

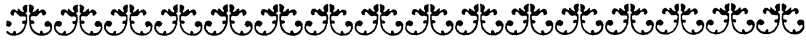
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978-1-107-67381-6 - In Memory of Israel Gollancz: John Milton's Epitaphium Damonis:

Printed from the First Edition

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Excerpt

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EPITAPHIVM DAMONIS.

ARGVMENTVM

Thyrsis, & Damon eiusdem viciniæ pastores, eadem studia sequuti a pueritiâ amici erant, ut qui plurimum. Thyrsis animi causâ profectus peregre de obitu Damonis nuncium accepit. Domum postea reversus, & rem ita esse comperto, se, suamque solitudinem hoc carmine deplorat. Damonis autem sub personâ hîc intelligitur Carolus Deodatus ex urbe Hetruriæ Luca paterno genere oriundus*, cætera Anglus, ingenio, doctrina, clarissimisque cæteris virtutibus, dum viveret, iuvenis egregius.

* Ed. Princeps
onundus

Thyrsis and Damon, shepherds of the same neighbourhood, had followed the same pursuits, and had been friends from childhood of the closer sort. Thyrsis, who had gone abroad for the cultivation of his mind, heard the news of Damon's death while in foreign parts. Afterward, returning home, and having discovered it to be as stated, he laments his own solitariness in this ode. Now the character of Damon is here meant for Charles Deodati, sprung on his father's side from Lucca, a city of Tuscany; in all other respects, an Englishman, whose intellect, learning and his other most shining virtues, showed him to have been, in his lifetime, a youth pre-eminent.

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IN DILECTISSIMAM DAMONIS NOSTRI MEMORIAM

DAMON.

HIMERIDES nymphæ (nam vos & Daphnin & Hylan
 Et plorata diu meministis fata Bionis)
 Dicite Sicelicum Thamesina per oppida carmen
 Quas miser effudit voces, quæ murmura Thyrsis,
 Et quibus assiduis exercuit antra querelis
 Fluminaque fontesque vagos, nemorumque recessus
 Dum sibi præreptum queritur Damona, neque altam
 Luctibus exemit noctem loca sola pererrans.
 Et jam bis viridi surgebat culmus arista,
 Et totidem flavas numerabant horrea messes,
 Ex quo summa dies tulerat Damona sub umbras
 Nec dum aderat Thyrsis, pastorem scilicet illum
 Dulcis amor Musæ Thusca retinebat in urbe.
 Ast ubi mens expleta domum, pecorisque relictæ

ATTEND, ye Nymphs who are of Himera's well,
 For in your memories, yet, doth Daphnis dwell—
 And Hylas, yet too ye remembering mourn
 Dead Bion's many days lamented urn—
 By citted Thames sing a Sicilian air!
 Sing Thyrsis' words pour'd forth with heavy cheer,
 Each murmur low, and moan'd uncessant tear—
 Plaints that he search'd withal each cavern'd nook,
 Each grove retir'd, river and wandering brook
 Sorrowing for Damon reft him—nor would spare
 Deep night his griefs, wandering o'er regions bare.
 Twice with green ear the rising haulm 'gan swell,
 Their harvests twice the golden granges tell,
 Since that last Dawn
 Unto the Shades below had Damon drawn—
 Nor yet was Thyrsis come; true, him o'erlong
 In Tuscan city held soft charm of song!
 But when a mind full furnish't, and the thought
 Of his abandon'd flock him homeward brought,

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Cura vocat, simul assuetâ sedítque sub ulmo,
 Tum vero amissum tum denique sentit amicum,
 Cæpit & immensum sic exonerare dolorem.
 Ite domum impasti, domino iam non vacat, agni.
 Hei mihi quæ terris, quæ dicam numina cælo?
 Postquam te immiti rapuerunt funere Damon!
 Siccine nos linquis, tua sic sine nomine virtus
 Ibit, & obscuris numero sociabitur umbris?
 At non ille, animas virgâ qui dividit aureâ
 Ista velit, dignumque tui te ducat in agmen
 Ignavumque procul pecus arceat omne silentum.
 Ite domum impasti, domino iam non vacat, agni.
 Quicquid erit, certè nisi mè lupus antè videbit*,
 Indeplorato non comminuere sepulchro,

* Ed. Pr. has a
 full-stop here.

And soon as 'neath the accusom'd elm he sate,
 He then (then at last smote full his comrade's fate)
 Thus gan to unload his measureless sorrow's weight!
 Home, lambs, unfed; no time for you have I!

Oh, how could I bespeak, as deities,
 The powers that dwell on earth or in the skies,
 Now that their harsh precept thy life hath rent?
 Canst quit me so? Shall thy clear spirit be fled
 Unsung, to fellow all the obscure Dead?
 So may not Hermes make arbitrement,
 But may He with His golden sceptre-head
 That doth the Souls divide—
 Thee to a troop of thee judg'd worthy, guide,
 Far from the herd of mute and stockish pent.
 Home, lambs, unfed; no time for you have I!

Yet be thou sure, so chance no wolf prevent
 My sight and strike me dumb,
 Whatever hap may come
 Thou shalt not wholly moulder in the grave

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Constabitque tuus tibi honos, longúmque vigebit
 Inter pastores, illi tibi vota secundo
 Solvere post Daphnin, post Daphnin dicere laudes
 Gaudebunt, dum rura Pales, dum Faunus amabit:
 Si quid id est, priscamque fidem coluisse, piúmque
 Palladiásque artes, sociúmque habuisse canorum
 Ite domum impasti, domino jam non vacat, agni.

Hæc tibi certa manent, tibi erunt hæc præmia Damon,
 At mihi quid tandem fiet modò? quis mihi fidus
 Hærebit lateri comes ut tu sæpe solebas
 Frigoribus duris, & per loca fæta pruinis,
 Aut rapido sub sole, siti morientibus herbis

Unwept, but high establisht honour have
 To thrive among our swains for many a day!
 To thee (the next from Daphnis) cheerly they
 Their orisons will pay;
 To thee (the next from Daphnis) will they raise
 Cheerly their songs of praise—
 So long as in our country leas and lawns
 Great Pales shall delight, delight the Fauns,—
 If aught avail to have cherish'd gods of yore,
 And what devout, and arts of Pallas' lore—
 If aught avail to have had a Bard to friend.
 Home, lambs, unfed; no time for you have I!

Dead shepherd, thine this meed, these sureties too!
 But unto me what end
 Remains? what comrade true
 Will cleave as thou, how closely, to my side?
 Who will with me, as thou so oft, abide
 Hard winter, and lands where the teem'd hoar-frost lies,
 Or scalding noons, when parch'd the green herb dies?

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Sive opus in magnos fuit eminùs ire leones
 Aut avidos terrere lupos, præsepibus altis;
 Quis fando sopire diem, cantuque solebit?
 Ite domum impasti, domino iam non vacat, agni.

Pectora cui credam? quis me lenire docebit
 Mordaces curas, quis longam fallere noctem
 Dulcibus alloquiis, grato cùm sibilat igni
 Molle pyrum, & nucibus strepitat focus, at malus auster
 Miscet cuncta foris, & desuper intonat ulmo
 Ite domum impasti, domino iam non vacat, agni.

Aut æstate, dies medio dum vertitur axe,
 Cum Pan æsculeâ somnum capit abditus umbrâ
 Et reperunt sub aquis sibi nota sedilia nymphæ,
 Pastoresque latent, stertit sub sepe colonus,

Who aid when I
 Must lions huge, at range of spear, assay,
 Or startle rav'ning wolves from sheepfolds high?
 Who lull with speech, with song, the lingering day?
 Home, lambs, unfed; no time for you have I!

To whom now trust my heart:—Who'll teach me how
 To deaden eating care,
 Or with sweet converse low
 The livelong watches of the night to snare,
 When juicy pears hiss mid the genial glow
 And crackle of chestnuts on the hearth resounds:
 Without, the felon South with sky confounds
 The earth, and on the elm his thunder sounds!
 Home, lambs, unfed; no time for you have I!

When summer days on noontide axle turn,
 When in the tall oaks' shade
 Conceal'd, Great Pan himself to rest is laid;
 When to their watery haunts the nymphs return;
 When swains lie close; 'neath hedge the plowmen snore;

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Quis mihi blanditiásque tuas, quis tum mihi risus
 Cecropiosque sales referet, cultosque lepores?
 Ite domum impasti, domino iam non vacat, agni.
 At iam solus agros, iam pascua solus oberro
 Sicubi ramosæ densantur vallibus umbræ
 Hic serum expecto, supra caput imber & Eurus
 Triste sonant, fractæque agitata crepuscula silvæ.
 Ite domum impasti, domino iam non vacat, agni.
 Heu! quàm culta mihi priùs arva procacibus herbis
 Involvuntur, & ipsa situ seges alta fatiscit!
 Innuba neglecto marcescit & uva racemo,
 Nec myrteta juvant, ovium quoque tædet, at illæ
 Mærent, inque suum convertunt ora magistrum
 Ite domum impasti, domino jam non vacat, agni.
 Tityrus ad corylos vocat, Alpheisibœus ad ornos,

Who shall thy graces lost to me restore,
 —Laugh, polished wit, and salt of Cecrops' taste?
 Home, lambs, unfed; no time for you have I!
 Companionless, o'er field—o'er farm I haste
 Companionless, and now in bottom glade
 Where'er thick branchings weave a deepening shade,
 Wait dark! O'erhead, the gale moans with the showers;
 Thro' shuddering dusk the stormwreckt forest lowers!
 Home, lambs, unfed; no time for you have I!
 Woe's me! what wanton growths involve so fast
 My once well-furrow'd fields! what mildew blast
 Chokes my tall corn! on the unmarried vine
 The untended clusters pine,
 Nor myrtles please, and irks the shepherd's hook;
 The mournful flock up to their master look!
 Home, lambs, unfed; no time for you have I!
 Hark! to the hazels Tityrus' summons rings!
 —Alpheisibœus to the mountain-ash—

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Ad salices Aegon, ad flumina pulcher Amyntas,
 Hîc gelidi fontes, hîc illita gramina musco,
 Hîc Zephyri, hîc placidas interstrepit arbutus undas;
 Ista canunt surdo, frutices ego nactus abibam.

Ite domum impasti, domino jam non vacat, agni.

Mopsus ad hæc, nam me redeuntem fortè notarat
 (Et callebat avium linguas, & sydera Mopsus)
 Thyrsi quid hoc? dixit, quæ te coquit improba bilis:
 Aut te perdit amor, aut te malè fascinat astrum
 Saturni grave sæpe fuit pastoribus astrum,
 Intimaque obliquo figit præcordia plumbo

Ite domum impasti, domino jam non vacat, agni.

Mirantur nymphæ, & quid te Thyrsi futurum est?
 Quid tibi vis? ajunt, non hæc solet esse juventæ
 Nubila frons, oculique truces, vultusque severi

Ægon to the willows—to the river-plash
 Comely Amyntas: 'Here (they call) are springs,
 Cool springs, and mossy turf-enamellings!
 Soft breathes the West! To gentle waters' flow
 Arbutus interposeth whisperings low!' *I*
 heed their pipings! The thickets gain'd, I go!
 Home, lambs, unfed; no time for you have I!

Here Mopsus, who had chanced my homing feet
 To spy—he knew the speech of all that flies,
 Mopsus, the star-gazer! 'What's this?' (he cries)
 'Thyrsis, what froward spleen thy veins doth heat?
 Art lost for love? o'erlookt by baleful star?
 Oft Saturn has meant mischance where shepherds are—
 Deep in their bosoms sinks his slanting lead!'

Home, lambs, unfed; no time for you have I!

Marvelling, the nymphs 'What's coming to thee?' plead,
 'Thyrsis, what lack'st? Is this youth's wonted gait—
 Ire-darting eyes, crabb'd looks, and cloudy brows?

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Illa choros, lususque leves, & semper amorem
 Iure petit, bis ille miser qui serus amavit.
 Ite domum impasti, domino jam non vacat, agni.
 Venit Hyas, Dryopéque, et filia Baucidis Aegle,
 Docta modos, citharæque sciens, sed perdita fastu,
 Venit Idumanii Chloris vicina fluenti,
 Nil me blanditiæ, nil me solantia verba
 Nil me, si quid adest, movet, aut spes ulla futuri.
 Ite domum impasti, domino jam non vacat, agni.
 Hei mihi quam similes ludunt per prata juveni
 Omnes unanimi secum sibi lege sodales,
 Nec magis hunc alio quisquam secernit amicum
 De grege, sic densi veniunt ad pabula thoes,
 Inque vicem hirsuti paribus junguntur onagri,
 Lex eadem pelagi, deserto in littore Proteus

—Nay! dance and dalliance, love's unwearied vows
 Are youth's! Twice luckless, who has lov'd o'erlate!
 Home, lambs, unfed; no time for you have I!

Came Hyas—Dryope—came (whom Baucis bore)
 Mistress of measures, lutist, too, of skill,
 Aegle, whom pride doth kill!—
 Came Chloris, she who dwelt by Chelmer's shore!—
 Nought their kind words, soft speeches, solace me!
 Nought reck's me now that is, nor ought to be!
 Home, lambs, unfed; no time for you have I!

Alas, the well-matcht steers afield that sport,
 All rul'd comrades by one impulse consort,
 Nor is from out the herd
 This friend to that preferr'd!—
 So, in close pack, the jackals hunt their game;
 Each hairy wild ass pairs, in turn, with each,
 The law that rules in ocean is the same!
 E'en Proteus, on his solitary beach,

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Agmina Phocarum numerat, vilisque volucrum
 Passer habet semper quicum sit, & omnia circum
 Farra libens volitet serò sua tecta revisens,
 Quem si fors letho objecit, seu milvus adunco
 Fata tulit rostro, seu stravit arundine fossor,
 Protinus ille alium socio petit inde volatu.
 Nos durum genus, & diris exercita fatis
 Gens, homines, aliena animis, & pectore discors
 Vix sibi quisque parem de millibus invenit unum,
 Aut si sors dederit tandem non aspera votis,
 Illum inopina dies quâ non speraveris horâ
 Surripit, æternum linquens in sæcula damnum.
 Ite domum impasti, domino jam non vacat, agni.

Counts o'er by companies his herded seals;
 While, commonest of all the birds that fly,
 The sparrow constantly
 Has other he may be with, when he wheels
 At large o'er all the corn-fields, roosting late!
 Should fate that comrade smite
 By hooked beak of kite
 Or ditcher's reed prostrate,
 With friendly swerve he seeks another mate!
 We men, fate-harass'd, lead a sterner life;
 Minds, all estrangement—hearts, that harbour strife!
 Scarce shalt thou find
 E'en out of thousands, one true kindred mind!
 Or if thy vows be not that bliss denied,
 Some day, some hour unween'd of, shall betide
 To snatch him from thy side
 Leaving thee agelong—nay, eternal loss!
 Home, lambs, unfed; no time for you have I!

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Heu quis me ignotas traxit vagus error in oras
 Ire per aereas rupes, Alpenque nivosam!
 Ecquid erat tanti Romam vidisse sepultam?
 Quamvis illa foret, qualem dum viseret olim,
 Tityrus ipse suas & oves & rura reliquit;
 Vt te tam dulci possem caruisse sodale
 Possem tot maria alta, tot interponere montes,
 Tot sylvas, tot saxa tibi, fluviosque sonantes.
 Ah certè extremùm licuisset tangere dextram,
 Et bene compositos placidè morientis ocellos,
 Et dixisse vale, nostri memor ibis ad astra.
 Ite domum impasti, domino jam non vacat, agni.

Quamquam etiam vestri nunquam meminisse pigebit
 Pastores Thusci, Musis operata juvenus,

Alas, what gadding folly drew me aside
 To visit shores I knew not of, and cross
 Peaks hung aloft in heaven, and Alpine snow?—
 Was there such need to see Rome's grave (e'en though
 She were as Tityrus saw her, when he left
 His flocks, his fields?)—and all to be bereft
 Of thee, that wast so pleasant, Friend,—how dream
 Twixt thee and me so many a deep to set—
 Woods, rocks, nay many a range and roaring stream?
 Ah, else I might thy dying eyelids yet
 Have clos'd in peace, thine outreach'd hand have met,
 'Farewell' to say—
 'Remember me upon thy starward way!'
 Home, lambs, unfed! no time for you have I!
 Yet still, ye Tuscan shepherds, surely still
 I never can nor will
 At thoughts of you repine,
 O youthful offerers at the Muses' shrine!