

Two New Poems by Sappho

Dirk Obbink, Christ Church Oxford

The recorded reception of Sappho begins with Herodotus. At 2.135 he documents a song (ἐν μέλει) in which Sappho criticized her brother Charaxos or his mistress. A trader in Lesbian wines, he conceived a violent passion for a notorious courtesan, then a slave at Naukratis, sailed to Egypt, ransomed her at a great price, at which Sappho gave vent to her indignation in a song. Herodotus' account is re-told, with variations and corrections by several later authors.¹ Charaxos, if we may believe Ovid, took no less offense, turned back to sea, rejecting all Sappho's assiduous advice and pious prayers. Grenfell and Hunt, in the first non-theological (i.e. non-biblical) papyrus published by them from Oxyrhynchus, thought they had identified part of a related poem, Sa. 5 (P. Oxy. 7), and later made a similar link with what we now call Sa. 15 (P. Oxy. 1231 fr. 1 i 1-12 + fr. 3)—although neither text names Charaxos, nor is it even certain that the 'brother' or 'sister' now certainly mentioned Sa. 5 are Charaxos or Sappho respectively. The very existence of Charaxos and his lover in Sappho's poetry has been doubted by many scholars. The earliest author to mention Charaxos, after Herodotus, is Posidippus in a third century BC epigram (XVII Gow-Page = 122 Austin-Bastianini), who describes Sappho's poetry as showing both Charaxos and girlfriend (there already called Doricha) in a benign light, notwithstanding an element of irony, which is as uncertain as it is untrustworthy; then Ovid. *Her.* 15.17-18 *Charaxus / frater*. We quite simply have had no clue, up until now, as to the kind of information, or its source, that could have given rise to Herodotus' story in a way that his fifth century Athenian audience might have found credible.

¹ Strab. 17.1.33 (p. 808, 16ff); Athen. 13.596b-d (disputing the name of the lover, and adducing Posidip. XVII Gow-Page = 122 Austin-Bastianini); Ov. *Her.* XV 63-70, 117-20; P. Oxy. XV 1800 fr. 1.1-35 (Sa. Test. 252 Voigt = Chamael. fr. 27 Wehrli); Sud. α1 334 Αἴωπος, ι 4 Ἰόδμων, and ρ 221 Ῥοδώπιδος ἀνάθημα.

A newly uncovered papyrus² changes that, offering parts of two new poems by Sappho—one which mentions prominently Charaxos and his trading at sea, and another that is an address to Aphrodite employing tropes familiar from Sappho’s love poetry elsewhere. Both poems clearly come from Sappho’s first book, where they stood in close proximity with Sa. 5 and 15. In what follows I refer to the first as the Brothers Poem, and the second as the Kypris Poem in shorthand designations for poems which as yet have no fragment numbers assigned to them in any edition.

THE PAPYRUS

A large fragment (178 x 117 mm) with the better part of the upper portion of a single column from a papyrus roll, written along the fibers, containing parts of two poems (20 and 9 lines respectively) in Sapphics in the Aeolic dialect. Top margin survives to a height of 8.1 cms, left margin to 2.0 cms, right margin to 2.0 cms. No bottom margin is visible. Twenty-two lines are preserved in their entire length. Seven lines at the bottom lack three to six letters from the beginnings and ends of lines; of the last line there are only negligible traces. The text is arranged in characteristic Sapphic stanzas consisting of four lines each, the fourth line (adoniaean) being notably shorter than the first three. Column drift to the left at the left margin (‘Maas’ Law’) is present in the upper and lower halves of the column.

The papyrus is written in a formal calligraphic script, with some informal connection of letters. In addition, there are corrections both by the main scribe and by a different but contemporary hand of similar style; the latter may also have added the accents (see below), certainly in a different, lighter pen. The main hand is a small, clearly written undecorated capital, a bilinear, rounded version of the plain style, slightly compressed vertically, but avoiding too much contrast between size of letter-shapes. The top line is exceeded only by φ and ψ; bottom line only by φ and ψ (and

² Plate 1. Now in a private collection, London. I am grateful to its anonymous owner for access to and permission to publish the papyrus and its text. Conventions of reference:

fr. 1 = fragment 1 of a papyrus other than the new papyrus, or of an author other than Sappho or Alcaeus.

Sa. 1, Alc. 1 = fragment 1 of Sappho or Alcaeus according to the edition of Voigt (unless otherwise indicated).

by F , see P. GC. 105 fr. 3 ii 12 = Sa. 5.3) although triangular letters and ξ tend to protrude slightly above the top line. M sometimes with a low bulbous, flattened middle, and sides leaning slightly inward as in Ὀλύμπω in 13; sometimes with neat finials off the tops of both sides, as ἔμε in 5 (its most calligraphic form), where it also has a little hook on the lead-in connecting stroke, which several times closes (confusingly) with the left side of the first upright to form a circlet (see 11 μεγάλην, 21 θάμ-).

Decoration is restricted to the occasional hook or finial, and to shading, the regular alternation of thick and thin strokes (vertical strokes are consistently thicker than the horizontal ones), which is noticeable but not yet formally stylized. The handwriting finds a close dated palaeographical parallel in P. Oxy. III 412, no. 23a in C. Roberts, *Greek Literary Hands* (1956), containing Julius Africanus' *Kestoi*, which was not composed before 227 AD, and having a document of 275-6 on the back. But the hand of the Sappho has a different α , being triangular and in three strokes, reminiscent of the Formal Mixed variety of this period, rather than α with a looped bowl on the left as in the *Kestoi*, and there are other differences: e.g. the ω of the Sappho sometimes has its middle upright written in duplicate vertical strokes, side by side. Another comparably dated example is Dura Parchment 24 in Roberts, *Greek Literary Hands* no. 21b, containing Tatian, *Diatessaron*, datable between 172 and 256 AD, but most probably written between 222 and 235 on archaeological grounds, and so to be dated to the second quarter of the third century. These give a period possible for the writing of the roll ranging from late second century through the first half of third century AD, allowing for a normal working life for a scribe.

The handwriting (as well as format and line-spacing) is identical with P. GC. inv. 105. A kollesis is visible running along the right edge of the papyrus, so that it cannot have formed part of the same sheet as P. GC. inv. 105 fr. 2-3 (containing Sa. 16-17, perhaps 18 and an unknown poem, and Sa. 5), but is likely to have come from a sheet that stood directly either before or after this sheet. Occasionally, in places, ink-traces are obscured by spots of adherent material that appears to be light-brown gesso or silt, specs of which are also to be seen on the back. The top portion of the column was detached horizontally (perhaps by ancient damage?), but has been reattached in modern times. On the back, there is evidence of ancient repair along vertical stress-

lines that in places have stretched the fibre-structure, with resulting distortion of alignment of ink-strokes on the front along this vertical band. The roll was apparently damaged here in ancient times (torn vertically up the middle of the middle of the column, just to left of center) and repaired in antiquity with thin strengthening strips of papyrus glued horizontally and vertically.³

The scribe marks punctuation occasionally by space, more often by middle or raised point, sometimes placed after writing of the text, but more often at the time of writing. A organic diaeresis is written in line 1 $\alpha\lambda\lambda\alpha\grave{\iota}$, which specifies the disyllabic division necessary for the meter, and helps to exclude $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\alpha\iota$, but does not clarify whether $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda(\acute{\alpha})\grave{\alpha}\grave{\iota}$ or $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda(\alpha)\grave{\alpha}\grave{\iota}$ is meant. The text is written verse for verse (the adoniaean added on a separate line), with final vowels consistently elided before words beginning with a vowel, occasionally marked with an apostrophe (usually by the second hand). Iota adscript is written in 2 $\nu\acute{\alpha}\grave{\iota}\ \kappa\acute{\upsilon}\mu\ \pi\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\alpha\iota$: it is omitted in 26 if $\rho\omega$ is dative and not genitive (see 26n., cf. 17n. on $\acute{\alpha}\epsilon\rho\eta$). It is written, however, at P. GC. inv. 105 fr. 2 i 21 (Sa. 16.23), if $\epsilon\grave{\mu}'\ \acute{\alpha}\upsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ has been correctly read and articulated there, and at id. fr. 1.2 (Sa. 9.4) $\acute{\omega}\rho\alpha\iota$ and fr. 2 ii 11 (Sa. 17.3) $\text{\textbackslash}\tau\rho[\epsilon\acute{\iota}\delta\alpha]\iota$, if these last two are datives and not nominative plurals; at id. fr. 2 i 12 (Sa. 16.14) $\nu\omicron\eta\kappa\eta\iota$ and fr. 3 ii 12 (Sa. 5.3) $\rho\omega\iota$ the iota adscript is uncertainly read. The scribe assimilates consonants (2 $\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\mu\ \pi\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\alpha\iota$, 3 $\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\mu\pi\alpha\nu\tau\acute{\epsilon}\epsilon\kappa$). Corrections have been entered by a second, different but roughly contemporary hand. Of the 2 corrections, both are certainly or arguably right; the one variant added (in 14, without cancellation) is also probably to be preferred. There is at least one uncorrected error, apparently in 26 ($\lambda\nu\{\ \} \kappa\alpha\nu\tau\iota$). Division between stanzas is marked at the left margin, where preserved, by a paragraphus after the fourth, short line (adoniaean), except at end of poem, at 20, where this is replaced by a decorated (i.e. 'forked') paragraphus or dipole obolismene (functioning as a coronis), in the shape of described by E. G. Turner, *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World*, ed. 2 rev. P. J. Parsons (London 1987) 12 n. 60, i.e. with a leg descending diagonally at the left from a horizontal line that might have otherwise been drawn as a paragraphus, and without any additional space between the lines. Afterwards there follow nine further verses from the beginning of a hitherto unknown poem.

³ For other ancient instances of repair of books see E. Puglia, *La cura del libro nel mondo antico. Guasti e restauri del rotolo di papiro* (Napoli 1997); id., *Il libro offeso. Insetti carticoli e roditori nelle biblioteche antiche* (Napoli 1991); G. Menci, 'Fabbricazione, uso e restauro antico del papiro: tre note in margine a Plinio, *NH* XIII 74-82', in *Proceedings of the XVIII International Congress of Papyrology, Athens*, vol. 2 (Athens 1988) 497-504.

Accentuation occurs three times, apparently drawn by a second hand in lighter-colored ink, sometimes crudely. Of the two clear cases of accent, at least one can best be explained as instances where the reader's attention was being drawn to accentuation particular to the Lesbian poets.

CONTENT

Metre, language and dialect, and references (in 1 and 8) to Charaxos (known from the ancient tradition as one of Sappho's two elder brothers) and (in 18) to Larichos (supposedly Sappho's younger brother) point indubitably to a poem by Sappho. Ovid (*Her.* XV 67-8) says that she 'advised him extensively', with good intentions, freely, but with pious speech:

me quoque, quod monui bene multa fideliter, odit;

hoc mihi libertas, hoc pia lingua dedit.

In the new poem, a speaker addresses someone, criticizing this person for 'always chattering about 'Charaxos' coming with a full ship', saying further that the addressee does not pay heed what Zeus and the other gods know, instead of sending her to pray to Queen Hera for a safe return for Charaxos, piloting his boat, to find 'us' safe and sound. Everything else let us leave to the gods: fair weather comes of a sudden out of a great storm. Those who, favoured by Zeus, get a special helping *daimon* to release them from their troubles become completely happy and blessed. The poem closes with well-wishing for Larichos (named in the ancient tradition as Sappho's younger brother), to grow up to be a member of the leisured, aristocratic class and so 'release us from many sufferings'. This poem is then followed in the papyrus by another, previously unattested poem addressed to 'Kypris' on the subject of love, with some recognisable similarity to the theme and phrasing of Sa. 1 and several other fragments of the Lesbian poets. Although there are sufficient fragmentary and uncertain readings here to warrant proceeding with caution, enough of the content can be distilled from the remaining lines to reconstruct a poem on the subject of passion, narrating (as an exemplum in her present plight) a past occasion on which the assistance of Aphrodite was sought. The succession of poems shows a specific sequence, i.e. a love poem following upon a poem about the Brothers. Given

the meter, both poems were presumably from book one of Sappho, all the poems of which were in the same meter (Sapphic strophe). All the poems of Sappho's first book, seem to have been about family, biography and cult, together with poems about love/Aphrodite. Sa. 5 and the Brothers Poem contain many of these elements: cultic addresses to divinities (Nereids, Hera, Zeus; possibly Aphrodite and Dionysus), a brother's wanderings, sisterly affection and loyalty, Sappho's and others' relations with him and the community, a hoped-for shift from bad times to good. The Kypris Poem, as far as we can tell, is almost exclusively concerned with love/Aphrodite, although there may be an allusion to cult in the address to Kypris. The poem may have also contained 'biographical' details in documenting the poet's own feelings for someone and encounter with divinity in the past or present.

RELATION TO SAPPHO FR. 5

The similarity of content and mention of Sappho's brothers in the Brothers Poem point to a connection with Sa. 5, where a brother and sister are mentioned but not named. The language of the Brothers poem at 7 ἐξίκεθαι τῷδε seems to replicate that of Sa. 5.2 τῷδ' ἴκεθα[ι (cf. Brothers Poem 19n.). Many scholars have thought that Sa. 5 ends after the fifth stanza at line 20, after the reverent and triumphant invocation of Kypris at lines 18-20. In P. GC. inv. 105, this comes at line 29 in its column, the last line of the fragment, which contains the greatest number of lines of any fragment of P. GC. inv. 105, and the same number of lines as the present fragment. Whether further lines followed in either column is unknown, since in both fragments the text breaks off at the bottom before end of column. Based on P. GC. inv. 105 Fr.2 col. ii and analysis of the continuity of Sa.16, there could be 0-2 stanzas following Sa. 5 after the fragmentary end of Fr.3 col. ii before the end of the original column. The present fragment cannot then be the following column—at least one column must have intervened, since a kollesis or sheet-join is visible along its far-right edge, whereas the preserved part of Sa. 5 in P. GC. inv. 105 stands at the far right edge of a sheet c.30 cms. in length that contained frr. 2-3 and comprises parts of four columns. It is again possible that the papyrus preceded P. GC. inv. 105 frr. 2-3 in the roll. If it did, it was certainly followed at least by the Kypris Poem, and then Sa. 15 (also probably about Charaxos) before P. GC. inv. 105 fr. 2 i, which begins in the

middle of Sa. 16 and is followed there by Sa. 17, possibly 18 (a sequence that is also known from the copy of Sappho book 1 in P. Oxy. 1231), and finally by another poem before Sa. 5. If it did directly follow P. GC. inv. 105 fr. 2-3, at least one column intervened containing at least one poem plus the beginning of the Brothers poem—both of them together in at least seven stanzas. Since line 1 of the Brothers Poem cannot be its opening, there must have been at least one and possibly two or even three stanzas of it beginning in the preceding column. The last would bring it up to the maximum known number of stanzas in a Sapphic poem from book 1 (Sa. 1 = seven stanzas).

A connection between the Brothers Poem and Sa. 5, which begins with an invocation of the Nereids, then mentions a brother, and finally invokes Kypris, is the context of strong personal and family and social and civic relations, emphasis on social and cultic behavior, civic and cosmic justice, and the threat of loss or security of safety through sea faring, in which one or even both brothers Charaxos and Larichos are engaged. There are also a number of fragments which contain themes of sea-faring (as in Alcaeus, famous for his use of sea-faring as allegories). In the bare remains of Sa. 20, on a dangerous sea-journey, there occur elements that overlap with ideas in the Brothers Poem, Sa. 5, and Sa. 15: fr. 20.4 τ]ύχαι cὺν ἔcλαι, 5 λί]μενος, 6 γ]ᾶc μελαίνας, 8 ναῦται, 9 μεγάλαic ἀήταic, 12 πλέοι, 13, τὰ φόρτι' εἰκ[.⁴ It is at any rate clear that not all of these come from one and the same poem, whether or not any of them mentioned by name Doricha or Rhodopis or Charaxos, as the Brothers Poem does now the last. At least one of Sappho's poems, reflected in a testimonium,⁵ almost certainly named Sappho's younger brother Larichos, who is now mentioned at Brothers Poem 18, acting as a boy in the honorary capacity of a wine-pourer for the banquets of the civic elite of Mytilene. We seem to have a cycle of poems centering

⁴ Ferrari 159 n.24 compares Sa. 20.4 τ]ύχαι cὺν ἔcλαι with 15.7 cὺν] τύχαι; Sa. 20.5 λί]μενος with 15.7 λί]μενος; Sa. 20.8 ναῦται with 15.6 ναυβ]άταic. The connection between Sa. 5, Sa. 15 and 20 was noted already by Schubart 315 and Schadewaldt 137. For Sa. 20 see also Milne.

⁵ Athen. 10.425a (Sa. T 203 Voigt) Σαπφώ τε ἡ καλὴ πολλαχοῦ Λάριχον τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἐπαινεῖ ὡς οἰνοχοοῦντα ἐν τῷ πρυτανείῳ τοῖς Μυτιληναίοις, 'The lovely Sappho often praises her brother Larichos because he poured the wine for the Mytilenaeans in the town-hall'. Mention of Larichos may have come in Sa. 141, a description of a divine wedding with Hermes as wine-pourer (quoted by Athenaeus just below at 10.425d): 'There a bowl of ambrosia had been mixed, and Hermes took the jug and poured the wine for the gods.... They [*subject uncertain*] all held drinking-cups, and the offered libations and prayed for all manner of blessings on the bridegroom.' For Larichos see also Eust. Ad Il. 1205.18ff; schol. T Il. 20.234 ἔθος γὰρ ἦν, ὡς καὶ Σαπφώ φησι, νέος εὐγενεῖς εὐπρεπεῖς οἰνοχοεῖν, 'For it was the custom, as Sappho says, for handsome young noblemen to pour the wine'.

on the family's role in civic, social, and business life and frequently employing images of sea-faring, viticulture, and wine-trading.

THE NEW POEMS AND SAPPHO BOOK 1

The two new poems instance types that come to be seen as alternating in book 1 of Sappho. The book contained poems about (i) family and biography and/or cult, for adults, and (ii) unrequited passion, for adolescents, while offering a window into adult experience, since the speaker repeatedly represents herself as having experienced these things in the past.

At the end of the Brothers Poem, Sappho hopes that Larichos will grow up to become a man (18). ἄνηρ is a rare word in Sappho (common in Alcaeus). Apart from the τέκτορες ἄνδρες of Sa. 111.3, there is the god-like groom of Sa. 111.5-7, the god-like man of Sa. 31 who may be in the husband's role; Menelaus in both Sappho (Sa. 16) and Alcaeus (Alc. 42), as the good husband Helen left; men who sing a pious hymn to godlike Hector and Andromache in Sa. 44.32-4; and in Alcaeus various men who are rich, powerful, distinguished, power-hungry, hard-drinking or even wicked: that is, men of the political and sympotic class, like the hard-drinking ἄνηρ of Alc. 72. Presumably, Larichos, who might have poured wine in the prytaneion (Sappho fr. 203a Voigt) as a youth, should grow up to assume the status of those whom he had the honor of serving, supported by the family wealth—free to live his life as a member of the leading, leisured class (ἀέργει in Brothers Poem 17—here positive, not pejorative).

The point is not that Larichos should survive and grow up: he should become an ἄνηρ in all senses. Presumably this would include marriage and the production of legitimate offspring, and would be threatened by Charaxos' not arriving 'with a full ship' (perhaps after squandering the whole cargo on a whore in some port), and failing to come home with a ship laden with goods, spices and perfume, traded in kind for wine⁶

⁶ Cf. Alc. 117b.26-7 who raises the problem; further: A. Aloni, 'Eteria e tiaso: I gruppi aristocratici di Lesbo tra economia e ideologia', *DArch* Ser. 3,1 (1983) 21-35.

In the Brothers Poem as we have it, Sappho concludes by having her delegation challenge the addressee (and by extension, her audience) to remember that Charaxos' success and safety is in the hands of the gods and attainable (if at all) only through the correct form of prayer in song. Against this is held up universal knowledge of the all gods and the cosmos by the speaker, and the power of hymnic song, framed in the poem, to help secure Charaxos' safety, as well as the safety and prosperity of the family or community. Perhaps Herodotus' readers and Hellenistic scholars even imagined that, if Charaxos were innocent of any wrong-doing, he would not need her prayers. She looks forward to his thus returning to Lesbos, and imagines and advises how one would have to pray to the gods to secure his safe passage, and in the course of which she herself does so: *i.e. performs this hymnic prayer*—putatively in the future, just as in Sa. 1 she re-performs one that she narrates in the past, thus bringing it into the immediacy of the present. First and foremost, the text may be seen as a wish for Charaxos to come home (ἔλθην), at most anxiety that he is gone (ἔλθην) and a prayer that he come home happily.

The text below presents a diplomatic version on the left, followed by an articulated text on the right.

TEXT

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>αλλαῖθρυληθαχαραξονελθην ἄναϊκουμπλέαι·ταμε·οι·μ·ιζευε οιδεκυμπαντετεθεοι·σε·δ·ουχρη ταυτανοεισθαι·</p> <hr/> <p>5 αλλακαιπεμπνημεκαικελ[η]·ε·σθαι πολλαλ·σσεσθα·βασ·αν·ραν εξικεσθαιτυιδεσσαναγοντα νααχαραξον·</p> <hr/> <p>καμμεπευρηναρ·μεασ·ταδαλλα</p> | <p>ἀλλ' ἄϊ θρύληθα Χάραξον ἔλθην νᾶϊ σὺμ πλέαι· τὰ μέν, οἴομαι, Ζεῦς οἶδε σύμπαντές τε θεοί· σέ δ' οὐ χρεῖ ταῦτα νόεισθαι,</p> <p>ἀλλὰ καὶ πέμπτην ἔμε καὶ κέλ[η]·ε·σθαι πόλλα λίσσεσθαι βασίληαν Ἴηραν ἐξίκεσθαι τυίδε σᾶαν ἄγοντα νᾶα Χάραξον,</p> <p>κάμμ' ἐπέυρηνην ἀρτέμεασ· τὰ δ' ἄλλα</p> |
|---|--|

10 πανταδαιμονες ινεπ ροπωμεν
ευδια α εκμεγαλαναητ
αισαπ νται

πάντα δαιμόνεςσιν επιτρόπωμεν
εὐδίαι γὰρ ἐκ μεγάλαν ἀήταν
αἴψα πέλονται

τωνκεβολληταιβασιλευσολυμπω
δάιμονεκπονωνεπαρη ὄ γονηδη
15 περτροπηνηκηνοι ακαρεσπελονται
καιπολυολβοι

τῶν κε βόλληται βασίλευσ Ὀλύμπω
δαίμον' ἐκ πόνων ἐπάρ{η} ὄ γον ἤδη
περτρόπην, κῆνοι μάκαρες πέλονται
καὶ πολύολβοι.

αμμεσαικετανκεφαλ ναερ η
λαρχοςκαιδηποταν ργενηται.
καιμαλεκπολλ[η] αν βα υθ μια κεν
20 αισαλύθειμεν

κάμμες, αἴ κε τὰν κεφάλαν ἀέργη
Λάριχος καὶ δῆποτ' ἄνηρ γένηται,
καὶ μάλ' ἐκ πόλλ[η] αν βαρυθύμιάν κεν
αἴψα λύθειμεν.

πω κεδητικουθαμε ασαι ο
κυπριδε εσ ο [] φ
[] θελοιμαλιτα κα []
[] ονεχησθα

πώ {ς} κε δῆ τις οὐ θαμέως ἄσαιτο,
Κύπρ', ἰδὲ θρέσαιτ' ὁ πίκρ[- υ]ηφ ×
[] θέλοι μάλιστα τ υ - καλ[- ×
[] ον ἔχησθα

25 [] αλοις μ' αλεμ ο α []
[] ρωλυ καντικο ε []
[] α α [] μμ ο [] περης[]
[] νερ []

[]
[] αλοισι μ' ἀλέματον δαίτδ[]
[] ρωλυ{ι} καντικο υ ε [×
[] α α [] μμ ο [ι] πέρης[θα
[] νερ [] -

[] []
[] []

[] []
[] []

Dirk Obbink, Christ Church Oxford

dirk.obbink@classics.ox.ac.uk

