

Three Texts about Sappho

Suda (10th century CE encyclopedia), Σ 107

Σαπφῶ, Σίμωνος, οἱ δὲ Εὐμήνου, οἱ δὲ Ἡεργυίου, οἱ δὲ Ἐκρούτου, οἱ δὲ Σήμου, οἱ δὲ Κάμωνος, οἱ δὲ Ἐτάρχου, οἱ δὲ Σκαμανδρωνύμου· μητρὸς δὲ Κλειδός· Λεσβία ἐξ Ἐρεσσοῦ, λυρική, γεγονυῖα κατὰ τὴν μβ' Ὀλυμπιάδα, ὅτε καὶ Ἀλκαῖος ἦν καὶ Στησίχορος καὶ Πιπτακός. ἦσαν δὲ αὐτῇ καὶ ἀδελφοὶ τρεῖς, Λάριχος, Χάραξος, Εὐρύγιος. ἐγαμήθη δὲ ἀνδρὶ Κερκύλα πλουσιωτάτῳ, ὀρμωμένῳ ἀπὸ Ἄνδρου, καὶ θυγατέρα ἐποίησατο ἐξ αὐτοῦ, ἣ Κλείς ὠνομάσθη· ἑταῖραι δὲ αὐτῆς καὶ φίλαι γεγόνασι τρεῖς, Ἀθίς, Τελεσίππα, Μεγάρα· πρὸς ἃς καὶ διαβολὴν ἔσχεν αἰσχροῦς φιλίας. μαθήτριάς δὲ αὐτῆς Ἀναγόρα Μιλησία, Γογγύλα Κολοφωνία, Εὐνεῖκα Σαλαμινία. ἔγραψε δὲ μελῶν λυρικῶν βιβλία θ'. καὶ πρώτη πλήκτρον εὗρεν. ἔγραψε δὲ καὶ ἐπιγράμματα καὶ ἐλεγεία καὶ ἰάμβους καὶ μονωδίας.

Herodotus (late 5th century BCE historian), *Histories* 2.135

Ῥοδῶπις δὲ εἰς Αἴγυπτον ἀφίκετο, Ξάνθεω τοῦ Σαμίου κομίσαντος· ἀφικομένη δὲ κατ' ἐργασίαν ἐλύθη χρημάτων μεγάλων ὑπὸ ἀνδρὸς Μυτιληναίου Χαράξου τοῦ Σκαμανδρωνύμου παιδός, ἀδελφοῦ δὲ Σαπφoῦς τῆς μουσοποιοῦ . . . Χάραξος δὲ ὡς λυσάμενος Ῥοδῶπιν ἀπενόστησε εἰς Μυτιλήνην, ἐν μέλει Σαπφῶ πολλὰ κατεκερτόμησέ μιν.

Aelian (quoted by Stobaeus, *Flor.* 3.29.58)

Σόλων ὁ Ἀθηναῖος ὁ Ἐξηκεστίδου παρὰ πότον τοῦ ἀδελφίδου αὐτοῦ μέλος τι Σαπφoῦς ἄσαντος ἦσθη τῷ μέλει καὶ προσέταξε τῷ μειρακίῳ διδάξαι αὐτόν· ἐρωτήσαντος δὲ τινος διὰ ποίαν αἰτίαν τοῦτο ἐσπούδασεν, ὁ δὲ ἔφη, “ἵνα μαθὼν αὐτὸ ἀποθάνω.”

Vocabulary

Suda (10th century CE encyclopedia), Σ 107

οἱ δὲ, some (people) say

Σίμωνος . . . Κλειδός: what case are all these words? Why?

ἐξ Ἐρεσσοῦ: Eressa is on the SW coast of Lesbos

γεγονυῖα κατὰ τὴν μβ' Ὀλυμπιάδα: born in the 42nd Olympiad (612-609 BCE).

ἐγαμήθη, aorist passive of γαμέω, to marry

Κερκύλα: her husband's name may be a pun on ἡ κέρκος, the tail of a beast or slang for penis; thus, "Dick Allcock from the Isle of Man," in Holt Parker's translation.

πλουσιωτάτω, very rich, most rich; superlative of πλουσιος -α -ον, rich

πρὸς ἅς καὶ διαβολὴν ἔσχεν αἰσχροῦς φιλίας: "in respect to whom she had

(incurred) the slander of shameful friendship"; διαβολή, ἡ, slander, false accusation (the devil [ὁ διάβολος] is the slanderer; αἰσχρός -α -ον shameful.

μέλος -ους, τό, song, poem (declined like το τεῖχος τοῦ τείχους wall [13β])

πληκτρον, τό, plectrum, an instrument for striking the lyre; there may be some confusion whether the biographer means a *plectrum* or a *pectis*, a type of lyre.

Herodotus (late 5th century BCE historian), *Histories* 2.135

Ξάνθεω τοῦ Σαμίου: Xanthes the Samian; Samos, an island across from Ephesus in Asia Minor, had extensive trade with Egypt; genitive with the participle

κομίσαντος: "with Xanthes the Samian bringing her."

κατ' ἐργασίαν: "on business, for work, for profit."

ἐλύθη, aorist passive of λύω: "she was freed"

χρημάτων μεγάλων: genitive of price: "for great [amounts of] money."

ὑπὸ ἀνδρὸς Μυτιληναίου Χαράξου: by Charaxos, a man from Mytilene;

Mytilene is the largest city on Lesbos.

μουσοποιός, ἤ, poet; what does this word literally mean?

ἀπονοστέω, to return home (ὁ νόστος is a homecoming, a return)

κατακερτομέω, to mock, bitterly attack

μιν = αὐτόν

Aelian (quoted by Stobaeus, *Flor.* 3.29.58)

ἀδελφιδούς –οῦ, ὁ, nephew

πότος, ὁ, a drinking, a drinking party

ᾄδω ᾄσομαι ἤσα to sing

ἡδομαι ἡσθήσομαι ἡσθην to enjoy oneself, take pleasure in

προστάττω προστάξω προσέταξα = κελεύω

μειράκιον –ου, τό = ὁ παῖς

διδάσκω διδάξω ἐδίδαξα to teach

ποιός –α –ον what, what sort of

αἰτία –ας, ἡ, cause, reason (cf. αἵτιος –α –ον responsible, to blame)

σπουδάζω σπουδάσομαι ἐσπούδασα to be earnest or serious, to pursue zealously