

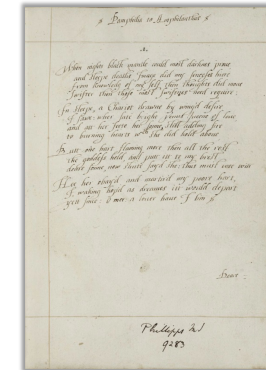
Mary Wroth (1587-1651?)



- niece of Sir Philip Sidney, the Elizabethan sonneteer; raised and educated at Penshurst, Sidney's country seat
- best known for *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania* (1621), a 558-page pastoral romance, the first for a woman writer
- after her first husband's death, controversially married first cousin William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, the model for Amphilanthus (NAEL B1067-69)



Mary Wroth (1587-1651?)



Folger Shakespeare Library

Wroth, *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania* (1621)

- a 558-page *pastoral romance*, the first written by a woman in England
- influenced by *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (1593) and *Astrophil and Stella* (1591), a prose romance and a sonnet cycle by Sir Philip Sidney, her uncle
- focuses on the activities of the royal families of an ambiguously ancient, war-torn Europe and Asia, often mirroring and commenting upon the fraught geopolitics of the day
- contains hundreds of characters and plotlines, but features first cousins Queen Pamphilia ("all loving") and Emperor Amphilanthus ("lover of two"), who pursue a scandalous relationship
- thought by contemporaries to be a *roman à clef* for Wroth and her second husband William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke (who was also her first cousin) (NAEL B1067-69)

pastoral romance

pastoral

- a mode of writing that celebrates the innocent life of shepherds in poems, plays, and prose romances
- describes the loves and sorrows of musical shepherds in an idealized golden age of rustic innocence and idleness
- originated in Greek idyls of the 3rd C; revived by Italian dramatists in the 16th C (Baldick 269-70)

romance

- a fictional story in verse or prose that relates improbable adventures of idealized characters in remote or enchanted settings
- usually refers to the tales of King Arthur's knights written in the Middle Ages; often involve chivalric or courtly love
- long, elaborate romances were written during the Renaissance (Baldick 313-14)

📖 Wroth, “Pamphilia to Amphilanthus” (1621)

- Petrarchan *sonnet sequence* or *sonnet cycle*, the second known by a woman writer in England (the first was by Anne Locke in 1560)
- divided into 4 parts:

Part 1	Pamphilia (“all loving”) decides to love Amphilanthus (“lover of two”) despite his faithlessness	55 sonnets
Part 2	Pamphilia doubts her love, but seeks forgiveness from Cupid, promising him a <i>crown of sonnets</i>	10 sonnets
Part 3	Pamphilia’s crown of sonnets to Cupid	14 sonnets
Part 4	Pamphilia comes to understand that suffering is necessary to appreciate love, other human emotions	8 sonnets

- appended to *The Countess of Montgomery’s Urania* (1621), Wroth’s pastoral romance, before being published separately (*Wikipedia*)

cycle

crown

- a linked sequence of lyric poems, usually sonnets
- the last line of each poem is repeated as the first line of the next; the final line of the last poem repeats the opening line of the first
- an Italian form of poetic tribute to the person addressed
- used in English by John Donne in *Holy Sonnets*, and by Sir Philip Sidney (Baldick 81)
- a group of works that either share a common theme or subject, or are linked together as a sequence by:
 - same setting
 - recurring characters
 - recurring motifs and images
- often applied to sequences of poems, usually sonnets, by the same author, but also applied to other genres such as short stories
- can be understood and appreciated both individually and as a collection (Baldick 83)

simile vs metaphor

simile

- a common figure of speech involving an explicit comparison between two different things, using the words “like” or “as” (Baldick 334)

epic simile

- an extended simile elaborated in such detail or a such length as to eclipse temporarily the main action of a narrative, forming a decorative digression (Baldick 119-20)

metaphor

- the most important or widespread figure of speech, in which one thing is referred to by a word or expression normally denoting another thing, so as to implicitly suggest some shared quality (Baldick 221-22)

extended metaphor

- a metaphor elaborated throughout a work in detail and/or at length (i.e., a *conceit*)

📖 Wroth, “Pamphilia to Amphilanthus” (1621)

77

In this strange Labyrinth how shall I turne,
Wayes are on all sides while the way I misse:
If to the right hand, there, in loue I burne,
Let mee goe forward, therein danger is.
If to the left, suspition hinders blisse;
Let mee turne back, shame cryes I ought
returne:
Nor faint, though crosses [with] my fortunes
kiss,
Stand still is harder, although sure to mourne.
Thus let mee take the right, or left hand way,
Goe forward, or stand still, or back retire:
I must these doubts indure without allay
Or helpe, but trauell finde for my best hire.
Yet that which most my troubled sense doth
moue,
Is to leaue all, and take the threed of Loue.

78

Is to leaue all, and take the threed of Loue,
Which line strait leads vnto the soules
content,
Where choise delights with pleasures wings doe
moue,
And idle fant’sie neuer roome had lent... (1-4)

90

... The tribute which my heart doth truly pay,
Is faith vntouch’d, pure thoughts discharge the
score
Of debts for me, where Constasy beares sway,
And rules as Lord, vnham’d by Enuies sore,
Yet other mischiefs faile not to attend,
As enimies to you, my foes must be,
Curst lealousie doth all her forces bend
To my vndoing, thus my harmes I see.
So though in Loue I feruently doe burne,
In this strange Labyrinth how shall I turne? (5-14)

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