

Sappho: Fragment 96
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We know this poem from a single source, a sixth century parchment (*P. Berol.* 9722). We have hints of a preceding strophe, but the secure text starts on the second line of the following strophe, with -σε from an unknown word.

The meter contains three glyconics, the first decorated with three syllables at the beginning, the last with three at the end, $\wedge ia \ 3gl \ ia \wedge$:

—υ— υυ—υυ—υ—
 υυ—υυ—υ—
 υυ—υυ—υ— υ---

Line 7 has an anaclastic glyconic, gl'' —υ—υ —υυ—.

There are several words crossing line boundaries at the end of the first and second glyconic. For the vocabulary notes I define the word in the line it starts in.

Both the poems from this parchment have Sappho speaking to a friend about a missing third person. In this one she appears to be consoling Atthis about her friend who has moved away to Sardis. The last line is gappy and difficult, and the poem probably continued on for at least six more verses which are too damaged for me to include here. Most of the secure text is devoted to an extended simile.

5 -σε θέα σ' ἰκέλαν ἄρι-
 γνώτα, σᾶ δὲ μάλιστ' ἔχαίρε μόλπᾳ.

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⁴The -σε is the last syllable of a word that presumably meant something like “she considered, regarded, thought.” ἰκελος η ον = εἴκελος *resembling, like* + dat; Aeolic 1st declension acc.sg, agreeing with σ[ε], “she considered you like...” ἀρίγνωτος (η) ον *easily known; famous, infamous*, agreeing with θέα.

⁵σᾶ = σῆ *your*, Aeolic fem.dat.sg., agreeing with μόλπᾳ. μάλιστα *most of all, especially*. χαίρω, χαρήσω, ἐχαίρησα *rejoice at, take pleasure in* + dat. μολπή ἡ *song, dance, music; play, amusement*.

νῦν δὲ Λύδαισιν ἐμπρέπεται γυναι-
 κεσσιν, ὡς ὅτ' ἀελίῳ
 δύντος ἅ βροδοδάκτυλος σελάννα
 πάντα περρέχουσ' ἄστρα· φάος δ' ἐπί-
 10 σχει θάλασσαν ἐπ' ἀλμύραν
 ἴσως καὶ πολυανθέμοις ἀρούραις·
 ἃ δ' ἔέρσα κάλα κέχυται, τεθά-
 λαισι δὲ βρόδα κᾶπαλ' ἄν-
 θρυσκα καὶ μελίλωτος ἀνθεμώδης·

⁷ὡς ὅτ' a conjecture by West. Most editions ὡς ποτ'.

⁶νῦν δέ - here the δέ is not simply connecting clauses, but should be taken with νῦν, meaning “but now,” highlighting a changed situation. Λυδός, ἡ *Lydian*; in the badly corrupt line 1 there appears σαρδ probably some form of Sardis, the capital of Lydia. ἐμ-πρέπω *be conspicuous, famous (among) + dat.* γυνή γυναικός, ἡ *woman; wife*; Aeolic dat.pl.

⁷ὡς *as, just as.* ὅτ' = ὅτε *when* Supply ἐμπρέπεται as the main verb for this clause. ἀελίῳ = Aeolic gen.sg. of ἡέλιος ὁ *sun*.

⁸δύω, δύσω, ἔδυσσα (ἔδυν), δέδυκα *enter, go down, sink*, of celestial objects *set*; δύντος is 2nd aorist participle; together ἀελίῳ δύντος forming a genitive absolute “as when, after the sun sets, ...” ἃ = ἡ. βροδοδάκτυλος = ῥοδοδάκτυλος *rosy-fingered* an epithet of the Dawn in Homer. Calling the moon so is a bit of a surprise to those of us who expect our dawns red and our moon pale and golden, but keep in mind that, first, roses come in whites and pale yellows, and second, what we usually translate as color words often seem to have referred primarily to the *quality* of the light. σελάννα = σελήνη ἡ *moon*.

⁹περρέχουσ' = περι-έχω *encompass, embrace, surround; surpass*; Aeolic fem.nom. participle. ἄστρον τό *star*. φάος τό *light; help, safety*; here accusative. ἐπ-ίσχω *hold or direct towards*.

¹⁰ἀλμυρός ἁ ὄν *salty*. ἐπ' ἀλμύραν θάλασσαν.

¹¹ἴσως -η -ον *equal, ἴσως equally*. πολυάνθεμος ὄν *having many flowers*. The -οις is the Aeolic second declension *accusative* plural, agreeing with the first declension accusative plural -αις in the next word. Take both with ἐπί from the previous line. ἄρουρα ἡ *field, (tilled) land*.

¹²ἔέρσα ἡ *dew*. Note that κάλα (= καλή) is not in attributive position here, but is predicate, “the dew falls beautiful, falls in beauty”. χέω *pour, shed*, pf. κέχυται *falls, is shed, is poured*. θάλλω, θαλλήσω, ἔθηλα (ἔθαλον) *bloom, be luxuriant*; τεθάλαισι is Aeolic 3pl. perfect active.

¹³βρόδα = *Frόδα, ie., ῥόδον τό the rose*. κᾶπαλ' = καὶ ἄπαλα. ἀπαλός ἡ ὄν *soft, tender, delicate*. ἀνθρουσκον τό *chervil*.

¹⁴μελίλωτος ὁ *melilot, a honey-rich clover*. ἀνθεμώδης *es flowery, blooming*.

- 15 πόλλα δὲ ζαφοίταισ', ἀγάννας ἐπι-
 μνάσθεισ' Ἄτθιδος ἰμέρω,
 λέπταν ποι φρένα, κ[ᾶ]ρ[ι σᾶ] βόρηται.

Sources: Moore's 1947 *Selections from the Greek Elgiac, Iambic and Lyric Poets*, Campbell's 1967 *Greek Lyric Poetry* and E. Lobel's *Σαπφοῦς Μέλη* via the *Oxford Book of Greek Verse*. The conjecture by West on line 7 comes by way of Hutchinson's *Greek Lyric Poetry*, 2001.

¹⁷ κ[ᾶ]ρ[ι σᾶ] Campbell κῆρ δ' ἄσα Lobel, Moore.

¹⁵ πόλλα adverbial, *much, a lot*. ζαφοίταισα = διαφοιτάω *wander, roam*; Aeolic fem. present participle. ἀγανός ἢ ὄν *gentle, mild; soothing, winning acceptance*; here Aeolic 1st decl. genitive singular, with Ἄτθιδος. ἐπι-μίμνησκω *remember, think about* + gen.; here Aeolic fem. sing. aorist passive participle.

¹⁶ Ἀτθίς -ίδος *Atthis*. ἴμερος ὁ *desire, longing*; dative of manner.

¹⁷ λεπτός ἢ, ὄν *thin, fine, delicate*. ποι = πού anyway; *probably, possibly, I suppose*. φρήν φρενός ἢ *diaphragm* but usually metaphorical for *heart, soul, mind*. κῆρ, κηρός ἢ *fate; death, bane*. βοράω *eat*. This is a corrupt and difficult line. One likely interpretation: "her tender spirit is consumed by your fate."