

Reflections on a New Poem by Sappho concerning her Anguish and her Brothers Charaxos and Larichos

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[original page-divisions in bold]

Everything produced by Sappho is not a masterpiece and it cannot be denied, on account of a certain unquestioning or undiscerning admiration, that she composed poems whose interest lies not in their literary quality but in the biographical and historical perspective they provide. This is, in my opinion, the case with the main fragment contained in a column from a papyrus roll recently published by Dirk Obbink.¹ This papyrus fragment, which belongs to a private individual in London, is dated by Obbink between the end of the second century AD and the middle of the following century. Obbink and two other scholars² have published separately four other fragments from the same roll that belong to the Green Collection in Oklahoma City (inv. 105) and contain the remains of seven poems already partially known, numbered 5, 9, 15-18 and 26 in the collections of Lobel-Page and Voigt. The column we are dealing with contains traces of twenty-nine lines, or, in this case, seven Sapphic stanzas and the first line of an eighth stanza. A *coronis* indicates that the first six stanzas, in which the text is very well or fairly well preserved, belong to a single poem. The following poem was already known from P. Oxy. 1231 fr. 16 = Sappho fr. 26 Voigt. The text of the first stanza in the column implies the existence of at least one previous stanza: it is quite possible that the poem was composed of seven stanzas, which would not be at all surprising given the length of the known poems of Sappho. The poem belonged to the first book of the Alexandrian edition of Sappho, which we know contained 1,320 lines or 330 Sapphic stanzas, which made up the entirety of Book 1.³

In terms of content, the poem relates to the number of items in Sapphic stanzas on Charaxos transmitted via papyri, namely the fragments in the Lobel-Page and Voigt collections

¹ 'Two New Poems by Sappho', *ZPE* 189 (2014) 32-49.

² S. Burris, J. Fish, D. Obbink, 'New Fragments of Book 1 of Sappho', *ZPE* 189 (2014) 1-28. On all five papyrus fragments, see M. L. West, 'Nine Poems of Sappho', *ZPE* 191 (2014) 1-12.

³ See Liberman, 'L'édition alexandrine de Sappho', in G. Bastianini and A. Casanova (edd.), *I papiri di Saffo e Alceo* (Florence 2007) [= Liberman 2007] 45-7.

numbered 5 (P. Oxy. 7 + P. Oxy 2289 fr. 6), 7 (P. Oxy 2289 fr. 2) and 15⁴ (P. Oxy 1231 fr. 1 col. i v 1-12 + fr 3⁵) and perhaps fr. 3 || [p.2] (P. Berol. 5006, a parchment codex fragment from the seventh century, the latest evidence for the direct tradition of Sappho).⁶ But our poem does not concern only one of Sappho's brothers and there is no question, as in Sappho fr. 7 and 15 especially, of the famous Doricha, with whom Charaxos supposedly had a stormy and ruinous affair which, as Herodotus says (II 135 = Sappho fr. Voigt 254a), led to him being criticised by his sister in a poem on his return to Mytilene.⁷ Here Sappho portrays the desire of the (female) speaker, whom the reader identifies as the poet, to see Charaxos return unharmed on his ship and to see her younger brother Larichos 'raising his head and finally becoming a man'. This is the first appearance of Larichos in the direct tradition of Sappho. Larichos was previously known via the

⁴ In this fragment Sappho, who is presumably the (female) speaker, reproaches someone who is grieving and whose gender is not specified. E. Diehl, in his 1936 edition, p. 220, suggests this relates to Charaxos. Due to the poor condition of the fragment, the precise motive for the attack is not clear. Diehl draws a parallel between the mention of 'friends' in 3.4 (fr. suppl. Blass) and 5.6 that the conduct of Charaxos would incense. If Diehl is correct, this may be the poem to which Herodotus II 135 refers (see below).

⁵ The fragments of P. Oxy. 1231, which contain the *subscriptio* and stichometric information (1320 *stichoi*), belong to the end of the book-roll, where, according to Alexandrian scholarship, the most famous pieces were not located. Thanks to the fragments from the Green Collection in Oklahoma City, we now know that fr. 5 Voigt followed fr. 15-18 and started with the word πόντια or πόντια (see West p. 5). If, according to some evidence, we accept the existence of an alphabetical order limited to the first letter (see West p. 1 n. 4), this word would appear to support the hypothesis that the fragment did not belong to the initial section of the roll. The poem which follows the one that interests us and augments fr. 26 Voigt begins with the word πῶς, which suggests placing the column containing the traces of the two poems after the four columns containing the remains of fr. 15-18 and 5. Nothing seems to link fr. 26 (see, for example, West p. 9-12) to the theme of the previous poem, which speaks of the brothers of Sappho. This poem and fr. 17, which begins with the word πλάσιον (see West p. 3-5), do not appear to have a thematic link. The poems concerning Charaxos do not therefore form a coherent group and but are in alphabetic order.

⁶ I do not know whether to add fr. 16a, for which see West, p. 3: whilst recognizing that this is only one possibility among others, he suggests linking the last word of the first line of the final stanza, ἀπέλθην, to Sappho's exile in Sicily (see below n. 20).

⁷ Herodotus uses a strong word, κατακερτομέω, closer to 'shower with insults', 'sarcasm' (cf. σκερβόλλω 'insult' with the note on this word in Chantraine's etymological dictionary) rather than simply 'heap with reproach'. D. L. Page, *Sappho and Alcaeus. An Introduction to the Study of Ancient Lesbian Poetry* (Oxford 1955) 49, tacitly admits that the pronoun μιν, which is the object of the verb κατακερτόμησε, refers to Charaxos, but several commentators take it to refer to Rhodopis, as Herodotus calls the woman known to Sappho as Doricha (we will discuss this issue below). These commentators cite the passage where Athenaeus (XIII 596c = Sappho test. 254c Voigt) says that Sappho accuses Doricha of having taken large sums from Charaxos. But the structure and actual meaning of the sentence in Herodotus seem to be clearly in favour of this referring to Charaxos: 'once Charaxos, who had freed Rhodopis, returned to Mytilene, Sappho showered him with lots of sarcastic comments in a poem'.

indirect tradition and ancient biography. Athenaeus X = 425a Sappho test. 203a Voigt says that Sappho mentioned her brother || [p.3] Larichos in many passages as a public cup-bearer in Mytilene, and in the new poem Larichos seems exactly the right age for this cup-bearing role.⁸ An anonymous ancient commentary (P. Oxy. 2506 fr. 48. col. iii 1 36-48 = Sappho test. 213A h Voigt) and a note in the *Suda* (S 107 = test. 253 Voigt) mentions the three brothers of Sappho named by the Peripatetic philosopher Chamaeleon in his treatise on Sappho (fr. 27 Wehrli) as ‘Erigyion, Larichos and the eldest, Charaxos’. Chamaeleon states that Sappho was fondest of Larichos—and Sappho's poem illustrates her concern for Larichos. This concern is in marked contrast to the restraint that seems to typify her affection for Charaxos in the rest of the poem. The text of Chamaeleon's treatise (P. Oxy. 1800 fr. 1) is incomplete because the participle meaning ‘being’, which refers to Larichos, requires an attribute/epithet, which is missing. The supplement νέον by the first editor, A. S. Hunt, was supported by the so-called *scholia Townleiana ad Iliadem* 20.234 = Sappho test. 203c Voigt: ‘It was indeed the custom, as Sappho among others relates, that well-born and handsome young men acted as cup-bearers’. This supplement of an adjective meaning ‘young’ may now be supported by the current poem, where Sappho wants to see Larichos ‘finally becoming a man’. It is true that Sappho's words are ambiguous, since they may refer to physical age or moral conduct, or both. It is tempting to think that Sappho is making a play on words and is hoping to see her brother become a man in both senses of the term, physical and moral. Her desire to see the boy ‘raising his head’ seems, in turn, to build on the moral sense: the boy must look up and face a difficult situation that the poem does not explain, but to which it refers and is its basis. This basis was clear to the listeners of Sappho, who thus did nothing to explain it for readers disconnected from the context. This poem shows over and over again how the compositions of poets from Lesbos, even when fully preserved, can only be fragments that are detached from the context that would complement and render them completely comprehensible. (Sappho seems allusive, in contrast to how effusive Alcaeus is on political matters.) The strength and weakness of the poem lie in part precisely in this close link to its lost context: weakness, because the references to context seem to represent an awkward black spot; strength, because the loss of context provides an element of undefined mystery and the poem gives the illusion of real speech and || [p.4] the impression of a dramatic situation. Is this purely artistic effect, with the poet managing to give an impression of reality and emotion that is immediately experienced, or, conversely, do the

⁸ See my edition of Alcaeus (Paris 1999) [= Liberman 1999] 226 n. 232. The reappearance of Larichos has revived interest in the ingenious analysis of K. Tümpel, ‘Lesbiaka’, *Philologus* 49 (1890) 718-19 on his cup-bearing role. But the boys in the inscription *IG XII*, 2 68.6 from Mytilene which he saw as cup-bearers are girls.

simplicity and occasional awkwardness of the poem show that Sappho is reacting to a situation through the medium of poetry and represent her emotions almost immediately? In any case, the speech that characterises the poem acts as a response to comments made by a character whose identity is concealed because of the fragmentary state of piece. This speech seems to fade as the poem progresses, and we see that it is a clever device to introduce a description of the anguish of the speaker. To whom is it addressed? Fortunately, the philological ingenuity exists to fill the gaps in the document and lift the veil that hides this essential character. So here, then, is a translation of a cleaned-up text of the poem, very kindly provided by Martin West. In terms of the numbering of the verses, I assume that the poem is only missing its first stanza.

<p>ἀλλ' αἴ θρύλησθα Χάραξον ἔλθην νᾶϊ σὺμ πλέαι. τὰ μὲν, οἴομαι, Ζεῦς οἶδε σύμπαντές τε θεοί· σὲ δ' οὐ χρῆ ταῦτα νόεισθαι,</p>	5	<p>but keep telling everyone about Charaxos coming with his ship laden. As to that, I think Zeus alone knows, and the company of gods. You should not be assuming this,</p>	5
<p>ἀλλὰ καὶ πέμπτην ἔμε καὶ κέλευσθαι πόλλα λίσσεσθαι βασιλῆαν Ἥραν ἔξίκεσθαι τυίδε σᾶν ἄγοντα νᾶα Χάραξον,</p>	10	<p>you should be sending me with instructions to ply Queen Hera with prayers for Charaxos to arrive here bringing his ship undamaged</p>	10
<p>κᾶμ' ἐπεύρην ἀρτέμεας· τὰ δ' ἄλλα πάντα δαιμόνεσσι ἐπιτρόπωμεν· εὐδαίαι γὰρ ἐκ μεγάλαν ἀήταν αἴψα πέλονται·</p>	15	<p>and find us safe and sound. Everything else let us leave to the powers above: after great gales blue skies soon come about.</p>	15
<p>τῶν κε βόλληται βασιλεὺς Ὀλύμπω δαίμον' ἐκ πόνων ἐπ' ἄρηον ἤδη περτρόπην, κῆνοι μάκαρες πέλονται καὶ πολύολβοι.</p>	20	<p>Those whose fortune the ruler of Olympus chooses to turn around from hardship for the better, they come out blessed and prosperous;</p>	20
<p>κᾶμμες, αἴ κε τὰν κεφάλαν ἀέρρη Λάριχος καὶ δήποτ' ἄνηρ γένηται, καὶ μάλ' ἐκ πόλλαν' βαρυθύμιάν κεν αἴψα λύθειμεν.</p>		<p>so we too, if Larichos will hold his head up and finally behave like a man, from our hearts' heaviness, however many, could soon find release.</p>	
M. L. West's English translation			
<p><i>Graeca, dico Lesbiaca, ita e papyro edidit editor princeps, nisi quod 6 πλέαι habet pap., emendavit West; 8 νοεισθαι item; 18 ἀρη' ὄγον pap., quod ut egregie emendavit West, ita ἀρήον(α) scil. δαίμονα forsitan praestet. De 13 ἄλλα mox locuturus sum.</i></p>			

|| [p.5] I think that Obbink has had a very good idea, in suggesting that the poem is addressed to Sappho's mother. We are dealing with the family of the poet, and no one is more appropriate than her mother to have had her send profuse prayers to Hera for the safe return of the eldest son of Cleis, the mother of Sappho, who, in accordance with tradition, gave her daughter the name of her

own mother.⁹ We can infer that the first stanza of the poem began with a word beginning with the letter Π and can also deduce that Sappho invoked her mother there. The second stanza seems to oppose an assertion that Sappho's mother is lacking self-control and is too presumptuous in taking it for granted that Charaxos will return with a fully laden ship. The key issue is to identify the person whom the speaker is addressing. We now know || [p.6] that in fr. 9 Sappho addresses her mother, perhaps to reproach her for not holding an extravagant celebration.¹⁰ Fr. 102 presents a scene where Sappho might be addressing her mother: 'Sweet mother, I can not at all weave my cloth, overcome as I am by the desire for a boy, which tender Aphrodite has aroused in me'. But there is nothing to indicate that Sappho is not here making someone else speak. Incidentally, the translation of παῖδας as 'boy' is common, but 'girl' is equally possible. The most compelling text to support the theory that in our poem Sappho is addressing her mother, is contained in the well-known fragments 98a and b. I assume that they represent a single poem:¹¹ 'For the one who brought me into the world used to say that in her time, it was such a beautiful adornment if her curls were gripped by a crimson band, while for a woman with hair that is lighter than a torch, garlands of blooming flowers are much more flattering. But today it is a colourful headband from Sardis . . .' (98a, 1-11); 'I do not know how to provide you with a colourful headband, Cleis' (98b, 1-3). There is a striking parallel between our poem and fr. 98: in both cases, the entourage of the poet is affected by a lack of resources, which, in 98b, prevents her from giving her daughter the luxurious colourful headband imported from Sardis.¹² In our poem, lack of resources makes Sappho's mother keep mulling over the return of her eldest son Charaxos with a fully laden ship, a ship filled, I suppose, with imported goods obtained by Charaxos in exchange for Lesbian wine that, according to Strabo (XVII 3 = 1.3, Sappho test. 254b Voigt¹³) he sold at Naucratis in Egypt.

⁹ Obbink suggests to relate P. Oxy. 2289 fr. 5, a scrap possibly containing the second person accusative personal pronoun and the first two letters of the word for 'mother', to the lost stanza (see West p. 9).

¹⁰ See West p. 7-8.

¹¹ As suggested by E. Lobel in A. Vogliano, *Sappho: una nuova ode della poetessa* (Milan 1941). Page (pp. 98-9) reserves judgement on whether they represent a single poem, something acknowledged by Schadewaldt in works cited below. Frr. 98a (P. Haun. Inv. 301) and 98b (P. Vogl. Mil. II 40 32) belong to the same column; it is a single document that was the oldest Sappho papyrus before the publication of the Cologne papyrus (see Liberman 2007, pp. 41 and 52-3).

¹² Compare fr. 39: 'a colourful leather strap, a beautiful piece of Lydian workmanship, covered her feet', with commentary by O. Muller, *Die Etrusker*, ed. W. Decker (Stuttgart 1877) vol. 1, p. 255. See also F. Ferrari, *Sappho's Gift. The Poet and Her Community*, transl. B. Acosta-Hughes and L. Prauscello (Ann Arbor 2010) 3-16. The title of the original Italian (Pisa 2007) is precisely *Una mitra per Kleis. Saffo e il suo pubblico*.

¹³ See Liberman 1999, p. 259 n. 387. 'We read clearly in Strabo', writes Anne Le Fevre, in wondering about the 'great rise' of Sappho in her edition of Anacreon and Sappho (Lyon 1696), p.

The main criticism that Sappho makes of her mother seems to be the presumption that she is taking for granted the return of her son | | [p.7] with ‘a fully laden ship’: she’d better have her daughter pray to Hera for the return of which she is so convinced. And, if I am not mistaken, yet another criticism is added to this. To her mother’s desire to see Charaxos return with a fully laden ship, Sappho’s seems to oppose her own wish for Charaxos to return safe and sound with his ship. It is noteworthy that, according to her daughter, her mother is most concerned about the cargo: it is a sign that she is suffering from hardship to the extent that she prizes material comfort over the return of her son safe and sound. Sappho, in turn, combines the material aspect and her brother’s safety by evoking not just the arrival of Charaxos safe and sound, as in the first stanza of fr. 5,¹⁴ but his arrival with his ship also safe and sound, and undamaged. This, I believe, is an indication that Sappho is also suffering from a lack of resources and she expects from her brother’s return a relief due, at least partly, to the goods he is transporting.¹⁵ The speaker also mentions, as one of the objects of the prayers that her mother should have had her send to Hera, the hope that Charaxos would find his family safe and sound. This seems to be an indication that Sappho and her entourage are in danger of death. But what does Sappho mean by these words, ‘As for the rest, shall we entrust it to the divine powers, as beautiful skies instantly follow powerful blasts of wind’? What is ‘everything else’ for which we must rely on the divine powers? The opposite of ‘everything else’ seems to include Charaxos’ safety and that of his family in Lesbos, which should be the subject of the prayers addressed to Hera. Is Sappho contrasting what she has to pray to Hera for with what she is leaving to the good will of the heavenly powers? The distinction seems somewhat arbitrary and awkward, since in both cases the outcome is left to the gods. Moreover, the contrast between what Sappho should ask Hera for and ‘everything else’ is very obscure. What follows next in the text suggests that ‘everything else’ includes Larichos becoming a man and his

395, ‘that her brother Charaxos traded Lesbian wine which he exported to Egypt; but this proves nothing; because trade in Greece was not what it is for us. The greatest nobles were engaged in it and took advantage of the opportunity to travel overseas’.

¹⁴ On fr. 5, which has been augmented by fragments from the Green Collection, see the suggestions by West, p. 5-7. We now know that the correct phraseology of v. 7-8 is, as envisioned by Fr. Blass γένοιτο δ’ ἄμμι μήδαμα μηδ’ εἶς, which perhaps means not ‘may no one ever be <a cause of affliction> for us’, meaningless in the context, but ‘may (Charaxos) never be for us a nobody (*vir nullius pretii, nullo in numero et honore habitus*)’, an idiomatic usage (see Ellendt, *Lexicon Sophocleum*² p. 451A; Kuhner-Gerth, *Gram. d. griech Spr.Satzlehre*, I, p. 61 Anm 2; II, p. 198 Anm. 2).

¹⁵ The passage where Athenaeus (XIII 596c) says that Sappho accuses Doricha of having taken large sums from Charaxos shows perhaps the particular interest of Sappho in maintaining the financial resources of her brother.

|| [p.8] finding the courage to ‘raise his head again’,¹⁶ that is to say, to rebel against something or someone that is overwhelming him, oppressing him or holding him back. But according to vv. 9-16, ‘everything else’ also seems to include a change from ill fortune to a happier fate and therefore involve the safety that should be asked of Hera. But this safety should be distinguished from ‘everything else’. Perhaps Sappho is contrasting physical well-being, which should be urgently requested from Hera, and moral and material happiness, which should be left to the will of the heavenly powers. If this is so, she has expressed herself clumsily. The difficulties just highlighted disappear if ΑΛΛΑ is only a misreading of ΑΙΝΑ (αἶνα with recessive Lesbian accentuation), an adjective used by Sappho in the neuter plural as an adverb in fr. 98b.9. This results in: ‘but all that is for us torment, let us entrust it to the divine powers, because (it is through them that) the beautiful skies instantly follow powerful blasts of wind’.

This rather prosaic poem seems to me to contain potential signs of hasty composition, even if one is struck by, say, the care with which the shift to the final idea of liberation is effected, by the framing of part of the poem between the mention of Charaxos and that of Larichos in the end, and by the correlative between the maritime metaphor ‘the beautiful skies instantly follow powerful blasts of wind’ and the longed-for return of Charaxos in his ship. There is also some ability in saying that prayer to Hera should not only concern the return of Charaxos safe and sound but also, by a kind of *mise en abyme*, the fact that he should find those awaiting his return and addressing prayers to the goddess (on his behalf) safe and sound too. But the repetition of τὰ (v. 6) with ταῦτα (v. 8.) is not particularly elegant, and ταῦτα νόησθαι (v. 8.) seems rather unclear, though, on reflection, there is little doubt as to the meaning. The laboured sequence πέμπτην ἔμε καὶ κέλεσθαι πόλλα λίσσεσθαι (v. 9-10) is somewhat unpoetic padding. Whilst αἶψα in v. 16 makes sense (the gods can instantly restore a situation), in the last line of the poem it seems a stopgap. The adverb ἤδη v. 18 is certainly a stop-gap and the phrasing of the entire stanza, which expresses a commonplace, is nevertheless very convoluted, even allowing for the ingenious correction by West, without which the passage is almost unintelligible except for forced interpretations that do not correspond to the Greek. West’s correction restores the reference, required by the verb περτρόπην (active or passive aorist infinitive), to that towards which Zeus deflects the people who call upon him when he diverts them from misfortune. Perhaps || [p.9] an improvement would be understanding not ἐπ’ ἄρηον (neuter), as West would like, but ἐπ’

¹⁶ West compares Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex* 23. See also Aeschylus, *Choephoroi* 496 (Electra asks her dead father to look up again). It brings to mind the metaphorical ἀναχαίτιζω in Sophocles fr. 179 Radt and Josephus, *Jewish War* II 370 and V 389.

ἀρήνον(α) ‘deflecting them away from misfortune towards a better fate’.¹⁷ Also note the unusual position of the particle *κεν* (v. 23), which normally tends to be closer to the beginning of a clause (Wackernagel’s Law). Of course, we could see some of the clumsiness and the possible hasty composition as an indication of Sappho’s anguish.

I once heard a classicist say that ‘up to and including Pindar all Greek literature is folklore’, which, if we take this joke seriously, means that we cannot use the poems of Sappho with any referential value. For my part, I accept this value and believe that there are several ‘Sapphos’ determined not only by the different periods of her reception but also by periods of her life and poetic career, which would certainly have lasted long enough: the ‘Poem on Old Age’ published in 2004 (P. Koln inv 21351 and 21376) refers to the last phase of a career that must have begun at an early age. The beginning of fr. 98a, translated above, seems to belong to a time when the mother of Sappho, mentioned as living in our poem, is no longer alive. In the most comprehensive textual reconstruction of fr. 98 W. Schadewaldt¹⁸ recognizes Pittacos, who came to power as *aesymnetes* for ten years¹⁹ in 597-596, as the ‘Mytilenian (. . .)’ of fr. 98b, where he corrects and supplements the difficult and incomplete text. According to him, the text means ‘I do not know how to provide you with a colourful headband, Cleis, but <ask> the Mytilenian <Pittacos, to whom> the city has given power,²⁰ if he can <obtain> colourful <headbands>. For so unhappy was the memory in the city of the exile of the Cleanactids, as their removal had been dreadful’.²¹ The poet therefore would

¹⁷ Compare Thucydides VI 20.2 (with the removal of the noun *μετάστασις* suggested by van Herwerden).

¹⁸ ‘Sappho: An die Tochter Kleis’, originally published in *Mélanges D. M. Robinson*, II, St Louis, 1953, and reprinted in Schadewaldt, *Hellas und Hesperien. Gesammelte Schriften zur Antike und neuen Literatur* (Zurich and Stuttgart 1960) 77-85 (see also Schadewaldt, *Sappho. Welt und Dichtung. Dasein in der Liebe* (Potsdam 1950) 71-4). S. Mazzarino, G. Pugliese-Carratelli and A. Vogliano also see Pittacos in the ‘Mytilenian (. . .)’. Page (p. 102) refers to and sharply criticizes their hypothesis, preferring his own idea, mentioned below.

¹⁹ See Liberman 1999, p. 198-199 for details. Schadewaldt adopts 590 as the starting date of Pittacos’ role as *aesymnetes*.

²⁰ Compare Alcaeus fr. 348.2: ‘they established low-born Pittacos as tyrant of this apathetic ill-starred city, voting for him in huge numbers’.

²¹ Schadewaldt’s analysis obviously excludes the idea (Page p. 102; D. A. Campbell, *Greek Lyric. Sappho and Alcaeus* (Cambridge, Mass. and London 1990²) XI and 125) that the backdrop to fr. 98 is Sappho’s exile in Sicily and that the inability of Sappho to provide her daughter with the famous colourful headband is due to how far away she is from Mytilene. On Sappho’s exile in Sicily, see Liberman 1999, p. 197 n. 2, where I mention the hypothetical assignment of this exile to 600/599 (I think that the bronze of Silanion representing Sappho [Cicero, *Verrines*, IV, 57, 125-6] stored in the prytany of Syracuse commemorates this). Page includes the tiny remains of fr. 98b: ‘Sappho tells her daughter that she cannot provide her with fashionable adornment; these objects would

associate a period of ‘general poverty’ (Schadewaldt) | | [p.10] with the exile of the Cleanactids, who appear to have included the tyrants of Mytilene Melanchros (overthrown by Pittacos in 612-609²²) and, at any rate, Myrsilos.²³ We know from an ancient commentary (fr. 305a Voigt, Liberman²⁴) that Myrsilos had returned to Mytilene, from where he had been exiled. This is the exile of Cleanactids mentioned in fr. 98b. It may not immediately precede the period when Pittacos was *aesymnetes*, as Myrsilos, on his return to Mytilene, shared power with Pittacos (fr. 70.7). The death of Myrsilos, celebrated by Alcaeus (fr. 332), may have ended this power sharing arrangement. The fact that the exile of the Cleanactids did not immediately precede Pittacos being *aesymnetes* is a fatal blow to Schadewaldt’s theory, because Sappho mentions as a fact that she is unable to provide her daughter’s with the Lydian luxury she wants. More plausible is the assumption of S. Mazzarino, according to which Sappho blames Pittacos for the unavailability of this imported luxury item.²⁵ So, it would be the period of the Cleanactid exile that would have left the city with the memory memory of the | | [p.11] availability of such luxuries; they became unobtainable under Pittacos, and it is this period of exile that Sappho regrets. But the new poem by Sappho seems to refer to a hardship preceding the one caused by Pittacos. It is impossible to know whether this impoverishment was widespread or affected only Sappho’s circle and was the result

available in Mytilene, but the Cleanactids are in power—they remind us of the time our enemies were in exile and where we were in the city; now it is they who are in the city and we who are in exile’. But this extremely free interpretation of the visible traces of the fragment is contradicted by *inter alia*, v. 3, which refers to ‘the Mytilenian (. . .)’, and vv. 8-9, where the memory in the city of Mytilene left by the exile of the Cleanactids is mentioned. See also, contrary to Page’s interpretation, Ferrari p. 12 and especially S. Caciagli, *Poeti e Società. Comunicazione poetica e formazioni sociali nella Lesbo del VII/VI secolo a.C.* (Amsterdam 2011) [= Caciagli 2011], pp. 210-11.

²² See the Suda π1659 and Liberman 1999, p. 198 n. 6.

²³ For Melanchros and Myrsilos as Cleanactids see Strabo XIII.2.3 = Alcaeus test. III Liberman 1999 with note. The transmitted text of Strabo distinguishes Myrsilos and Melanchros from Cleanactids but the scholium on v. 23 of fr. 112 informs us that Myrsilos was a Cleanactid, hence the suppression by Wilamowitz of the καὶ which, in the manuscripts of Strabo, separates the two tyrants from the Cleanactids.

²⁴ See Liberman 1999, p. 222 n. 199.

²⁵ Mazzarino, ‘Per la storia di Lesbo nel VI secolo a. C.’, *Athenaeum* 21 (1943) 57-8 and in *Fra Oriente e Occidente* (Florence 1947) 187, thinks ascribes Sappho’s inability to provide a colourful headband for her daughter to a sumptuary law of Pittacos. Caciagli 2011, 210-11, agrees with Mazzarino. This is from this passage of Sappho (fr. 98b, 1-3 = Pittacos test. fr. 9 Gentili-Prato) that Mazzarino infers the existence of a sumptuary law, even if know of restrictive measures of Pittacos concerning drunkenness and attendance at funerals (test. 5 and 7 Gentili-Prato). Ferrari, p. 8-9, rightly reduces the objection to the identification of the ‘Mytilenian’ with Pittacos to the grounds that Sappho would be too old for her daughter to still be a girl: there is no problem if, in accordance with the testimony of Eusebius (Alcaeus test. Liberman 1999), the *floruit* of Sappho is 600/599 (see Liberman 1999, p. 198 n. 3), not 612-609 (Suda σ107 = Sappho test. 253 Voigt).

of political threats to her circle in particular. With regard to the position of Larichos especially, does it have any connection with his cup-bearing role in the Mytilenean prytany, which would have specifically exposed the young man to the potential hostility of those in power? Does the Alcaeus poem from which fr. 364 is extracted and which inspired the supplement by West at the beginning of our poem refer to the same context as the poem of Sappho? Is the context the tyranny of Melanchros, overthrown by Alcaeus' brothers, allies of Pittacos in the 42nd Olympiad (612-609),²⁶ or does it refer to the tyranny of Myrsilos? Note that in this poem it is Larichos who, because of his attitude, causes Sappho concern, whereas if she is worried about Charaxos, it is not related to the affair between Charaxos and Doricha, which may be earlier or later than the time to which our poem refers. If earlier, our poem may refer back to the same return to Lesbos of Charaxos as the one mentioned in the first stanza of Sappho fr. 5; in this poem, in which Sappho asks the Nereids for a safe voyage for her brother, she considers Charaxos' errors as being in the past²⁷ and hopes for a bright period in their relationship. But the affair between Charaxos and Doricha may have been a repeated occurrence: 'and may Doricha not boast that he went back to her for a second time to regain the love he yearned for' (fr. 15.10-12).²⁸ If this wish expressed by the || [p.12] poet has not been granted,²⁹ our poem could presuppose a return to Naucratis by Charaxos, who has fallen in love again, contrary to Sappho's hopes. In any event, the Charaxos/Doricha affair is prior to the time of fr. 98, when, firstly, (98a), Sappho's mother was,

²⁶ Suda Π 1659 = Pittacos test. 1 Gentili-Prato². See Liberman 1999, p. XVI.

²⁷ If this were not the case, Sappho would not have asked the Nereids to see that her brother expunge all the errors he had committed *previously* (v. 5). 'Previously' does not mean 'before the effacement currently desired by Sappho', but must refer to a change of behaviour that Sappho notes and hopes will be comprehensive and lasting. This fact, overlooked by Page (p. 50), was noted by E. Buchholz and J. Sitzler in their lyrical anthology volume devoted to choral and melic poetry (Leipzig and Berlin 1909⁵) 21: 'Sappho richtet die Verse an ihren heimkehrenden Bruder Charaxos, dem sie jetzt, wo er ein anderer geworden ist, Vergessenheit des Friiheren und eine geachtete Stellung inmitten seiner Mitbürger in Aussicht stellt'. However, the reconciliation was not yet complete, otherwise Sappho would not have prayed for it. See also West's interpretation (p. 6) of the third and fourth stanzas: 'And may he see fit to treat his sister with greater respect: may he [release me] from the grim pains with which in the past he grieved and [overcame my heart,] hearkening [the while to Doricha], which would now be [plucking me] to the raw through the censure of the townsfolk, just as much as ever; but it was not long before he came to realize it'.

²⁸ Wilamowitz, 'Neue lesbische Lyrik', *NeueJ* 33 (1914) 226 = *Kleine Schriften*, I (Berlin 1935) 386 acknowledges, according to a differently supplemented text, that Charaxos fell into the clutches of the courtesan at Naucratis.

²⁹ For Page (p. 50) it is a proven fact that her wish was not granted, and he cites this verse from *Epistula Sapphus ad Phaonem* 67: *me quoque, quod monui bene multa fideliter, odit*. This is inconclusive. For a sceptical view on whether Sappho is actually the inspiration for the Latin poem, see Wilamowitz, *Sappho und Simonides* (Berlin 1913) 20-1.

apparently, no longer alive, and, secondly, (98b), Sappho's daughter of the same name, Cleis, mentioned as a small child in fr. 132, had become a young girl.

Thus far we have talked about relative chronology. The absolute chronology would be completely changed if we identified, along with K. J. Beloch, S. Mazzarino and D. Fehling, Doricha with the courtesan Rhodopis, whom Herodotus (II 134) mentions as having an affair with Charaxos, dating her *floruit* to the reign Pharaoh Amasis (569-525). However, on the one hand, Athenaeus XIII 596c had already protested against this incorrect identification, and criticizes Herodotus, whilst Aelian (*Var. Hist.* XIII 33) links Rhodopis with the pharaoh Psammetichos (664-610). In this case, the chronological problem disappears and we could accept that Doricha was also called Rhodopis, either her name as a courtesan,³⁰ or her name following her 'emancipation',³¹ since she was bought by Charaxos, according to Herodotus. I have previously suggested,³² given the chronology of Herodotus with regard to Rhodopis, that the occurrence in the poems of Sappho of an epithet such as βρόδωπις may have contributed to the confusion between Doricha and Rhodopis. However, the problem of the absolute chronology of Lesbian poets and of the archaic Greek period more broadly is not limited to distinguishing between Doricha and || [p.13] Rhodopis.³³ In any event, comparison of the new poem and fr. 98 seems, if we understand fr. 98 correctly, to make the idea³⁴ that Sappho could have been old when her eldest brother had an affair with Doricha even less likely. This idea is due to the misguided attempt to reconcile the fact that Sappho was famous in 600/599 and the *floruit* of Rhodopis during the reign of Amasis. As for Naucratis, the Greeks traded there under Psammetichus before Amasis authorized them to establish

³⁰ So Th. Bergk, *Griechische Literaturgeschichte*, I (Berlin 1872) 374 n. 192. On these second names, see L. Grasberger, *Die griechischen Stichnamen* (Würzburg 1883²) 49.

³¹ J. Kenrick puts forward the latter theory in his commentary on Book II of Herodotus (London 1841) p. 172.

³² *BMCR* 2008.12.13. An idea anticipated by H. Stein in his commentary (Berlin 1902⁵) on Herodotus II 135, p. 155. He said the error was due to Herodotus, who, whilst he only found Doricha in Sappho, only talked about Rhodopis. I think the error, if it occurred, of necessity predates Herodotus, as the affair between Charaxos and Rhodopis presupposes; whilst Herodotus recorded this legend, he did not invent it (see my comments in *BMCR*). Rhodopis was also confused with a queen called Nitocris, who is supposed to have built the third pyramid of Giza. According to Manetho (p. 56 Waddell) in the Armenian version of Eusebius, Nitocris was the most beautiful woman of her time, and she had a rosy complexion: hence, perhaps, as Stein (p. 152) seems to suggest, identifying Nitocris with Rhodopis, analogous to the identification of Doricha with Rhodopis. Herodotus (II 134) contradicts the idea that Rhodopis had this pyramid built; the legend presupposes the identification of Nitocris, whom the text of Herodotus does not mention, and Rhodopis.

³³ On the problematic evidence and for bibliographical references, see Liberman 1999, p. XV-XVI.

³⁴ Page p. 49; Campbell p. XI.

a Greek city there.³⁵ It is therefore wrong for Beloch³⁶ to see in the fact that Charaxos sold wine from Lesbos at Naucratis proof not only of a late date for Charaxos' commercial activity and love affair, but for archaic Greek chronology more generally.

³⁵ See for example the chapter 'The Greeks in Egypt' in the book by the Egyptologist A. Weigall, *Sappho of Lesbos: Her Life and Times* (London 1932) especially pp. 226-7. However, Weigall adopts Herodotus' chronology, dating the Charaxos/Rhodopis affair to the reign of Amasis.

³⁶ *Griechische Geschichte*², I.2 (Strasbourg 1913) 364.