

Worst. Endearment. Ever.

Peter Davidson's *Poetry and Revolution: An Anthology of British and Irish Verse 1625-1660* (Oxford, 1998) includes a rather dull love-poem (number 36) by "T.C.", most likely Thomas Cary, "Gentleman of the Bedchamber to Charles I" (516). The untitled poetic dialogue begins:

Tell me, Eutresia, since my fate
And thy more powerfull Forme decrees
My heart an Immolation at thy Shrine,
. . .

In the 'Notes on the Text' in the back of the book (516), Davidson records that some manuscripts call the addressee 'Eutresia', at least one 'Utrechia'. The note below the text reads: "1 *Eutresia* 'Utrechia' MS (Greek) 'beautiful hair'", which is a bit confusing: which name is supposed to mean 'beautiful hair'? Could 'Utrechia' be meant for 'Eutrichia' or something similar? (I see nothing in the poem to justify an allusion to the Dutch city of Utrecht.) The Greek adjective meaning 'with beautiful hair' is normally 'euthrix' in the nominative, sometimes feminine 'eutriche' or possibly 'eutricha'. 'Utrichia' may be close enough to the last, if U- can stand for Eu- and we can attribute the -i- to euphony rather than nounness.

But what of Eutresia, the name Davidson prints in his text? I see no way to make that mean anything to do with hair. It would be a properly-formed Greek noun meaning 'well-holedness', the quality of being equipped with one or more excellent holes or orifices: not a name anyone this side of Lord Rochester, or Martial in one of his darker moods, would give to an enemy, much less a mistress. Neither 'eutresia' nor for that matter 'dystresia' is included in the OED, but 'atresia', "from Greek ἄτρητος not perforated", is attested with the meaning "occlusion or closure of a natural channel of the body" since 1807. Biliary atresia is a common birth defect.

A mountainous region near the center of the Peloponnese, north and east of Megalopolis, was called Eutresia in ancient times. I do not know whether it was named that for an abundance of springs, or caves, or both, and an Internet search for caves in Greece does not indicate any disproportionate number of them in Eutresia. The Greek adjective 'eutretos' (εὐτρητος), meaning literally "well-holed", is found in a wide range

of authors, describing (for instance) Hera's pierced earlobes (*Iliad* 14.182), wind instruments, the soil of a well-worked garden, and a sponge. I suppose Cary's mistress, if not imaginary, could console herself with the thought that at least he didn't call her Dystresia.