

Extract, regarding Arachne, from the Arthur Golding translation (1567) of *Metamorphoses* by Ovid.

THE SIXT BOOKE OF OVIDS METAMORPHOSIS

[*Arachne. Niobe. Marsyas. Tereus, Procne, and Philomela. Boreas and Orithyia.*]

Tritonia unto all these wordes attentive hearing bendes,
And both the Muses learned song and rightfull wrath commendes.
And thereupon within hir selfe this fancie did arise:
It is no matter for to prayse: but let our selfe devise
Some thing to be commended for: and let us not permit 5
Our Majestie to be despise without revenging it.
And therewithall she purposed to put the Lydian Maide
Arachne to hir neckeverse who (as had to hir bene saide)
Presumed to prefer hir selfe before hir noble grace
In making cloth. This Damsell was not famous for the place
In which she dwelt, nor for hir stocke, but for hir Arte. Hir Sier
Was Idmon, one of Colophon, a pelting Purple Dier.
Hir mother was deceast: but she was of the baser sort,
And egall to hir Make in birth, in living, and in port.
But though this Maide were meanly borne, and dwelt but in a shed
At little Hypep: yet hir trade hir fame abroad did spread
Even all the Lydian Cities through. To see hir wondrous worke
The Nymphes that underneath the Vines of shadie Tmolus lurke
Their Vineyards oftentimes forsooke. So did the Nymphes also
About Pactolus oftentimes their golden streames forgo. 20
And evermore it did them good not only for to see
Hir clothes already made, but while they eke a making bee
Such grace was in hir workmanship. For were it so that shee
The newshorne fleeces from the sheepe in bundels deftly makes,
Or afterward doth kemb the same, and drawes it out in flakes
Along like cloudes, or on the Rocke doth spinne the handwarpe woofe,
Or else embroydreth, certainly ye might perceive by prooffe
She was of Pallas bringing up, which thing she nathelesse
Denyeth, and disdainng such a Mistresse to confesse,
Let hir contend with me, she saide: and if she me amend 30
I will refuse no punishment the which she shall extend.

line 8: *neckeverse*: Latin verse shown to a defendant who claimed benefit of clergy; ability to read it would save him from hanging.

line 12: *pelting*: paltry.

line 14: *Make*: mate; *port*: social position.

line 26: *Rocke*: distaff; *handwarpe*: handywarpe, a sixteenth-century cloth.

line 30: *amend*: surpass.

Ovid, *Metamorphoses, The Arthur Golding Translation, 1567*,
edited by John Frederick Nims, New York: Macmilan. pp.136-137.