

Article

Transatlantic Lifelines: Anne Bradstreet's "Elegie upon That Honorable and Renowned Knight, Sir Philip Sidney"

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Abstract: The legacy of Sir Philip Sidney, the distinguished Elizabethan courtier-poet, was the subject of numerous claims to memorialization. On 17 October 1586 Sidney died in battle at Arnhem in the United Netherlands. Less than a week later, his corpse was transported to Flushing, of which Sidney had been Governor, and in the following year Sidney's body was "interr'd in stately *Pauls*", as recorded by Anne Dudley Bradstreet—the first known poet of the British North American colonies. While Bradstreet is omitted from most early modern and contemporary literary accounts of Sidney's legacy, this article demonstrates that Bradstreet's commemoration of Sidney from across the Atlantic presents new insights into his afterlife and the female poet's formulations of early modern nationhood. Bradstreet's first formal poem, "An Elegie upon that Honorable and renowned Knight, Sir *Philip Sidney*" (comp. 1637–8), was a tribute to Sidney as well as to her own Anglo-American literary heritage and England's rolls. Bradstreet exhibits her complex relationship to Sidney along the same lines that she reconceives her English identity. A comparison of the two published seventeenth-century editions of Bradstreet's elegiac poem (1650, 1678) shows how she translates descent and lineage from kinship (and kingship) into poetic creation. In the process, Bradstreet takes her place not only as a "semi-Sidney", as Josuah Sylvester characterized Sidney's descendants, but also as a Sidneian Muse—in America.

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Arcadians knowe no Other, for Apollo,
No other Mars (in *Armes* or *Arts* to follow
As Demi-Gods, as well of Warre as Wit)
Then Sidneys yerst, or Semi-Sidneys, yet.
(Sylvester 1621, p. 1155)

1. Introduction

The legacy of Sir Philip Sidney, the distinguished Elizabethan courtier-poet, was the subject of numerous international claims to memorialization. On 17 October 1586 Sidney died in battle at Arnhem in the United Netherlands. Less than a week later, his corpse was transported to Flushing, of which Sidney had been Governor, and in the following year Sidney's body was "interr'd in stately *Pauls*",¹ (Bradstreet 1650, p. 195) as recorded by Anne (née Dudley) Bradstreet—the first known poet of the British North American colonies. On 16 February 1587, Sidney's (Bos et al. 1986) father-in-law, Sir Francis Walsingham, bankrolled a highly extravagant funera.² The Oxbridge universities launched the European practice of producing memorial volumes in honour of the deceased,³ while British poets of note as well as Dutch and other European writers composed verses in his praise. A roll of mourners, which commemorated the procession to Old St. Paul's Cathedral, was formed from the plates engraved by Derick Theodor de Brij/Bry, based on drawings by English artist and servant to Sir Philip Sidney, Thomas Lant.⁴ A copy of one of Lant's etchings features Sidney's pallbearers, who include Fulke Greville, Edward Dyer, Thomas Dudley,⁵

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and Edward Wotton. A procession follows the casket (Morley 1883, p. 215). No sepulchral monument was erected, though an anonymous epitaph, derived from Latin and French sources, did appear above the gravesite. The site, however, was destroyed in the Great Fire of London in 1666, eighty years after Sidney's death. What forms would Sidney's memorial and restoration take?

Inspired strains of verse eulogize Sidney's corpus—his life and work—but the vast majority of English and international neo-classical epitaphs to Sidney commemorate the man rather than his writings.⁶ Anne Bradstreet wanted it both ways. While Bradstreet is omitted from most early modern and contemporary historical and literary accounts of Sidney's legacy, this essay demonstrates that Bradstreet's commemoration of Sidney from across the Atlantic offers new insights into the formulation of early modern Englishness. Her first formal poem, "An Elegie upon that Honorable and renowned Knight, Sir *Philip Sidney*, who was untimely slaine at the Siege of *Zutphon*[sic], Anno 1586" (comp. 1637–8), was a tribute to Sidney and, by extension, to her artistry, her Anglo-American heritage, and England's rolls.⁷ Bradstreet exhibits her complex relationship to Sidney's afterlife along the same lines that she reconceives her English identity. A comparison of the two seventeenth-century published editions of Bradstreet's elegiac poem (Bradstreet 1650, 1678) shows how she translates descent and lineage from kinship (and kingship) into poetic creation. In the process, Bradstreet takes her place not only as a "semi-Sidney", as Josuah Sylvester characterized Sidney's descendants, but also as a Sidneian Muse.⁸

Bradstreet's negotiations with the English Renaissance, which Bradstreet rebirths and transplants to America, give new life to Sidney while also emboldening the early modern female poet. Bradstreet's speaker desires to inscribe Sidney's renown: "O brave *Achilles*, I wish some *Homer* would/Engrave on Marble, in characters of Gold/What famous feats thou didst on *Flanders* coast, / Of which, this day, faire *Belgia* doth boast" (Bradstreet 1650, p. 193). The two versions of the stichic poem she composes—each of which contains an *elogium* "tomb inscription" (from Greek *elegia* "elegy")—are studies in continuity across, and reconceptions of, heritages, histories, and literary forms. In the process, the poem as a work in flux becomes caught up in a complex cross-pollination of literary reputations and traditions. Bradstreet departs from the pastoral elegiac tradition, which she seems to regard as a dead end, and adopts the heroic language of the panegyric. Like most elegies and panegyrics, Bradstreet's poem features the author's stamp and identity as much as it celebrates and exalts its subject. "An Elegie" differs from its predecessors in its form and its emphasis on Sidney as poet. In the golden age of Elizabeth, "noble *Sidney* wore the Crown of Bayes" and unified the Kingdom through his art: he bestowed "Honour to our *British* Land" as a "Refiner of our *British* Tongue" (Bradstreet 1650, pp. 191, 192). Bradstreet commends Sidney's rhetoric, eloquence, and logic, and announces his accomplishments in the arts. In other words, he mastered the Humanist intellectual tradition. In Bradstreet's poem, which is both a formulaic and unique contribution to Sidney's afterlife, the Elizabethan poet-courtier is reanimated by the Nine Muses and ennobled by the tenth muse.

2. Lifelines and New Strains

With the composition of "An Elegie", Bradstreet establishes a lineage founded on direct bloodlines. The early American poet initially casts herself in the line and lines of Sidney by exploiting her presumed consanguinity (via Dudley) with the Elizabethan poet: "Let then, none dis-allow of these my straines, / Which have the self-same blood yet in my veines" (Bradstreet 1650, p. 192). The aforementioned poet-translator Josuah Sylvester produced an English translation of the French poet Guillaume du Bartas's highly influential poetic biblical epic, *The Divine Weekes and Workes*, partly derived from *La Sepmaine* [1578], popular in France and England where it was frequently translated. Sylvester's first translation of Du Bartas was printed in 1590. His next translation appeared as *Devine Weekes and Workes* (1605). Evidence supplied in this essay suggests that, while Bradstreet may have consulted the 1605 edition of Du Bartas, she also may have used the 1621 edition. Certainly Bradstreet coveted *The Divine Weekes and Workes*. An edition of Du Bartas was very probably in the

substantial collection amassed by Anne's father, Thomas Dudley, whose New England library contained hundreds of volumes transported from the estate of Theophilus Clinton, who was the Puritan Earl of Lincoln and in 1627 of Boston in Lincolnshire. The estate's library holdings in the classics and literature of the early modern era nourished Anne Bradstreet's literary life and pursuits in the New World. To a large degree, the expansion of Englishness discussed in this essay is the story of the migration of books that generated textual legacies and the cultural and national identities of their authors.

Acknowledging indebtedness to Sylvester's translation in the earliest poem published in her 1650 volume, Bradstreet's speaker expresses her strained efforts in perseverance: "For to persist, my muse is more in doubt: / ... / ... / And makes me now with *Sylvester* confesse, / But *Sydney's* Muse, can sing his worthinesse" (Bradstreet 1650, p. 194).⁹ The project of celebrating Sidney's fame is left not only to the Sidney corpus or works but also to Sylvester's *Du Bartas* volume, which hailed Sidney as our "Apollo, World's Wonder" (Sylvester 1621), and which included Sylvester's own elegy on William Sidney, a likely source for Bradstreet's elegy. As she defers to Sidney as "Heir to the Muses", Bradstreet, claiming to have enraged the muses, clings to Parnassus (mythological Greek home of the arts and muses); in her elegy on Sidney and in-progress collections, she anticipates her role as the "tenth muse". The tenth muse is Sappho/Urania/the Christian muse/the source of inspiration in *Du Bartas's His Divine Weekes and Workes*, who affords him "a higher argument" (Du Bartas 1621), and the titular figure of his collection *La Muse Chrestienne*, containing the poem "L'Uranie". More to the point, the tenth muse is the title assigned to Bradstreet the poet "*lately sprung up in America*". Sidney prepared a translation of *Du Bartas's La Sepmaine* (not its 1584 sequel *La Seconde Semaine*) in the early 1580s; Sidney's translation remains one of the Renaissance's "great missing works". (Auger 2005)¹⁰

Bradstreet's intervention in, and redirecting of, the English literary tradition thus generated an imaginatively and materially conceived transatlantic dynamic, resulting in *The Tenth Muse*. The emendations, cancelled passages (lines dropped from the first edition), and new insertions in the 1678 Boston volume are especially striking in the Sidney tribute, in which bloodlines are rerouted.¹¹ Unlike the 1650 elegy, in which "By A. B. in the yeare, 1638" appears under the title, the second edition of Bradstreet's poem omits the byline. The effect of this change is the dissociation of the later tribute from a specific historical moment and date of composition. For those poems contained in both editions, the 1650 volume features more signed entries.¹² As for the newly added poems in the 1678 edition, which focus largely on family and domestic relations, many bear initials: examples include "Before the Birth" (p. 239), letters to Bradstreet's husband (pp. 241, 244, 248), and the funeral elegies (pp. 250–51). Signatures, autographs, or initials thus establish the personal nature of the subject matter specific to a historical moment. When it was reprinted, the elegy appeared as a formal, occasional poem, without an autograph. The alterations in the Boston edition display both a text and an authorial identity in flux. While the connections Bradstreet forged with Old World literary traditions remain intact, they were reformulated in various ways in the New. Categories of British and American literature and nationhood consequently invite redefinition.

The 1678 version of the elegy channels consanguinity with Sidney into national kinship or affinity with the motherland, an identity less defined by bloodlines and (princely) lineage than by cultural and literary value. The material circumstances of the reissue of Bradstreet's volume reveal how literary production becomes transformed across space and time. The changes that distinguish the former from the later volume, which likely convey Bradstreet's rereading and reclaiming of her art as much as they display John Foster's redactions, are striking and speak volumes, though that doesn't make *Several Poems* more authoritative than the 1650 (first-born) edition. In the case of the Sidney elegy specifically, the second edition of the poem omits Bradstreet's speaker's most self-referential and defensive passages, and curiously also distances the speaker from her subject matter, now mainly identified in the third person. The poem is a palimpsest, however, because it reveals vestiges of the poet's former self and her connections in the second-person

pronouns retained for Sidney.¹³ And yet the elegy in the 1678 volume features a modulated relationship to an English heritage. The frontiers of literary production were moving beyond England but also expanding the concept of Englishness by way of the transatlantic female author's musings, memory, and the crosscurrents to which her work was subject. As Jim Egan observes, Bradstreet "figures her ties to England from nobility to nation in the hopes that this will allow her and her fellow colonists to claim what might be called an unqualified English identity" (Egan 2009, p. 239). Bradstreet likely sought to profess an unadulterated national identity—she commends Sidney's refined "British Tongue" (Bradstreet 1678, 2010)—but her poem in its two editions also conveys an expansion of the concept of Englishness. Veins and strains, that is lines of descent, become strains, lines of verse composed by a native English poet now relocated to "the Occidental parts of the World in *America*, alias *NOV-ANGLIA*".¹⁴

Why officially launch a literary career with a deferential elegy on Sidney? Familial, national, and maybe genealogical ties. Genealogies offer authorization, credibility, and licence, which Bradstreet, as a Briton abroad and as a female in a male profession, badly needed. Thomas Dudley, like Sir Philip Sidney's mother, Mary Dudley, was a descendent of John Dudley, 1st Duke of Northumberland of the house of Dudley.¹⁵ Sidney's father (and William Sidney's grandfather), Sir Henry Sidney, Lord Deputy of Ireland, memorably wrote, "Remember, my son, the noble blood you are descended of by your mother's side; and think that only by virtuous life and good action you may be an ornament to that illustrious family".¹⁶ Bradstreet took advantage of the blood relations (via Dudley) with Sidney: "Let then, none dis-allow of these my straines,/Which have the self-same blood yet in my veines" (Bradstreet 1650, p. 192). But she modified that claim without necessarily retracting it.¹⁷ The lines in the 1678 edition read "Then let none disallow of these my strains, / Whilst English blood yet runs within my veins" (Bradstreet 1678, 2010). In his prescient examination of Bradstreet's negotiation of her "communal and national identity", Christopher Ivic argues that the revision of the lines from self-same blood to English blood allows Bradstreet to regain an English identity in response to or while "expressing a deep anxiety about degeneracy, a decaying of identity".¹⁸ Might we not regard Bradstreet's efforts as an exercise in expanding Englishness as a geography-defying formulation? Egan contends that Bradstreet's Sidney elegies represent "two fundamentally different and perhaps incompatible versions of Englishness" (Egan 2009, p. 222). Again, I would maintain that Bradstreet broadens and diversifies the concept of an English identity, rendering it a composite transnational literary construction. A deep vein of Englishness runs through the exilic poet's verse, as Bradstreet's American-produced, British publication *The Tenth Muse* reinforces, and as her posthumous American-produced and published volume yet confirms.

Though geographically distanced from the motherland, Bradstreet remains genetically and culturally connected through veins (L. *vena*) "blood vessels" and strains, lines of descent, ancestry, as in "a noble strain".¹⁹ Among the related meanings of strain were character or constitution. Early modern occurrences of the term in literature include Ben Jonson's *Sejanus* "th' exalted streine" (1605); William Shakespeare's *King Lear* "valiant strain" (1608); and John Tillotson's *Sermons Preach'd Upon Several Occasions* (1671), in which he warns that "the Strain of a Nation" can be marred through intemperance.²⁰ Further, strain refers to poetic lines or lyrics, as in John Davies's *The Muses-Tears for the Losse of Their Hope . . . Prince of Wales . . . Where-unto is added, Consolatory Straines to wrest Nature from her bent in immoderate mourning. The Muses-Tears'* lament "Consolations for, and to the King" forges connections between elegiac poetic lines and blood vessels or channels.²¹ Bradstreet, who, along with the other colonists, participated in "a fiercely contested debate over just what constituted true Englishness" (Egan 2009, p. 221), used her elegiac, panegyric poem on Sidney to exploit the full range of connotations of strains.

Lifeblood, lifelines, and cross-currents extend to Sylvester, whose labor nurtures Bradstreet's muse. Sylvester's poem to William Sidney, eldest son of Sir Robert Sidney, 1st Earl of Leicester—"An Elegiac Epistle Consolatorie Against Immoderate Sorrow for the

Immature Decease of Sir William Sidney Knight”—in all likelihood influenced Bradstreet’s tribute to Philip Sidney. The commemorative poem to William Sidney was appended to *Lachrimae Lachrimarum or, The distillation of teares shede for the untymely death of the incomparable prince Panaretus*.²² Like Davies’s volume of elegies, *The Muses-Teares, Lachrimae Lachrimarum* eulogizes Prince Henry. Parts of *Lachrimae Lachrimarum* (spelled *Lacrymae Lacrymarum*) are printed in later editions of Du Bartas’s *Divine Weekes*. This includes Sylvester’s dedication which precedes the 1613 elegy on William Sidney. In Sylvester’s post-1605 editions of *Du Bartas His Divine Weekes and Workes*, the elegy is addressed “To the Right Honourable The Lord Viscount Lisle, and his most virtuous Lady. Sir Robert Sidney, Knight, their Hopefull Sonne. To the most Worthy Lady Wroth, with the rest of her right virtuous Daughters: and To all the Noble Sidneys and Semi-Sidneys”. The sonnet that follows commences with “Although I knowe None, but a Sidney’s Muse,/Worthy to sing a Sidney’s worthynesse:/None but Your Owne Al-Worth, Sidneides / In whom, her Uncle’s noble Veine renews”. (Sylvester 1621, p. 588) Sir Philip’s niece, Lady Mary Wroth, née Mary Sidney, is among the addressees. Sylvester asks the family to “Accept these sighs and these few Tears of ours,/Which have their Course but from the Sourse of Yours” (ll. 13–14). Sylvester’s playful identification of the source of “Al-Worth” is revealed in the accompanying “Anagram. LA. Wroth”.²³ In the front matter to the *Tenth Muse* (and the 1678 edition), the anagrammatic model would be adapted and applied in witty praise of Bradstreet in the fittingly anonymous “An Anagram”. Here Bradstreet’s initials are used in the hybrid name “An Bartas”—characterized as an “Epicene”.²⁴

Along similar lines, I./J. W. [John Woodbridge], Bradstreet’s brother-in-law, would align Bradstreet with Wroth through wordplay: In the dedicatory poem to Bradstreet in both editions of the *Tenth Muse*, Woodbridge wrote, “If you alone professe you are not wroth; / Yet if you are, a womans wrath is little, / When thousands else admire you in each tittle”.²⁵ Bradstreet’s verses turn back on themselves and discover lines of descent in the life and lines of Lady Mary Wroth. Wroth’s opening sonnet in “A Crowne of Sonnets dedicated to Love” features a sidetracked Pamphilia: “In this strange Labyrinth how shall I turne, / Wayes are on all sids while the way I misse”.²⁶ Mimicking and redirecting the pursuit, Bradstreet fashions a relationship with Wroth that is caught up in witty imitation. In the tribute to Sidney, she writes, “now into such lab’rinths I am lead, / With endless turns, the way I find not out” (Bradstreet 1678, 2010). “Endless turns” characterize the subject and form of the labyrinthine verse. A disoriented poet-speaker seeks direction, and determines that “Sidney’s Muse”, reanimated by Sylvester, can attest to Sidney’s renown: “How to persist my Muse is more in doubt;²⁷ / Which makes me now with Sylvester confess,/But Sidney’s Muse can sing his *worthiness*” (ll. 73–5, p. 203; italics mine). The lifelines sought by Bradstreet and supplied by Sidney’s and Sylvester’s art conduct Bradstreet’s speaker through the labyrinth.

3. Grave Markers: English Literary Tradition and Sidney’s International Legacy

“An Elegiac Epistle”, contained in Sylvester’s posthumous edition of *Du Bartas His Divine Weekes and Workes*, redirects Sylvester’s subject matter from the late Prince Henry to “Sidney’s Death”. Sylvester extends condolences to Lady Lisle and prays that the Graces might send forth “Foure lovely Nymphs, foure Rivers, as it were, / Your veines of Vertue through the Land to bear”.²⁸ Literally and figuratively, the exalted strain and strains are conduits for the Sidneys’ noble blood channeled through the “veines of Vertue” of the female Sidneys. Sylvester also implies that true nobility is truly exhibited in virtuous action more than birthright or bloodlines. Bradstreet in turn designs a linear succession from the noble Sidneys and the Semi-Sidneys, whom Sylvester names, to Bradstreet herself, a succession carved in verses that she, the tenth muse, composes from America. Using her first poem to build a bridge between worlds, she erects a monument that also serves as a pedestal for her achievements as much as for Sidney’s. Bradstreet accomplishes this by building on earlier foundations that literally designated the gravesite and memorialized the corpus.

The anonymous epitaph that first marked Sidney's burial site is the product of gravesite robbery from an epitaph composed by Joachim du Bellay, a major French Renaissance poet (who was admired by Edmund Spenser as being on par with Du Bartas). Du Bellay's epitaph for French Admiral Seigneur de Bonivet, which would establish the base and basis for Sidney's epitaph, reads

*La France et le Piedmont et les Cieux et les Arts,
Les Soldats et le Monde ont fait comme six parts
De ce grand Bonivet: Car une si grand' chose
Dedans un seul tombeau ne pouvoit estre enclose.
La France en a le corps qu'elle avoit eslevé,
Le Piedmont a le coeur qu'il avoit esprouvé;
Les Cieux en ont l'esprit, et les Arts la memoire,
Les Soldats le regret, et le Monde la Gloire.*²⁹ (Raleigh 1593, pp. 8–10)

Complicating the narrative of the epitaph's history and significance is its Latin origin. Du Bellay's Latin source is even more removed from the English translation that would serve as an epitaph for Sidney. John Eliot in 1593 publishes the anonymous English epitaph of "the peerelesse paragon of letters and arms":

England, Netherlands, the Heavens, and the Arts,
The Souldiors, and the World, have made six parts
Of the noble Sydney: for none will suppose,
That a small heape of stones can Sydney enclose.
His body hath England, for she it bred,
Netherland his blood, in her defence shed:
The Heavens have his soule, the Arts have his fame,
All Souldiors the greefe, the World his good name.³⁰

The tombstone emblazons Sidney's character traits, values, and destiny. The epitaph assigns Sidney's legacy to six sites, from England, to Netherlands, the Heavens, and the Arts, the military, and the World. The structure would establish the basis for other markers.

In the same year, Sir Walter Raleigh's unsigned sixty-line tribute to Sidney, the 15-quatrain "An Epitaph upon the right Honourable Sir Phillip Sidney knight: Lord governor of Flushing", appeared in the anthology *The Phoenix Nest Built up with the most rare and refined workes of noble men*. Raleigh maps Sidney's international reach by itemizing and enshrining Sidney's feats and features in the fields of arms and arts:

England doth hold thy lims that bred the same,
Flaunders thy valure where it last was tried,
The Campe thy sorrow where thy bodie died,
Thy friends, thy want; the world, thy vertues fame.
Nations thy wit, our mindes lay up thy love,
Letters thy learning, thy losse, yeeres long to come,
In worthy harts sorrow hath made thy tombe,
Thy soule and spright enrich the heavens above. (Raleigh 1593, pp. 8–10)

Raleigh's Sidney is entombed in body, mind, and spirit in the *Phoenix Nest* in which the shepherd-knight's legacy is published. Two years later, Raleigh's anonymous epitaph appeared in Edmund Spenser's belated *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* (1595), which is addressed to Raleigh, who is cast as Colin Clout's companion.

The formation of the living monument to Sidney remains a work in progress penned by many hands and built on earlier poetic foundations. In the *Colin Clout* volume, Spenser composed his elegy on Sidney along the lines of Greek Bucolic poet Theocritus's idyll

featuring Thyrsis's lament for Daphnis. Sidney, to whom Spenser had dedicated *The Shepherdes Calendar* (1579), is figured in *Colin Clout* (the volume and the poem) as Astrophel, that is, "A Gentle Shepheard borne in *Arcady*, / Of gentlest race that ever shepheard bore"³¹ When Bradstreet picks up her quill to memorialize Sidney, she doesn't enlist Spenser's assistance, and seems uninterested in the pastoral mode. Spenser, however, appears in the corrected, posthumous edition of the poems, in which Bradstreet inserts "Phoenix Spenser" and "Astrophel", the name referring to Sidney's own poetic creation and Spenser's pastoral elegy "Astrophel", the namesake of Sidney. The inter-animation of Sidney and Spenser and the interweaving of life and lines establish the context for the description in the 1678 edition of Spenser presenting an elegy to Stella in consolation of "the sad loss of her dear Astrophel": "Phoenix Spenser (Sylvester 1605, B2r; Sylvester 1621, A8r.) doth unto his life/His death present in sable to his wife". Armed and allied with a "Phoenix pen", "Spenser's poetry" restores Sidney in and as "Astrophel".³²

Bradstreet would like to advance that restoration project: "Fain would I show how he fame's paths did tread", continues the speaker, "[b]ut now into such lab'rins I am lead" (ll. 70–1, p. 203). The group of fellow poets whose work comprises the final third of the *Colin Clout* volume had also deployed the modesty topos in accordance with convention. "To praise thy life, or waile thy woorthie death, / And want thy wit, thy wit high, pure, divine, / Is far beyond the powre of mortall line, / Nor any one hath worth that draweth breath", maintains Raleigh, who grants that Sidney's "vertues [are] wounded by my worthlesse rime".³³ The speaker in L. B. [Lodowick Bryskett]'s "The Mourning Muse of Thestylis" claims that Sidney was the subject of a faltering pen, "Whose worthie praise to sing, my [the poet's] *Muses* not aspire".³⁴ The anonymous "Elegie, or friends passion, for his *Astrophill*" closes with "And heere my pen is forst to shrink, / My teares discollors so mine inke".³⁵ Another tribute is by Mathew Roydon, and the volume's final entry is an epitaph by Fulke Greville or Edward Dyer, titled "Another of the Same". Again the poem ends formulaically on a note of humility: rhyme is no indication of talent, concedes the poet-speaker: "Now rime, the sonne of rage, which art no kin to skill, / And endles grieffe, which deads my life, yet knowes not how to kill, / Go seekes that haples tombe, which if ye hap to finde, / Salute the stones, that keep the lims, that held so good a minde".³⁶ The poem and the volume at large conclude with the invitation to seek out the tomb.

4. Sidney's Muses

Too late my error see, that durst presume

To fix my faltring lines upon his tomb. (Bradstreet 1650, p. 194)

"Hexameters, Upon the never-enough praised Sir Phillip Sidney" in the *Poetical Rapsody* anthology compiled by Francis Davison, a kinsman of Sidney, credits poets for immortalizing Sidney: "He lives eternall, with endlesse Glorie bedecked: / Yea still on earth hee lives, and still shall live by the Muses", who bewail Sidney's death in "Another upon the same".³⁷ Scaffolding for Bradstreet's elegy is supplied by Sylvester's edition of Du Bartas with its dedicatory columns to each muse in *Divine Weeks* (1621). The elaborate front matter salutes the crown ("Corona Dedicatoria"), and specifically James as "Prince of Parnassus", so that Parnassus is claimed for England, Scotland, France and Ireland—"Europes greatest Iles" (Sylvester 1621, A3). In 1591 James IV and I himself had translated parts of Du Bartas's epic poem. "The Printer, to the Reader" in Du Bartas's *His Divine Weeks* (1621) professes that the deceased authors, including notably Josuah Sylvester (d. 1618), survive in and as "living Monuments" (Sylvester 1621, A7v). A column resembling a Parnassian monument to Sidney appears on the page facing the dedication to the reader. In the inscription, Sylvester confesses his inability to outdo Sidney's (non-extant) translation of Du Bartas.³⁸ Upon reviewing the frontmatter of *Divine Weekes*, Bradstreet would have learned about Sidney's admiration of Du Bartas.

Bradstreet herself will transfer noble status to Sidney, and crown him as Apollo:

Calliope with Terpsichore did sing,

Of poesy, and of music, he was king;
 His rhetoric struck Polymnia dead,
 His eloquence made Mercury³⁹ wax red:
 His logic from Euterpe won the crown,
 More worth was his than Clio could set down.
 Thalia and Melpomene, say truth,
 (Witness *Arcadia* penned in his youth)
 Are not his tragic comedies so acted,
 As if your ninefold wit had been compacted. (Bradstreet 1678, 2010)

The champion of epic poetry, the beautiful-voiced Calliope, together with Terpsichore, who inspires lyrical verse and dance, is among Sidney's muses. Sidney also has mastered the arts of Poly(hy)mnia, Euterpe, and Clio, who are next in line. Then, as author of the posthumously published *The Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia* (1590), Sidney was guided by Thalia and Melpomene, Bradstreet implies. In conventional elegies, the muses are summoned to lament the deceased. Angel Day, for example, had asked the nymphs where they directed their gaze: "Thalia with her pleasant layes? / fine Erato in gladsome Ditties drest, / And faire Caliop', statelier then the rest[?]" (Day 1587, p. 3).⁴⁰ In her elegy, Bradstreet is not only intent on doing a complete roll call of the nine, but also reminds the reader who is king. Bradstreet's Apollo-Sidney exhibits the combination and culmination of the muses' "ninefold wit". But who is missing in the lineup on Parnassus? The verse pillar or column Bradstreet erected at the start of her poem includes all but Erato and Urania. In the conclusion of both editions of Bradstreet's elegy on Sidney, however, "Errata" rather than Erato ("lovely"—the Greek muse of lyric and love poetry)⁴¹ supplies the pen that Bradstreet's poet-speaker utilizes to compose the tribute. "Errata" thus is among the nine.⁴² And what about Urania, who was also the "Christian muse" in Protestant poetic tradition, to which Du Bartas was a formidable contributor? In the poem to Sidney, Bradstreet identifies herself with the figure of Worth-Urania-Pamphilia-Stella.⁴³ She is related to Wroth through lines of descent and a literary tradition: entering Bradstreet's elegy by way of strained, labyrinthine verses, Wroth is Bradstreet's Urania, just as Sidney is her Apollo.

Most evidently in the first edition of her Sidney elegy, but also throughout the *Tenth Muse*, Bradstreet deploys the commonplace modesty topos. As she nears the end of "The Third Monarchy, Being the Grecian", for example, Bradstreet's narrator acknowledges in a statement that collapses the opposition between self-deprecation and self-praise, "Pardon to crave for errors, is but vain, / The subject was too high, beyond my strain, / To frame apology for some offense, / Converts our boldness into impudence".⁴⁴ "An Elegie upon that Honourable and Renowned Knight" too incorporates references to Bradstreet's alleged blunders: "But to say truth, thy worth I shall but staine, / Thy fame, and praise, is farre beyond my straine".⁴⁵ The original version of the elegy is especially self-critical: "Yet great Augustus was content (we know) / To be saluted by a silly Crow; / Then let such Crowes as I, thy praises sing, / A Crow's a Crow, and Caesar is a King" (193). Though her poetic predecessors had used the trope of modesty, Bradstreet speaker's self-denigrating remarks are more numerous and intrusive than those of her male counterparts.

The later edition of Bradstreet's volume omits some of the self-censorious passages. With fewer confessions about injuries inflicted by Bradstreet on art of poetry, the 1678 elegy moves more precipitously and economically towards the conclusion. While the muses still drive the poet-speaker from Parnassus, the tenth muse summons Errata (Erato) sooner to persist with her work. Errata also helpfully tosses Bradstreet a pen so that she might leave her mark and indite her final two lines, namely "So Sidney's fame I leave to England's rolls, / His bones do lie interred in stately Paul's" (ll. 90–1; p. 204). The act of resignation is a declaration of agency: while England's roll inscribes Sidney's popularity and stature, Bradstreet leaves her mark on his monumental legacy by inscribing "faltring lines upon his

tomb" (Bradstreet 1650, p. 194) in the final section titled "His Epitaph" in both editions of the elegy.

The conventions of classical epitaphic verse dictated the opening line of the epitaph: "hic iacet":

Here lies in fame under this stone
Philip and Alexander both in one;
Heir to the Muses, the son of Mars in truth,
Learning, valour, wisdom, all in virtuous youth.
His praise is much, this shall suffice my pen,
That Sidney died 'mong most renowned of men. (Bradstreet 1678, 2010)

The poem resembles Greek and Roman epitaphs and early modern imitations of those models, like the elegiac epigrams by Ben Jonson, for example. Bradstreet's tombstone inscription preserves "in fame under this stone, Philip and Alexander both in one". (Princely) Philip Sidney is aligned figuratively and literally with Philip of Macedon, king of Macedonia. But the line "Philip and Alexander both in one" refers to the "self-same blood[lines]" (Bradstreet 1650, p. 192), relating Philip II to his son, Alexander III the Great, King of Macedon in the fourth century BCE.⁴⁶ The concise epigrammatic lines expand the significance of strains by demonstrating what English strains can connect and accomplish.

Epitaphs and epitaphic verse relied on classical epic formulae to exalt the heroism of the deceased. L. B. had identified Sidney with the celebrated ancient warriors "*Pirrhus, Hanniball, / Scipio and Cæsar*".⁴⁷ International elegists had applied similar models: "Rectorem amissum flet Belga, Britannia alumnum; / Et necis est tantae iustus utrique dolor: / Haud aliter tracto confuse est Hectore Troia, / Hellas & exstincto flevit in AEacide".⁴⁸ Raleigh memorialized Sidney as England's martial champion: "That day their *Hannibal* died, our *Scipio* fell" (Raleigh 1595). Bradstreet follows the tradition by venerating England's Mars-Sidney as "brave Achilles" (l. 44, p. 202), "Brave Hector by the walls of Troy" (l. 55, p. 203), "noble Scipio" (l. 63, p. 203), and "Philip and Alexander" (l. 94, p. 204).

"O Princely *Philip*, rather *Alexander*" exclaimed Bradstreet when she composed the elegy in 1638 (Bradstreet 1650, p. 194). The modifier "Princely" is dropped in the 1678 edition, and in fact references to military heroes and Sidney's Herculean feats are reduced or deleted. "An Elegy Upon That Honorable and Renowned Knight" is about creating a heroic heritage and lineage for her and her subject as subjects of art. It is about transmitting and transmuting English strains. The tribute lionizes Sidney's "learning, valour, and morality . . . within his book" (ll. 34, 36, p. 202) and the epitaph, confirming the testimony of the poet, versifies and etches Sidney's virtues in stone in Bradstreet's book; Bradstreet's epitaph thus inscribes the line with variation: "Learning, valour, wisdom, all in virtuous youth" (l. 96, p. 204). Bradstreet's Sidney is more emphatically the heir to the muses and the poetic creation of Bradstreet, as inspired by Du Bartas, Spenser, Sylvester, and Raleigh, and Bradstreet's own training and imagination. At the end of the tribute, Bradstreet proclaims her right to eulogize Sidney while applying disclaimers and the modesty topos as she casts herself as an exile from the literary Greek mainland. But while she has outraged the nine Muses, she, the tenth muse, possesses their prowess. The front matter of both volumes of the *Tenth Muse* features Woodbridge's rhetorical praise of Bradstreet's "pleasant witty strains" as confirmation of the poet's merit and prominence: "And if the Nine, vouchsafe the Tenth a place, / I think they rightly may yeeld you that grace".⁴⁹ Bradstreet's strains in fact accord her a place on Parnassus, whose heights she thus scales. *Several Poems* concludes with a funeral elegy composed by John Norton for the tenth muse. "Farewell my Muse", laments Norton, who "seeks to blazon" Bradstreet: "since thou hast left they firme, / I am unblest in one, but blest in nine". Norton's invocation of "Maro's [Virgil's] Muse" confirms the translation and reanimation of the poetess and brings the volume full circle.⁵⁰

The work Bradstreet delivered is now categorized as early American literature, but evidence offered here suggests its alignment and continuities with the English Re-naisance.

While Anglo-American writers and poets seeded a diasporic culture, their strains were largely in tune with English books, conventions, and character (Tennenhouse 2007). The translation of English strains across time and space figured forth a living monument, the textual and material legacy of which was the work of a semi-Sidney, situated in the interstices of two worlds.

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Notes

- ¹ (Bradstreet 1650). “An Elegie upon that Honorable and renowned Knight, Sir Philip Sidney, who was untimely slaine at the Siege of Zutphon[sic], Anno 1586” (Bradstreet 1650, p. 195). Quotations of Bradstreet’s poetry contained in her first volume are taken from *The Tenth Muse* (1650). The edition lacks line numbers, and thus quotations are cited by page number in the body of the essay. Throughout this essay, I have modernized f/s, u/v, i/j, f/s in the typography of quotations from early modern sources.
- ² (Colaianne and L 1980, p. xii); Bos, Sander, Marianne Lange, and Jeanine Six. 1986, pp. 37–67; (Buxton 1989, pp. 46–56).
- ³ (van Dorsten 1962, p. 154). In the Netherlands, commemorative verses are recorded only in Leiden, not in Utrecht or Amsterdam or Zeeland (164).
- ⁴ A list of mourners was compiled by Richard Lea, an officer of the College of Arms or official heraldic authority for England. Ronald Strickland interprets the list as prescriptive (Strickland 1990, p. 36 n27). The funeral roll, of which several copies are extant, was produced by Thomas Lant, a herald responsible for funerals of the aristocracy. A series of 30 engravings by Theodor de Brij/Bry offers a record of the ceremonial procession and its 344 participants, identified by name and rank. See (Lant 1587.) The plates are printed in (Nichols 2014, pp. 285–314).
- ⁵ This was not the 10-year old Thomas Dudley, future father of Anne Bradstreet. There are “so many Thomas Dudleys, and so many Captain Dudleys”, reports Dean Dudley, who supplies a long list (Dudley 1886, pp. 28, 34). Among the Thomas Dudleys was a servant and kinsman of the Earl of Leicester.
- ⁶ (van Dorsten 1965, p. 174). For the Dutch neo-Latin epitaphs, see (van Dorsten 1962).
- ⁷ Bradstreet’s poem is only loosely an elegy. It is primarily a panegyric, though this essay refers to it as an elegy because of the titular term. Certainly “An Elegie” is indebted to the Latin term *elogium* (tomb inscription [from Greek *elegia* “elegy”]), which it literally inscribes in “His Epitaph”.
- ⁸ Josuah Sylvester, Dedication to the 1613 elegy on William Sidney. (Sylvester 1621, p. 1154). I cite primarily the 1621 edition of *Du Bartas His Divine Weekes and Workes* because it contains *Lacrymae Lacrymarum/Lachrimæ Lachrimarum*.
- ⁹ Bradstreet’s earliest extant poem, “Upon a Fit of Sickness, Anno. 1632”, does not appear in the 1650 *Tenth Muse*. The poem was published in a supplementary section of the 1678 volume, “Several other Poems made by the Author upon Diverse Occasions, were found among her Papers after her Death” (Bradstreet 1678). The modern edition of the 1678 volume cited in this essay is dated Bradstreet 2010. Except where noted, all quotations from the 1678 edition of Bradstreet’s volume are from Hensley’s edition, and cited by line and page numbers in the body of the essay.
- ¹⁰ Auger 2019. *Du Bartas’ Legacy in England and Scotland* also referred. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 22.
- ¹¹ Bradstreet. “An Elegy Upon That Honorable and Renowned Knight Sir Philip Sidney, Who Was Untimely Slain at the Siege of Zutphen, Anno 1586” (Bradstreet 1678, 2010).
- ¹² For example, the 1650 edition features the name Anne Bradstreet on p. 2. Her poem, “The Prologue”, is signed “A.B.” (p. 4) in the 1650 edition only; “The four Seasons” are signed. “A.B.” (p. 64) in the 1650 edition only. “In honour of Du Bartas” is dated (Sylvester 1641) and signed “A.B.” (p. 196) in the 1650 only, though the 1678 edition also includes the 1641 date.
- ¹³ Some verses retain the second person pronouns: ll. 41–51, p. 202.
- ¹⁴ N. H. [Nathaniel Ward], “In praise of the Author, Mistris Anne Bradstreet”, (Bradstreet 1650, A7r; Bradstreet 2010, p. 7).
- ¹⁵ Ann Stanford begins with a direct connection between Bradstreet and Sir Philip Sidney; in her veins ran that same Dudley blood of which Sir Philip had been so proud (Stanford 1974).
- ¹⁶ (Wallace 1915, p. 69). The letter is dated 1591.
- ¹⁷ Ann Stanford argues that Bradstreet’s dropping of the claim to kinship is not a retraction but a concession to decorum (Stanford 1983, p. 98).
- ¹⁸ (Ivic 2003, p. 202). Auger in *Du Bartas’ Legacy* devotes a section to Bradstreet’s imitation of Du Bartas (171–77). He mentions Bradstreet’s reference to “self-same blood” (Auger, 173) but doesn’t acknowledge the significant editorial change to the phrase in the second edition of the elegy.
- ¹⁹ Pedigree, lineage, ancestry, descent. “strain, n.5”. (OED 2021). March 2021. Oxford University Press (accessed on 16 April 2021); see also 1600 W. Shakespeare *Much Ado about Nothing* ii. i. 355 “He is of a noble strain, of approoued valour, and confirme honesty”.

- 20 “strain, n.8.a”. OED 2021. Oxford University Press
- 21 (Davies 1613, D2r). My emphasis.
- 22 (Sylvester 1612). Bound with the edition of *Lachrimæ Lachrimarum* was “An Elegie and Epistle Consolatorie against Immoderate Sorrow for th’ immature Decease of Sr William Sidney, knight, Sonne and Heire apparant to the Right Honourable Robert, Lord Sidney
- 23 Ann Stanford recognized that the elegy is modelled on Sylvester’s elegy on William Sidney (Stanford, p. 97). Wright notes the connection of veins (Wright 1996, p. 246). See also (Alexander 2006, p. 142). Alexander, who opts for 1640 as a cut-off date, doesn’t include Bradstreet in his afterlife of Sidney (Alexander 2006).
- 24 “An Anagram” (Bradstreet 1650, A8v).
- 25 I./J. W. [John Woodbridge], “To my deare Sister, the Author of these Poems” (Bradstreet 1650, A5v). The 1678 edition contains the same lines with variations in the typography (ll. 74–6, p. 6).
- 26 Lady Mary Wroath [sic], “Pamphilia to Amphilanthus” [independently paginated] (Wroth 1621, p. 36).
- 27 *The Tenth Muse* had included two additional lines: “Calls me ambitious fool, that durst aspire,/ Enough for me to look, and so admire” (Bradstreet 1650, p. 194).
- 28 (Sylvester 1621, pp. 1155, 1170). The 4-page elegy (pp. 1155, 1168–1170; Gggg2r–Gggg3v) is irregularly numbered.
- 29 (Du Bellay 1569). *Divers Poemes*. Paris: Federic Morel; quoted in (Farlo 2005, p. 98). The epitaph is quoted with variations in (Du Bellay 1918). Sir George Buc’s *Poetica* identified the epitaph’s source, according to an entry in “Epitaphes” in (Camden 1605, p. 54; Bond 1943, p. 256, 256n10, 12). See also (Whetstone 1587).
- 30 (Eliot 1593, p. 163). For a copy of the original epigraph, see (Fisher [1684] 1885, p. 4).
- 31 (Spenser 1595), *Astrophel. A Pastorall Elegie upon the death of the most Noble and valorous Knight, Sir Philip Sidney*.
- 32 The 1678 edition of the elegy inserts Spenser (Bradstreet 1678, 2010) while cancelling verses describing an unfavourable Stella in the older edition (Bradstreet 1650, p. 110).
- 33 In “In Honour of That High and Mighty Princess Queen Elizabeth”, neither the “Phoenix pen, nor Spenser’s poetry” can restore Elizabeth, the “Phoenix queen”, decides (Bradstreet 2010, ll. 24, 94, pp. 210, 212).
- 34 (Raleigh 1593, p. 10); also in (Raleigh 1595, K3).
- 35 [L. B.], “The mourning Muse of Thestylis” (Spenser 1595, H2r).
- 36 [L. B.], “An Elegie, or friends passion, for his *Astrophill*” (Spenser 1595, K2). Previously published in (*Phoenix Nest* 1593, p. 8).
- 37 Anon. “Another of the Same”, (*Phoenix Nest* 1593, p. 11). Also published in Spenser 1595, K3, where the poem and the quoted lines are the final words in the volume.
- 38 Anon. “Hexameters, Upon the never-enough praised Sir Phillip Sidney” and “Another upon the same”, in (Davison 1602), np. The volume is dedicated to William Herbert, nephew of Sir Philip Sidney.
- 39 Mercury, along with Minerva, compares Bradstreet’s work with Du Bartas’s in Nathaniel Ward’s commendatory poem [“Mercury shew’d *Apollo* . . . ”], which identifies Bradstreet as “a right *Du Bartas* Girle” (Bradstreet 1650, A4r).
- 40 In “In Honour of Du Bartas, 1641”, that honour is bestowed on Du Bartas—“Parnassus’ Glory” (Bradstreet 1650, l. 87, p. 208).
- 41 For Erato’s role in Du Bartas, see (Sylvester 1621, A4).
- 42 On the relationship between Errata and Erato, the Muse of erotic poetry in (Sweet 1988, p. 160)
- 43 On Bradstreet’s relationship with the Sidney circle’s female authors—Wroth; her aunt, Mary Sidney Herbert; Philip Sidney’s own daughter, Elizabeth, for example—see (Gillespie 2017, pp. 206–7).
- 44 “The Third Monarchy, Being the Grecian, Beginning under Alexander the Great in the 112 Olympiad”, (Bradstreet 2010, ll. 3416–19, p. 185).
- 45 (Bradstreet 1650, p. 192; Bradstreet 2010, ll. 48–49, p. 202). Two different edition for reference
- 46 “Great Alexander was wise Philip’s son”, Bradstreet states in “The Third Monarchy, Being the Grecian”, l. 1597, p. 130. Bradstreet would detail his conquests by declaring his fame would “last . . . whilst there is Land” (p. 148, ll. 2577–78); he “oft lament[ed] . . . / There were no more worlds to be conquered” (ll. 2601–2, p. 160).
- 47 [L. B.], “The mourning Muse of Thestylis” (Spenser 1595, H2r).
- 48 “Belgia bewails her helmsman, Britannia the child she bred; and justified is the grief of both for such a violent death: Troy was thrown in no less disorder when Hector’s body was dragged away, and Hellas wept as much when Ajax was killed” (Janus Dousa the Younger 1591, p. 54).
- 49 I./J. W. [John Woodbridge], “To my deare Sister, the Author of these Poems” (Bradstreet 1650, A4v, A5r). The 1678 edition contains the same lines with variations in the typography (l. 5, p. 4; ll. 41–2, p. 5).
- 50 John Norton, “A Funeral Elogy, upon . . . Mrs. Anne Bradstreet” (Bradstreet 1678, p. 254). Hensley excludes the elegy from her 1967/2010 edition.

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