

Her Master's Voice: Sappho's Dialogue with Homer

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1) R.L. Fowler, The Nature of Early Greek Lyric: Three Preliminary Studies (1987)

p. 9: "a Vergilian description of the technique of early Greek lyric is inappropriate...poets throughout the archaic period continued to use traditional phrases to evoke the atmosphere of epic in a general way. They needed no specific models; phrases came readily to their minds from epics they heard everywhere about them".

p. 40: "by the time we reach Anacreon, there is a great deal of attention paid to each word in the poem".

p. 40: "[lyric] poetry is very much on the surface, in the clear and straightforward formulation of ideas, in the ornaments and style, not beneath the surface in the subtleties of poet-reader relations, remote literary resonances, etc."

2) J. Svenbro, Phrasikleia: An Anthropology of Reading in Ancient Greece (1988; trans. J. Lloyd, 1993)

p. 146: "a Greek living around 600 B.C., if reflecting upon the matter of setting down a poem in writing, would probably consider the question in terms of a *transcription* of something that already had a socially recognized existence and that had been technically mastered in an oral or memorized state".

p. 148: "Although her work stemmed from oral tradition and she composed her poems for the ear, Sappho was no doubt conscious of the written dimension of her poems once they began to be set down in writing".

3) E.A. Havelock, The Muse Learns to Write: Reflections on Orality and Literacy from Antiquity to the Present (1986)

p. 101: "The masterpieces we now read as texts are an interwoven texture of oral and written. Their composition was conducted in a dialectical process in which what we are used to think of as "literary value" achieved by the architectural eye crept into a style which had originally formed itself out of acoustic echoes".

4) Epigrams from the Greek Anthology

AP 7.14.1-5: Antipater of Sidon (= Loeb T 27)

Aeolian earth, you cover Sappho, who among the immortal Muses
is sung of as the mortal Muse,
whom Cypris and Eros together nurtured,
with whom Peitho wove an undying wreath of song,
a joy to Hellas and "kleos" for you...

AP 9.506: "Plato" (= Loeb T 60)

Some people say there are nine Muses; how careless!
Look - Sappho of Lesbos is the tenth!

AP 7.15: Antipater of Thessalonica (= Loeb T 57)

My name is Sappho, and I surpassed women in poetry
as greatly as Homer surpassed men.

5) Sappho fr. 16

16 P. Oxy. 1231 fr. 1 col. i 13-34, col. ii 1 + 2166(a) 2 (Ox.
Pap. xxi p. 122) + P.S.I. 123. 1-2

οἱ μὲν ἰππῶν στρότον οἱ δὲ πέσδων
οἱ δὲ νάων φαῖσ' ἐπ[ί] γὰν μέλαι[ν]αν
ἔμμεναι κάλλιστον, ἔγω δὲ κῆν' ὅτ-
4 τω τις ἔραται·

πά]γχν δ' εὖμρες σύνετον πόησαι
π]άντι τ[ο]ῦτ', ἃ γὰρ πόλυ περσκέθοισα
κάλλος [ἀνθ]ρώπων Ἑλένα [τῶ]ν ἀνδρα
8 τῶν [πανάρ]ιστον

καλλ[ί]ποι]σ' ἔβα 'ς Τροίαν πλέοι [ἴ]τα
κωὺδ[έ] πα[ῖ]δος οὐδὲ φίλων το[κ]ήνων
πά[μ]παν] ἐμνάσθη, ἀλλὰ παράγαγ' αὐταν
12]σαν

]αμπτον γὰρ]
] . . . κούφως τ[]σησ[.]ε
[.] με νῦν Ἀνακτορ[ί]ας ὀ]μ[έ]μναι-
16 σ' οὐ] παρεοίσας·

τᾶ]ς κε βολλοίμαν ἔρατόν τε βᾶμα
κάμάρυγμα λάμπρον ἴδην προσώπω
ἢ τὰ Λύδων ἄρματα κᾶν ὄπλοισι
20 πεσοδομ]άχεντας·

16 Same papyrus +

Some say a host of cavalry, others of infantry, and others of ships, is the most beautiful thing on the black earth, but I say it is whatsoever a person loves. It is perfectly easy to make this understood by everyone: for she who far surpassed mankind in beauty, Helen, left her most noble husband and went sailing off to Troy with no thought at all for her child or dear parents, but (love) led her astray . . . lightly . . . (and she?) has reminded me now of Anactoria who is not here: I would rather see her lovely walk and the bright sparkle of her face than the Lydians' chariots and armed infantry

6) Brief bibliography of works mentioned in the paper

- A. Bergren, "Language & the Female in Early Greek Thought", Arethusa 16 (1983): 69-96
P. duBois, "Sappho and Helen", Arethusa 1 (1978): 89-99
B. Gentili, Poetry and Its Public in Ancient Greece (1985; trans. A. Cole, 1988)
G. Most, "Sappho Fr. 16.6-7 L-P", CQ 31 (1981): 11-17
L. Rissman, Love as War: Homeric Allusion in the Poetry of Sappho (1983)
M. Skinner, "Woman and Language in Archaic Greece, or Why is Sappho a Woman?", in Rabinowitz & Richlin, eds., Feminist Theory and the Classics (1993), pp. 125-44
R. Thomas, Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece (1992)
J. Winkler, "Double Consciousness in Sappho's Lyrics", in The Constraints of Desire (1990), pp. 162-87