for the
12 German, porridge for the Englishman. At our exercises,
13 soldiers call for tragedies, their object is blood:
14 courtiers for comedies, their subject is love;
15 countrymen for pastorals, shepherds are their saints.
16 Traffic and travel hath woven the nature of all nations
17 into ours; and made this land like arras, full of device;
18 which was broad-cloth, full of workmanship.

Prologue: Midas was likely first rehearsed at *St. Paul's* church in front of a small paying public, and subsequently performed for the Queen and the Court.⁹ Daniel⁵ notes that the tone of this Prologue is somewhat sassier than the one Lyly would likely have later presented before Elizabeth.

We have broken up the Prologue, which was published as one long paragraph, into smaller paragraphs to facilitate understanding for the reader.

1-5 (below): in this first paragraph, Lyly uses exaggeration and analogy to describe how hard it is to please the public.

= fussy or fickle.¹

3: *delicate* = ie. delicacy.¹

invention = ideas.

4-5: ie. the public will have had its fill of it by midday, and be contemptuous of it by evening.

6-16 (below): Lyly bemoans the difficult time persons in the service industries have trying to satisfy their customers.

6-8: *Come to...making* = if you order a suit from a tailor, he must ask an artist to teach him how to be creative; Fairholt¹⁶ tells us of multiple ancient sources which describe how tailors sometimes consulted with artists over how to make their clothing more attractive.

7: *cunning* = skill.

8-10: *Ask the musicians...Ela* = to please their audiences, musicians must try to play notes beyond *ela*, the highest note on the musical scale^{1,22} – an impossible task!

10: *ordinaries* = taverns where food is served for a fixed price.

sallets = the more common spelling for *salads* in this period; most editors emend *sallets* to *salads*.

11: *picktooths* = a Mediterranean plant whose umbels could be used as toothpicks.¹ Toothpicks were considered a foreign affectation in Lyly's days. In Shakespeare's *King John*, a character known as the "Bastard" mocks the proverbial international traveler "*and his toothpick at my worship's mess*" (Act I.i).

pots = tankards for drinking.

12-15: *At our exercises...saints* = each segment of society demands plays to satisfy its own particular tastes.

our exercises = ie. the performances of Lyly's plays.

object = preferred dramatic subject matter.

courtiers = means both (1) pursuers of women, and (2) members of a sovereign's court.

countrymen = ie. those who live in the countryside.

pastoral = a literary genre, usually revolving around rural themes in general and shepherds in particular.

16-17: *Traffic...ours* = international trade and travel have noticeably infused English culture with a foreign character.

17: *arras* = the French city **Arras** was famous for its delightful and colourful tapestries, so much so that the

20 Time hath confounded our minds, our minds
the matter; but all commeth to this pass, that what
22 heretofore hath been served in several dishes for a
feast, is now minced in a charger for a gallimaufrey. If
24 we present a mingle-mangle, our fault is to be excused,
because the whole world is become an hodge-podge.

26 We are jealous of your judgments, because you
are wise; of our own performance, because we are
28 imperfect; of our author's device, because he is idle.
Only this doth encourage us, that presenting our
30 studies before gentlemen, though they receive an
inward mislike, we shall not be hissed with an open
disgrace.

32 *Stirps rudis urtica est; stirps generosa, rosa.*

name *arras* came to mean tapestries in general. Lyly continues the metaphor begun with *woven* in the previous line.

full of device = the image is of a colourful tapestry filled with various ideas (*device*) and scenes.

18: *which was...workmanship* = Lyly describes England as a plain cloth (*broadcloth*) that has become enriched and more interesting, thanks to those who have introduced new fashions and ideas through their trade and travel. The *arras* image corresponds nicely with the American conception of the United States as a melting pot of cultures.

19-24 (below): Lyly excuses the sloppiness of the play with the suggestion that all elements of society have entered into a confused or disorderly state.

19: *confounded* = confused or mixed up.¹

19-20: *our minds the matter* = ie. "and our minds have mixed up the matter". Note how in the remainder of the paragraph, the idea of "blending" is applied both literally to food and metaphorically to the world.

21: *heretofore* = previously.

several = individual.

22: *minced* = ground up.

charger = large plate.¹

gallimaufrey = stew made up of odds and ends.¹

23: *mingle-mangle* = mishmash.¹

24: *hodge-podge* = mishmash, sometimes written as *hotchpotch*.¹

25-31 (below): Lyly both seeks and fears the audience's reception of the play.

25: *jealous of* = anxious to learn or receive.⁵

26: *of* = ie. also jealous (anxious) regarding.

27: *our author's* = Lyly's, a cute bit of self-reference.

device = conception or ideas for the play.

he is idle = Bond notes that Lyly may have authored *Midas* after a break of several years from writing.

29: *studies* = ie. the play.

29-31: *though they...disgrace* = a sentiment which Lyly frequently expresses in his prologues: even if the audience is not pleased with the play, he hopes they will not be so callous as to demonstrate their displeasure too overtly.

32: **Latin:** "a rough lineage (ie. being born into a mean family) is a nettle; a well-born lineage is a rose."⁶ Daniel sees the *nettle*, a wild plant, as representing the rough crowd in public theaters, and the *rose* as the cultured crowd of St. Paul's (p. 372).⁵

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The gardens before Midas' palace.

*Enter Bacchus, Midas, Eristus, Martius
and Mellacrites.*

1 **Bacc.** Midas, where the gods bestow benefits, they ask
2 thanks, but where they receive good turns, they give

4 rewards. Thou hast filled my belly with meat, mine
ears with music, mine eyes with wonders. Bacchus of
6 all the gods is the best fellow, and Midas amongst men
a king of fellows. All thy grounds are vineyards, thy
corn grapes; thy chambers cellars, thy household stuff

8 standing cups; and therefore ask anything, it shall be
granted. Wouldest thou have the pipes of thy conducts
10 to run wine, the udders of thy beasts to drop nectar, or
thy trees to bud ambrosia? Desirest thou to be
12 fortunate in thy love, or in thy victories famous, or to
have the years of thy life as many as the hairs on thy
14 head? Nothing shall be denied, so great is Bacchus, so
happy is Midas.

16 **Midas.** Bacchus, for a king to beg of a god it is no
18 shame, but to ask with advice, wisdom; give me leave

to consult, lest desiring things above my reach, I be

20 fired with Phaeton; or against nature, and be drowned
with Icarus: and so perishing, the world shall both

Entering Characters: *Bacchus* is the Roman god of wine. *Midas* is the King of Phrygia, a land located in what is now western Turkey. *Eristus*, *Martius* and *Mellacrites* are advisors to the king.

1-3: *where...rewards* = the relationship between the ancients and their gods was one of *quid pro quo*: humans prayed and performed sacrifices to the gods, who in return were expected to protect and even bring good fortune to those who honoured them.

turns = acts, deeds.

3-4: *Thou hast...wonders* = Midas has been entertaining the god.
= companion in feasting and drinking.^{1,14}

7: *corn* = could refer, as it does here, to the fruit or seed of various plants, such as *grape*.¹

thy chambers cellars = "your rooms all serve as wine cellars".

= a *standing cup* was a drinking vessel with a base.¹
= conduits or fountains.¹
= the drink of the gods.
= the food of the gods.

= fortunate.

18: *to ask...wisdom* = ie. for a king to get advice from others before making a request from a god shows his good sense.

leave = permission.

= "beyond my capacity (for understanding or employing properly)".

20: *fired with Phaeton* = ie. "burnt (ie. destroyed) alongside (ie. as was) Phaeton."

Phaeton was the son of *Apollo*, the sun god. As an adolescent, Phaeton begged his father to allow him, for one day, to drive the chariot that pulled the sun across the sky. After listening to much pleading, *Apollo* reluctantly acquiesced, but warned his son to be careful. Phaeton could not control the horses, and would have crashed onto the earth had not *Jupiter* killed him with a thunderbolt.⁷

against nature = ie. striving against the natural order of things.¹

and = usually emended to *I*.

22 laugh and wonder, crying, *Magnis tamen excidit ausis.*

24 **Bacc.** Consult, Bacchus will consent.

26 **Midas.** Now, my lords, let me hear your opinions;
28 what wish may make Midas most happy, and his
subjects best content?

30 **Erist.** Were I a king, I would wish to possess my
32 mistress, for what sweetness can there be found in life,
but love, whose wounds the more mortal they are to
34 the heart, the more immortal they make the possessors?
and who knoweth not that the possessing of that must
be most precious, the pursuing whereof is so pleasing?

36 **Mar.** Love is a pastime for children, breeding nothing

38 but folly, and nourishing nothing but idleness. I
40 would wish to be monarch of the world, conquering
kingdoms like villages, and, being greatest on the earth,
42 be commander of the whole earth: for what is there
that more tickles the mind of a king, then a hope to be
the only king, wringing out of every country tribute,
44 and in his own to sit in triumph? Those that call
conquerors ambitious, are like those that term thrift
46 covetousness, cleanliness pride, honesty preciseness.

48 Command the world, Midas, a greater thing you
cannot desire, a less you should not.

50 **Midas.** What say you, Mellacrites?

52 **Mell.** Nothing, but that these two have said nothing. I
would wish that everything I touched might turn to

20-21: *be drowned with Icarus* = the reference is to the story of **Daedalus**, the famous Athenian craftsman, who for some crime was banished from **Athens** and went to **Crete** to serve **King Minos**, for whom he built the famous **Labyrinth**. When Daedalus advised the Greek hero **Theseus** how to enter and exit the Labyrinth (in order to kill the monstrous **Minotaur**), the King imprisoned Daedalus with his son **Icarus**.

Daedalus fashioned wings for himself and his son out of feathers held together with wax, and the pair used the wings to fly away and escape Crete. Icarus, unfortunately, did not heed his father's advice not to fly too high, and the sun melted the young man's wings, causing him to plunge to his death in the sea.⁷

22: **Latin** = "Yet he failed in pursuing great ventures."⁶ The line is from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Book II.

34-35: *the possessing...pleasing* = anything that requires effort to obtain provides the most satisfaction once it is in the pursuer's possession.

= Martius' name, which means "of Mars", is appropriate for the advisor who counsels Midas to ask to conquer the world: Mars was the Roman god of war.

= promoting or forstering.¹

44-46: *Those that...preciseness* = Martius uses parallel phrasing to suggest that those people who snidely call *conquerors ambitious* are also likely to portray other positive characteristics (*thrift, cleanliness* and *honesty*) in a negative light (*covetousness, pride* and *preciseness*, respectively).

cleanliness = moral purity.^{1,14}

honesty = could refer to virtuousness or chastity.¹

preciseness = a term which suggests an exaggerated puritanical scrupulousness.²

54 gold: this is the sinews of war, and the sweetness of
 56 peace. Is it not gold that maketh the chastest to yield to
 58 lust, the honestest to lewdness, the wisest to folly, the
 faithfulest to deceit, and the most holy in heart, to be
 most hollow of heart? In this word gold are all the
 powers of the gods, the desires of men, the wonders of
 60 the world, the miracles of nature, the looseness of
 fortune and triumphs of time. By gold may you shake
 62 the courts of other princes, and have your own settled;
 one spade of gold undermines faster than an hundred
 mattocks of steel. Would one be thought religious and
 devout? *Quantum quisque sua nummorum servat in*
 66 *arca, tantum habet et fidei*: religion's balance are
 golden bags. Desire you virtue? *Querenda pecunia*
 68 *primum est, virtus post nummos*: the first stair of
 virtue is money. Doth any thirst after gentry, and wish
 70 to be esteemed beautiful? *Et genus et formam regina*
pecunia donat: king coin hath a mint to stamp
 72 gentlemen, and art to make amiableness. I deny not but

= *sinews* are tendons, suggesting strength; in ancient Rome, Cicero called money *the sinews of war*, in that no ruler can keep an army going without it.¹

55-58: *Is it not gold...heart?* = Mellacrites means that those who possess gold can cause other people to abandon their principles, e.g., cause the normally *chaste* to become lascivious, etc.

lewdness (line 56) = wickedness.¹

Note Mellacrites' wordplay in comparing the *holy heart* with the *hollow heart*.

= the sense is "generosity".

61-62: *By gold...settled* = with gold, a king can both undermine foreign governments, and keep his own subjects content.

63-64: *one spade...steel* = a compact military metaphor: Mellacrites refers to two ways a besieging army may break into a city:

(1) dig a tunnel underneath the city's defenses, and then set off explosives which would cause the walls above to collapse (literal *undermining*); or

(2) bribe one of the defenders into opening the city gate (metaphorical *undermining*).

Mellacrites argues that gold can achieve the goal more quickly (through a bribe) than can 100 men digging a tunnel. *Mattocks* (line 64) are tools for digging, something like picks.¹

= ie. wish to be accounted or judged.

65-66: *Latin* = "A man is trusted the more money he keeps in his safe."⁶ From Juvenal's *Satires*, Book III.

66-67: *religion's...bags* = The idea is that gold can be used to corrupt the religious.

balance are = *balance* was sometimes treated as a plural word.

67-68: *Latin* = "First one must seek money; virtue is second to cash."⁶ From Horace's *Epistles*, Book I.

= step in achieving.

= ie. to enter the rank of the *gentry*, the social class immediately below the nobility.

70-71: *Latin* = "Our queen, money, confers both pedigree and beauty."⁶ From Horace's *Epistles*, Book I.

71-72: *king coin...gentlemen* = a numismatic metaphor: the crown controlled the *minting* of coins, which were *stamped* with images. Mellacrites' point is that gold allows one to purchase the trappings of gentility.

= (money also has) the ability (*art*) to make one's friendship desirable (*amiableness* = the quality of being beloved¹); a cynical way to rephrase this would be to say that people will always be attracted to those who have money.

love is sweet, and the marrow of a man's mind; that to

74 conquer kings is the quintessence of the thoughts of

76 kings: why, then follow both, *aurea sunt verè nunc saecula, plurimus auro venit honos, auro conciliatur amor*: it is a world for gold; honour and love are both

78 taken up on interest. Doth Midas determine to tempt

80 the minds of true subjects? to draw them from

82 obedience to treachery, from their allegiance and oaths to treason and perjury? *quid non mortalia pectora cogit auri sacra fames?* what holes doth not gold bore

in men's hearts? Such virtue is there in gold, that being

84 bred in the barrenest ground, and trodden under foot, it

mounteth to sit on princes' heads. Wish gold, Midas,

86 or wish not to be Midas. In the counsel of the gods,

88 was not Anubis, with his long nose of gold, preferred before Neptune's, whose stature was but brass? And

90 Aesculapius more honoured for his golden beard, than Apollo for his sweet harmony?

92 **Erist.** To have gold and not love (which cannot be

94 purchased by gold) is to be a slave to gold.

96 **Mar.** To possess mountains of gold, and a mistress more precious than gold, and not to command the

= **marrow** was the term used to describe the white matter of the brain; hence, figuratively, the richest or key element.¹

= purest part, ie. defining characteristic.¹

75-77: **Latin** = "now truly the centuries are golden; the greatest honour is sold for gold, love is won over with gold."⁶ Mellacrites is arguing that gold can attain for Midas all the things the other counselors have advised him to ask for, plus much more! The Latin is from Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*, Book II.

= ie. "at the command of one who has gold",⁹ or "obtained through the payment of interest."¹⁴

= ie. his enemies' subjects who are loyal to their own kings.

81-82: **Latin** = "what does this cursed hunger for gold not compel mortal hearts to do?" From Virgil's *Aeneid*, Book III.

= (supernatural) power.¹

= likely reference to an observation of the Roman Pliny the Elder, who wrote in *The Natural History* that gold can be found in the "arid and sterile" mountains of Spain (Bostock and Riley, 33.21).¹⁰ Pliny was a favourite source of Lyly's for usually fantastic facts about the natural world.

= rises. = ie. in the form of crowns.

86-88: **In the counsel...brass** = Bond identifies the source of this allusion to be the satirical play *Jupiter Tragoedus* by the Roman Lucian, in which the gods, during a meeting, are seated in an order corresponding to the material of which their respective statues are made; **Neptune** (god of the sea) complains about **Anubis** getting priority over him, because Anubis' statue is made of gold, but his own is of bronze,⁹ a metaphor for valuing wealth over merit.

Anubis was the Egyptian dog-god, though sometimes he was portrayed as a jackal, or a man with a dog's or jackal's head.

stature = common alternate form of **statue**.

89-90: **Aesculapius...harmony** = the Roman writer Valerius Maximus told the story of how **Dionysius**, the tyrant of **Syracuse**, ordered the **golden beard** to be removed from the statue of **Aesculapius** (and given to him, naturally), justifying this action by suggesting that it was not appropriate for the god to have a beard, since Aesculapius' father, **Apollo**, was beardless.⁸

Aesculapius was the popular Greek god of medical healing.⁴ **Apollo** was the god of music and song.

92-93: Eristus directly contradicts Mellacrites' assertion that gold can be used to obtain love.

95-98: Martius too criticizes Mellacrites' recommendation.

98 world, is to make Midas new prentice to a mint, and
journeyman to a woman.

100 **Mell.** To enjoy a fair lady in love, and want fair gold
102 to give; to have thousands of people to fight, and no
penny to pay – will make one's mistress wild, and his
soldiers tame. Jupiter was a god, but he knew gold was

104 a greater: and flew into those grates with his golden

wings, where he could not enter with his swan's wings.

106 What stayed Atalanta's course with Hippomenes? an

apple of gold: what made the three goddesses strive?
108 an apple of gold. If therefore thou make not thy

mistress a goldfinch, thou mayest chance to find her a
110 wagtail: believe me, *Res est ingeniosa dare*. Besides,

= ie. an apprentice to.
= a hired worker,² suggesting a subordinate position.

100-3: **To enjoy...tame** = if one has no money to shower on one's mistress or pay one's soldiers, the lady will be discontented and the warriors unwilling to fight. Note how Mellacrites has cleverly rebutted the distinct criticisms of Eristus and Martius in a single argument.

want (line 100) = lack.

104-5: **flew into...golden wings** = a reference to the popular myth of **Danae**: **Acrisius**, the king of **Argos**, received an oracle that the future son of his daughter Danae would grow up to kill him. To prevent this event, Acrisius kept Danae locked away in a tower or underground apartment. **Jupiter** visited her in the form of a shower of gold, which impregnated her, resulting in the birth of the Greek hero **Perseus**. Perseus did indeed later kill Acrisius, when a discus he threw during funeral games was carried by the wind and fatally struck the king.⁴

= an allusion to another of Jupiter's conquests: the king of the gods, while in the form of a **swan**, seduced Leda, resulting in the birth of **Helen** (later of Troy), and **Clytemnestra** (future husband of **Agamemnon**).

106-7: **What stayed...gold** = "what slowed Atalanta during her race with Hippomenes? An apple of gold."

Atalanta was a beautiful and swift-footed maiden, but she refused to get married, due to an oracle which warned her that if she did become some man's wife, she would "lose herself". Under pressure to take a husband, Atalanta announced she would marry any suitor who could beat her in a foot-race, with the condition that he would be put to death if he lost. Many men tried, and many men died.

A young man, **Hippomenes**, also in love with Atalanta, prayed to **Venus** to help him win her; the goddess gave him three golden apples. During his foot-race with Atalanta, he tossed the apples one at a time whenever she took the lead, hoping to distract her. Sure enough, every time Hippomenes tossed an apple, Atalanta would stop to chase and gather it. With Atalanta trying to run while carrying these heavy pieces of fruit, Hippomenes won the race, and won Atalanta.⁷

107-8: **what made...gold** = a reference to the most famous beauty contest in history: **Paris**, a Trojan prince, was assigned the unenviable task of judging which of three goddesses – **Hera**, **Athena**, and **Aphrodite** – was the most beautiful; the prize was a golden apple. To bribe Paris, Hera offered him rule over Asia and great riches if he chose her; Athena offered him glory and success in war; and Aphrodite tempted him with the hand of **Helen**, the world's most beautiful woman. Paris chose Aphrodite, who, in arranging for Helen to run off with Paris, precipitated the Trojan War.⁴

= one who has lots of gold.¹

110: **wagtail** = a small bird, used here to describe a straying girl.^{1,9}

112 how many gates of cities this golden key hath opened,
we may remember of late, and ought to fear hereafter.

That iron world is worn out, the golden is now come.

114 *Sub Jove nunc mundus, iussa sequere Jovis.*

116 *Erist.* Gold is but the guts of the earth.

118 *Mell.* I had rather have the earth's guts, than the moon's
brains. What is it that gold cannot command, or hath

120 not conquered? Justice herself, that sitteth wimpled

122 about the eyes, doth it, not because she will take no
gold, but that she would not be seen blushing when she

124 takes it: the balance she holdeth are not to weigh the
right of the cause, but the weight of the bribe; she will
126 put up her naked sword if thou offer her a golden
scabbard.

128 *Midas.* Cease you to dispute, I am determined. – It is
gold, Bacchus, that Midas desireth, let everything that
130 Midas toucheth be turned to gold: so shalt thou bless
thy guest, and manifest thy godhead. Let it be gold,
132 Bacchus.

134 *Bacc.* Midas, thy wish cleaveth to thy last word. Take
up this stone.

Res est ingeniosa dare = "Giving is a clever act."⁶
From Ovid's *Amores*, Book I.

111-2: Lancashire¹⁴ sees a possible allusion to an actual of
event of 1589, when, during the war in the Netherlands, an
English garrison surrendered to the Spanish in return for the
latter giving the men their long-overdue backpay.

113: a reversal of the ancient Greek idea, as described by the
8th century B.C. poet Hesiod, that humanity has passed
through five ages: the golden age first, then silver, bronze,
heroic, and iron; the ages describe a decline in the state of
mankind. The current age, says Mellacrites, with its
appreciation for gold, makes this the superior one.

114: **Latin** = "The world is now under Jupiter, you must
now follow Jupiter's commands."⁶ The source is un-
known.

= ie. nothing but.

118-9: *the moon's brains* = ie. the brains of the man in the
moon. Bond interprets the line to mean that "only a lunatic
would dream of doing without money" (p. 521).⁹ Bond has
in mind the old belief that the moon caused certain kinds of
insanity (hence the word *lunatic*, which is derived from the
Latin word for moon, *luna*)¹.

120-126 (below): *Justice herself...scabbard* = Mellacrites
perverts the normally admirable image of the impartial and
blindfolded goddess Justice holding in one hand her famous
balance, or scales of justice, on which she weighs the
relative merits of both sides of a case, and in the other a
sword, "a symbol of power, protection, authority, vigilance
and might."²⁰

120-1: *wimpled about the eyes* = ie. blindfolded;¹ a *wimple*,
properly, is a headdress which envelopes the entire head and
neck, as worn in the present day by nuns. Mellacrites is
mocking.

121-3: *doth it...takes it* = Mellacrites expresses admiration
for those who are able to pervert justice to their own ends
with bribes.

doth it = ie. does so, ie. wears a wimple or blindfold.

= *balance* is again treated as a plural word.¹

= sheathe, put away.

= "I have decided."

= "reveal or demonstrate your powers as a deity."¹

= attaches itself.¹

136		
137		137, 142: stage directions added by editor.
138		
140	Midas. Fortunate Midas! It is gold, Mellacrites! gold! it is gold!	
142	Mell. This stick.	
144		[Midas picks up stick.]
146	Midas. Gold, Mellacrites! my sweet boy, all is gold! – forever honoured be Bacchus, that above measure hath made Midas fortunate.	
148		
150	Bacc. If Midas be pleased, Bacchus is. <u>I will</u> to my temple with <u>Silenus</u> , for by this time there are many to offer unto me sacrifices: <i>Poenam pro munere poscis</i> .	= "I will go"; this is an example of a common late 16th century grammatical construction: in the presence of a verb of intent (<i>will</i>), the verb of action (<i>go</i>) is omitted. = Silenus was a Satyr (a half-human half-beast), a jovial, fat and perpetually drunken old man, and a constant companion to Bacchus. In Ovid's story of Midas, it was Silenus whom Midas entertained, not Bacchus, leading the god to offer Midas a gift of his choosing to show his appreciation. = Bacchus offers a veiled warning to Midas in Latin: "you demand punishment for a gift." ⁶ The quote is from Ovid's <i>Metamorphoses</i> , Book II. Apollo says this to his son Phaeton when the latter asks to be allowed to drive the sun-chariot across the sky. Note that in line 20 in this scene, Midas has anticipated this warning when he compared himself to Phaeton. ⁹
152		
154	Midas. Come, my lords, I will with gold pave my court, and <u>deck</u> with gold my turrets; these petty islands near to Phrygia shall totter, and other kingdoms be turned topsy-turvy: I will command both the	155: <i>deck</i> = adorn, ornament. 155-7: <i>these petty...turvy</i> = Midas plans to use his gold to immediately build an army to attack his neighbors. The <i>islands</i> refer to Lesbos, which Midas will be portrayed as trying to conquer throughout the play. Previous editors have all commented on the clear allegorical representation of the threatened island Lesbos as England, and the evil aggressor Phrygia, led by Midas (Philip II), as Spain. See, e.g., Daniel, p. 373, note 31. ⁵
156		
158	<u>affections</u> of men, and the fortunes. Chastity will grow cheap where gold is thought dear; <u>Celia</u> , chaste Celia, shall yield. You, my lords, shall have my hands in your houses, turning your <u>brazen</u> gates to fine gold. Thus shall Midas be monarch of the world, the <u>darer</u> of Fortune, the commander of <u>Love</u> . Come let us <u>in</u> .	158: <i>affections</i> = love, goodwill. 158-9: <i>Chastity...dear</i> = because every woman, no matter her price, can be bought (when gold is ubiquitous), the value of preserving one's maidenhead will diminish to nothing. <i>dear</i> (line 159) = valuable. = Celia is Mellacrites' daughter. Midas appears to be interested in her, but this idea is never really pursued in this play. = brass. = challenger. ¹ = ie. Cupid. = ie. go in.
160		
162		
164		
166	Mell. We follow, desiring that our thoughts may be touched with thy fingers, that they also may become	

gold.
 168 **Erist.** Well, I fear the event, because of Bacchus' last
 170 words, *poenam pro munere poscis*.
 172 **Midas.** Tush, he is a drunken god, else he would not
 174 have given so great a gift. Now it is done, I care not
 for anything he can do.
 176 [Exeunt.]

ACT I, SCENE II.

The same: the gardens before Midas' palace.

Enter Petulus and Licio.

1 **Licio.** Thou servest Mellacrites, and I his daughter,
 2 which is the better man?
 4 **Pet.** The masculine gender is more worthy than the
 feminine: therefore Licio, backare.
 6
 8 **Licio.** That is when those two genders are at jar, but
 when they belong both to one thing, then –
 10 **Pet.** What then?
 12 **Licio.** Then they agree like the fiddle and the stick.
 14 **Pet.** Pulchrè sanè. God's blessing on thy blue nose!
 16
 but, Licio, my mistress is a proper woman.
 18 **Licio.** Ay, but thou knowest not her properties.
 20 **Pet.** I care not for her qualities, so I may embrace her
 quantity.
 22 **Licio.** Are you so pert?
 24 **Pet.** Ay, and so expert, that I can as well tell the
 thoughts of a woman's heart by her eyes, as the change
 26 of the weather by an almanac.

= outcome.

= ie. Bacchus.

Entering Characters: *Petulus* is a servant, a young page working for the advisor Mellacrites, while *Licio* serves Mellacrites' daughter Celia. The servants' scenes are responsible for the plays' comic relief.

= ie. "which of us".

4-5: "since a man has more worth than a woman, the servant of the man is better than that of the woman." The line parodies a Latin grammar, with its references to the gender of words.¹⁶

backare = "back off!" or "give place!" (to Petulus as the more worthy man).^{1,16}

= in conflict.²

12: this line may be mildly suggestive.

14: **Pulchre sane** = very nice (Latin).

blue nose = the reference is uncertain: Lancashire suggests the allusion may be to the blue veins of Licio's nose, or to the blue colour of the servants' livery. In the 17th century, the phrase **blue nose** came to be used to describe a cold nose.¹

= ie. Celia. = good-looking or admirable.¹

= note the typical Lylyian play on words with **proper** and **properties**.

19-20: the humour of the younger and lewder Petulus will run towards the risqué.

= impertinent.

= note again the play on words with **pert** and **expert**.

28	Licio. <u>Sir boy</u> , you must not be saucy.	= a humorous and ironic form of address.
30	Pet. No, but faithful and <u>serviceable</u> .	= always available to provide assistance. ¹
32	Licio. Lock up your lips, or I will lop them off. But	
34	<u>sirrah</u> , for thy better instructions I will <u>unfold</u> every	33: sirrah = common familiar form of address.
	<u>wrinkle</u> of my mistress' disposition.	33-34: I will...disposition = Licio will describe the physical attributes of his mistress Celia in detail. Note the brief cloth metaphor of unfold (which means both "straighten out" and "reveal") and wrinkle .
36	Pet. I pray thee do.	= ie. "please do."
38	Licio. But for this time I will only handle the head and	
40	<u>purtenance</u> .	38-39: Licio only has time to describe Celia's head and its accessories (purtenance). ¹ The rest of her will have to wait.
42	Pet. Nothing else?	
44	Licio. Why, will not that be a long hour's work to describe, that is almost a whole day's work to <u>dress</u> ?	43-44: Fairholt provides a nice quote from a 1607 comedy that is <i>apropos</i> : "a ship is sooner rigged by far than a gentlewoman made ready." (p. 263). ¹⁶
46	Pet. Proceed.	dress = prepare, make ready, ie. fix the hair, apply make-up, etc.
48	Licio. First, she hath a head as round as a <u>tennis ball</u> .	= an early form of tennis, in which the ball was hit with an open palm, was known in England as early as 1400. ¹
50	Pet. I <u>would</u> my bed were a <u>hazard</u> .	50: would = wish.
52	Licio. Why?	hazard = a tennis term, referring to the place, such as an aperture in a wall, in which an unreturnable, and hence winning, serve has been made. ² Petulus is brazen in his rudeness!
54	Pet. Nothing, but that I would have her head there among other <u>balls</u> .	54-55: one of the bawdiest lines in all the canon; the use of balls to refer to the testes dates back to the 14th century. ¹
56	Licio. <i>Video, pro intelligo</i> . Then hath she an hawk's	
58	eye.	57: Latin = "I see rather than understand." ⁶
60	Pet. O, <u>that</u> I were a partridge head.	= "if only".
62	Licio. To what end?	62: "for what purpose?"
64	Pet. That she might <u>tire with her eyes</u> on my countenance.	= the sense is "feast her eyes"; ¹⁶ tire is a term from falconry, used to describe a raptor tearing at the flesh of its prey. ¹
66	Licio. Wouldst thou be hanged?	67: hanging was more of an English concern than a Phrygian one.
68	Pet. <i>Scilicet</i> .	69: Latin = "indeed" (ironic). ¹
70	Licio. Well, she hath the tongue of a parrot.	
72	Pet. <u>That's a leaden dagger</u> in a velvet sheath, to have a	= "that would be like a dagger made of lead".
74	<u>black tongue</u> in a fair mouth.	= perhaps meaning "shrewish" or "malignant".

76 **Licio.** Tush, it is not for the blackness, but for the
78 babbling, for every hour she will cry “Walk, knave,
80 walk.”
82 **Pet.** Then will I mutter, “A rope for parrot, a rope.”
84 **Licio.** So maist thou be hanged, not by the lips, but by
86 the neck. Then, sir, hath she a calve's tooth.

88 **Pet.** O monstrous mouth! I would then it had been a
90 sheep's eye, and a neat's tongue.

92 **Licio.** It is not for the bigness, but the sweetness: all
94 her teeth are as sweet as the sweet tooth of a calf.

96 **Pet.** Sweetly meant.

98 **Licio.** She hath the ears of a want.

100 **Pet.** Doth she want ears?

102 **Licio.** I say the ears of a want, a mole; thou dost want
104 wit to understand me. She will hear, though she be
106 never so low on the ground.

108 **Pet.** Why then, if one ask her a question, it is likely
110 she will hearken to it.

112 **Licio.** Hearken thou after that. She hath the nose of a
114 sow.

116 **Pet.** Then belike there she wears her wedding ring.

118 **Licio.** No, she can smell a knave a mile off.

120 **Pet.** Let us go farther, Licio, she hath both us in the
wind.

122 **Licio.** She hath a beetle-brow.

124 **Pet.** What, is she beetle-browed?

126 **Licio.** Thou hast a beetle head! I say the brow of a
beetle, a little fly, whose brow is as black as velvet.

77-78: "*Walk, knave, walk*": Fairholt identifies this as "a
rude phrase which parrots were taught to use" (p. 263).¹⁶

80: "*A rope for parrot, a rope*" = another phrase commonly
taught to parrots.⁹ The *rope*, of course, is for hanging.

= likely meaning, "she is wanton";¹⁴ a possible variation of
the more common expression, "having a colt's tooth", which,
in referring to the friskiness of a young horse, carries the
same connotation.²³

= "would have preferred her to have".

= a *sheep's eye* is one that looks out amorously.¹ = cow's.

= ie. because a calf would gladly take a lump of sugar from
one's hand.⁹

93: ie. her hearing is acute; a *want* is a mole, which, because
it is blind, was believed to have good hearing.⁵ Interestingly,
the noun *want* referring to the mole actually entered English
before the modern use of *want* meaning "lack" or "need".¹

= lack, an easy joke.

= lack.

= ie. as a mole.

= ie. "asks her an improper question" (Bond, p. 523).⁹

= listen.

107: there was a custom of putting a ring in a swine's nose.¹⁶

= referring humorously to Petulus.

111: *go farther* = ie. continue, as on a path.

111-2: to *have one in the wind* means "to sense the
presence of":¹ hence, suggests Petulus, Celia can smell, or
detect, them both (Lancashire, p. 91).¹⁴

= modern editors usually take this phrase to mean "having an
overhanging brow", but the OED suggests it may refer to
shaggy brows, or brows that were lifted up to create a
scowling expression.¹ Licio may indeed intend the latter
meaning (see the note at line 118-9 below).

118: *beetle head* = a *beetle* was a tool with a heavy head,
used to drive in pegs or crush stones and so forth; hence,
a blockhead.¹

118-9: *I say...velvet* = Celia is of swarthy complexion.
Also, to be *black-browed* was to have a scowling brow.¹

122 *Pet.* What lips hath she?

124 *Licio.* Tush, the lips are no part of the head, only made for a double-leaf door for the mouth.

126 *Pet.* What is then the chin?

128 *Licio.* That is only the threshold to the door.

130 *Pet.* I perceive you are driven to the wall that stands behind the door, for this is ridiculous: but now you can say no more of the head, begin with the purtenances, for that was your promise.

134 *Licio.* The purtenances! it is impossible to reckon them up, much less to tell the nature of them: hoods, frontlets, wires, caules, curling-irons, perriwigs,

136 bodkins, fillets, hairlaces, ribbons, rolls, knotstrings,

138 glasses, combs, caps, hats, coifs, kerchers, clothes,

140 earrings, borders, crippins, shadows, spots, and so

142 many other trifles, as both I want the words of art to name them, time to utter them, and wit to remember them: these be but a few notes.

144 *Pet.* "Notes" quoth you, I note one thing.

146 *Licio.* What is that?

148

black as velvet = there are frequent references to *black velvet* in 16th century literature, though at least one mid-century source observes that velvet was available in "sundry", or various, colors.

= *double-leaf* was the early name for the twayblade orchid, whose leaves grow in pairs, and which at one point resemble little Pac-men. Also, each part of a *double-door* is called a *leaf*.¹ Lyly punningly combines the ideas.

= ie. driven to the last extremity.¹

= ie. subsidiary parts of the whole.¹

= count.

137-140: all definitions in this lengthy catalogue of women's accessories are from the OED, unless otherwise footnoted:

frontlet = a band worn on the forehead.

wire = a wire frame used to support a hairstyle.

caule = a small cap or net for the hair.

perriwig = a wig.

138: *bodkin* = a pin for holding up one's hair.

fillet = a band or ribbon for tying up one's hair.

hairlace = a string for tying up one's hair.

roll = a cushion that is part of a headdress.

knotstring = an accessory used "for fastening on a knot or bunch of ribbon (Bond, p.523).⁹

139: *glasses* = mirrors.

coif = a close-fitting cap tied under the chin.

kercher = obsolete word for *kerchief*, referring to a cloth used to cover one's head.

clothes = veils.¹

140: *border* = an ornamental border around the edge of a cap or other bit of clothing.

crippin = a net worn in the hair.

shadow = a broad-brimmed or forward projecting hat which protects the face from the sun.

spot = an artificial beauty mark, sometimes used to cover blemishes.

= lack.

= cleverness or intelligence.

= remarks or observations.²

= "say you".

150	Pet. That if <u>every part</u> require so much as the head, it will make the richest husband in the world ache at the heart.	= ie. every part of a woman's body. 150-1: ie. over the cost of maintaining his wife.
152	<i>Enter Pipenetta.</i>	Entering Character: Pipenetta is the maid of Celia (Mellacrites' daughter); all three servants of Mellacrites' household are now on stage.
154	Licio. But <u>soft</u> , here comes Pipenetta: – what news?	= "hold on a moment".
156	Pip. I would not be in your <u>coats</u> for anything.	157ff: Pipenetta arrives to offer a warning to the boys, but they playfully and deliberately misinterpret everything she says. coats = ie. servants' livery.
158	Licio. Indeed, if thou shouldest <u>rig</u> up and down in our jackets, thou wouldst be thought a very tomboy.	= frolic or behave in a wanton manner. ⁹
162	Pip. I mean I would not be in your <u>cases</u> .	= circumstances, situation. ¹
164	Pet. Neither shalt thou, Pipenetta, for first, they are too <u>little for thy body</u> , and then too fair, to pull over so <u>foul a skin</u> .	164-6: Petulus takes cases to mean "skins" ⁹ or "clothes." ⁵ = Pipenetta appears to be larger than the boys. = Petulus is not very nice to Pipenetta at all!
166	Pip. These boys be drunk! – I would not be in your <u>takings</u> .	= situations or predicaments. ⁹
168	Licio. I think so, for we take nothing in our hands but weapons, it is for thee to use needles and pins, a <u>sampler</u> , not a <u>buckler</u> .	171-3: women should concern themselves with sewing, men with weapons. = a bit of embroidery. ² = a small, round shield. ²
170	Pip. Nay then, we shall never <u>have done</u> ! I mean I would not be so <u>curst</u> as you shall be.	= "be finished here". = damned with curses. ¹ Petulus takes curst to be coursed , a hunting term which suggests the boys will be pursued like animals.
172	Pet. Worse and worse! We are no <u>chase</u> (pretty <u>mops</u> .) for deer we are not, neither <u>red nor fallow</u> , because we	= prey to be hunted. ¹ = a term of endearment for a girl. ¹ = two common species of European deer. ¹
174	are bachelors, and have not <u>cornu copia</u> , we <u>want</u>	180: cornu copia = literally the horn of plenty, but used punningly to thematically tie together the horns of the deer, and the horns which are proverbially said to grow on the foreheads of cuckolded husbands: since the boys are bachelors, they cannot be cuckolded. want = lack.
176	<u>heads</u> : hares we cannot be, because they are male one	181: heads = antlers, ie. horns.
178	year, and the next female, we change not our sex:	181-2: hares...sex = Lyly borrows another idea from <i>The Natural History</i> , in which Pliny cites the ancient Greek philosopher Archelaus for the belief that hares have both male and female characteristics, and do not require coupling to become pregnant (Pliny, 8.81). ¹⁰
180	badgers we are not, for our legs are one as long as another: and who will take us to be foxes, that stand so	183-4: badgers...another = contemporary literature occasionally referred to a superstition which suggested that the legs on one side of the badger were longer than those on the other.
182		
184		

186 near a goose, and bite not?

188 **Pip.** Fools you are, and therefore good game for
 190 wise men to hunt: but knaves I leave you, for honest
 192 wenches to talk of.

194 **Licio.** Nay, stay sweet Pipenetta, we are but disposed
 196 to be merry.

198 **Pip.** I marvel how old you will be before you be
 200 disposed to be honest. But this is the matter, my
 202 master is gone abroad, and wants his page to wait on
 204 him: my mistress would rise, and lacks your worship

206 to fetch her hair.

208 **Pet.** Why, is it not on her head?

210 **Pip.** Methinks it should, but I mean the hair that she
 212 must wear today.

214 **Licio.** Why, doth she wear any but her own?

216 **Pip.** In faith, sir, no, I am sure it's her own when she
 218 pays for it. But do you hear the strange news at the
 220 court?

222 **Pet.** No, except this be it, to have one's hair lie all
 224 night out of the house from one's head.

226 **Pip.** Tush! Everything that Midas toucheth is gold.

228 **Pet.** The devil it is!

230 **Pip.** Indeed, gold is the devil.

232 **Licio.** Thou art deceived, wench, angels are gold. But
 is it true?

Pip. True? Why, the meat that he toucheth turneth to
 gold, so doth the drink, so doth his raiment.

Pet. I would he would give me a good box on the ear,
 that I might have a golden cheek.

Licio. How happy shall we be if he would but stroke
 our heads, that we might have golden hairs. But let us
 all in, lest he lose the virtue of the gift before we taste
 the benefit.

= **goose** also means "a fool", referring to Pipenetta.

= women.

191-2: "don't be mad, we are just kidding around!"

195-6: **my master** = ie. Mellacrites, who is of course the
 master of all three of them.
 = out and about. = lacks, is missing. = attend.

197: **my mistress would rise** = ie. "Celia wishes to get out
 of bed", but the sense seems to be "wishes to get herself
 ready".
your worship = ironic, of course.

= ie. "get her wig", but obviously and humorously ambi-
 guous.

202-3: **the hair...today** = the *Encyclopedia Britannica*
 (1911) notes that Queen Elizabeth herself owned "eighty
 attires of false hair". In the 16th century, wigs were used to
 simulate genuine hair, but became a costume feature in the
 17th. (Vol. 28, p. 624).³

= unless.

= **angels** were old English coins, having an image of the
 archangel Michael stamped on them; an easy and common
 pun, as well as an anachronism.

= clothing.

= wish.

= yellow-dyed hair was fashionable during the age of
 Elizabeth.

= ie. go in. = power.

234 **Pip.** If he take a cudgel and that turn to gold, yet
236 beating you with it, you shall only feel the weight of
gold.

238 **Pet.** What difference to be "beaten with gold", and to
be "beaten gold"?

240 **Pip.** As much as to say, drink before you go, and go
242 before you drink.

244 **Licio.** Come, let us go, lest we drink of a dry cup for
246 our long tarrying.

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF ACT I.

= stick or rod, used usually to beat someone with.

238: **What difference** = ie. "what is the difference between the expressions".

beaten with gold = overlaid or embroidered with gold, but of course punning on **beaten**.

= **beaten** here refers to the process by which any malleable metal might be shaped by repeatedly striking it.¹

= "the difference is as great as there is in saying".

= ie. receive a **dry**, or severe, beating.^{1,16}

= lingering.²

ACT II.

SCENE I.

The same: the gardens before Midas' palace.

Enter Eristus and Celia.

Entering Characters: the counselor *Eristus*, we remember, is obsessed with love; he also carries a torch for Mellacrites' daughter *Celia*.

1 *Erist.* Fair Celia, thou seest of gold there is satiety, of
2 love there cannot.

= overabundance.

= ie. cannot be too much.

4 *Cel.* If thou shouldst wish that whatsoever thou
5 thoughtest might be love, as Midas whatever he
6 touched might be gold, it may be love would be as
7 loathsome to thine ears, as gold is to his eyes, and
8 make thy heart pinch with melancholy, as his guts
do with famine.

4-7: ie. "if love were as plentiful as gold is in the kingdom,
you would be sick of that too."

8: **pinch with melancholy** = be tormented or pressed with
depression.

8-9: **his guts...famine** = here is our first hint of the
problem Midas is having with his "gift": since everything,
including food, turns to gold at his touch, he is actually
starving to death! Daniel notes Lyly's interesting choice to
not present a scene, which the audience would have
expected, of Midas first discovering the unhappy side of his
gift (p. 373).⁵

10

12 *Erist.* No, sweet Celia, in love there is variety.

= ie. are fickle.

14 *Cel.* Indeed men vary in their love.

16 *Erist.* They vary their love, yet change it not.

18 *Cel.* Love and change are at variance, therefore if they
vary, they must change.

= in conflict.

20 *Erist.* Men change the manner of their love, not the
humour; the means how to obtain, not the mistress they

20-22: **Men change...honour** = ie. men change the way
they show their love, but not the love itself; and change the
methods they employ to win their women, but are constant
in whom they love.

22 honour. So did Jupiter, that could not entreat Danae by
24 golden words, possess his love by a golden shower,
not altering his affection, but using art.

22-24: **So did...art** = to support his point, Eristus brings
up *Jupiter*, who changed his tactics (ie. his shape) to win
Danae, but whose love for her remained constant. This is the
second reference in this play already to the myth of Jupiter
visiting the maiden Danae in the form of a shower of gold:
see the note at Act I.i.104-5.

art = skill or cunning.

26 *Cel.* The same Jupiter was an eagle, a swan, a bull;

26: emphasizing Jupiter's fickle ways, Celia refers to three of
the forms the king of the gods has taken to seduce both boys
and women:

(1) in the form of an **eagle**, Jupiter (*a*) pursued (unsuc-
cessfully) the Titan goddess **Asteria** (this was according to
Ovid),²⁴ and (*b*) kidnapped the handsome Trojan prince
Ganymede, employing him as the cup-bearer of the gods.

(2) as a **swan**, Jupiter seduced **Leda**, resulting in the birth
of the future **Helen of Troy**; and

and for every saint a new shape, as men have for

28 every mistress a new shadow. If you take example

30 of the gods, who more wanton, more wavering? if of yourselves, being but men, who will think you more

32 constant than gods? Eristus, if gold could have allured mine eyes, thou knowest Midas, that commandeth all things to be gold, had conquered: if threats might have

34 feared my heart, Midas, being a king, might have commanded my affections: if love, gold, or authority

36 might have enchanted me, Midas had obtained by love, gold, and authority, *Quorum si singula nostrum flectere non poterant, potuissent omnia mentem.*

38

40 **Erist.** Ah, Celia, if kings say they love, and yet dissemble, who dare say that they dissemble, and not

42 love? They command the affections of others [to] yield, and their own to be believed. My tears, which have

44 made furrows in my cheeks, and in mine eyes fountains; my sighs, which have made of my heart a

46 furnace, and kindled in my head flames; my body, that melteth by piecemeal; and my mind, that pineth at an

48 instant, may witness that my love is both unspotted,

50 and unspeakable: *Quorum si singula duram flectere non poterant, deberent, omnia mentem.* – But soft, here cometh the princess, with the rest of the lords.

52

54 *Enter Sophronia, Mellacrites, Martius and other courtiers.*

56 **Soph.** Mellacrites, I cannot tell whether I should

(3) Jupiter took the shape of a beautiful **bull** to attract the attention of the maiden **Europa**; after she slid onto his back, he jumped into the ocean and took her to **Crete**, where he seduced her, begetting **Minos**, the king of Crete.⁷

= for every woman he wanted, Jupiter took on a new appearance.
saint = ie. a woman who is worshipped like a saint.¹⁴

28: **a new shadow** = earlier editors suggested this refers to a new portrait, painted for men's keeping.⁹ But Daniel's interpretation of **shadow** as "guise", given the previous description of Jupiter's activities, may make more sense (p. 373).⁵

take = "follow the".

29: **who more...wavering?** = ie. "who are more unchaste and fickle (than the gods)?"

29-30: **if of yourselves** = ie. "if you men use yourselves as models".

= faithful (to one woman).

= ie. "would have won me".

= instilled fear into.

= power, political supremacy.¹

= ie. "would have won me".

37-38: **Latin** = "If each of these matters individually were not able to persuade my mind, all of them jointly should have been able to."⁶ Celia adapts a line from Book 9 of *Metamorphoses*.

= ie. "who would dare accuse a king of only pretending to be in love".

47: **by piecemeal** = a little bit at a time.¹

47-48: **that pineth at an instant** = which suffers at the same time.¹

= pure.¹

49: **unspeakable** = ineffable, cannot be expressed in words.¹

49-50: **Latin** = "If each of these matters joined together were not able to persuade a hard heart, each of them individually *should* have been able to."⁶ Eristus modifies Celia's quotation.

Entering Characters: **Sophronia** is Midas' daughter; we have already met the king's counselors. Mellacrites was the advisor who recommended that the king ask Bacchus for gold.

more mislike thy counsel or Midas' consent, but the
58 covetous humour of you both I contemn and wonder

at, being unfit for a king, whose honour should consist
60 in liberality, not greediness; and unworthy the calling
of Mellacrites, whose fame should rise by the soldiers'
62 god, Mars, not by the merchants' god, Gold.

64 **Mell.** Madam, things past cannot be recalled, but
repented; and therefore are rather to be pitied than
66 punished. It now behooveth us how to redress the
miserable estate of our king, not to dispute of the
68 occasion. Your highness sees, and without grief you
cannot see, that his meat turneth to massy gold in his
70 mouth, and his wine slideth down his throat like liquid
gold: if he touch his robes they are turned to gold, and
72 what is not that toucheth him, but becommeth gold?

74 **Erist.** Ay, Mellacrites, if thy tongue had been turned to
gold before thou gavest our king such counsel, Midas'
76 heart had been full of ease, and thy mouth of gold.

78 **Mar.** If my advice had taken place, Midas, that now
sitteth over head and ears in crowns, had worn upon

80 his head many kings' crowns, and been conqueror of
the world, that now is commander of dross. That
82 greediness of Mellacrites, whose heart-strings are
made of Plutus' purse-strings, hath made Midas a lump
84 of earth, that should be a god on earth; – and thy
effeminate mind, Eristus, whose eyes are stitched on
86 Celia's face, and thoughts gyved to her beauty, hath
bred in all the court such a tender wantonness, that
88 nothing is thought of but love, a passion proceeding of
beastly lust, and coloured with a courtly name of love.
90 Thus whilst we follow the nature of things, we forget
the names. Since this unsatiable thirst of gold, and

92 untemperate humour of lust crept into the king's court,
soldiers have begged alms of artificers, and with their
94 helmet on their head been glad to follow a lover with a
glove in his hat, which so much abateth the courage of

96 true captains, that they must account it more honourable
in the court to be a coward, so rich and amorous, than

= ie. adopting Mellacrites' suggestion.

58: **covetous humour** = greedy disposition.

contemn = scorn.

wonder = marvel; Sophronia is berating Mellacrites for the foolish advice he gave Midas.

= generosity.

= reputation.

64-72 (below): note how Mellacrites attempts to turn the conversation away from the blame he deserves for his having misled Midas, and towards a solution to the king's emergency.

= condition.

= cause.¹

= solid and heavy.¹

= one may wonder how Midas can wear any clothes at all, if they all turn to solid gold at his touch.

= would have been.

= ie. been taken. = who.

79: **sitteth over head and ears** = is completely immersed in or surrounded by;¹ a common expression.

crowns = a type of British gold coin, first struck under Henry VIII.

= ie. he who is now. = contemptuous term for money.

= the Greek god of wealth. = ie. "turned Midas into a".

= "he who".

= fettered.¹

= an effeminate looseness of morals.¹

= from.

= disguised under the pretext of.

91-113: **Since this...safety** = Martius bemoans the soldiers' thoughts turning away from military preparedness, and towards amorous pursuits.

= craftsmen.

= a common Elizabethan conceit was for a lover to wear a token of his mistress', such as her **glove**, on his person.

= military commanders, perhaps meaning all soldiers.

= "provided he is" (Bond, p. 524).⁹

98 in a camp to be valiant, if poor and maimed. He is
100 more favoured that pricks his finger with his mistress'
102 needle, than he that breaks his lance on his enemy's
104 face; and he that hath his mouth full of fair words, than
he that hath his body full of deep scars. If one be old,
and have silver hairs on his beard, so he have golden
ruddocks in his bags, he must be wise and honourable.

106 If young and have curled locks on his head, amorous
glances with his eyes, smooth speeches in his mouth,
108 every lady's lap shall be his pillow, every lady's face
his glass, every lady's ear a sheath for his flatteries;
110 only soldiers, if they be old, must beg in their own
countries; if young, try the fortune of wars in another.

112 He is the man, that, being let blood, carries his arm in
a scarf of his mistress' favour, not he that bears his leg
on a stilt for his country's safety.

114 *Soph.* Stay, Martius, though I know love to grow to
116 such looseness, and hoarding to such misery, that I

118 may rather grieve at both, than remedy either: yet thy
animating my father to continual arms, to conquer
crowns, hath only brought him into imminent danger

120 of his own head. The love he hath followed, I
122 fear unnatural; the riches he hath got, I know
unmeasurable; the wars he hath levied, I doubt
unlawful, – hath drawn his body with gray hairs to

124 the grave's mouth; and his mind with eating cares to

desperate determinations: ambition hath but two steps,
126 the lowest, blood; the highest, envy: both these hath
my unhappy father climbed, digging mines of gold with
128 the lives of men, and now envied of the whole world;
is environed with enemies round about the world, not
130 knowing that ambition hath one heel nailed in hell,
though she stretch her finger to touch the heavens. I
132 would the gods would remove this punishment, so that
Midas would be penitent. Let him thrust thee, Eristus,

= ie. soldiers' camp.

= ie. sewing needle.

= who.

= "so long as he has".

104: *ruddocks* = originally referring to the robin red-breast,
ruddock was used, along with the phrase "red gold", to refer
to gold coins.¹⁶

must be = ie. "is accounted".

= "if he is".

= flattering.

= mirror. = metaphorically, a receptacle for his praise.

= ie. true. = for alms (on account of their poverty).

= ie. they have to go to other countries if they want to
pursue their profession.

= "he is considered a real man", or "he is the favoured
man".¹⁴

= crutch; an interesting opposition from Lyly, of a wounded
leg supported by a crutch, against an injured arm wrapped in
a lady's scarf.

= stop.

116: *looseness* = loose morals in the court.

hoarding = ie. "the amassing of the plentiful gold
(which has led)".

117: *than remedy either* = Sophronia has no solution to
either problem.

117-9: *yet thy...crowns* = Midas has been using his gold
to pay for an army that has been viciously attacking his
neighbors, much to Sophronia's chagrin.

animating = inspiring or giving encouragement to.

= suspect to be.

= ie. have all.

= ie. Midas' troubles have caused him to suffer from a cor-
rosive torment; but *eating cares*, of course, also touches on
the king's starvation.

= ie. is manifested in one of two ways, or leads one down
either of two paths.

= ie. "the lowest step being the spilling of blood".

= despised by.¹

= surrounded.

= personified *ambition* reaches out.

= wish. = provided that.¹⁴

= ie. exile.

<p>134 with thy <u>love</u>, <u>into Italy</u>, where they honour Lust for a</p> <p>god, as the <u>Egyptians did dogs</u>: – thee, Mellacrites, with</p> <p>136 thy greediness of gold, to the utmost parts of the west, where all the guts of the earth are gold: – and thee,</p> <p>138 Martius, that <u>soudest but</u> blood and terror, into those barbarous nations, where nothing is to be found but 140 blood and terror. Let Phrygia be an example of chastity, not lust; <u>liberality</u>, not covetousness; valour, 142 not tyranny. I wish not your bodies banished, but your minds, that my father and your king may be our honour, 144 and the world's wonder. – And thou, Celia, and all you ladies, learn this of Sophronia: that beauty in a minute 146 is both a blossom and a <u>blast</u>; love, a worm which seeming to live in the eye, dies in the heart. You be all 148 young and fair: endeavour all to be wise and virtuous, that when, like roses, you shall <u>fall from the stalk</u>, you 150 may be gathered and <u>put to the still</u>.</p> <p>152 Cel. Madam, I am free from love, and unfortunate to be beloved.</p> <p>154 Erist. To be free from love is strange, but to think 156 <u>scorn</u> to be beloved, monstrous.</p> <p>158 Soph. Eristus, thy tongue doth itch to talk of love, and my ears <u>tingle</u> to hear it. – I <u>charge</u> you all, if you owe</p> <p>160 any duty to your king, to go presently unto the temple of Bacchus, offer praise-gifts and sacrifice, that Midas 162 may be released of his wish, <u>or his life</u>: this I entreat you, this Midas commands you. <u>Jar</u> not with 164 yourselves, agree in one for your king, if ever you took Midas for your lawful king.</p> <p>166 Mell. Madam, we will go, and omit nothing that duty 168 may perform, or <u>pains</u>.</p> <p>170 Soph. Go speedily, lest Midas die before you return: – and you, Celia, shall go with me, that with talk we 172 may <u>beguile</u> the time, and my father think of no <u>meat</u>.</p> <p>174 Cel. I attend.</p> <p>176 [Exeunt.]</p>	<p>134: <i>love</i> = ie. obsession with love. <i>into Italy</i> = Elizabethan plays commonly alluded to <i>Italy</i> as a nation known for its loose morals.</p> <p>= another reference to Anubis, the Egyptian god with the face of a dog.</p> <p>136-7: <i>to the utmost...gold</i> = reference to the Western Hemisphere: by the early 16th century, the Spanish were looting Central and South America of its precious metals.</p> <p>= speaks of nothing but.</p> <p>= generousness.</p> <p>144-5: <i>all you ladies</i> = perhaps directed at the audience.¹⁴</p> <p>= blight; Sophronia comments on how quickly beauty fades.</p> <p>= ie. "lose your beauty", a metaphor. = ie. distilled; rose oil was produced by distillation.</p> <p>152-3: <i>unfortunate to be beloved</i> = ie. by Eristus.</p> <p>= ie. "it worthy of scorn".</p> <p>159: <i>tingle</i> = ie. experience a discomforting ringing sensa- tion.¹ <i>charge</i> = command.</p> <p>= ie. or let him die (rather than suffer as he does). = argue.</p> <p>= efforts.</p> <p>171-2: Sophronia knows her father has feelings for Celia, and so hopes to distract him from his hunger with her presence and conversation. <i>beguile</i> = pass. <i>meat</i> = food.</p>
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ACT II, SCENE II.

The same: the gardens before Midas' palace.

Enter Licio, Petulus, Pipenetta.

Entering Characters: the three servants of Mellacrites' household enter the stage.

1 **Licio.** Ah, my girl, is not this a golden world?

2

3 **Pip.** It is all one as if it were lead with me, and yet
4 as golden with me as with the king: for I see it, and
5 feel it not; he feels it, and enjoys it not.

= all the same.

= ie. "all that gold does me as much good as it does Midas".

= ie. "I cannot get my hands on any of it."⁹

6

7 **Licio.** Gold is but the earth's garbage, a weed bred by
8 the sun, the very rubbish of barren ground.

9 **Pet.** Tush, Licio, thou art unlettered; all the earth is an
10 egg: the white, silver; the yolk, gold.

= uneducated, ie. ignorant.

11

12 **Licio.** Why, thou fool, what hen should lay that egg?

13

14 **Pip.** I warrant a goose.

= ie. fool.

15

16 **Licio.** Nay, I believe a bull.

= the joke is not exactly clear. According to the OED, a 17th century meaning of **bull** was "a ludicrous jest" (see **bull**, *n.4*); it is possible that Lyly had used **bull** here in some similar vein.

17

18 **Pet.** Blurt to you both! it was laid by the sun.

= an exclamation of scorn, similar to "to hell with".

19

20 **Pip.** The sun is rather a cock than a hen.

= Pipenetta means that the sun god Apollo was male, not female.⁴

21

22 **Licio.** 'Tis true girl, else how could Titan have troaden
23 Daphne?

23-24: **else how...Daphne** = ie. "how else could the sun god have slept with (**troaden**)^{1,14} Daphne?"

Daphne was a lovely maiden who was chased by the amorous **Apollo (Titan)**, but she was changed into a laurel tree by her mother Gaia, the earth goddess, to protect her from the lusty god.⁴ Despite Licio's claim, Apollo never did catch Daphne, but of course the servant is being facetious.

Titan = as a descendent of the original Titan gods, the sun god (usually called **Phoebus** or **Apollo**) was occasionally referred to as **Titan** in the late 16th century, following the example set by Ovid and others.⁴

troaden = alternate form of **trodden**.

24 **Pet.** I weep over both your wits! if I prove in every
25 respect no difference between an egg and gold, will
26 you not then grant gold to be an egg?

26-27: **if I prove...and gold** = Petulus will use a logician's sophistry to prove an absurd assertion.

= admit, allow.

27 **Pip.** Yes, but I believe thy idle imagination will make
28 it an addle egg.

= rotten; note the wordplay of **addle** with **idle**.

29

30 **Licio.** Let us hear. Proceed, Doctor Egg.

= any learned man might be addressed as **Doctor**.

31

32 **Pet.** Gold will be cracked: a common saying, a cracked
33 crown.

35: **will** = ie. can.

35-36: **cracked crown** = the gold coin known as a **crown**

38 **Pip.** Ay, that's a broken head.

40 **Pet.** Nay, then I see thou hast a broken wit.

42 **Licio.** Well, suppose gold will crack.

44 **Pet.** So will an egg.

46 **Licio.** On.

48 **Pet.** An egg is roasted in the fire.

50 **Pip.** Well.

52 **Pet.** So is gold tried in the fire.

54 **Licio.** Forth.

56 **Pet.** An egg (as physicians say) will make one lusty.

58 **Pip.** Conclude.

60 **Pet.** And who knows not that gold will make one frolic?

62 **Licio.** Pipenetta, this is true, for it is called "egg", as a
64 thing that doth egg on; so doth gold.

66 **Pip.** Let us hear all.

68 **Pet.** Eggs poached are for a weak stomach; and gold
70 boiled, for a consuming body.

72 **Licio.** Spoken like a physician.

74 **Pip.** Or a fool of necessity.

76 **Pet.** An egg is eaten at one sup, and a portage lost at
78 one cast.

80 **Licio.** Gamester-like concluded.

82 **Pet.** Eggs make custards, and gold makes spoons to eat
84 them.

Pip. A reason dough-baked.

had a picture of the sovereign stamped on it; if the coin developed a crack through the ring surrounding the head, the coin was said to be **cracked**, and banned from circulation; but a **crown** could also refer to a person's head, hence Pipenetta's response.

46: "go on."

= **to try** is to extract gold or other precious metal from ore by melting it in a **fire**.¹

54: "continue."

= healthy and vigorous; **eggs** were considered aphrodisiacs.¹

= merry, joyful.¹

= the use of **egg** to mean "incite" goes back at least to 1200 A.D., but has a different etymology than the animal **egg**.¹

68-69: **gold...body** = a solution of gold was believed to have medicinal value.⁹

consuming body = wasting away of the body, as from consumption.¹

= necessarily, unavoidably.¹

75: **at one sup** = in one sip, ie. in a single mouthful or bite.¹
portage, or **portague**, refers to a Portuguese coin.⁹
Petulus is continuing his comparison of eggs to gold.

= meaning both (1) a toss of the dice, as in a wager, and (2) an episode of vomiting, as a contrast with the **eaten egg**.

= like a gambler.

= metaphorically, "poorly concluded": **dough-baked** literally refers to underbaked dough.¹⁶

86 **Licio.** O! the oven of his wit was not thoroughly heated.

88 **Pet.** Only this odds I find between money and eggs,
90 which makes me wonder; that being more pence in the
92 world than eggs, that one should have three eggs for a
94 penny, and not three pence for an egg.

96 **Pip.** A wonderful matter! but your wisdom is over-shot
98 in your comparison, for eggs have chickens, gold hath
none.

96 **Pet.** Mops, I pity thee! gold hath eggs: change an angel
98 into ten shillings, and all those pieces are the angel's
eggs.

100 **Licio.** He hath made a spoke: wilt thou eat an egg? –

but soft, here come our masters, let us shrink aside.

102 *Enter Mellacrites, Martius, Eristus.*

104 **Mell.** A short answer, yet a sound; Bacchus is pithy

106 and pitiful.

108 [*Reads the oracle*]

= common alternate form of *thoroughly*.

= difference.²

= "there existing more pennies".

= ie. has missed the mark.

96: **Mops** = term of endearment for a young girl.

96-98: **change...eggs** = the ten shillings one can get as
change for the gold coin known as an **angel** can be said to be
the **eggs** laid by the angel. Introduced in 1465, the **angel** (so
called because it featured, on its obverse side, the image of
the archangel Michael slaying the dragon) was in fact worth
exactly ten shillings in the late 16th century.

= a variation on "he has put a spoke in your wheel", meaning
Petulus has successfully refuted or thwarted Pipenetta's
reasoning.^{1,9}

101: **soft** = "hold on".

our masters = "our betters."⁹

let us shrink aside = "let us withdraw."¹ A convention of
Elizabethan drama permitted onstage characters to retire and
observe those who have just entered the stage, while
remaining unobserved themselves.

103: the counselors have returned from their trip to Bacchus'
temple, where they went to seek the advice from the god
through his oracle (see the note below at line 108 for a
discussion of **oracles**).

105: **a sound** = ie. a sound one. Mellacrites is describing the
oracle they have received.

pithy = sincere, of sound judgment.¹
= literally "full of pity", hence, "merciful".

= **oracle** could refer to the advice given by a god, the
location at which the advice was given, or the human
medium through which the advice was given. There were
numerous oracles to whom members of the ancient world
could turn to receive advice from a god, the most famous
being **Apollo's** oracle at **Delphi**. Generally, in return for a
gift, a donor could ask a question of a god, who would give
an answer through a priest or priestess, just as the dead are
believed by some to speak to the living through a medium in
a trance in a modern séance.

The oracles of the gods were infamous for their
ambiguity. The most famous example of this was told by
Herodotus, in his *Histories*, of **Croesus**, the king of **Lydia**,
who asked the oracle of Delphi whether he should attack the
incipient Persian kingdom. The response from the god was
that if he did attack the Persians, he would overthrow a great
empire. Unfortunately, Croesus realized too late that the
overthrown empire would be his own.¹³

110 *In Pactolus go bathe thy wish and thee,
Thy wish the waves shall have, and thou be free.*

112

114 **Mar.** I understand no oracles! shall the water turn
everything to gold? what then shall become of the
fish? shall he be free from gold? what then shall
116 become of us, of his crown, of our country? I like not
these riddles.

118

120 **Mell.** Thou, Martius, art so warlike, that thou wouldest
cut off the wish with a sword, not cure it with a salve:
but the gods, that can give the desires of the heart,
122 can as easily withdraw the torment. Suppose Vulcan

124 should so temper thy sword, that were thy heart never
so valiant, thine arm never so strong, yet thy blade
should never draw blood; wouldest not thou wish to
126 have a weaker hand, and a sharper edge?

128 **Mar.** Yes.

130 **Mell.** If Mars should answer thee thus, "Go bathe thy
sword in water, and wash thy hands in milk, and thy
132 sword shall cleave adamant, and thy heart answer the
sharpness of thy sword"; wouldest not thou try the
134 conclusion?

136 **Mar.** What else?

138 **Mell.** Then let Midas believe till he have tried, and
think that the gods rule as well by giving remedies, as
140 granting wishes. – But Eristus is mum.

142 **Mar.** Celia hath sealed his mouth.

144 **Erist.** Celia hath sealed her face in my heart, which I
am no more ashamed to confess, than thou that Mars
146 hath made a scar in thy face, Martius. But let us in
to the king. – Sir boys, you wait well!

148

150 **Pet.** We durst not go to Bacchus, for if I see a grape,
my head aches.

110: **Pactolus** = a river flowing from Mt. Tmolus in the ancient state of Lydia, located in today's far-western Turkey. The waters of this river were said to contain large amounts of gold dust. It was thought that when Midas immersed himself in the stream, as commanded here by the oracle, to be relieved of his curse, the river itself acquired his power (hence, line 111's, *Thy wish the waves shall have*).¹¹
thy wish = ie. Midas' golden touch.

113-7: Martius is frustrated by the unclear nature of the oracle, which raises as many questions as it answers.

= healing balm.

122-6: **Suppose...edge** = "Suppose you were the bravest and strongest warrior in the world: if Vulcan were to give you a strong arm but a dull sword, would you not prefer a weaker arm and a sharper sword?" **Vulcan** was the Roman blacksmith god.

= adjust the strength of one's sword by heating and cooling it – a typical job for a blacksmith.

130: **If Mars...answer thee** = "Well, suppose Mars (the god of war) gave you this answer:" What follows are Mars' imagined instructions for Martius to follow in order to get his hypothetical wish.

= cut. = legendary mineral of great hardness.

133-4: **try the conclusion** = see what would happen (by following the instructions).

136: "so what?", or "what follows?"

= ie. tested the god's oracle.

= Mellacrites notices that Eristus has not spoken a word since the lords entered the scene.

= Eristus engages in some light wordplay, using **sealed** in its sense of "impressed".

= ie. go in.

= Eristus, noticing the servants, chides them for not having gone with them on their visit to Bacchus' oracle.⁹

= dare.

= a reference to the discomfort of a hangover.

152	Erist. And if I find a <u>cudgel</u> , I'll make your shoulders ache.	= stick or rod usually used to beat another. The history of finding humour in beating one's servants goes back to ancient Greek drama.
154	Mell. And you, Licio, <u>wait on yourself</u> .	= perhaps a warning, e.g., "watch yourself."
156	Licio. I cannot <u>choose</u> , sir, I am always so near myself.	= ie. choose to do otherwise.
158	Mell. I'll be as near you as your skin presently.	159: another "humorous" threat of a good pummeling.
160	[<i>Exeunt.</i>]	
END OF ACT II.		

ACT III.

SCENE I.

The same: the gardens before Midas' palace.

Enter Midas, Mellacrites, Martius, Eristus.

1 **Midas.** [*Reading the oracle*]

2
3 *In Pactolus go bathe thy wish and thee,*
4 *Thy wish the waves shall have, and thou be free.*

6 Miserable Midas, as unadvised in thy wish, as in thy
7 success unfortunate. O, unquenchable thirst of gold,
8 which turneth men's heads to lead, and maketh them
9 blockish; their hearts to iron, and maketh them
10 covetous; their eyes to delight in the view, and maketh
11 them blind in the use. I that did possess mines of gold,
12 could not be contented till my mind were also a mine.
13 Could not the treasure of Phrygia, nor the tributes of
14 Greece, nor mountains in the east, whose guts are
15 gold, satisfy thy mind with gold? Ambition eateth
16 gold, and drinketh blood; climbeth so high by other
17 men's heads, that she breaketh her own neck. What
18 should I do with a world of ground, whose body must
19 be content with seven foot of earth?

20 Or why did I covet to get so many crowns, having
21 myself but one head? Those that took small vessels

1-83 (below): the following monologue by Midas, clocking in at 737 words, is one of the longest in the entire Elizabethan canon, surpassed only by a 775-word speech which appeared in the early drama, *Gorboduc*, which was published in 1561.

The longest unbroken published speeches in Shakespeare's works, by contrast, are those of:

(1) Biron in Act III.iv of *Love's Labour's Lost*, which contains 588 words; however, the editors of *The New Oxford Shakespeare* (Oxford University Press, 2016) believe that 22 of these lines (comprising 168 words) were printed accidentally (having been included in a rough draft of the speech), and thus were never actually recited on stage; and

(2) Richard III in Act III.ii of *Henry IV, Part I*, which contains 575 words.

I have broken up Midas' lengthy prose speech into paragraphs to facilitate reading; note, however, that it was not the normal practice of our ancient authors and publishers to do so.

6-77: likely delivered as an aside.

unadvised = rash.¹

= outcome or sequel⁹ (as in "successive" or "succession").

= doltish, stupid.

= who.

= ie. because of its darkness.⁹

= the annual payments made to Midas by those nations he has conquered.

15-17: *Ambition...neck* = one who aspires to rise often-times does so by taking advantage of, and even violently crushing, others; in the end, however, ambition always destroys the aspirant.

= ie. in which to be buried at death.

20-32: (below): Midas turns his thoughts to regret over his insatiable need to conquer, and harsh treatment of, the kingdoms that surround Phrygia.

21-23: *Those that...conqueror* = a self-damning contrast:

22 at the sea, I accompted pirates; and myself that
suppressed whole fleets, a conqueror: as though

24 robberies of Midas might mask under the names of
triumphs, and the traffic of other nations be called
26 treachery. Thou hast pampered up thyself with
slaughter, as Diomedes did his horse with blood;

28 so unsatiable thy thirst, so heavy thy sword. Two
books have I always carried in my bosom, calling
30 them the dagger and the sword; in which the names of
all princes, noblemen, and gentlemen were dedicated
32 to slaughter, or if not (which worse is), to slavery.

34 O, my lords, when I call to mind my cruelties in
Lycaonia, my usurping in Getulia, my oppression in

Sola: then do I find neither mercies in my conquests,

36 nor colour for my wars, nor measure in my taxes. I
have written my laws in blood, and made my gods of
38 gold: I have caused the mothers' wombs to be their
children's tombs, cradles to swim in blood like boats,

40 and the temples of the gods a stews for strumpets.

42 Have not I made the sea to groan under the number of
my ships? And have they not perished, that there was

44 not two left to make a number? Have I not thrust my
subjects into a camp, like oxen into a cart; whom
having made slaves by unjust wars, I use now as slaves
46 for all wars?

those who capture individual sailing ships Midas accounted (*accompted*)² pirates, but he himself, who destroyed entire navies of his enemies, he considered to be a conquering hero.

Bond⁹ here sees a reference to the pirating activities of the era's English sailors, such as Francis Drake.

= performed by. = ie. conceal their true natures.

= engorged (Daniel, p. 374).⁵

= *Diomedes* was a king of Thrace who fed his horses human flesh. One of Hercules' Twelve Labours was to capture these horses.⁴

31-32: *dedicated to slaughter* = designated for killing.

33-46 (below): in this paragraph, Midas bemoans his treatment of the individuals of the nations on which he has made war.

34: *Lycaonia* = a region in south-central Asia Minor, bordering Phrygia on its south-east side.

Getulia = an area in north-west Africa, obviously an error; Bond plausibly suggests that Lyly meant to write *Galatia*, which lies to the immediate north of Phrygia, and which is mentioned later at Act IV.i.262.

= also known as *Soli*, a city in Cilicia located on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea in Asia Minor, to the south-east of Lycaonia. We note that the inhabitants were infamous for speaking Greek badly, so much so that it gave us the modern word, *solecism*, referring to a bit of faulty grammar.^{1,11}

= acceptable pretexts. = reasonable limit.

38-39: note the wordplay of *wombs* and *tombs*.

= the metaphorical image of cradles floating in a stream of blood, like a grotesque fleet of boats, is an arresting one.
= brothels (*stews*) for prostitutes.

41-42: *Have not...ships* = Bond sees an "unmistakable allusion" to the Spanish Armada, which the English had defeated only two years before in 1588 (p. 526).⁹ Midas himself is referring to his failed attempts to capture the island of Lesbos.

43-44: *thrust my...camp* = ie. impressed all his male subjects into soldiers to fight on his behalf.

47-67 (below): Midas rues the immoral tactics he has used to overthrow his neighbours' governments.

48 Have not I enticed the subjects of my neighbor
princes to destroy their natural kings, like moaths

50 that eat the cloth in which they were bred, like vipers
that gnaw the bowels of which they were born,

52 and like worms that consume the wood in which they
were engendered? To what kingdoms have not I
54 pretended claim? as though I had been by the gods
created heir apparent to the world, making every trifle

a title; and all the territories about me traitors to me.

56 Why did I wish that all might be gold I touched, but
that I thought all men's hearts would be touched with

58 gold? that what policy could not compass, nor prows,

gold might have commanded, and conquered? A

60 bridge of gold did I mean to make in that island where
all my navy could not make a breach. Those islands
62 did I long to touch, that I might turn them to gold, and
myself to glory. But unhappy Midas, who by the same
64 means perisheth himself, that he thought to conquer
others: being now become a shame to the world, a

66 scorn to that petty prince, and to thyself a
consumption.

47-48: **Have not...kings** = Midas has bribed those in
neighbouring lands to overthrow their kings.

Bond sees a reference here to the many reports sent by
English continental spies of Spanish plans to assassinate
both Queen Elizabeth and William of Orange (aka William
the Silent), leader of the house of Orange and instigator of
the Dutch revolt against the Spanish; William was indeed
assassinated in 1584.^{3,9}

moaths = ie. moths, a common late 16th and early 17th
century alternate form.

49-50: **vipers...born** = the belief that vipers ate their way
out of their mothers' wombs when they were ready to be
born was an ancient one.⁹

= born, begotten.¹

54: **heir apparent** = the oldest child of a monarch, and thus
the one who will succeed to the throne, should he or she
survive.

54-55: **making...a title** = the sense is, "taking over other
kingdoms on the slightest pretexts".

55: **and** = ie. and making.

traitors to me = hence providing Midas with a pretext
for attacking his neighbors.⁹

= swayed or corrupted.¹

58-59: **that what...conquered** = Midas regrets adopting the
belief that what he could not achieve (**compass**)² through
political maneuvering (**policy**) or naval (ie. military) action,
he could get through bribery.

The line contains a good example of the figure of speech
known as a *synecdoche*, in which a part (the **pro**w of a ship)
is used to represent the whole (the ship).

59-63: **A bridge...glory** = another allusion to the Spanish
and their designs on England: the **gold** refers to the fabulous
mineral wealth acquired by the Spanish in the New World.

= ie. Lesbos.

= ie. break through the defenses of.

63: **unhappy** = unlucky.

63-65: **the same...others** = ie. gold, the means by which
Midas bought off all of Asia Minor, is now causing him to
starve to death.

= ie. the sovereign of Lesbos, allegorically Elizabeth I.

= wasting away.

68-77 (below): finally, Midas recognizes the superiority of a
king who rules with wisdom and mercy; such a sovereign
will be protected by the gods and loved by his subjects. He is
of course really describing Queen Elizabeth; in fact, the
entire paragraph is really a description of England.

68	A petty <u>prince</u> , Midas? no, a prince protected by the gods, by nature, by his own virtue, and his subjects' obedience. Have not all treasons been discovered by miracle, not counsel? that do the gods <u>challenge</u> . Is not the country walled with huge waves? that doth nature claim. Is he not through the whole world a wonder, for wisdom and temperance? that is his own strength. Do not all his subjects (like bees) swarm to preserve the king of bees? that their loyalty	= monarch.
70		
72		= demand as a right.
74		
76	maintaineth. –	
78	My lords, I faint both for lack of food, and <u>want</u> of <u>grace</u> . I <u>will</u> to the river, where if I be rid of this intolerable disease of gold, I will next shake off that <u>untemperate</u> desire of government, and measure my territories, not by the greatness of my mind, but the right of my succession.	= lack. = favour shown by the gods. = ie. will go.
80		
82		= intemperate, ie. excessive. ¹
84		
	Mar. I am not a little sorry, that because all that your highness toucheth turneth to pure gold, and therefore all your princely <u>affections</u> should be converted to <u>dross</u> . Doth your majesty begin to melt your own	
86		
88		= desires. = the extraneous and worthless waste material collected during the purification of gold.
	crown, that should make it with other monarchies <u>massy</u> ? Begin you to make enclosure of your mind, and	
90		89-90: make it...massy = metaphorically combine his own crown with those of other nations so as to create a single heavy and solid (massy) crown.
	to <u>debate of inheritance</u> , when the sword proclaims you	= ie. "question your right to rule other lands". inheritance = succession to a crown. ¹
92	conqueror? If your highness' heart be not of kingdom	92-93: of kingdom proof = ie. "made of a metal that is proof against another kingdom's attack" (closely quoting Bond, p. 527). ⁹
	proof, every <u>pelting prince</u> will batter it. Though you use this garish gold, let your mind be still of steel, and let the sharpest sword decide <u>the right of scepters</u> .	= petty monarch. = ie. who has the right to rule other kingdoms.
94		
96		
	Midas. Every little king is a king, and the <u>title</u> consisteth not in the <u>compass</u> of ground, but in the right of inheritance.	97-108 (below): Midas and Martius disagree as to whether conquest alone gives one the legitimate right to rule a nation. = right to rule. = measure.
98		
100	Mar. Are not conquests good titles?	
102	Midas. Conquests are great thefts.	
104	Mar. If your highness would be advised by me,	

106 then would I rob for kingdoms, and if I obtained,
108 fain would I see him that durst call the conqueror
a thief.

110 **Midas.** Martius, thy counsel hath shed as much blood
112 as would make another sea. Valour I cannot call it, and
barbarousness is a word too mild. – Come, Mellacrites,
114 let us go, and come you Eristus, that if I obtain mercy
of Bacchus, we may offer sacrifice to Bacchus. –
116 Martius, if you be not disposed to go, dispose as you
will of yourself.

118 **Mar.** I will humbly attend on your highness, as still
120 hoping to have my hearts' desire, and you your height
of honour.

122 [Exeunt.]

ACT III, SCENE II.

The same: the gardens before Midas' palace.

Enter Licio and Petulus.

1 **Pet.** Ah, Licio, a bots on the barber! ever since I
2 cozened him of the golden beard I have had the
toothache.

4 **Licio.** I think Motto hath poisoned thy gums.

6 **Pet.** It is a deadly pain.

8 **Licio.** I knew a dog run mad with it.

10 **Pet.** I believe it, Licio, and thereof it is that they call it
12 a dogged pain. Thou knowest I have tried all old
women's medicines, and cunning men's charms, but

= ie. in order to obtain. = ie. succeeded in obtaining other kingdoms by means of such theft.
= the sense is, "then I would dare anyone to"; Martius, of course, is advocating the notion that "might makes right".

= ie. from.

Entering Characters: Petulus and Licio, we remember, are the servants of Mellacrites and his daughter Celia respectively.

The Story Advances: Lyly, as he often does, allows for some plot development to occur off-stage: in this case, since we last met the servants, it appears that Motto the barber had given Midas a shave, and naturally took ownership of the king's golden beard; Petulus, however, has somehow tricked the barber out of possession of the beard.

= Petulus curses the barber Motto.
bots = a stomach worm afflicting horses.²
= cheated.

= ie. gone mad.¹

= ie. that is why.¹
= cruel.¹

= in 1584, author Reginald Scot published his encyclopedic *Discovery of Witchcraft*, in which he provided various charms for a toothache: for example, during the consecration at mass, a sufferer might repeat the following words: "*O horssecombs and sickles that have so many teeth, come heale me now of my toothach.*" (Book XII, Chapter 14). Bond notes other evidence of Lyly's familiarity with this

14 interim my teeth ache.

16 *Enter Dello (the Barber's Boy).*

18 **Dello.** I am glad I have heard the wags, to be quittance
 for over-hearing us. We will take the vantage, they
 20 shall find us quick barbers. I'll tell Motto, my master,
 and then we will have quid pro quo, a tooth for a
 22 beard.

24 *[Exit Dello.]*

26 **Pet.** Licio, to make me merry, I pray thee go forward
 with the description of thy mistress; thou must begin
 28 now at the paps.

30 **Licio.** Indeed, Petulus, a good beginning for thee,
 for thou canst eat pap now, because thou canst bite
 32 nothing else. But I have not mind on those matters. If
 the king lose his golden wish, we shall have but a
 34 brazen court; – but what became of the beard, Petulus?

36 **Pet.** I have pawned it, for I durst not coin it.

38 **Licio.** What doest thou pay for the pawning?

40 **Pet.** Twelve pence in the pound for the month.

42 **Licio.** What for the herbage?

44 **Pet.** It is not at herbage.

46 **Licio.** Yes, Petulus, if it be a beard it must be at
 herbage, for a beard is a badge of hair; and a badge of
 48 hair, hair-badge.

book.⁹

= **Latin:** in the meantime.

Entering Character: Dello is the servant or apprentice of the barber Motto. Dello should perhaps enter at the beginning of the scene, eavesdropping on Licio and Petulus, but remaining out of their sight.

18: **heard the wags** = ie. overheard the mischievous young men.¹
to be quittance = ie. "so that we can pay them back". = getting the better of.⁹ = advantage, profit.¹
 = ie. quick-witted.²

21: **quid quo pro** = an exchange (of tricks), tit for tat.
 21-22: **a tooth for a beard** = just as Petulus had cheated Motto out of a beard, so Dello will arrange for the barber – who also works as a dentist – to treat Petulus for his toothache, a service which the latter may expect to be painful.

26-28: Petulus asks Licio to continue his detailed description (begun in Act I.ii) of Celia, in the hopes it will distract him from his toothache.
paps = breasts.

31-32: **for thou...nothing else** = ie. because of his toothache, Petulus can eat nothing but **pap**, which refers to soft food intended for babies and the infirm.¹
 = brass.
 = ie. turn it into ready money, e.g., by selling it.¹⁴

38: Petulus has received a loan from the pawnbroker, with the golden beard acting as security; Licio is inquiring as to the interest rate Petulus is paying to keep from defaulting on the loan, and thus losing the beard.

40: since there were 240 pence in a pound, the usurious interest rate comes to 5% monthly. A 1571 English statute limited the interest rate on a loan to 10%.¹⁵
 = the joke here is a cryptic one, depending on the audience's familiarity with the legal terms **pawnage** (also spelled **pannage**) and **herbage**, both of which referred to the right given a farmer to pasture his cattle or hogs in another man's forest, or the money paid for the same: see the entry under **Pannage** in John Cowell's 1607 law dictionary, *The Interpreter*.

46-48: Licio has set up Petulus for one of the most painful puns in all of Elizabethan literature.
 = the sense is, a flag or standard (Bond, p. 527).⁹

<p>50</p> <p>52</p> <p>54</p> <p>56</p> <p>58</p> <p>60</p> <p>62</p> <p>64</p> <p>66</p> <p>68</p> <p>70</p> <p>72</p> <p>74</p> <p>76</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Enter Motto with Dello.</i></p> <p>Motto. Dello, thou knowest Midas touched his beard, and twas gold.</p> <p>Dello. Well.</p> <p>Motto. That the pages <u>cozened</u> me of it.</p> <p>Dello. No lie.</p> <p>Motto. That I must be revenged.</p> <p>Dello. In good time.</p> <p>Motto. Thou knowest I have taught thee the knacking of the hands, the <u>tickling</u> on a man's hairs, like the <u>tuning of a cittern</u>.</p> <p>Dello. True.</p> <p>Motto. Besides, I instructed thee in the phrases of our eloquent occupation, as "How, sir, will you be trimmed? will you have your beard <u>like a spade</u>, or a <u>bodkin</u>? a <u>penthouse on your upper lip</u>, or an ally on your chin? a <u>low curl on your head like a bull</u>, or <u>dangling lock</u> like a spaniel? Your mustachoes sharp at</p>	<p>Entering Characters: from line 52 through line 94 below, the barber Motto and his servant Dello speak out of the hearing of Petulus and Licio.</p> <p>= tricked.</p> <p>65-67: Motto reminds Dello of all the tricks of the trade he has taught him.</p> <p>65-66: knacking of the hands = the snapping of the fingers, which, along with the snapping of the scissors, appears to have been a showy affectation adopted by fashionable barbers (Bond, p. 527).⁹</p> <p>tickling = stroking lightly.¹</p> <p>tuning of a cittern = Fairholt cites a source which asserts that a cittern (an early guitar) was often made available in barbers' shops for the amusement of waiting patrons.</p> <p>71-80 (below): Fairholt notes that this entire speech has been "frequently quoted as a curious detailed account of fashions in male hair-dressing" (p. 265).¹⁶ Unless otherwise footnoted, all descriptions of the fashionable hair-styles in lines 73-80 are from Fairholt.</p> <p>= a spade-beard was grown long and cut straight across the bottom.</p> <p>74: bodkin = a bodkin-beard was sharp and pointed, a bodkin being a name for a dagger. The style was the one favored later by Charles I.</p> <p>penthouse on your upper lip = a bushy mustache overhanging the mouth.</p> <p>74-75: ally on your chin = in this style, also known as a forked-beard, the beard would be parted about half-way down.</p> <p>= Fairholt describes bull's curls as curls which "were arranged above each other in close contiguity, rising above each other in a thick bush."</p> <p>76: dangling lock = locks which "were curled and allowed to flow over the shoulders."</p> <p>76-77: mustachoes sharp...awls = mustaches which were tapered and pointed at the ends, and "stiffened with gum."</p>
---	--	---

78 the ends like shoemaker's awls, or hanging down to
your mouth like goat's flakes? your love-locks

80 wreathed with a silken twist, or shaggy to fall on your
shoulders?

82 **Dello.** I confess you have taught me Tullie de oratore,

84 the very art of trimming.

86 **Motto.** Well, for all this I desire no more at thy hands,
than to keep secret the revenge I have prepared for the
88 pages.

90 **Dello.** O, sir, you know I am a barber, and cannot
tittle-tattle, I am one of those whose tongues are
92 swelled with silence.

94 **Motto.** Indeed, thou shouldst be no blab, because a
barber, therefore be secret. – [*Louder.*] Was it not a
good cure, Dello, to ease the toothache and never
96 touch the tooth?

98 **Dello.** O master, he that is your patient for the
toothache, I warrant is patient of all aches.

100 **Motto.** I did but rub his gums, and presently the rheum
102 evaporated.

104 **Licio.** Deus bone, is that word come into the barber's
basin?
106

108 **Dello.** Ay, sir, and why not? My master is a barber and
a surgeon.

110 **Licio.** In good time.

112 **Pet.** O, Motto, I am almost dead with the toothache;
all my gums are swollen, and my teeth stand in my
114 head like thorns.

78: *goat's flakes* = parallel but unwoven threads or hairs.¹
love-locks = single locks of hair, allowed to grow
long and usually tied with a ribbon and a silken bow at
the end.

= "the oratory of Cicero", ie. the language of the barbering
profession.

De Oratore was a dialogue written by the famous Roman
lawyer and public speaker Cicero on the art of oratory.
Cicero was referred to often in English as **Tully**, alluding to
his middle name *Tullius*.¹⁷

= **trimming** could also refer to cheating or tricking another
person out of his money.¹

89-91: a sly joke of Lyly's: barbers were notorious gossip-
ers.¹⁶
= gossip.¹

= swollen so as to cause an inability to speak;¹ Shakespeare
borrowed this expression directly from Lyly for *Richard II*,
when he wrote of "*unseen grief, that swells in silence in the
tortured soul.*"

94-96: **Was it not...tooth** = Motto implements his plan of
revenge: Dello had overheard that Petulus' teeth hurt, so
Motto loudly brags of his ability to cure toothaches, knowing
that Petulus and Licio will overhear him. We may note here
that English barbers at this time were permitted by statute to
pull teeth and draw blood, the two professions – medical and
tonsorial – not being severed until 1745.¹⁶

= guarantee.

= generally any of the secretions from the eyes, nose or
mouth¹, but here likely referring specifically to the patient's
tears of pain.

104: **Deus bone** = good God.

that word = Licio pretends to be stunned that a low
fellow like the barber would use such a courtly term as
rheum.

104-5: **come into the barber's basin** = ie. enter the lingo
of the barbering profession.

= until 1745, barbers could, if qualified, act as surgeons.¹⁶

116 **Motto.** It may be that it is only the breeding of a beard,
and being the first beard, you shall have a hard travel.

118 **Pet.** Old fool, doest thou think hairs will breed in my
120 teeth?

122 **Motto.** As likely, sir, for anything I know, as on your
chin.

124 **Pet.** O teeth! O torments! – O torments! O teeth!

126 **Motto.** [*Aside to his boy*] May I but touch them, Dello,
128 I'll teach his tongue to tell a tale, what villainy it is to
cozen one of a beard; but stand not thou nigh, for it is
130 odds when he spits, but that all his teeth fly in thy face.

132 **Licio.** Good Motto, give some ease, for at thy coming
in, I overheard of a cure thou hadst done.

134 **Pet.** My teeth! I will not have this pain, that's certain!

136 **Motto.** Ay, so did you overhear me, when you cozened
138 me of a beard: but I forget all.

140 **Dello.** My master is mild and merciful: and merciful,
because a barber, for when he hath the throat at
142 command, you know he taketh revenge but on a silly
hair.

144 **Motto.** How now, Petulus, do they still ache?

146 **Pet.** Ay, Motto.

148 **Motto.** Let me rub your gums with this leaf.

150 **Pet.** Do, Motto, and for thy labour I will requite thee.

[*Under pretense of easing, Motto hurts him.*]

152 **Out,** rascal! what hast thou done? all my nether teeth
154 are loose, and wag like the keys of a pair of virginals.

156 **Dello.** O, sir, if you will, I will sing to them, your
158 mouth being the instrument.

160 **Pet.** Do, Dello.

[*Dello reaches into Petulus' mouth.*]

162 **Dello.** Out, villain! thou bitest. I cannot tune these
164

= the beginning of a beard's growth: Petulus, a young lad, is
still awaiting the sprouting of his first facial hairs.
= ie. it will be an arduous project.

125: an example of the figure of speech known as *antimetabole*, in which phrases are repeated in reverse order.¹

= "don't stand too close".
= probable that.

= "got the advantage of",¹⁶ the second time in the scene a
pun is employed on the dual meanings of *overhear*.
= "I have already forgotten it", ie. "I forgive you".

141-3: *when he...hair* = perhaps every man has wondered
about the wisdom of trusting another man to scrape a razor
across his throat.
silly = weak or vulnerable.²

149: 16th and 17th century treatises on health referred to a
multitude of ailments which could be successfully treated by
rubbing the gums with various substances, including the
leaves of various plants.

= reward.

= "damn you", a common exclamation.¹ = lower.

= *virginals* were small primitive harpsichords, probably
referred to as *a pair* because of the instrument's double row
of keys known as *jacks* (see the note at line 166 below).⁹

163: stage direction added by editor.

166	virginal keys.	
168	Pet. <u>They were the jacks above</u> , the keys beneath were <u>easy</u> .	= Petulus' upper teeth are his <i>jacks</i> , the short pieces of wood which strike the strings of a virginal. = Lancashire suggests "yielding".
170	Dello. <u>A bots on</u> your jacks and jaws too!	= common exclamation of impatience. ¹
172	Licio. They were virginals of your master's making.	
174	Pet. O my teeth! good Motto, what will ease my pain?	
176	Motto. Nothing in the world, but to let me lay a golden beard to your chin.	177-8: Motto hints rather explicitly that he can ease Petulus' pain only if he gives back the golden beard.
178	Pet. It is at pawn.	
180	Motto. <u>You are like to</u> fetch it out with your teeth, or go without your teeth.	= the sense is, "you will either", ie. there are only two possible outcomes here.
182	Pet. Motto, <u>withdraw thyself</u> , it may be thou shalt draw my teeth; <u>attend my resolution</u> .	= "stand back". = "wait for my decision".
184		
186		
188	[<i>Motto and Dello retire.</i>]	
190	A <u>doubtful dispute</u> , whether I were best to lose my golden beard, or my <u>bone-tooth</u> ? Help me, Licio, to determine.	= dreadful question, ie. conundrum. ² = ie. teeth: literally referring to the hard substance of which the tooth is comprised. ¹
192		
194	Licio. Your teeth ache, Petulus, your beard doth not.	194: Licio advises Petulus to part with the golden beard; Lyly understands that when your teeth hurt, nothing else matters.
196	Pet. Ay, but, Licio, if I part from my beard, my heart will ache.	
198	Licio. If your tooth be hollow it must be <u>stopped</u> , or pulled out; and stop it the barber will not, without the beard.	= filled. ¹
200		
202	Pet. My heart is hollow too, and nothing can stop it but gold.	
204		
206	Licio. Thou canst not eat meat without teeth.	
208	Pet. Nor buy it without money.	
210	Licio. Thou mayest get more gold; if thou lose these, more teeth thou canst not.	
212	Pet. Ay, but the golden beard will last me ten years in porridge, and then to what use are teeth?	213-4: <i>last me...porridge</i> = ie. provide Petulus with enough wealth to last him a decade, during which time he can survive without teeth by eating porridge.
214		
216	Licio. If thou <u>want</u> teeth, thy tongue will catch cold.	= lack.
218	Pet. 'Tis true, and if I lack money, my whole body may go naked. But Licio, let the barber have his beard, I will have a <u>device</u> (by thy help) to get it again, and a	= trick or stratagem.
220		

222 cozenage beyond that, maugre his beard.

224 **Licio.** That's the best way, both to ease thy pains, and
try our wits.

226 **Pet.** Barber, eleven of my teeth have gone on a jury, to
try whether the beard be thine, they have chosen my
228 tongue for the foreman, which cryeth, "guilty".

230 **Motto.** Gilded? nay, boy, all my beard was gold, it
was not gilt: I will not be so overmatched.

232 **Dello.** You cannot pose my master in a beard. Come to
234 his house, you shall sit upon twenty: all his cushions
are stuffed with beards.

236 **Licio.** Let him go home with thee, ease him, and thou
238 shalt have thy beard.

240 **Motto.** I am content, but I will have the beard in my
hand to be sure.

242 **Pet.** And I thy finger in my mouth, to be sure of ease.

244 **Motto.** Agreed.

246 **Pet.** Dello, sing a song to the tune of "*My Teeth Do*
248 *Ache*."

250 **Dello.** I will.

252 [*The Song:*]

254 **Pet.** *O my teeth! dear barber, ease me;
Tongue tell me, why my teeth disease me.
256 O! what will rid me of this pain?*

258 **Motto.** Some pellitory fetched from Spain.

260 **Licio.** Take mastic else.

262 **Pet.** *Mastic's a patch.*

221: **cozenage** = act of deceit.
maugre his beard = "in spite of everything he can do",
a common expression, here with obvious *apropos* usage.⁹

= test.

226-8: the English had for centuries used 12 men on a
jury, even by Lyly's time.¹⁸

230-1: **Gilded?...****gilt** = the beard was not just overlaid with
gold (**gilt**), but was of solid gold. **Gilded** and **gilt** are meant
to pun with **guilty** in line 228.

= bested.¹

= perplex, confuse.²

234: **you** = "and you".
234-5: **cushions...beards** = contemporary literature
also referred to the clippings of men's beards being used to
stuff breeches and tennis balls.

250: like all the songs in the play, this one appears only in
the quarto of 1632. We may note that although Dello agrees
to perform, he actually does not sing a single note of the
tune!

= Bond suggests that Motto cures Petulus' aching teeth as
the characters sing together. Note how the lyrics are com-
prised completely of rhyming couplets.

= trouble, vex.¹

= the root of a certain North African plant, used to treat
toothaches: chewing a bit of this irritant caused increased
salivation, which was supposed to ease the patient's
suffering; often referred to in literature as **pellitory of**
Spain.^{9,16}

= a gum or resin discharged by the Mediterranean **mastic**
tree, formerly thought to have medicinal value, generally,³
and to arrest tooth decay, specifically.¹⁶

= literally meaning "fool", suggesting that mastic is useless
or of no value as a palliative for toothaches.¹⁶

264 *Mastic does many a fool's face catch.*
If such a pain should breed the horn,
Twere happy to be cuckolds born.
266 *Should beards with such an ache begin,*
Each boy to th' bone would scrub his chin.

268 **Licio.** *His teeth now ache not.*

270 **Motto.** *Caper then,*
272 *And cry up checkered-apron men:*

There is no trade but shaves,
274 *For barbers are trim knives,*
Some are in shaving so profound,
276 *By tricks they shave a kingdom round.*

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III, SCENE III.

The same: the gardens before Midas' palace.

Enter Sophronia, Celia, Camilla,
Amerula, and Suavia.

1 **Soph.** Ladies, here must we attend the happy return of
2 my father, but in the mean season, what pastime shall
we use to pass the time? I will agree to any, so it be
4 not to talk of love.

6 **Suav.** Then sleep is the best exercise.

8 **Soph.** Why, Suavia, are you so light, that you must
chat of love? or so heavy, that you must needs sleep?

10 **Penelope** in the absence of her lord beguiled the days
with spinning.

12 **Suav.** Indeed, she spun a fair thread, if it were to make
14 a string to the bow wherein she drew her wooers.

264-5: another reference to the ubiquitous *horns* of the
cuckolded husband.

269: Motto's treatment has succeeded!

= dance or joyfully leap about.¹

272: ie. "and praise (**cry up**)¹ barbers", who were identifiable
by their **checkered aprons**.¹⁶

= excellent,² with obvious pun.

= learned.¹

= cheat.²

Entering Characters: the princess **Sophronia** and her
attendants need to kill time while they wait for Midas to
return from the River Pactolus, where he is hoping to be
relieved of his curse.

= meantime.

= can mean "frivolous" or "wanton".

= **heavy** can mean "serious", which would make it the
opposite of **light** in two punning ways; but it is also used
here to mean "tired".²

10-11: **Penelope** was the husband of **Odysseus**, the king of
Ithaca who was away from home for twenty years, after
having gone to fight in the Trojan War. Pursued by over one-
hundred suitors who naturally assumed Odysseus must be
dead, Penelope kept the young men at bay by promising to
choose one of them to be her new husband after she finished
weaving a certain funeral shroud for **Laertes**, the father of
Odysseus. Every night, however, she famously (and secretly)
undid the weaving she had completed during the day, thus
allowing her to postpone the decision she had promised to
make – a ruse she was able to keep up for three years! (*The
Odyssey*, Book II).

13-14: Suavia, as we shall shortly see, is going to pervert
Homer's story to suit her own mischievous mood.
= "by which she attracted", with pun on **drew**: one could,
of course, "draw" one's bow.

16 **Soph.** Why, Suavia, it was a bow which she knew to
be above thy strength, and therein she shewed her wit.

18
20 **Suav.** *Qui latus arguerit corneus arcus erat:* it was
made of horn, madam, and therein she shewed her
22 meaning.

24 **Soph.** Why, doest thou not think she was chaste?

26 **Suav.** Yes, of all her wooers.

28 **Soph.** To talk with thee is to lose time, not well to
spend it; – how say you, Amerula, what shall we do?

30 **Amer.** Tell tales.

32 **Soph.** What say you, Celia?

34 **Cel.** Sing.

36 **Soph.** What think you, Camilla?

38 **Cam.** Dance.

40 **Soph.** You see, Suavia, that there are other things to
keep one from idleness, besides love; nay, that there is
42 nothing to make idleness, but love.

44 **Suav.** Well, let me stand by and feed mine own
thoughts with sweetness, whilst they fill your eyes
46 and ears with songs and dancings.

48 **Soph.** Amerula, begin thy tale.

50 **Amer.** There dwelt sometimes in Phrygia a lady very
fair, but passing froward, as much marveled at for
52 beauty, as for peevishness misliked. High she was in

16-17: Sophronia, unclear as to what exactly Suavia is trying to say, assumes she is referring to this story told in Book XXI of the *Odyssey*: Odysseus has returned to Ithaca, but he is in disguise, and is planning a way to eliminate Penelope's suitors. Penelope, meanwhile, has announced a new contest to decide whom she will marry: whichever suitor could string Odysseus' bow (a gift which he had left at home when he went off to fight in the Trojan War) and use it to shoot an arrow through a row of 12 axes (the exact alignment of the axes remains unclear), she would take as a husband. The key, of course, was that she knew that no man other than Odysseus himself was strong enough to accomplish the task.

shewed = showed, a common alternate form.

19: **Latin** = "it was a bow of horn which proved his strength."⁶ Suavia is being playfully disingenuous in her interpretation of Penelope's story: firstly, she is quoting from Ovid's *Amores*, and not Homer's *Odyssey*; secondly, the poetry she is quoting from is being spoken by a pander to a young girl, explaining to her how to get herself rich men.

In relating this episode from the *Odyssey*, the pander suggests Penelope was really trying to signal her eagerness for a man, as her reference to the bow being *made of horn* – the symbol of cuckoldry – proved (Bond, p. 529).⁹

= by; Suavia puns on *chaste*, taking it as "chased".

= cause, create.

= stand aside or stand idle, ie. not participate in any of the other activities.

= ie. the other girls.

= once upon a time.¹

= exceedingly perverse or ungovernable.²

52-53: **High she was in the instep** = she was proud.⁹

the instep, but short in the heel; straitlaced, but loose-

54 bodied. It came to pass, that a gentleman, as young in
 56 wit as years, and in years a very boy, chanced to
 58 glance his eyes on her, and there were they dazzled on
 her beauty, as larks that are caught in the sun with the
 glittering of a glass. In her fair looks were his thoughts

entangled, like the birds of Canary, that fall into a

60 silken net. Dote he did without measure, and die he
 must without her love. She on the other side, as one
 62 that knew her good, began to look askance, yet felt the

passions of love eating into her heart, though she
 64 dissembled them with her eyes.

66 *Suav.* Ha, ha, he!

68 *Soph.* Why laughest thou?

70 *Suav.* To see you, madam, so tame as to be brought to
 hear a tale of love, that before were so wild you would
 72 not come to the name; and that Amerula could devise
 how to spend the time with a tale, only that she might
 74 not talk of love, and now to make love only her tale.

76 *Soph.* Indeed, I was overshoot in judgment, and she in
 discretion. – Amerula, another tale or none, this is too
 78 lovely.

80 *Suav.* Nay, let me hear any woman tell a tale of ten
 lines long without it tend to love, and I will be bound
 82 never to come at the court. And you, Camilla, that
 would fain trip on your pettitoes; can you persuade me
 84 to take delight to dance, and not love? or you that
 cannot rule your feet, can guide your affections,
 86 having the one as unstead as the other unsteady:

dancing is love sauce, therefore I dare be so saucy, as
 88 if you love to dance, to say you dance for love. But
 Celia, she will sing, whose voice, if it should utter her
 90 thoughts, would make the tune of a heart out of tune.

53: *short in the heel* = ie. loose or wanton.
straitlaced = stiff in bearing or demeanor.⁹
 53-54: *loose-bodied* = wanton, lascivious.¹

54-55: *as young in wit as years* = as immature or lacking in
 cleverness as he was youthful.

57-58: *larks...glass* = a reference to a passage from the
 collection of romance stories, *A Petite Pallace of Pettie His
 Pleasure*, written by the Englishman George Pettie (1548-
 1589) and published in 1576. Pettie suggests that a section of
 wood, inlaid with pieces of glass that glitter in the sun when
 the wood is spun, will capture the attention of larks, who in
 their mesmerized state can easily be shot.
 As a side note, Lyly's adoption of euphuism is believed to
 be directly inspired by Pettie's use of the same style in
Pallace.¹⁹

= unsurprisingly, *canary birds* are native to the *Canary
 Islands*.³
 = limit.

62: *knew her good* = ie. knew herself to be good or properly
 behaved.⁹
look askance = eye (him) surreptitiously.¹

= notice that the princess, as is appropriate, addresses her
 attendants with *thee*; the maidens in turn, implicitly acknow-
 ledge their inferior status by addressing Sophronia with the
 respectful and more formal *you*.

= ie. "dare not speak the word *love* itself."
 = ie. the core subject of.
 = missed the mark, a metaphor borrowed from archery.
 = amorous in subject, ie. love-centric.

= tending towards.
 = to.
 = gladly.¹ = toes.¹
 = "or persuade me that".
 = manage or control.¹
 86: ie. her affections are unrestrained (*unstead*),¹ and her
 feet *unsteady*.

She that hath crotchets in her head, hath also love

92 conceits. I dare swear she harpeth not only on plain
song: – and before you, Sophronia, none of them all

94 use plain dealing; but because they see you so curious,
they frame themselves counterfeit. For myself, as I

96 know honest love to be a thing inseparable from our sex,
98 so do I think it most allowable in the court; unless we
would have all our thoughts made of church-work, and
100 so carry a holy face, and a hollow heart.

102 **Soph.** Ladies, how like you Suavia in her loving vain?

104 **Cel.** We are content at this time to soothe her in her
vanity.

106 **Amer.** She casts all our minds in the mould of her own
108 head, and yet erreth as far from our meanings, as she
doth from her own modesty.

110 **Suav.** Amerula, if you were not bitter, your name had
112 been ill-bestowed: but I think it as lawful in the court
to be counted loving and chaste, as you in the temple
to seem religious, and be spiteful.

114 **Cam.** I marvel you will reply any more, Amerula: her
116 tongue is so nimble, it will never lie still.

118 **Suav.** The liker thy feet, Camilla, which were taught
not to stand still.

120 **Soph.** So, no more ladies: let our coming to sport not
122 turn to spite. – Love thou, Suavia, if thou think it sweet:
– sing thou, Celia, for thine own content: – tell thou
124 tales, and dance thou, Camilla: and so every one using
her own delight, shall have no cause to be discontent.
126 But here commeth Martius and the rest. –

128 *Enter Martius, Mellacrites and others.*

130 What news, Martius, of my sovereign and father
132 Midas?

134 **Mar.** Madame, he no sooner bathed his limbs in the
river, but it turned to a golden stream, the sands to fine
gold, and all to gold that was cast into the water.
136 Midas, dismayed at the sudden alteration, assayed
again to touch a stone, but he could not alter the nature

91: *crotchets* = musical notes.¹

91-92: *love conceits* = notions or fancies of love.

92-93: *plain song* = unaccompanied melody, ie. without
harmony.⁹ But the sense may refer to the *plain song* sung by
monks, which lacked any rhythm precisely to prevent any
non-religious, ie. less pure, thoughts from entering one's
mind.

94: *use plain dealing* = speak truthfully.

94-95: *because...counterfeit* = because Sophronia
appears to be too squeamish (*curious*) to talk about love, the
other girls pretend to feel the same way.

= works of charity, or work taken up on behalf of a church.¹

= be pious in thought, but have a heart empty of passion.

= humour.

= foolishness.¹

= the name *Amerula* suggests *amor*, or love.

= ie. a poorly chosen one to give her.

= to be thought of as wanton, but actually be chaste.

= full of malice.

= ie. can reply at all. = ie. Suavia's.

= "the more they are like".

= ie. Amerula.

136: *dismayed...alteration* = though Midas, we may think,
should be pleased, rather than *dismayed*, at being able to eat
now, we will see that he admits to having been depressed at

138 of the stone. Then went we with him to the temple of
140 Bacchus, where we offered a lance wreathed about
with ivy, garlands of ripe grapes, and skins of wolves
and panthers, and a great standing cup of the water

142 which so lately was turned to gold. Bacchus accepted
144 our gifts, commanding Midas to honour the gods, and
also in wishing to be as wise, as he meant to have
made him fortunate.

146 *Soph.* Happy Sophronia, thou hast lived to hear these

148 news; and happy Midas, if thou live, better to govern
150 thy fortune. – But what is become of our king?

152 *Mell.* Midas, overjoyed with this good fortune,
154 determined to use some solace in the woods; where, by
156 chance we roused a great boar: he, eager of the sport,
158 outrid us; and we, thinking he had been come to his
palace some other way, came ourselves the next way.
If he be not returned, he cannot be long: we have also
lost our pages, which we think are with him.

160 *Soph.* The gods shield him from all harms: the woods
162 are full of tigers, and he of courage. Wild beasts make
164 no difference between a king and a clown; nor hunters,
in the heat of their pastime, fear no more the fierceness
of the boar, than the fearfulness of the hare. But I hope
well, let us in to see all well.

166 [Exeunt.]

END OF ACT IV.

the loss of his golden touch.

136-7: *assayed...stone* = Midas touched a stone to test
whether the curse had truly been broken.

= spear-like military weapon.

141: *panthers* = in some ancient works of art, Bacchus is
pictured riding a panther.⁴

standing cup = cup with a base.

147-8: *these news* = it has been acceptable to treat *news* as
either a singular or plural word for most of the modern
English era.

148-9: *and happy Midas...fortune* = Sophronia briefly
apostrophizes to her absent father.

= decided. = ie. take.

= "rode ahead of us."

= nearest or shortest.¹

= who.

160-1: *make no difference* = do not differentiate.

= peasant.

End of Act III: with the story of Midas' golden touch con-
cluded, the play moves on to depict Ovid's second story of
the Phrygian king.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A glade in the forest on Mount Tmolus.

Enter Apollo, Pan, Erato, Thalia and other Nymphs.

1 *Apol.* Pan, wilt thou contend with Apollo, who tunes
2 the heavens, and makes them all hang by harmony?

4 Orpheus, that caused trees to move with the sweetness
of his harp, offereth yearly homage to my lute: so doth

Arion, that brought dolphins to his sugared notes, and

6 Amphion, that by music reared the walls of Thebes.

8 Only Pan with his harsh whistle (which makes beasts
shake for fear, not men dance for joy) seeks to

The Scene: *Mt. Tmolus* is a mountain range in what was the nation of Lydia, located immediately to the west of Midas' Phrygia.¹¹ A *glade* is an open, treeless area in the woods.¹

Entering Characters: *Apollo* is one of the Olympian gods, and the god of music. Half-goat and half-man, *Pan*, the cheerful god of herds and shepherds, spends his time playing his pan-pipes, watching his sheep, and engaging in erotic games with nymphs. He was a favourite of Apollo, who often took Pan with him in his travels.⁷

Nymphs are semi-divine maidens who lived in the great outdoors, be it in the woods, in streams, or wherever. *Erato* and *Thalia* are two such nymphs: Erato was a priestess of Pan's at his oracle in Megalopolis in Arcadia,^{4,14} while Thalia was said to reside on Mt. Etna in Italy.²⁵

Iff (below): the scene begins in mid-conversation: Pan has challenged Apollo to a contest of musical skill. The story is told by Ovid in Book XI of the *Metamorphoses*.

1-2: *who tunes...harmony* = allusion to the Ptolemaic conception of the universe, in which each planet revolves around the earth in its own sphere; the spheres were further believed to emit harmonious music. Elizabethan authors referred repeatedly to these musical spheres.

3-4: *Orpheus...harp* = the son of a Muse, *Orpheus* was given the gift of a lyre (an early *harp*) by *Apollo*, and was taught by the god to play the instrument. Orpheus' skill in playing was so great that he not only was able to tame wild beasts, but he even once charmed the trees of Mt. Olympus to follow him as he played.⁴

5: *Arion...notes* = a Greek bard and skilled musician, *Arion* once traveled to Sicily, where he won a musical contest and was given many great prizes. On his way home to Corinth, the sailors of the boat on which he was traveling planned to murder him in order to steal his valuable treasures.

In a dream, *Apollo* warned Arion of his predicament, and, having been given permission to play his cithara (a plucked instrument, similar to a lyre¹) one last time before his death, Arion stood on the prow of the ship and began to play. He then threw himself into the sea, where he was picked up by some music-loving *dolphins*, who carried him home.⁴

6: according to myth, the walls of *Thebes* had been first built by twin brothers *Amphion*, a musician, and *Zethus*; supposedly Zethus carried the stones to the building site, while Amphion caused the stones to construct themselves into a wall by playing on his lyre.⁴

= Apollo is contemptuous!

compare with Apollo.

Pan. Pan is a god, Apollo is no more. Comparisons cannot be odious, where the deities are equal. This pipe (my sweet pipe) was once a nymph, a fair nymph, once my lovely mistress, now my heavenly music. Tell

me, Apollo, is there any instrument so sweet to play on as one's mistress? Had thy lute been of laurel, and the strings of Daphne's hair, thy tunes might have been compared to my notes: for then Daphne would have added to thy stroke sweetness, and to thy thoughts melody.

Apol. Doth Pan talk of the passions of love? of the passions of divine love? O, how that word "Daphne" wounds Apollo, pronounced by the barbarous mouth of Pan. I fear his breath will blast the fair green, if I dazzle not his eyes, that he may not behold it. Thy pipe a nymph? Some hag rather, haunting these shady groves, and desiring not thy love, but the fellowship of such a monster. What god is Pan but the god of beasts, of woods, and hills? excluded from heaven, and in

earth not honoured. Break thy pipe, or with my sweet lute will I break thy heart. Let not love enter into those savage lips, a word for Jove, for Apollo, for the heavenly gods, whose thoughts are gods, and gods are all love.

Pan. Apollo, I told thee before that Pan was a god, I tell thee now again, as great a god as Apollo, I had almost said a greater: and because thou shalt know I care not to tell my thoughts, I say a greater. Pan feels

the passions of love deeply engraven in his heart, with as fair nymphs, with as great fortune, as Apollo, as Neptune, as Jove; and better than Pan can none

describe love. Not Apollo, not Neptune, not Jove! My temple is in Arcadie, where they burn continual flames to Pan. In Arcadie is mine oracle, where Erato the

nymph giveth answers for Pan. In Arcadie, the place of love, is the honour of Pan. Ay, but I am god of hills. So I am, Apollo! and that of hills so high, as I can pry

= ie. compare himself.

12-14: **This pipe...music** = Pan was in love with the woodland nymph **Syrinx**, who, wishing to preserve her virginity, rejected the god's amorous advances, and fled back to her fellow nymphs. She having asked them for their assistance, they changed her into reeds, whose hushed murmuring so charmed Pan that he collected and bound a bunch of them, creating the instrument for which he was known. Ovid tells the tale in Book I of the *Metamorphoses* (Humphries, p. 24-25).¹²

16-20: **Had thy...melody** = Pan suggests that if Apollo had employed an instrument made from the **laurel** tree which had once been **Daphne** (the maiden who had rejected the sun god), he would be able to play his lute as sweetly as Pan does his reeds; the full story of Apollo and Daphne was described earlier in the note at Act II.ii.23-24.

= ie. cause to wither.¹

= dim.¹

= Pan lived on Earth rather than with the Olympian gods, who lived on Mt. Olympus. While Pan suggests that all gods, by the very fact of their deity, are equal, Apollo naturally insists that some gods are better than others.

= king of the gods, and father of Apollo.

= ie. "don't care whether I offend you by telling you what I think".

= god of the sea, and brother to Jove.

44-46: **My temple...Pan** = Pan contradicts Apollo's assertion that he, Pan, is not honoured on earth (see lines 30-31 above). In fact, there were a number of temples and sanctuaries dedicated to Pan in the ancient world, including one at **Arcadia** (**Arcadie**) in the Peloppones.⁴ Arcadia was in fact Pan's place of birth.

= perhaps defensively, Pan appears to compare the hills he is god of to Mt. Olympus, the home of Jupiter and

50 into the juggling of the highest gods. – Of woods! so
 52 I am, Apollo! of woods so thick, that thou with thy
 beams canst not pierce them. I knew Apollo's prying, I
 54 knew mine own jealousy. Sun and shadow cozen one
 another. Be thou sun still, the shadow is fast at thy
 56 heels, Apollo. I as near to thy love, as thou to mine. A
carter with his whistle and his whip in true ear, moves
 as much as Phoebus with his fiery chariot and winged
 58 horses. Love-leaves are as well for country porridge,
 as heavenly nectar. Love made Jupiter a goose, and
 60 Neptune a swine, and both for love of an earthly
 mistress. What hath made Pan, or any god on earth
 62 (for gods on earth can change their shapes) turn
 themselves for an heavenly goddess? Believe me,
 64 Apollo, our groves are pleasanter than your heavens,
 our milkmaids than your goddesses, our rude ditties
 66 to a pipe than your sonnets to a lute. Here is flat faith
amo amas; where you cry, *o utinam amarent vel non*
 68 *amasse*. I let pass, Apollo, thy hard words, as calling
 Pan monster; which is as much as to call all monsters:
 70 for Pan is all, Apollo but one. But touch thy strings,
 and let these nymphs decide.
 72 *Apol.* These nymphs shall decide, unless thy rude
 74 speech have made them deaf: as for any other answer

the other Olympian gods.
 = trickery, deceptions.
 51-52: *thy beams* = Pan alludes to Apollo in his role as the
 sun god.
 = suspicion. = cheat.
 = always.
 55-58: *A carter...horses* = a commonplace cart-driver
 (*carter*) can affect the emotions of a woman (*moves*) as
 much as can Apollo (frequently called *Phoebus*) while he
 (Apollo) pulls the sun across the sky while riding in his *fiery*
chariot.
with his whistle...ear = whistling in tune¹ and plying his
 whip with accuracy.
 58-59: *Love-leaves...nectar* = ie. "love is as appropriate for
 simple country people as for the gods" (Daniel, p. 375).⁵
 Lancashire asserts that *love-leaves* refers to certain types of
 leaves which cause those who consume them to fall in love
 (p. 84).¹⁴
nectar (line 59) = food of the gods.
 59-61: *Love made...mistress* = Pan continues to goad
 Apollo by deliberately misrepresenting famous myths of the
 Olympian gods:
 (1) *Jupiter* took the form of a swan, not a *goose*, in order
 to seduce *Leda*, resulting in the birth of *Helen*, later Helen
 of Troy; however, *goose* was commonly used to mean
 "fool", so Pan's insulting intent is obvious; and
 (2) *Neptune*, like Jupiter, took on many forms to take
 advantage of various maidens – a ram, a horse, even a
 dolphin – but never a *swine*.⁹ Again, Pan's choice of
 substitute is telling.
 62-63: *turn themselves* = change their forms.
 = ie. are pleasanter than.
 66: *to* = ie. sung to.
 66-68: *Here is...amasse* = Pan mocks Apollo for his
 fancy language: Pan speaks in plain and direct declarations
 (*flat faith*), whereas (*where*) Apollo, with his metaphorical
 and verbose language, is round-about and deceitful (Daniel,
 p. 375).⁵
 67: *amo amas* = "I love, you love".⁶
 67-68: *o utinam...amasse* = "oh, if only they were in
 love, or that I had not been in love."⁶
 = will overlook. = harsh, insulting.¹
 = ie. all living things.
 = as a root word, *pan* means all.

76 to Pan, take this, that it becommeth not Apollo to
answer Pan. Pan is all, and all is Pan; thou art Pan and
78 all, all Pan and tinkerly. But to this music, wherein all
thy shame shall be seen, and all my skill.

80 *Enter Midas.*

82 **Midas.** In the chase, I lost all my company, and missed
the game too. I think Midas shall in all things be
84 unfortunate.

86 **Apol.** What is he that talketh?

88 **Midas.** Midas, the unfortunate king of Phrygia.

90 **Apol.** To be a king is next to being a god. Thy fortune
is not bad: what is thy folly?

92 **Midas.** To abuse a god.

94 **Apol.** An ungrateful part of a king. But, Midas, seeing
96 by chance thou art come, or sent by some god of
purpose, none can in the earth better judge of gods
98 than kings. Sit down with these nymphs. I am Apollo,
this Pan, both gods. We contend for sovereignty in
100 music. Seeing it happens in earth, we must be judged
of those on earth, in which there are none more worthy
102 than kings and nymphs. Therefore, give ear, that thy
judgment err not.

104 **Midas.** If gods you be, although I dare wish nothing
106 of gods, being so deeply wounded with wishing; yet
let my judgment prevail before these nymphs, if we
108 agree not, because I am a king.

110 **Pan.** There must be no condition, but judge Midas,
and judge nymphs.

112 **Apol.** Then thus I begin both my song and my play.

114 [A Song of Daphne to the Lute:]
116

118 **Apol.** *My Daphne's hair is twisted gold,
Bright stars a-piece her eyes do hold,
My Daphne's brow enthrones the graces,
120 My Daphne's beauty stains all faces,
On Daphne's cheek grow rose and cherry,
122 On Daphne's lip a sweeter berry,*

= is not fitting for.

= literally "like a tinker", meaning "disreputable" or "clumsy".¹

82ff: Bond suggests Midas is depressed at the loss of his golden touch.

= who.

= ie. fail to treat with appropriate or due honour.

= element of a king's character.¹

96-97: *of purpose* = on purpose, ie. for a reason.

= by.

102-3: *ear...err* = more wordplay: the two words *ear* and *err* sounded more alike in the 16th century than they today.

105-6: Midas wisely acknowledges how poorly his last wish from a god turned out.

= over that of.

= ie. playing his instrument.

115: Apollo sings as he plays his lute.

The Songs of Apollo (lines 117-128) and Pan (lines 146-161): the songs of both gods are comprised of rhyming couplets in *iambic tetrameter*: that is, there are four *iamb*s per line, each iamb being a 2-syllable foot or unit, comprised of an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed one.

119-122: note that the 3rd through 6th lines of the song each have an extra unstressed syllable tagged on at the end (the so-called *feminine ending*).

	<i>Daphne's snowy hand but touched does melt,</i>	123: this line has an extra stressed syllable attached at its beginning.
124	<i>And then no <u>heavenlier</u> warmth is felt,</i>	= poetically, a 2-syllable word: <i>HEA'N-lier</i> . In verse, <i>Heaven</i> is almost always pronounced in one syllable, with the <i>v</i> elided, or essentially omitted; the ending <i>-lier</i> here comprises a single unstressed beat.
	<i>My Daphne's voice tunes all the <u>spheres</u>,</i>	125: a second allusion to the music produced by the <i>spheres</i> of the universe as they rotate about the earth; see the note at lines 1-2 above.
126	<i>My Daphne's music charms all ears. <u>Fond</u> am I thus to sing her praise;</i>	= foolish.
128	<i>These glories now are turned to <u>bays</u>.</i>	128: bay leaves (<i>bays</i>) ² are employed by Lyly as a symbol of lost or unattained love. Daphne, as we noted earlier, was turned into a laurel, or bay, tree, to protect her from Apollo.
130	<i>Erato. O divine Apollo, o sweet <u>consent</u>!</i>	130: <i>consent</i> = harmony (between Apollo's voice and his lute). ¹⁶ In the original tale told by Ovid, the judge of the contest was Tmolus , the god of the mountain of the same name on which the contest, and this scene, took place. Tmolus ruled in favour Apollo.
132	<i>Thalia. If the god of music should not be above our reach, who should?</i>	
134	<i>Midas. I like it not.</i>	135: oh no! Midas once again, in expressing his dislike of Apollo's music, is showing terrible judgment.
136	<i>Pan. Now let me tune my pipes. I cannot pipe and sing, that's the <u>odds</u> in the instrument, not the art: but I will pipe and then sing; and then judge both of the art and instrument.</i>	= unusual or unhappy circumstance ² or difference. ¹
142	<i>[He pipes, and then sings.]</i>	
144	<i>[Pan's Song:]</i>	
146	<i>Pan. Pan's Syrinx was a girl indeed, Though now she's turned into a reed, From that dear reed Pan's pipe does come, A pipe that strikes Apollo dumb; Nor flute, nor lute, nor <u>cittern</u> can So chant it, as the pipe of Pan; <u>Cross-gartered swains</u>, and dairy girls,</i>	146-161: the iambic pentameter of Pan's song is strict, or unvaried. = early guitar or lute. ¹
154	<i>With faces <u>smug</u>, and round as pearls, When Pan's shrill pipe begins to play, With dancing wear out night and day; The <u>bag-pipe's drone</u> his hum lays by,</i>	152: <i>cross-gartered</i> = reference to the wearing of long garters which crossed both above and below the knee, a fashion considered eccentric or boorish in Lyly's day. ⁹ <i>swains</i> = rustics or shepherds. = smooth. ¹
156	<i>When Pan sounds up his <u>minstrelsy</u>,</i>	156: <i>bagpipe's drone</i> = a bagpipe has 3 three pipes, or drones. The reference here is to the largest, the bass drone, which emits a single continuous note. <i>his hum lays by</i> = pauses or stops making its (<i>his</i>) sound. = ie. singing and playing his own instrument.

158 *His minstrelsy! O base! This quill*
Which at my mouth with wind I fill,
160 *Puts me in mind, though her I miss,*
That still my Syrinx lips I kiss.

162 **Apol.** Hast thou done, Pan?

164 **Pan.** Ay, and done well, as I think.

166 **Apol.** Now, Nymphs, what say you?

168 **Erato.** We all say that Apollo hath shewed himself
170 both a god, and of music the god; Pan himself a rude
satyr, neither keeping measure, nor time; his piping as

172 far out of tune, as his body out of form. To thee, divine
Apollo, we give the prize and reverence.

174

176 **Apol.** But what says Midas?

178 **Midas.** Methinks there's more sweetness in the pipe of
Pan than Apollo's lute; I brook not that nice tickling
180 of strings, that contents me that makes one start. What
a shrillness came into mine ears out of that pipe, and
182 what a goodly noise it made! Apollo, I must needs
judge that Pan deserveth most praise.

184 **Pan.** Blessed be Midas, worthy to be a god: these girls,
whose ears do but itch with daintiness, give the verdict

186 without weighing the virtue; they have been brought
up in chambers with soft music, not where I make the
188 woods ring with my pipe, Midas.

190 **Apol.** Wretched, unworthy to be a king, thou shalt
know what it is to displease Apollo. I will leave thee
192 but the two last letters of thy name, to be thy whole
name; which if thou canst not guess, touch thine ears,
194 they shall tell thee.

196 **Midas.** What hast thou done, Apollo? the ears of an
ass upon the head of a king?

198 **Apol.** And well worthy, when the dullness of an ass is
200 in the ears of a king.

202 **Midas.** Help, Pan! or Midas perisheth.

204 **Pan.** I cannot undo what Apollo hath done, nor give
thee any amends, unless to those ears thou wilt have
206 added these horns.

= a name for any of the pipes in a pan-pipe.¹

= ie. showed.

171: **satyr** = the generic name for the half-goat half-human denizens of the woods.

measure = could refer to rhythm or pace or time.¹
= ouch! A reference to Pan's goatish lower-half.

169-173: note that although Erato is Pan's oracle in Arcadia, she, perhaps wisely, judges the music of the powerful god Apollo to be superior to that of Pan.

= cannot tolerate. = absurd or foolish plucking or playing.¹

= high-pitched sound,¹ apparently meant without negative connotation.

= are over-nice or overly delicate.¹

186-8: **they have...pipe** = Pan is suggesting the nymphs were raised shielded from ever hearing authentic music, as is heard on earth.

chambers = rooms.

= ie. -as, meaning ass.

196-7: here, Midas reaches up to feel his head, only to find his own ears have been replaced with those of an ass.

= stupidity.

= an interesting limitation on the gods' powers is that they will not, or cannot, undo the actions performed by other gods.

= in addition to having a body that was half-goat, Pan also wore the horns of a goat.

208 **1st Nymph.** It were very well, that it might be hard to
 judge whether he were more ox or ass.

210 **Apol.** Farewell, Midas.

212 **Pan.** Midas, farewell.

214 [Exeunt Apollo and Pan.]

216 **2nd Nymph.** I warrant they be dainty ears: nothing can
 218 please them but Pan's pipe.

220 **Erato.** He hath the advantage of all ears, except the
 222 mouse; for else there's none so sharp of hearing as the
 ass. Farewell, Midas.

224 **2nd Nymph.** Midas, farewell.

226 **3rd Nymph.** Farewell, Midas.

228 [Exeunt Erato and Nymphs.]

230 **Midas.** Ah, Midas! why was not thy whole body
 232 metamorphosed, that there might have been no part
 left of Midas? Where shall I shroud this shame? or
 234 how may I be restored to mine old shape? Apollo is
 angry: blame not Apollo, whom being god of music
 thou didst both dislike and dishonour; preferring the
 236 barbarous noise of Pan's pipe, before the sweet melody
 of Apollo's lute. If I return to Phrygia, I shall be
 238 pointed at; if I live in these woods, savage beasts must
 be my companions: and what other companions should
 240 Midas hope for than beasts, being of all beasts himself
 the dullest? Had it not been better for thee to have
 242 perished by a golden death, than now to lead a beastly
 life? Unfortunate in thy wish, unwise in thy judgment;
 244 first a golden fool, now a leaden ass. What will they
 say in Lesbos (if haply these news come to Lesbos)?
 246 – *If they come, Midas? yes, report flies as swift as*
 thoughts, gathering wings in the air, and doubling
 248 rumours by her own running, insomuch as having here
 the ears of an ass, it will there be told, all my hairs are
 250 ass's ears. Then will this be the byword; is Midas, that
 sought to be monarch of the world, become the mock
 252 of the world? are his golden mines turned into water,
 as free for every one that will fetch, as for himself, that
 254 possessed them by wish? Ah, poor Midas! are his
conceits become blockish, his counsels unfortunate,
 256 his judgments unskillful? Ah, foolish Midas! a just

215: stage direction added by editor.

217-8: the 2nd Nymph, recalling Pan's comment about how the nymphs' "ears do but itch with daintiness" (line 185 above), is sarcastic.

dainty = over-nice or sensitive.

220-1: **He hath...mouse** = Midas' ears hear better than do those of any other animal, excepting the mouse, whose hearing was believed to be, as contemporary literature suggested, exceptionally keen.

204-228: ultimately, the gods and other deities do not really have any reason to care about the fate of mortals.

= a nice allusion to Ovid's collection of myths.
 = hide.

= displease.

= stupidest; the *dullness* of the ass was proverbial.
 = Midas alludes to the starvation caused by his golden touch.

= *lead* is contrasted with *gold*, the two metals having diametrically opposite values.

= by chance.

= ie. news.

250: **Then will...byword** = ie. Midas' ears will cause him to be an object of scorn or ridicule.

that = who.

252-4: **are his...by wish** = Midas worries that his enemies will lose their awe of him, and will feel free to remove some of his gold (Phrygia's wealth) without fear of retribution, as if *gold* were no more valuable than *water*.

= ideas. = doltish. = advice is unlucky.¹

258 reward, for thy pride to wax poor, for thy overweening
to wax dull, for thy ambition to wax humble, for thy
cruelty to say, *sisque miser semper, nec sis miserabilis*

260 *ulli.* – But I must seek to cover my shame by art, lest
being once discovered to these petty kings of Mysia,

262 Pisidia and Galatia, they all join to add to mine ass's

ears, of all the beasts the dullest, a sheep's heart, of all
264 the beasts the fearfullest: and so cast lots for those
kingdoms, that I have won with so many lives, and
266 kept with so many envies.

[Exit.]

ACT IV, SCENE II.

A reedy place.

*Enter five shepherds; Menalcas, Coryn,
Celthus, Driapon, and Amyntas.*

1 *Menal.* I muse what the nymphs meant, that so sang in
2 the groves, "Midas of Phrygia hath ass's ears".

4 *Cor.* I marvel not, for one of them plainly told me he
had ass's ears.

6 *Celt.* Ay, but it is not safe to say it: he is a great king,
8 and his hands are longer than his ears: therefore, for us

that keep sheep, it is wisdom enough to tell sheep.

10

12 *Dria.* 'Tis true; yet since Midas grew so mischievous
as to blur his diadem with blood, which should glister
with nothing but pity; and so miserable, that he made

14 gold his god, that was framed to be his slave; many
broad speeches have flown abroad: in his own country

16 they stick not to call him tyrant, and elsewhere

= grow. = arrogance or high expectations of himself.¹

258-9: **Latin** = "May you always be unhappy, and pitied by
no one."⁶ From Ovid's curse poem, *Ibis*.⁹

= ie. skillfully cover his ears.

261: **discovered** = revealed, literally "uncovered".

Mysia = region in north-west Asia Minor, perhaps
bordering Phrygia.

= **Pisidia** and **Galatia** bordered Phrygia to the south and
north-east respectively.

= so much ill will.¹

The Scene: Bond supposes this location, probably a marshy
area, is somewhere between the Palace and the woods.⁹

Entering Characters: interestingly, **Amyntas** is the only
shepherd mentioned by name in the scene. One may wonder
why Lyly even bothered to give the shepherds names: it
would become common in such situations to simply call
them *Shepherd No. 1, No. 2*, etc.

= a variation on the proverbial concern for *the long arm of
the law*: not only will anything said in the kingdom even-
tually get back to Midas, but his ability to strike back at
anyone extends even further.

= ie. "we would be wiser to stick to counting (*tell* = count)
sheep."

11-22 (below): Driapon agrees that discretion is required
here, but then goes on at length to criticize the king
anyway.

= injurious in action.¹

= blemish or stain his crown. = sparkle.¹

= mercy. = despicable or miserly.¹

14: **framed** = made or created.

14-15: **many broad...abroad** = much loose talk has
spread; note the wordplay between **broad** and **abroad**.

= hesitate.

18	usurper. They <u>flatly</u> say, that he eateth into other dominions, as the sea doth into the land, not knowing, that in swallowing a poor island as big as Lesbos, he	17-22: They flatly...the sand = a clever metaphor for describing how Midas, through his ambition, may end up losing more than he gains. flatly (line 17) = openly, unambiguously. ¹
20	may <u>cast up</u> three territories thrice as big as Phrygia: for what the sea winneth in the marsh, it loseth in the	= vomit; a metaphor with eateth (line 17) and swallowing (line 19).
22	sand.	
24	Amy. <u>Take me with you</u> , but speak softly, for these reeds may have ears, and hear us.	= "let me understand you".
26		
28	Menal. Suppose they have, yet they may be without tongues to <u>bewray us</u> .	= "give us away".
30	Cor. Nay, let them have tongues too; we have eyes to see that they have none, and therefore if they hear, and	
32	speak, they know not <u>from whence it comes</u> .	= ie. who uttered the slanderous language.
34	Amy. Well, then this I say, when a lion doth so much degenerate from <u>princely kind</u> , that he will borrow of	35: princely kind = ie. its kingly nature. The lion is of course standing in for Midas. 35-36: borrow of the beasts = ie. assume parts or characteristics from other animals.
36	the beasts, I say he is no lion, but a monster; <u>pieced</u>	= assembled.
38	with the craftiness of the fox, the cruelty of the tiger, the ravening of the wolf, the <u>dissembling of the hyena</u> , he is worthy also to have the ears of an ass.	= Pliny wrote that the hyena is capable of imitating a human voice, in order, for example, to lure a sheep out of its pen so it may devour it (8.44).
40		
42	Menal. He seeks to conquer Lesbos, and like a foolish <u>gamester</u> , having a <u>bagfull</u> of his own, <u>ventures</u> it all to win a <u>groat</u> of another.	41-43: Midas is like a foolish gambler (gamester), who out of greed bets all of his wealth on the chance to win a little bit more. bagfull = ie. of money. ventures = risks. groat = an English coin of the lowest value.
44		
46	Cor. He that fishes for Lesbos must have such a <u>wooden net</u> , as all the trees in Phrygia will not serve to make the <u>cod</u> , nor all the woods in Pisidia provide the	45-48: a fishing metaphor: "anyone foolish enough to try to attack Lesbos must have such a large navy that nature cannot provide enough materials to build one." The wooden net is a metaphor for a navy. A stone was often placed in the bottom of a net (its cod) to keep it deep in the water, while corks would be attached to the net's sides to keep them afloat. ⁹
48	<u>corks</u> .	
50	Dria. Nay, he means to <u>angle</u> for it with an hook of gold and a bait of gold, and so to <u>strike</u> the fish with a	= fish. = hook. ¹
52	pleasing bait, that will slide out of an open net.	
54	Amy. Tush! tush! those islanders are too <u>subtle</u> to	54-55: those islanders...treasure = the citizens of Lesbos

nibble at craft, and too rich to swallow treasure: if that

56 be his hope, he may as well dive to the bottom of the
58 sea, and bring up an anchor of a thousand weight, as
60 plod with his gold to corrupt a people so wise. And
besides, a nation (as I have heard) so valiant, that are
readier to strike than ward.

62 **Celt.** More than all this, Amyntas (though we dare
64 not so much as mutter it), their king is such a one as
dazzleth the clearest eyes with majesty, daunteth the
66 valiantest hearts with courage, and for virtue filleth all
the world with wonder. If beauty go beyond sight,
confidence above valour, and virtue exceed miracle,

68 what is it to be thought, but that Midas goeth to
70 undermine that by the simplicity of man, that is
fastened to a rock, by the providence of the gods.

72 **Menal.** We poor commons (who tasting war, are made
to relish nothing but taxes), can do nothing but grieve,

74 to see things unlawful practiced, to obtain things
impossible. All his mines do but gild his comb, to
76 make it glister in the wars, and cut ours that are forced
to follow him in his wars.

78 **Cor.** Well! that must be borne, not blamed, that cannot
80 be changed: for my part, if I may enjoy the fleece of

82 my silly flock with quietness, I will never care three
flocks for his ambition.

84 **Menal.** Let this suffice; we may talk too much, and
being overheard, be all undone. I am so jealous, that
86 methinks the very reeds bow down, as though they
listened to our talk: – and soft: I hear some coming,
88 let us in, and meet at a place more meet.

90 [Exeunt.]

ACT IV, SCENE III.

are too shrewd (*subtle*) to be fooled by any Machiavellian strategies to conquer them, and are already too wealthy to be vulnerable to bribery.

craft = cunning or trickery.

= ie. "it will be as futile for him to".

= ie. attempt to retrieve. = weighing one thousand pounds.¹

= plot.

= ie. simply stand guard or in a defensive position. Here is another reference to the English decision to attack and defeat the Spanish Armada in 1588.

= ie. the king of Lesbos, ie. Elizabeth I.

= achievement.¹

68-70: *Midas goeth...the gods* = a difficult passage. The sense is that Midas seeks to overthrow the great king which the gods in their wisdom have set in Lesbos. Midas assumes that ignorant men (*simplicity* = ignorance) will be available to assist him. The *rock* could refer to the king or to the island itself.

72-73: *We poor...taxes* = a familiar complaint over the heavy taxes imposed upon a nation's citizens to pay for its armies. An alert reader may ask why Midas needed to impose taxes at all, when, thanks to his golden touch, the government had all the wealth it could ever need to prosecute its wars.

relish = taste.¹

= metaphorically, pride: a reference to the crest or comb of a cock; but Lancashire suggests Menalcas is referring to the crest of Midas' helmet, a rare use of this meaning for *comb*.

79-80: *that must...changed* = that which cannot be altered must be endured, and it is pointless to assign blame for deleterious circumstances.

= humble.²

= a *flock* is a tuft of cotton or like material, referring to something of no value, with obvious pun.⁹

= ruined. = anxious (of being overheard).

= ie. towards the shepherds, as if straining to hear.

= ie. "let us go in". = more fitting (to continue the discussion).

The same: a reedy place.

Enter Licio, Petulus, Minutius, Huntsman.

1 **Licio.** Is not hunting a tedious occupation?

2
4 **Pet.** Ay, and troublesome, for if you call a dog a dog,
you are undone.

6 **Hunts.** You be both fools! and besides, baseminded;
8 hunting is for kings, not peasants. Such as you are
unworthy to be hounds, much less huntsmen, that
know not when a hound is fleet, fair-flewed, and

10 well-hanged; being ignorant of the deepness of a
12 hound's mouth, and the sweetness.

14 **Minut.** Why I hope, sir, a cur's mouth is no deeper
than the sea, nor sweeter than a honeycomb.

16 **Hunts.** Pretty cockscomb! a hound will swallow thee
18 as easily as a great pit a small pebble.

20 **Minut.** Indeed, hunting were a pleasant sport, but the
22 dogs make such barking, that one cannot hear the
hounds cry.

24 **Hunts.** I'll make thee cry! If I catch thee in the forest
thou shalt be leashed.

26 **Minut.** What's that?

28 **Licio.** Doest thou not understand their language?

30 **Minut.** Not I!

32 **Pet.** 'Tis the best calamance in the world, as easily

Entering Characters: *Minutius* is a page or servant, but
of whom is unclear. His name suggests his small size.

= wearisome or irksome activity.

3-4: though unclear as yet, Petulus is pointing out that if
one wants to be a proper hunter, one has to learn an entirely
new affected language and lingo, which quickly becomes
tiresome.

3-4: *if you call...undone* = "if you are unable to identify
a hunting dog by its breed, then you will demonstrate your
ignorance of the sport of hunting."¹⁴ We may note that the
expression "call a dog a dog" also meant "tell it like it is", or
"speak plainly".

undone = ruined.

9: *fleet* = fast.

fair-flewed = with large hanging chaps or jowls.⁹

10: *well-hanged* = with large drooping ears.⁹

10-11: *deepness of a hound's mouth* = a reference to
the deep-toned cry of a hunting dog, which was believed to
be characteristic of a good dog.¹⁶

16-17: The Huntsman makes a joke about Minutius' small
size.

Pretty cockscomb = clever (or excellent) fool.

a = ie. can swallow a.

= ie. howl in a way which would notify the hunters that it
has spotted its prey; a hunting term.¹

= beaten with a leather thong or leash, with obvious pun.⁹
Hunting in English forests was the prerogative of the royal
family, and punishments for any trespass were historically
quite severe, including mutilation or death.²¹

26: "what does that mean?"

= properly, a glossy Flemish woolen material, woven in such
a way as to appear checkered only on one side;⁹ Halliwell²²
suggests the term here is used to mean something like
"bombast", just as the word *fustian* (also a type of cloth) was
commonly employed in Elizabethan drama to refer to
similarly inflated language (see, e.g., line 52 below).

deciphered as the characters in a nutmeg.

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72

Minut. I pray thee, speak some.

Pet. I will.

Hunts. But speak in order, or I'll pay you.

Licio. To it, Petulus.

Pet. There was a boy leashed on the single, because when he was embossed, he took soil.

Licio. What's that?

Pet. Why, a boy was beaten on the tail with a leathern thong, because when he foamed at the mouth with running, he went into the water.

Hunts. This is worse than fustian! Mum you were best! Hunting is an honourable pastime, and for my part

I had as lief hunt a deer in a park, as court a lady in a chamber.

Minut. Give me a pasty for a park, and let me shake off a whole kennel of teeth for hounds: then shalt thou

see a notable champing! after that will I carouse a bowl of wine, and so in the stomach let the venison take soil.

Licio. He hath laid the plot to be prudent: why 'tis pasty crust, "Eat enough and it will make you wise", an old proverb.

Pet. Ay, and eloquent, for you must tipple wine freely, *et foecundi calices quem non fecere disertum?*

Hunts. *Fecere dizardum*! Leave off these toys, and let us seek out Midas, whom we lost in the chase.

Pet. I'll warrant he hath by this started a covey of

= Bond believes this is a reference to the easily-visible radial veins in a cross-section of a nutmeg seed.⁹ Petulus is explaining how easy it is to talk "hunting-ese".

= "please", often written simply as "prithee".

= ie. correctly. = "give you what you deserve", ie. a beating.

43-44: Petulus shows off his knowledge of hunting terms in this speech, which he translates at line 48 below.

leashed = beaten.

single = the tail of a buck.

embossed = used to describe a deer that is foaming at the mouth, due to fatigue from running.

took soil = **to take soil** is to go into hiding in a body of muddy water.²²

48-49: **leathern thong** = a strip of leather used for whipping.¹

52: **fustian** = low, vulgar language.²²

52-53: **Mum you were best** = "you had best remain silent."

= "would rather".

57-60: Minutius would rather feast than hunt.

pasty (line 57) = English venison-pastry.¹

for = ie. in exchange for, instead of.

57-58: **shake off** = Lancashire suggests "let loose".

= vigorous and noisy chewing.¹ = drink freely.¹

= go into hiding (in the wine in the stomach); a hunting term (see the note at lines 43-44 above).

= ie. set the stage. = cautious, sensible.

67: **Latin** = "whom has the flowing cups not made eloquent?" (quoting Horace's *Epistles*, Book I.v.19).

69: **Fecere dizardum** = the Huntsman parodies the last two words Petulus spoke in Latin, which mean "they have made him eloquent"; he replaces *disertum* with *dizardum*, which, from *dizzard*, means "fool": "they have made him a fool."

toys = trifles.

72: **by this** = ie. by this time.

started = flushed out.

bucks, or roused a school of pheasants.

74

Hunts. Treason to two brave sports, hawking and hunting: thou shouldest say, start a hare, rouse the deer, spring the partridge.

76

78

Pet. I'll warrant that was devised by some country swad: that seeing a hare skip up, which made him start, he presently said he started the hare.

80

82

Licio. Ay, and some lubber lying besides a spring, and seeing a partridge come by, said he did spring the partridge.

84

86

Hunts. Well, remember all this!

88

Pet. Remember all? nay, then had we good memories, for there be more phrases than thou hast hairs! but let me see: I pray thee, what's this about thy neck?

90

92

Hunts. A bugle.

94

Pet. If it had stood on thy head, I should have called it a horn. Well, 'tis hard to have one's brows embroidered with bugle.

96

98

Licio. But canst thou blow it?

100

Hunts. What else?

102

Minut. But not away.

104

Pet. No, 'twill make Boreas out of breath, to blow his horns away.

106

Licio. There was good blowing, I'll warrant, before they came there.

108

110

Pet. Well, 'tis a shrowd blow.

112

Hunts. Spare your winds in this, or I'll wind your

114

necks in a cord: – but soft, I heard my master's blast.

covey = ie. a group name properly used for fowl, not deer.

= still hilariously incorrect, Petulus uses a group word, **school**, which of course should be applied to fish, not birds.

= ie. a capital insult. = fine, excellent.

76-77: **thou shouldest...partridge** = the Huntsman tries to correct the boys' hunting lingo.

= guarantee. = thought up.¹

80: **swad** = bumpkin.^{1,9}

80-81: **that seeing...the hare** = having been startled (**started**) by the sudden appearance of a hare, the bumpkin promptly (**presently**) announced it was he who **started** the hare, and a new hunting term was born!

= dolt.²

83-85: note how Licio puns on **spring** to explain the origin of another hunting expression.

87: "You'll pay for all this!"⁹

= "we would require".

= ie. around; Petulus points to the instrument hanging from the Huntsman's neck.

95-97: **If it...a horn** = yet another crack about the horns that were said to grow on cuckolds' foreheads.

brows = forehead.

embroidered = ie. adorned.

101: "what else would I do with it?"

103 "but you cannot blow it away."

= the god of the north wind.⁴

= ie. shrewd, meaning evil or malicious; a common alternate form,¹ pronounced to rhyme with **showed**.

113-4: **I'll wind...a cord** = punning on **wind**, the Huntsman threatens to weave or twist the servants' necks together as if to make a rope (**cord**); but possibly punning also on **cord**, which could refer to a hangman's noose.

= ie. the blow of the hunting horn of whomever the Huntsman is working for.

116 **Minut.** Some have felt it!
118 **Hunts.** Thy mother, when such a flyblow was buzzed
120 out! but I must be gone, I perceive Midas is come.

[Exit Huntsman.]

122 **Licio.** Then let not us tarry, for now shall we shave

124 the barber's house. The world will grow full of wiles,
seeing Midas hath lost his golden wish.

126 **Minut.** I care not, my head shall dig devises, and my
128 tongue stamp them; so as my mouth shall be a mint,
and my brains a mine.

130 **Licio.** Then help us to cozen the barber.

132 **Minut.** The barber shall know every hair of my chin to
134 be as good as a choke-pear for his purse.

136 [Exeunt.]

ACT IV, SCENE IV.

The same: a reedy place.

Enter Mellacrites, Martius, and Eristus.

1 **Erist.** I marvel what Midas meaneth to be so
2 melancholy since his hunting.

4 **Mell.** It is a good word in Midas, otherwise I should
term it in another blockishness. I cannot tell whether it
6 be a sourness commonly incident to age, or a
severeness particular to the kings of Phrygia, or a
8 suspicion cleaving to great estates; but methinks he
seemeth so jealous of us all, and becomes so
10 overthwart to all others, that either I must conjecture
his wits are not his own, or his meaning very hard to
12 some.

= ie. the master's blast, but Minutius means a beating.

118-9: **Thy mother...buzzed out** = Minutius is compared to a maggot (*flyblow*),¹ the offspring of a fly: according to Daniel, the Huntsman means that Minutius' father must have beaten up his mother over his disappointment at her giving birth to (*buzzed out*) such a runt of a boy, with obvious pun on *buzz*.

123-4: **shave the barber's house** = trick (*shave*) the barber out of his possessions,¹ especially the golden beard, with obvious pun on *shave*.

124-5: **The world...golden wish** = if Midas can no longer create new gold, people will have to return to finding clever ways to trick each other out of their wealth.
wiles = guile, deceitful tricks.¹

127-9: Minutius employs an extensive mining metaphor.
dig devises = invent plans or stratagems.¹
= ie. referring to the act of *stamping* words or an image onto a coin.¹

= deceive, trick.

133-4: Minutius will dedicate every ounce of energy to discovering a way to rob the barber. Despite Minutius' ostensible participation in the plan to fleece the barber, he disappears from the play after this scene.

choke-pear = Fairholt identifies a *choke-pear* as an Italian torture device, a pear-shaped instrument which when applied to the mouth would force it to open to its maximum width; the metaphor's application to the barber's purse is obvious.

Entering Characters: the three royal advisors arrive.

4-5: **It is...blockishness** = ie. "the word *melancholy* describes Midas well, but if another had person behaved this way, Mellacrites would call it "stupidity" (*blockishness*).¹

= which attaches to, ie. is inherent in, men of high standing.

= suspiciously watchful (so as to protect his secret).¹

= contentious.¹

= intention.¹⁴

14	Mar. For my part, I neither care nor wonder, I see all his expeditions for wars are <u>laid in water</u> : for now	= suspended. ¹
16	when he should <u>execute</u> , he begins to consult; and	= act.
18	<u>suffers the</u> enemies to bid us good morrow at our own doors, to whom we long since might have given the	= "allows our".
20	last good night in their own beds. He weareth (I know not whether for warmth or <u>wantonness</u>) a <u>great tiara</u> on	18-19: given...beds = ie. killed.
22	his head, as though his head were not <u>heavy</u> enough	= caprice. ¹ = enormous or high crown.
24	unless he loaded it with great <u>rolls</u> : an attire never used (that I could hear of) but <u>of</u> old women, or <u>pelting</u>	= weighed down. ¹⁴
26	priests. This will make Pisidia <u>wanton</u> , Lycaonia <u>stiff</u> , all his territories <u>wavering</u> ; and he that hath <u>couched</u>	= cushions used as part of a headdress. ⁹
28	so many kingdoms in one crown, will have his kingdom scattered into as many crowns as he	= by. = petty, small-time. ¹
30	posseseth countries. I will rouse him up, and if his ears	= ungovernable. ¹ = resolute, defiant. ¹
32	be not ass's ears, I will make them tingle. I respect not my life, I know it is my duty, and certainly I dare swear war is my profession.	= reeling, dangerously close to falling. ¹ = set. ⁹
34	Erist. Martius, we will <u>all join</u> : and though I have been (as in Phrygia they <u>term</u>) a <u>brave courtier</u> , that is, (as	26-28: will have...countries = each conquered nation will regain its own king.
36	they expound it) a fine lover; yet will I set both aside, love and courting, and follow Martius: for never shall it be said, <i>Bella gerant alij, semper Eristus amet.</i>	28-29: and if...tingle = colloquially, "and if he is not so stubborn as to refuse to listen to my advice, then I will make his ears burn with sharply-spoken advice," with obvious "accidental" reference to Midas' elongated ears.
38	Mell. And I, Martius, that honoured gold for a god, and accounted all other gods <u>but lead</u> , will follow Martius, and say, <i>Vilius argentum est auro, virtutibus aurum.</i>	29-31: I respect...profession = Martius knows it is his duty to stir Midas out of his lethargy, even though he risks his life by possibly angering the king with such counsel.
40	Mar. My lords, I give you thanks, and am glad: for there are no stouter soldiers in the world, than those that are made of lovers; nor any more <u>liberal</u> in wars, than they that in peace have been covetous. Then doubt not, if courage and coin can prevail, but we shall prevail; and besides, nothing can prevail but fortune. – But here comes Sophronia, I will first talk with her.	= "do this together."
42		34: term = "call (me)".
44		brave courtier = an excellent courtier; the latter word is ambiguous, as Eristus recognizes: courtier could refer to him as (1) a member of the king's court, or (2) a lover or wooer of women; Eristus means the second, as he explains.
46		37: Latin = "Let others wage war, but let Eristus always love." ⁶ Eristus adapts a line from Ovid's <i>The Heroides</i> , XVII. 254.9
48		= ie. of no value.
50		41: Latin = "Silver is of less value than gold, and gold is of less value than virtue." ⁶ From Horace's <i>Epistles</i> , Book I.I.52.
52	<i>Enter Sophronia, Camilia, Amerula.</i>	43-46: Martius courteously compliments his companions.
54	Madame, either our king hath no ears to hear, or no care to consider, both in what <u>state</u> we stand being his subjects, and what danger he is in being our king.	= generous.
		Entering Characters: the princess Sophronia enters with two of her attendants.
		= condition. ¹

56	Duty is not regarded, courage <u>contemned</u> ; altogether	= scorned.
	<u>careless of us</u> , and his own safety.	= ie. "Midas neglects us".
58		
60	Soph. Martius, I <u>mislike not</u> thy <u>plain dealing</u> ; but	= "am not <i>not</i> pleased". = direct language.
62	pity my father's trance; a trance I must call that, where	
64	nature cannot <u>move</u> , nor counsel, nor music, nor	= persuade, influence.
	<u>physic</u> , nor danger, nor death, nor all. But that which	= medicine.
	maketh me most both to sorrow and wonder, is that	
	music (a <u>mithridate</u> for melancholy) should make him	= an antidote.
	mad; <u>crying still</u> . <i>Uno namque modo Pan et Apollo</i>	65: crying still = lamenting ceaselessly.
66	<i>nocent</i> . None hath access to him but Motto, as though	65-66: Latin = "for Pan and Apollo harm in the same
	melancholy were to be shaven with a razor, not cured	way." ⁶
68	with a medicine. – But <u>stay</u> , what noise is this in those	= hold on.
	reeds?	
70		
72	Mell. What sound is this? who dares utter that he	
	hears?	
74	Soph. I dare, Mellacrites, the words are plain, – "Midas	
	the king hath ass's ears."	
76		
78	Cam. This is strange, and yet <u>to be told</u> the king.	= ie. "it must be told to".
80	Soph. So dare I, Camilla: for it concerneth me in duty,	
	and us all in discretion. But soft, let us <u>hearken better</u> .	= listen carefully.
82		
	The Reeds. Midas of Phrygia hath ass's ears.	
84		
86	Erist. This is monstrous, and either <u>portends</u> some	= ie. is an omen of.
	mischief to the king, or <u>unto the state confusion</u> . Midas	= disaster for the nation.
	of Phrygia hath ass's ears? It is <u>unpossible</u> ! let us with	= both <i>unpossible</i> and <i>impossible</i> were in use as early as
	speed <u>to</u> the king to know his resolution, for to some	the 14th century. ¹
88	oracle he must send. Till his majesty be acquainted	= ie. go to.
90	with this matter, we dare not root out the reeds;	
92	himself must both hear the sound, and guess at the	
	reason.	
94	Soph. Unfortunate Midas! that being so great a king,	
	there should out of the earth spring so great a shame.	
96		
98	Mar. It may be that his wishing for gold, being but	= waste material.
100	<u>dross</u> of the world, is by all the gods accounted	= revealed. ¹
102	foolish, and so <u>discovered</u> out of the earth: for a king	
	to thirst for gold instead of honour, to prefer heaps of	
	worldly coin before triumphs in warlike conquests,	
	was in my mind no princely mind.	
104	Mell. Let us not debate the cause, but seek to prevent	103-4: prevent the snares = anticipate traps, ie. further
	the snares; for in [my] mind it foretelleth that which	difficulties.
106	woundeth my mind. Let us in.	
	[<i>Exeunt.</i>]	
	END OF ACT IV.	

ACT V.

SCENE I.

The same: a reedy place.

Enter Midas, Sophronia, Mellacrites, and Martius.

1 **Midas.** Sophronia, thou seest I am become a shame to
2 the world, and a wonder. Mine ears glow. – Mine ears?
3 Ah, miserable Midas! to have such ears as make thy
4 cheeks blush, thy head monstrous, and thy heart
5 desperate? Yet in blushing I am impudent, for I walk
6 in the streets; in deformity I seem comely, for I have
7 left off my tiara; and my heart, the more heavy it is for
8 grief, the more hope it conceiveth of recovery.

10 **Soph.** Dread sovereign and loving sire, there are nine
11 days past, and therefore the wonder is past; there are

12 many years to come, and therefore a remedy to be
13 hoped for. Though your ears be long, yet is there room
14 left on your head for a diadem: though they resemble
15 the ears of the dullest beast, yet should they not daunt
16 the spirit of so great a king. The gods dally with men,
17 kings are no more; they disgrace kings, lest they
18 should be thought gods: sacrifice pleaseth them, so
19 that if you know by the oracle what god wrought it,
20 you shall by humble submission by that god be
21 released.

22 **Midas.** Sophronia, I commend thy care and courage,
23 but let me hear these reeds, that these loathsome ears
24 may be glutted with the report, and that is as good as
25 a remedy.

28 **The Reeds.** Midas of Phrygia hath ass's ears.

30 **Midas.** Midas of Phrygia hath ass's ears? So he hath,

31 unhappy Midas. If these reeds sing my shame so loud,
32 will men whisper it softly? No, all the world already
33 rings of it: and as impossible it is to stay the rumour, as
34 to catch the wind in a net that bloweth in the air, or to
35 stop the wind of all men's mouths that breathe out air.
36 I will to Apollo, whose oracle must be my doom, and
I fear me, my dishonour, because my doom was his,

Entering characters: *Sophronia* and the counselors went to fetch Midas at the end of the last scene, and now return with him to the *reedy place*.

= Midas' ears burn or tingle, suggesting that people are talking about him.¹

= shameless.²

= graceful.

= out of, from.

10-11: *there are...is past* = the phrase *nine day's wonder* was used to describe a phenomenon that would attract great attention for a period of time, before the public's attention would be pulled elsewhere. Sophronia is trying to comfort Midas, suggesting that no one is interested in his ears anymore.

= stupidest.

= toy, trifle.

= ie. kings are no more than men. = ie. kings.

= which god transformed Midas' ears; it is apparent that though Midas has revealed his long ears to his companions, he has not told them the embarrassing story behind the transformation.

30-39: Midas' speech is spoken as a partial aside, meaning that the other characters hear Midas or can observe that Midas is speaking, but only indistinctly.

= unlucky.

= stop the spread of.

36-37: Midas decides he will visit the oracle of Apollo to discover how he can appease the god and get him to remove his cursed ears; the king, however, recognizes that his own role in angering Apollo may make any such assistance less likely to be granted: after all, since Midas' judgment in the

38 if kings may disgrace gods: and gods they disgrace,
 when they forget their duties.

40 **Mell.** What saith Midas?

42 **Midas.** Nothing, but that Apollo must determine all, or
 44 Midas see ruin of all. To Apollo will I offer an ivory
 lute for his sweet harmony, and berries of bays as

46 black as jet for his love Daphne, pure simples for his
 physic, and continual incense for his prophesying.

48 **Mar.** Apollo may discover some odd riddle, but not

50 give the redress; for yet did I never hear that his
 oracles were without doubtfulness, nor his remedies

52 without impossibilities. This superstition of yours is
 54 able to bring errors among the common sort, not ease
 to your discontented mind.

56 **Midas.** Dost thou not know, Martius, that when
 58 Bacchus commanded me to bathe myself in Pactolus,
 thou thoughtedst it a meer mockery, before with thine
 60 eyes thou sawest the remedy.

62 **Mar.** Ay, Bacchus gave the wish, and therefore was
 like also to give the remedy.

64 **Midas.** And who knows whether Apollo gave me these
 66 ears, and therefore may release the punishment? Well,
reply not, for I will to Delphos: in the meantime, let it

68 be proclaimed that if there be any so cunning that can
 tell the reason of these reeds creaking, he shall have
 my daughter to his wife, or if she refuse it, a dukedom

music competition brought Apollo dishonour (*my doom was his*), it seems probable that Apollo's oracle will be to sentence Midas to carry his long ears, with its concomitant *dishonour*, forevermore.

whose oracle must be my doom = whatever Apollo decides for him will likely be his final punishment (*doom*).

= kings. = ie. the obeisance and respect they owe the gods.

45-46: *berries...Daphne*: laurel trees (*bays*) produce berries whose colour is a very dark purple, approaching black. See the note at Act II.ii.23-24 for the tree's significance to Apollo.

jet (line 46) = a form of coal proverbial for its blackness.

46-47: *simples for his physic* = herbs (*simples*) for his medicines. Midas presents such gifts to Apollo in the latter's role as the god of healing and medicine.

= a gift of incense to be burned in perpetuity for Apollo's being the god of prophesy.

49-54: Martius again expresses his doubt about the efficacy and ambiguity of the gods' oracles: see Act II.ii.113-7.

discover = reveal.

50: *redress* = remedy.

52-53: *This superstition...sort* = Martius is toying with blasphemy: belief in supernatural oracles, which he terms *superstition*, only leads average or lower-class people (*common sort*) to compound the error of their ways by misinterpreting inherently ambiguous oracles.

61-62: while Midas has revealed the fact of his ass's ears, he still has not told anyone yet how or why he got them, hence Martius' confusion as to why Midas is so intent to get an oracle from Apollo.

66: *reply not* = ie. "do not try to talk me out of it".

Delphos = the name used by Elizabethan poets for *Delphi*, a town lying at the foot of Mt. Parnassus on the Greek mainland, and home to the oracle of Apollo. *Delphos* properly is the former name of the island of Delos, where Apollo was born.

= ie. croaking.

70 for his pains: and withal, that whosoever is so bold as
72 to say that Midas hath ass's ears, shall presently lose
his.

74 **Soph.** Dear father, then go forwards, prepare for the
76 sacrifice, and dispose of Sophronia as it best pleaseth
you.

78 **Midas.** Come, let us in.

80 [Exeunt.]

ACT V, SCENE II.

The gardens before the palace.

Enter Licio and Petulus.

1 **Pet.** What a rascal was Motto to cozen us, and say
2 there were thirty men in a room that would undo us,
and when all came to all, they were but table-men.

4

6 **Licio.** Ay, and then to give us an inventory of all his
goods, only to redeem the beard! but we will be even
with him, and I'll be forsworn, but I'll be revenged.

8

10 **Pet.** And here I vow by my concealed beard, if ever it
chance to be discovered to the world, that it may make

= efforts. = in addition.

71-72: **lose his** = ie. lose his own ears; the cropping of ears
was a common punishment in Elizabethan England.

The Action: much has happened off-stage since we last saw
Mellacrites' servants **Licio** and **Petulus** and **Motto** the
barber. Unfortunately, it is unclear exactly what has been
going on. Bond provides us with some tentative details:

First, we must remember that Petulus has pawned the
golden beard. Secondly, Motto has cured Petulus' toothache
on the condition he would redeem the beard and return it to
Motto.

Now here is the tricky part: according to Bond, the
servants, with Motto's acquiescence, were able to persuade
the pawnbroker to release the beard by using Motto's
possessions as security. This necessitated Motto giving
Petulus an inventory of his goods, which the lads intended to
pawn in order to make some profit out of the deal. Motto
apparently tried and failed to bully the boys into giving him
the beard without first turning over the inventory (see the
scene's first speech at lines 1-3 below). Having finally
received the inventory, Petulus recovered the beard and gave
it to Motto, only to find that the list of Motto's possessions is
a very amusing sham (Bond, p. 534).⁹

The result is one of the funnier scenes in Lyly's canon.

= deceive.

= destroy, ie. thrash.

= pieces of a board-game, such as draughts (checkers).¹ It
appears that before Motto agreed to give the boys an
inventory of his possessions, he tried to threaten them with
violence if they did not turn over the beard. Motto falsely
claimed (says Petulus here) that he had a number of men in
the next room ready to beat them up if they did not hand the
beard over – but the only men he actually had in hiding were
table-men.

9-10: **I vow...world** = the young Petulus pokes fun at the
fact that he has yet to grow any facial hair. It was common in
Elizabethan plays for characters to vow or swear to do
something on body parts.

12 a pike devant: I will have it so sharp pointed, that it shall stab Motto like a poignado.

14 **Licio**. And I protest by these hairs on my head, which are but casualties, – for alas, who knows not how soon

16 they are lost, autumn shaves like a razor, – if these locks be rooted against wind and weather, spring and fall, I swear they shall not be lopped, till Motto by my knavery be so bald that I may write verses on his scalp: in witness whereof I eat this hair. Now must

22 thou, Petulus, kiss thy beard, for that was the book thou swearest by.

24 **Pet**. Nay, I would I could come but to kiss my chin,

26 which is as yet the cover of my book! but my word shall stand. Now let us read the inventory, we'll share it equally.

28 **Licio**. What else?

30 **Pet**. [*Reading*] “An inventory of all Motto's moveable bads and goods, as also of such debts as are owing

34 him, with such household stuff as cannot be removed. Imprimis, in the bed-chamber, one foul wife, and five small children.”

36 **Licio**. I'll not share in that.

40 **Pet**. I am content, take thou all. These be his moveable bads.

42 **Licio**. And from me they shall be removables.

44 **Pet**. “*Item*, in the servant's chamber, two pair of curst queans' tongues.”

46 **Licio**. Tongs thou wouldst say.

48

discovered = revealed.

= ie. pique-devant, a short, pointed beard.¹
= dagger.¹

14-15: *these hairs...casualties* = a humorous description of a thinning scalp.

16: *autumn...razor* = a delightful metaphor for the loss of hair that accompanies the aging of men.

16-20: *if these...scalp* = Licio will never get another haircut – assuming his remaining hairs do not fall out – until he has gotten revenge on Motto.

= Bible.

24: *would* = wish.

24-25: *my chin...book* = ie. Petulus' chin still conceals within it the beginnings of his first beard; note the clever metaphor of Petulus' *chin* as a *cover* for his beard (*book*).

25-26: *my word shall stand* = "my word will be sufficient to guarantee my vow to be revenged."

29: "what else would we do with it?"¹⁶

= although it appears to be nothing more than a humorous opposition to *goods*, the word *bads* was a real noun, used to describe a collection of things that were bad, or of low quality, etc. But it does also serve as a play on words, since *goods* refers to Motto's personal property, just as it is still used today.

= ie. including also.

= "first of all" or "firstly": typically used to introduce a list.

37: Licio says that he doesn't want possession of any of these "items", but Petulus humorously takes Licio to mean that he (Licio) won't share any of them with him, Petulus.

= *movables* is a legal term, referring to personal property; *removables* is a humorous variation invented by Lyly, but a word which in the 19th century came to be used to refer to items which can be taken away.¹

44-45: *two pair...tongues* = ie. Motto's female servants. = scolds'.²²

47: ie. "You mean *tongs*," referring to the tool used to grasp and pick up smaller items.

50 **Pet.** Nay, they pinch worse than tongs.

52 **Licio.** They are moveables, I'll warrant.

54 **Pet.** “Item, one pair of horns in the bride-chamber, on the bed's head.”

56 **Licio.** The beast's head, for Motto is stuffed in the head, and these are among unmoveable goods.

58 **Pet.** Well, *Felix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum*,

60 hapy are they whom other men's horns do make to

62 beware. “Item, a broken pate owing me by one of the Cole house, for notching his head like a chessboard.”

64 **Licio.** Take thou that, and I give thee all the rest of his debts.

66 [Makes as to strike him.]

68 **Pet.** *Noli me tangere*, I refuse the executorship, because I will not meddle with his desperate debts. “Item, an hundred shrewd turns owing me by the pages in the court, because I will not trust them for trimming.”

74 **Licio.** That's due debt.

76 **Pet.** Well, because Motto is poor, they shall be paid him *cum recumbentibus*. All the pages shall enter into

78 recognizance, but ecce, Popenetta chants it.

80 *Enter Popenetta singing.*

82 [Song by Popenetta:]

84 1. 'Las! How long shall I

86 And my maidenhead lie

88 In a cold bed all the night long,

90 I cannot abide it,

Yet away cannot chide it,

Though I find it does me some wrong.

= ie. "women's tongues torment". There is a pun on **pinch** here, which can mean (1) torment, and (2) nip or grip, as tongs would do.

= still talking about women's **tongues**. = "I assure you."

= ie. suggesting a pair of antlers or the like, but Motto has certainly made a joke about his wife cuckolding him. Licio immediately recognizes the reference to the horns said to be worn by the man whose wife is cheating on him.

= furnished.¹

59: **Latin** = "Happy is the man who is made wary thanks to his awareness of the dangers afflicting others."⁶

60-61: **happy...beware** = those men are lucky whom the cuckolding of other men raises their own alertness of their own wive's potential straying.

61-62: **a broken...chessboard** = Motto has listed in his inventory of assets a blow to the head (**pate**) owed him by another.

one = ie. a member.

69: **Latin** = "Do not touch me".

= malicious deeds or "favors".¹ = ie. "owed to me".

= Motto appears to be barber for the entire palace staff.

= typical barbering pun: **trimming** refers to "cheating."

78: **Latin** = quoting Bond: "this ought to mean 'with interest'...it seems to be used as a sort of dog-Latin for 'recompense'" (p. 535).⁹

78-79: **All...recognizance** = the pages will have to record their debts before a magistrate.¹⁴

= behold.¹ = is singing.

Popenetta's Song: Popenetta sings a song entirely about her own virginity, and virginity in general.

= virginity.

92 2. *Can anyone tell*
 94 *Where this fine thing doth dwell,*
That carries nor form, nor fashion?
 96 *It both heats and cools,*
Tis a bauble for fools,
 98 *Yet caught at in every nation.*

100 3. *Say a maid were so crossed,*
As to see this toy lost,

Cannot hue and cry fetch it again?

102 *'Las! No, for 'tis driven*
 104 *Nor to hell, nor to Heaven,*
When 'tis found, 'tis lost even then.

106 **Pip.** Hey ho! would I were a witch, that I might be a
 108 duchess.

Pet. I know not whether thy fortune is to be a duchess,
 110 but sure I am thy face serves thee well for a witch: –
 112 what's the matter?

Pip. The matter? marry, 'tis proclaimed, that
 114 whosoever can tell the cause of the reeds' song, shall
 116 either have Sophronia to wife, or (if she refuse it) a
 118 dukedom for his wisdom. Besides, whosoever saith
 that Midas hath ass's ears shall lose theirs.

Licio. I'll be a duke! I find honour to bud in my head,
 120 and methinks every joint of mine arms, from the
 shoulder to the little finger, says “Send for the herald”.

122 Mine arms are all armoury, gules, sables, azure, or
 124 vert, pur, post, pair, &c.

Pet. And my heart is like a hearth where Cupid is
 126 making a fire, for Sophronia shall be my wife:
 methinks Venus and Nature stand, with each of them
 128 a pair of bellows, the one cooling my low birth, the
 other kindling my lofty affections.

130

= toy or trinket.

= sought or snatched at.¹

= thwarted.

= trifle, referring to her maidenhead.

= a legal phrase denoting the verbal alarm raised by any injured party to pursue an offending felon.¹ It was the duty of those who heard the victim cry out to assist in pursuing and arresting the criminal;³ hence the image in this line of **fetching** or pursuing a girl's permanently-lost virginity.

= "I wish"; Pipenetta is thinking about Midas' offer of a duchy to whomever can solve the mystery of the whispering reeds. If she were a **witch**, she would have the magic powers needed to unravel a puzzle she otherwise does not really own the brains to deal with.

= an oath, derived from the Virgin Mary.

ie. as a reward for

119-123: Licio too dreams of becoming nobility.

= the officer of the court charged with making proclamations¹ – such as announcing the new duke, Licio!

122-3: Licio ostensibly daydreams about the colours of his coat of arms, initially using the correct heraldic vocabulary (**gules** = red, **sables** = black, **azure** = blue, and **vert** = green);¹ but having quickly exhausted his knowledge of heraldry, Licio humorously tosses out some terminology from cards: **pur** is the jack, and **post and pair** is the name of an old card game.⁹

&c = etcetera; often used in drama to indicate that the actor may improvise additional language.

127-8: **Venus...bellows** = ie. Venus and personified Nature each is holding a pair of bellows.

= the sense is of reducing or terminating his low social status by elevating him to the ranks of nobility.

= desires or passions.

132	Pip. <u>Apollo</u> will help me because I can sing.	131: Apollo was the god of music.
134	Licio. <u>Mercury</u> me, because I can lie.	133: the Roman messenger god, Mercury , was known for his deceit.
136	Pet. All the gods me, because I can lie, sing, swear, and love. – But soft, here comes Motto: now shall we have a fit time to be revenged, if by <u>device</u> we can make him say, "Midas hath ass's ears."	= stratagem: the pages will try to trick Motto into committing treason by getting him to say those words which Midas has banned.
140	<i>Enter Motto and Dello.</i>	
142	Licio. Let us not seem to be angry about the inventory, and you shall see my wit to be the hangman for his tongue.	143-4: <i>for his tongue</i> = ie. for its anticipated treason
146	Pip. Why, fools, hath a barber a tongue?	
148	Pet. We'll make him have a tongue, that his teeth that look like a comb shall be the scissors to cut it off.	148-9: a convoluted metaphor suggesting that Motto's own words will lead to his punishment.
150	Pip. I pray let me have the <u>odd ends</u> . I fear nothing so much as to be tongue- <u>tawde</u> .	= leftovers, ¹ ie. Motto's amputated tongue. = tied.
154	Licio. Thou shalt have all the shavings, and then a woman's tongue <u>imped</u> with a barber's, will prove a razor or a <u>raser</u> .	= augmented or enlarged. ¹ = one who rages. ^{1,14}
158	Pet. How now, Motto, what, all <u>amort</u> ?	= dejected. ²
160	Motto. I am as <u>melancholy</u> as a cat.	= depressed.
162	Licio. Melancholy? <u>marry gup</u> , is "melancholy" a word for a barber's mouth? thou shouldst say, "heavy",	162-6: Licio censures Motto for his pretentiousness in using such a sophisticated word as melancholy ! marry gup = an oath or exclamatory cry. ¹
164	"dull" and "doltish": "melancholy" is the <u>crest</u> of	= properly a three-dimensional heraldic device, such as an eagle or fan, worn on the top of one's helmet, usually for ceremonies and tournaments. The <i>coat-of-arms</i> is the entire unique heraldic design used to identify a noble or his family. ¹
166	courtiers' arms, and now every <u>base companion</u> , being in his <u>mubble-fubbles</u> , says he is melancholy.	= low fellow, an insult. = a phrase of uncertain origin referring to depression or melancholia. ¹
168	Pet. Motto, thou shouldst say thou art " <u>lumpish</u> ". If thou encroach upon our courtly terms, we'll <u>trounce</u>	= stupidly lethargic, a baser word for melancholy , and thus more appropriate for Motto to use. = beat.
170	thee: <u>belike</u> if thou shouldst spit often, thou wouldst call it "rheum". Motto, in men of reputation and credit,	170: belike = it is likely that. 170-1: if thou... "rheum" = Petulus suggests Motto is so pretentious that he would use a high-class word like rheum (which refers to any watery discharge) to describe his spitting.
172	it is the "rheum"; in such <u>mechanical mushrumps</u> , it is	172: mechanical = vulgar or coarse, ¹ used to describe one engaged in menial work, such as Motto. mushrumps = ie. mushrooms, meaning "contemptible"

174 a "catarrh", a "pose", the "water evil". You were best wears a velvet patch on your temples too.

176 **Motto.** [Aside] What a world it is to see eggs forwarder than cocks! these infants are as cunning in diseases, as

178 I that have run them over all, backward and forward. –
180 I tell you, boys, it is melancholy that now troubleth me.

182 **Dello.** My master could tickle you with diseases, and that old ones, that have continued in his ancestors' bones these three hundred years. He is the last of the

184 family that is left uneaten.

186 **Motto.** What mean'st thou, Dello?

188 **Pet.** He means you are the last of the stock alive, the
190 rest the worms have eaten.

192 **Dello.** A pox of those saucy worms, that eat men before they be dead.

194 **Pet.** But tell us, Motto, why art thou sad?

196 **Motto.** Because all the court is sad.

198 **Licio.** Why are they sad in court?

200 **Motto.** Because the king hath a pain in his ears.

202 **Pet.** Belike it is the wens.

204 **Motto.** It may be, for his ears are swoln very big.

206 **Pet.** [Aside to Licio] Ten to one Motto knows of the
208 ass's ears.

210 **Licio.** [Aside to Petulus] If he know it, we shall: for

person",^{1,14} a common word used to describe one who has undeservedly risen in status quickly, especially at court.

173: *catarrh, pose, water evil* = words describing watery discharge or a cold,¹ which Petulus feels would be more appropriate for a mere commoner like Motto to employ.

173-4: *You were...too* = Petulus ironically suggests that Motto should wear a beauty mark (*velvet patch*), if that's how he is going to be.

176-7: *eggs...cocks* = a metaphor for babies or novices (ie. Licio and Petulus) behaving so brashly towards their betters (ie. Motto).¹

177: *infants* = term used to describe those who are beginners in some enterprise, here referring to Petulus, Licio and Minutius.

cunning in = knowledgeable about.¹

= discoursed on thoroughly.

182-5: Dello amusingly recounts the long history of venereal disease, whose symptoms were thought to be hereditary,¹⁴ running in Motto's family.

tickle you = "delight you" (by recounting).

= any mention of one's *bones* in the context of disease in Elizabethan drama may be assumed to be an allusion to the pain caused by syphilis.¹

= Dello will explain this in a moment.

= "a curse on", but also a reference to syphilis.

203: "it is likely a lump (or tumour or swelling).¹

= ie. swollen.

<p>212 it is as hard for a barber to keep a secret in his mouth as a burning coal in his hand. Thou shalt see me wring 214 it out by wit. – Motto, 'twas told me that the king will discharge you of your office because you cut his ear when you last trimmed him.</p> <p>216 Motto. 'Tis a lie; and yet if I had, he might well spare 218 an inch or two.</p> <p>220 Pet. [<i>Aside to Licio</i>] It will <u>out</u>, I feel him coming.</p> <p>222 Dello. [<i>Aside to Motto</i>] Master, take heed, you will blab all <u>anon</u>, these <u>wags</u> are crafty.</p> <p>224 Motto. Let me alone.</p> <p>226 Licio. Why, Motto, what difference between the king's 228 ears, and thine?</p> <p>230 Motto. As much as between an ass's ears and mine.</p> <p>232 Pet. O, Motto is modest; to <u>mitigate the matter</u>, he calls his own ears ass's ears.</p> <p>234 Motto. Nay, I mean the king's are ass's ears.</p> <p>236 Licio. Treason, treason!</p> <p>238 Dello. I told you, master! <u>you have made a fair hand</u>; 240 for now you have made your lips <u>scissors</u> to cut off your ears.</p> <p>242 Motto. <u>Perij!</u> unless you pity me, Motto is <u>in a pit</u>.</p> <p>244</p> <p>246 Pet. Nay, Motto, treason is a worse pain than toothache.</p> <p>248 Licio. Now Motto, thou knowest thine ears are ours to command.</p> <p>250 Motto. <u>Your</u> servants, or handmaids.</p> <p>252 Pet. Then will I lead my maid by the hand.</p> <p>254</p> <p style="text-align: center;">256 [<i>He pulls him by the ears.</i>]</p> <p>258 Motto. Out, villain! thou wring'st too hard.</p> <p>260 Dello. Not so hard as he bit me.</p> <p>262 Motto. Thou seest, boy, we are both mortal. I enjoy mine ears, but <i>durante placito</i>; nor thou thy finger, but <i>fauente dento</i>.</p>	<p>= come out.</p> <p>= any moment. = mischievous boys.</p> <p>= minimize the danger of his words.</p> <p>= "you have gotten yourself into a nice mess";⁹ a card- playing metaphor.¹⁴ = ie. into scissors.</p> <p>243: Perij = Latin: "I am undone."¹⁶ in a pit = according to Lancashire, "in a desperate situation". Note the typical Lylyian wordplay of pity with pit.</p> <p>= ie. "my ears are your".</p> <p>259: Dello has not forgotten how Petulus bit his fingers back at Act III.ii.163-6.</p> <p>262: Latin = "only during pleasure",⁹ a legal expression.¹⁴ 263: Latin = "with the support of your teeth", a parody of the proverbial <i>deo fauente</i>, "with God's support."⁶</p>
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264 **Pet.** Yea Motto, hast thou Latin?

266 **Motto.** Alas! he that hath drawn so many teeth, and

268 never asked Latin for a tooth, is ill brought up.

270 **Licio.** Well, Motto, let us have the beard, without

272 covin, fraud, or delay, at one entire payment, and thou

shalt scape a payment.

274 **Motto.** I protest by scissors, brush and comb; basin,

ball and apron; by razor, ear-pick and rubbing cloths;

276 and all the tria sequuntur triaes in our secret

occupation (for you know it is no blabbing art) that

278 you shall have the beard, in manner and form

280 (though it be not hair), but a dozen of beards, to stuff

two dozen of cushions.

282 **Licio.** Then they be big ones.

284 **Dello.** They be half a yard broad, and a nail, three

286 quarters long, and a foot thick; so, sir, shall you find

288 them stuffed enough, and soft enough. All my

mistress' lines that she dries her clothes on, are made

290 only of mustachio stuff. And if I durst tell the truth, as

lusty as I am here, I lie upon a bed of beards; a bots of

292 their bristles, and they that owe them; they are harder

than flocks!

294 **Pet.** A fine discourse! – well, Motto, we give thee

296 mercy, but we will not lose the beard. Remember now

our inventory. *Item*, we will not let thee go out of our

298 hands, till we have the beard in our hands.

300 **Motto.** Then follow.

[*Exeunt.*]

= ie. "do you know".

= perhaps the old meaning "required".²²

= a legal term, meaning "fraudulent agreement".⁹

= ie. escape punishment (for his treason), ie. the boys won't turn him in to the authorities.

274: *protest* = affirm, attest.

274-8: *by scissors...beard* = Motto is vowing on the tools of his trade that he will give the beard to Petulus.

275: *ball* = ie. ball of soap.⁹

ear-pick = instrument used to pick wax out of one's ear (analogous in use to a toothpick).¹

rubbing cloths = cloths for rubbing or massaging the face, etc.¹

276: *tria sequuntur triaes* = the Latin is not proper: it is close to meaning "three things follow", or "you are three things",⁶ but is probably intended to demonstrate Motto's limited knowledge of Latin; Bond guesses the Latin is meant to sound like an alchemic or magic formula.⁹

secret = secretive, ie. filled with secrets.¹

= Motto once again unconvincingly comments on the taciturnity of barbers.

= in the exact way specified; a legal expression.¹

280: *though it be not hair* = ie. because it is now gold.

280-1: *a dozen...cushions* = a second joke in the play about the enormous beards worn by some men.¹⁶

= "they must be" or "they are likely".

= wide. = a sixteenth of a yard, or 2.25 inches.⁹

287-9: *All my...stuff* = Fairholt says it was customary to make clothes-lines of hair, because hair is more resistant to nature's dampness than is ordinary flax.

= ie. sleep. = ie. stuffed with. = ie. a plague on.

= own.

= tufts of cotton or like material.¹

End of Scene: thus ends the battle of wits between the pages and the barber. The boys in the end are the victorious owners of the golden beard.

ACT V, SCENE III.

Delphi (Delphos), before Apollo's Temple.

Enter Midas, Sophronia, Mellacrites, and Martius.

1 **Midas.** This is Delphos. – Sacred Apollo, whose
2 oracles be all divine, though doubtful, answer poor
4 Midas, and pity him.

Soph. I marvel there is no answer.

6 **Midas.** Fond Midas, how can'st thou ask pity of him
8 whom thou hast so much abused; or why dost thou
10 abuse the world, both to seem ignorant in not
12 acknowledging an offence; and impudent, so openly to
14 crave pardon? Apollo will not answer, but Midas must
16 not cease. – Apollo, divine Apollo, Midas hath ass's
18 ears, yet let pity sink into thine ears, and tell when he
shall be free from this shame, or what may mitigate his
sin?

[A pause.]

Mar. Tush! Apollo is tuning his pipes, or at barley-

20 break with Daphne, or assaying on some shepherd's

coat, or taking measure of a serpent's skin. Were I

22 Midas, I would rather cut these ears off close from my
24 head, than stand whimpering before such a blind god.

26 **Midas.** Thou art barbarous, not valiant. Gods must be
28 entreated, not commanded: thou wouldst quench fire
with a sword, and add to my shame (which is more
30 than any prince can endure) thy rudeness, (which is
more than any sensible creature would follow.) – Divine
Apollo, what shall become of Midas? Accept this lute,
these berries, these simples, these tapers; if Apollo

= Elizabethan name for the location of the oracle of Apollo.
= unclear.¹

5: there is likely a pause after Midas' first speech, during
which the royal party waits in vain for the oracle to
speak.

= foolish. = ie. Apollo.

= ie. by stupidly ruling against him in the musical contest.

= ie. give up his praying to Apollo.

= ie. what Midas may do to.

19-23 (below): Martius is once again harsh in his expression
of the futility of appealing to the gods.

19-20: **barley-break** = a game in which a couple, while
holding hands, has to catch either of two other couples,
something like a game of tag; the couple they catch then
becomes "it", and has to enter the area in between the other
two, which location was called *hell*, and start the process
again.⁹

20-21: **assaying...coat** = allusion to Apollo's disguising
himself as a shepherd as he attempted to seduce the
Dryopian princess Amphissa.^{14,26}
assaying on = trying on.¹

= possibly a reference to Apollo in his role as the god of
medicine, or to the Python he slew, and whose skin he used
to form a cover for the stool of his oracle.⁹

= an arbitrary or unseeing.

= king.

30-33: **Accept...eternity** = Midas repeats his list of gifts to
Apollo (see Act V.i.44-47 above), but now in a complex

32 take any delight in music, in Daphne, in physic, in
34 eternity.

36 **Oracle of Apollo:**

When Pan Apollo in music shall excel,

38 *Midas of Phrygia shall lose his ass's ears;*
Pan did Apollo in music far excel,
40 *Therefore king Midas weareth ass's ears:*
Unless he shrink his stretching hand from Lesbos,
42 *His ears in length, at length shall reach to Delphos.*

44 **Mell.** It were good to expound these oracles, that the
learned men in Phrygia were assembled; otherwise the
46 remedy will be as impossible to be had, as the cause to
be sifted.

48 **Mar.** I foresaw some old saw, which should be

50 doubtful. Who would gad to such gods, that must be
honoured if they speak without sense: and the oracle

52 wondered at, as though it were above sense?

54 **Midas.** No more, Martius! I am the learnedest in
Phrygia to interpret these oracles: and though shame
56 hath hitherto caused me to conceal it, now I must
unfold it by necessity. Thus destiny bringeth me, not
58 only to be cause of all my shame, but reporter. – Thou,
Sophronia, and you my lords, hearken. When I had

60 bathed myself in Pactolus, and saw my wish to float in
the waves, I wished the waves to overflow my body,

62 so melancholy my fortune made me, so mad my folly:
yet by hunting I thought to ease my heart. And coming
64 at last to the hill Tmolus, I perceived Apollo and Pan
contending for excellency in music: among nymphs
66 they required also my judgment. I (whom the loss of
gold made discontent, and the possessing desperate)

parallel form: the first three offerings (*lute...simples*)
correspond to various interests ascribed to Apollo:

(1) the *lute* is offered to him in his guise as the god of
music;

(2) laurel or bay tree *berries* as a way to acknowledge his
love for *Daphne*; and

(3) herbs (*simples*) in his role as the god of medicine
(*physic*).

Finally, Midas also offers devotional or penitential
candles (*tapers*)¹ to be kept burning for eternity.⁹

37: typical complex word ordering for the meter's sake:
"when Apollo excels Pan in music". The oracle is written in
loose iambic pentameter.

41: Midas must give up his attempts to capture Lesbos.
= in the end, in due time.¹

44-47: Mellacrites explains that the oracle should be repeat-
ed to the ranking citizens of Phrygia, to make them more
amenable to leaving Lesbos to self-rule.

49-50: *I foresaw...doubtful* = Martius is basically saying,
"I told you so." He knew the oracle would be unclear or
ambiguous (*doubtful*); but he may be excused, seeing as he
does not know the reason Midas has been punished with
ass's ears.

saw = platitude.¹

50-51: *Who would...sense* = Martius wonders why anyone
would waste their time supplicating to such gods who never
make any sense.

gad = literally "wander about", here meaning "travel".¹

= marveled.

= ie. most qualified (because he is the only one who knows
why he has been punished so).

= reveal the reason.

= ie. the one who must report or reveal what has transpired.
= listen.

60-61: *my wish...waves* = ie. how his curse left him and
was dispersed in the river.

= depressed.

= Mt. Tmolus.

= ie. Midas is admitting to his greed.

68 either dulled with the humours of my weak brain, or

70 deceived by thickness of my deaf ears, preferred the
 72 harsh noise of Pan's pipe, before the sweet stroke of
 74 Apollo's lute, which caused Phoebus in justice (as I
 76 now confess, and then as I saw in anger) to set these
 78 ears on my head, that have wrung so many tears from
 mine eyes. For stretching my hands to Lesbos, I find
 that all the gods have spurned at my practices, and
 those islands scorn them. My pride the gods disdain;
 76 my policy men: my mines have been emptied by
 78 soldiers, my soldiers spoiled by wars, my wars without
 success, because usurping; my usurping without end,
 80 because my ambition above measure. I will therefore
 yield myself to Bacchus, and acknowledge my wish to
 82 be vanity: to Apollo, and confess my judgment to be
 foolish: to Mars, and say my wars are unjust: to Diana,
 84 and tell my affection hath been unnatural. And I doubt
 not, what a god hath done to make me know myself,
 86 all the gods will help to undo, that I may come to
 myself.

88 **Soph.** Is it possible that Midas should be so overshot
 90 in judgment? Unhappy Midas, whose wits melt with his
 gold, and whose gold is consumed with his wits.

92 **Midas.** What talketh Sophronia to herself?

94 **Soph.** Nothing, but that since Midas hath confessed his
 96 fault to us, he also acknowledge it to Apollo.

98 **Midas.** I will, Sophronia. – Sacred Apollo, things
 100 passed cannot be recalled, repented they may be: behold
 Midas not only submitting himself to punishment, but
 102 confessing his peevishness, being glad for shame to
 call that peevishness which indeed was folly.
 104 Whatsoever Apollo shall command, Midas will
 execute.

106 **Apol.** Then attend, Midas. I accept thy submission
 and sacrifice, so as yearly at this temple thou offer

= the various fluids (blood, phlegm, and black and yellow bile) of the body which, depending on the proportions in which they existed, were believed to determine a person's temperament.

= alternate name for Apollo. = ie. justly.

74-75: **For stretching...practices** = the gods are unhappy with Midas' attempts to subjugate Lesbos (as they were with Spain's attempt to attack England).

= "men disdain my practices".

= ruined, ie. maimed.

= because he was overthrowing the legitimate rulers of other nations.

= without or beyond limit.

82: **be vanity** = have been foolish or profitless.

my judgment = again referring to the music contest; one wonders about the maturity level of gods who would be so spiteful.

= the goddess of the hunt, and a sworn virgin.

= "confess my desires or passions were monstrous."²

85: **what a...myself** = "what Apollo did to me in order to enable me to truly understand the errors of my ways".

know myself = allusion to the ancient maxim **know thyself**, which was famously inscribed at the entrance to Apollo's oracle at Delphi.

= to be **overshot** is to have "missed the mark", a term borrowed from archery.

89-91: once again, a speech is spoken as a partial aside: Midas hears Sophronia mumbling to herself.

= ie. "he should also".

= foolishness.¹⁶

106-124 (below): the god speaks directly to Midas, rather than through his oracle. It will become apparent that only Midas can hear Apollo.

= pay attention.

108 sacrifice in submission: withal, take Apollo's counsel,
110 which if thou scorn, thou shalt find thy destiny. I will
not speak in riddles; all shall be plain, because thou art
dull; but all certain, if thou be obstinate.

112 *Weigh not in one balance gold and justice;*
114 *With one hand wage not war and peace;*
Let thy head be glad of one crown,
116 *And take care to keep one friend.*
The friend that thou wouldst make thy foe,
118 *The kingdom thou wouldst make the world,*
The hand that thou dost arm with force,
120 *The gold that thou dost think a god,*
Shall conquer, fall, shrink short, be common;
122 *With force, with pride, with fear, with traffic.*

124 If this thou like, shake off an ass's ears:
If not, forever shake an ass's ears.

126 **Soph.** Apollo will not reply.

128 **Midas.** It may be, Sophronia, that neither you, nor any
130 else, understand Apollo, because none of you have the
heart of a king: but my thoughts expound my fortunes,
132 and my fortunes hang upon my thoughts. That great
Apollo, that joined to my head ass's ears, hath put
134 into my heart a lion's mind. I see that by obscure
shadows, which you cannot discern in fresh colours.

136 Apollo, in the depth of his dark answer, is to me the
glistening of a bright sun. I perceive (and yet not too

138 late) that Lesbos will not be touched by gold, by force
it cannot: that the gods have pitched it out of the
world, as not to be controlled by any in the world.

140 Though my hand be gold, yet I must not think to span
over the main ocean. Though my soldiers be valiant, I
142 must not therefore think my quarrels just. There is no
way to nail the crown of Phrygia fast to my daughter's
144 head, but in letting the crowns of others sit in quiet on
theirs.

146 **Mar.** Midas!

148 **Midas.** How darest thou reply seeing me resolved? thy

= furthermore.

117-122: despite Apollo's promise to speak plainly, his series of quadruple-parallel warnings needs thinking through: the four verbs of line 121 and four adjectives of line 122 belong respectively to the four clauses of lines 117-120. Reorganized, the lines read as follows:

- a. *The friend that thou wouldst make thy foe shall conquer with force* (ie. Midas' new foe shall conquer him);
- b. *The kingdom thou wouldst make the world shall fall with pride* (ie. the personal kingdom Midas intends to make of the whole world will fall due to his pride);
- c. *The hand that thou dost arm with force shall shrink short with fear*; and
- d. *The gold that thou does think a god shall be common with traffic* (ie. the gold Midas so covets will become worthless due to it becoming as common as, say, dirt).
traffic (line 122) = commerce.¹

126: Midas' companions cannot hear Apollo.

= interpret, explain.¹

133-4: **I see...colours** = ie. Midas can understand that which is difficult to interpret, while others cannot comprehend that which is plainly set before them.

= obscure, incomprehensible.¹
= sparkling.

137-9: **Lesbos...in the world** = Lyly allegorically offers up one last boast of England's honoured place in the universe.

138-9: **pitched...in the world** = removed Lesbos (ie. England) as a capturable prize.

= reach, ie. stretch his hand,¹ so as to grasp Lesbos.
= ie. high sea.

= firmly decided.

150	counsel hath spilt more blood than all my soldiers' lances! let none be so hardy as to look to <u>cross</u> me. –	= thwart.
152	Sacred Apollo, if sacrifice yearly at thy temple, and submission hourly in mine own court, if fulfilling thy	
154	counsel, and correcting my counselors, may shake off these ass's ears, I here before thee vow to shake off	
156	all envies abroad, and at home all tyranny.	
158	<i>[The ears fall off.]</i>	
160	Soph. Honoured be Apollo, Midas is restored.	
162	Midas. Fortunate Midas, that feel'st thy head lightened of dull ears, and thy heart of deadly sorrows. – Come	
164	my lords, let us repair to our palace, in which Apollo shall have a stately statue erected: every month will we	
166	solemnize there a feast, and here every year a sacrifice. Phrygia shall be governed by gods, not men, lest the	
168	gods make beasts of men. So my counsel of war shall not make conquests in their own <u>conceits</u> , nor my	= notions or fancies. ^{1,14}
170	counselors in peace make me poor, to enrich themselves. So blessed be Apollo, quiet be Lesbos,	
172	happy be Midas, and to begin this solemnity, let us sing to Apollo, for, so much as music, nothing can	
174	content Apollo.	
176	<i>[They sing all.]</i>	
178	<i>Sing to Apollo, <u>god of day</u>,</i>	= once again, Apollo is addressed in his role as god of the sun.
180	<i>Whose golden beams with morning play,</i>	
180	<i>And make her eyes so brightly shine.</i>	
182	<i><u>Aurora's face is called divine.</u></i>	= goddess of the morning.
182	<i>Sing to <u>Phoebus</u>, and that throne</i>	= alternate name for Apollo.
184	<i>Of diamonds which he sits upon;</i>	
184	<i><u>Io, paeans</u> let us sing,</i>	= an ancient exclamation of joy. ¹ = hymns or songs. ¹
186	<i>To <u>physic's</u> and to <u>poesy's king</u>.</i>	185: to Apollo, the god (king) of medicine (physic) and poetry or poems (poesy).
186	<i>Crown all his altars with bright fire,</i>	
188	<i>Laurels bind about his lyre,</i>	= ie. a crown of laurel, to honour Apollo's love Daphne .
188	<i>A <u>Daphnean coronet</u> for his head,</i>	= daughters of Jupiter, the nine Muses were the inspiration for and protectors of all forms of art.
188	<i>The <u>Muses</u> dance about his bed;</i>	
190	<i>When on his ravishing lute he plays,</i>	
192	<i>Strew his temple round with <u>bays</u>.</i>	= laurel leaves.
192	<i><u>Io, paeans</u> let us sing,</i>	
194	<i>To the glittering <u>Delian king</u>.</i>	= ie. Apollo; the island of Delos was said to be the god's birthplace. ¹
194	<i>[Exeunt.]</i>	
196	FINIS	

FOOTNOTES.

The footnotes in the play correspond as follows:

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