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GREEK LYRIC
SAPPHO AND ALCAEUS



Edited and Translated by
DAVID A. CAMPBELL

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I

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藏书章



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To my mother

μητρὶ φίλῃ

PREFACE

J. M. Edmonds' three volumes of *Lyra Graeca* have given useful service since their appearance some fifty years ago, but the time has come to replace them. Much new material has been unearthed; and Edmonds' version of the papyrus texts was spoiled by his excessive eagerness to fill the gaps.

It will be obvious that the present volume makes a fresh beginning. In the first place, I have rearranged the contents of the volumes, so that solo song precedes choral lyric: accordingly, this, the first volume, is devoted to Sappho and Alcaeus; and Anacreon (and the *Anacreontea*) will appear at the beginning of volume II. Secondly, I have renumbered the fragments, using as far as possible the marginal numbers of Lobel and Page for Sappho and Alcaeus. Papyrus scraps which yield nothing of interest are omitted. Thirdly, I have numbered the testimonia to simplify reference and have grouped them under headings, although it will be obvious that some of the passages did not readily submit to being dragooned in this way.

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UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA
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DAVID A. CAMPBELL

INTRODUCTION

Solo song

The poetry of Sappho, Alcaeus and Anacreon was lyric in the strict sense: it was composed to be sung to the accompaniment of the lyre. The poets themselves do not tell us this explicitly: when their audience could see the lyre and hear the song with its accompaniment, there was no need for such explicit statement. They do however mention their music: Sappho in an isolated line, the text of which is uncertain, says, 'Come, divine lyre, speak to me and find yourself a voice' (118): fr. 160 has, 'I shall now sing these songs beautifully to delight my companions'; and we know that her companions were themselves singers (21, 22, 96). Alcaeus says the lyre plays a merry part in the symposium (70. 3 f.), and the symposium must have provided the occasion for the performance of most of his poetry. The *κίθαρις*, 'lyre', is mentioned in his fragments in the context of wine and love. Anacreon twice has the verb *ψάλλω*, 'I pluck the lyre strings', each time in the context of revelry (373, 374).

The evidence from the fragments of the poets can be supplemented. Vase-painters represented all three poets as lyre-players, and the earliest paintings

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belong to the late 6th century, i.e. to the lifetime of Anacreon (G. M. A. Richter, *The Portraits of the Greeks* i 69–72, 75–78). Later writers called Sappho a ψάλτρια, 'lyre-player', and attributed to her the invention of the plectrum and the πηκτίς, a type of lyre (testt. 2, 3, 38); when Horace speaks of Sappho and Alcaeus he refers to their lyres (*Odes* 2. 13, 4. 9). Lastly, the writers on music were certain that Sappho, if not the others, had a place in the history of music: Aristoxenus, the most important of these writers, attributed to her the creation of the Mixolydian mode (test. 37).

Solo song, or monody, differed from choral lyric poetry in the less formal circumstances of its performance, in its metrical form and in its language. Whereas the units of choral poetry were the long strophe, antistrophe (repeating the rhythm of the strophe) and epode, and the metrical patterns were complex, solo song used short repeated stanzas and simpler metres; and the monodists for the most part composed in their own dialect, Aeolic in Sappho and Alcaeus, Ionic in Anacreon, whereas the writers of choral lyric used an artificial language with a strong Doric element.

Sappho

Strabo calls Sappho a contemporary of Alcaeus, who was born c. 620 or a few years earlier, and of Pittacus, whose dates are c. 645–570 (test. 7); Athenaeus makes her a contemporary of Alyattes, king of Lydia c. 610–560 (test. 8). The *Suda* entry under her name (test. 2) has 'γεγονυῖα in the 42nd Olympiad' (612/608), the date given by Diogenes

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Laertius for the *floruit* of Pittacus: the term *γεγονυῖα* occasionally denotes the date of birth in the *Suda* but more often the *floruit*, i.e. a date at which the person could be shown to have been alive. Since Sappho went into exile in Sicily before 595/4 (test. 5) and since she seems to have had her daughter with her (fr. 98), it is likely that *γεγονυῖα* refers to her *floruit* and that she was born c. 630 or earlier. This fits the entry in Eusebius, according to which she was famous in 600/599 or shortly after (see test. 6).

There is little firm evidence for her life. She may have been born in Eresus on Lesbos but seems to have spent most of her life in Mytilene. Her brother Larichus poured wine in the town-hall there (fr. 203), and Athenaeus tells us (10. 424e) that this office was held by boys of the best families. The *Suda* gives the name of her husband, the wealthy Cercylas of Andros, but his unusual name may be the creation of a comic writer (see test. 2 n. 4). Her exile in Sicily, the beginning of which is dated to a year in the period from 604/3 to 596/5 (test. 5), may indicate that her family or her husband's family led an active political life, and she speaks with apparent hostility of the noble house of Penthilus (fr. 71: see also 98(b), 213). She may refer to her own old age in fr. 58. 13-17; and Rhodopis, with whom her brother Charaxus formed a liaison, was said to have flourished in the reign of Amasis (568-526) (test. 9).

Her way of life has been the subject of much speculation. Her poetry gives unmistakable evidence of strong homosexual feelings, and this was used by later writers for inferences about her character and indeed her profession: cf. the Oxyrhynchus biography (test. 1): 'she has been accused by some of

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being irregular in her ways and a woman-lover'; or the *Suda* (test. 2): 'she got a bad name for her impure friendship towards Atthis, Telesippa and Megara'; Ovid made her speak of her low reputation (test. 19), and about the same time Didymus Bronze-Guts addressed himself to the question, 'Was Sappho a prostitute or not?' (test. 22), and Horace spoke ambiguously of 'masculine Sappho' (test. 17). Voices were raised in defence of her character: a commentator inferred from her poetry that she was 'a good housekeeper and industrious' (test. 14). The case-history is complicated by the evidence, usually neglected, that she was married and spoke lovingly of her daughter in her poetry, and by the story, however it arose, that she died of unrequited love for Phaon (testt. 3, 23, fr. 211).

Only one complete poem survives (fr. 1) out of nine books of lyrics; but writers who knew all her work make it plain that most of it was love poetry: love was her main theme (Anacr. test. 10); 'she dedicated all her poetry to Aphrodite and the Loves' (Himerius: test. 50). When she refers to mythological figures, she often does so in order to illustrate her own or her friends' love affairs. Her audience must usually have been her circle of women and girls: cf. fr. 160, 'I shall now sing these songs beautifully to delight my companions.' She may well have taught her poetic skill to members of her group: a commentator on her poetry (fr. 214B) says she taught the daughters of the Lesbian and Ionian nobility; the *Suda* lists three 'pupils', all from overseas—from Miletus, Colophon and Salamis (test. 2); and her reference to 'the house of those who serve the Muses' (fr. 150) suggests some kind of

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literary association, however informal. Her friends were singers: see frr. 21, 22, 96. 5; and she derided the woman who had no share in the roses of the Muses (fr. 55). Andromeda and Gorgo seem to have been leaders of rival groups (test. 20).

A small amount of her poetry was composed for a wider audience: her epithalamia (frr. 27, 30, perhaps 44, 103–117B) must have been performed at actual weddings on Lesbos, and 140(a) is a fragment in dialogue form for worshippers of Adonis.

Sappho's works were the subject of scholarly attention from the time of Aristoxenus to the period of the Roman Empire (see testt. 37–41). One of the Alexandrian scholars arranged her collected poems by metre in nine books, Book 9 containing the epithalamia which were excluded by their metre from the other books. Book 1 alone had 1320 lines, i.e. 330 Sapphic stanzas, perhaps 60–70 poems (test. 29, fr. 30), but Book 8 had only a tenth of that number (fr. 103). Nothing survives of the elegiac poetry mentioned by the Oxyrhynchus biographer (test. 1), and the three epigrams ascribed to her in the *Palatine Anthology* probably belong to the Hellenistic period.

Alcaeus

The turbulent life of Alcaeus is linked inextricably with that of Pittacus, tyrant of Mytilene and one of the Seven Wise Men of the Greek world. Since Pittacus' dates are fairly well established, they must be considered first. Two events of his life are assigned to the 42nd Olympiad (612/608): the overthrow of the tyrant Melanchrus in Mytilene (*Suda*

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II 1659) and the single combat in which he killed the Athenian commander Phrynon in the fighting between Mytilene and Athens over Sigeum (*Suda*: the versions of Eusebius place this several years later). His *floruit* was placed in the same 42nd Olympiad by Diogenes Laertius 1. 75, and his birth was assigned to 652/48, the 52nd Olympiad (*Suda*), a conventional 40 years before his *floruit*: his birth may have been a few years later, since Diogenes says that he died in 570/69, aged 'over 70' (not 'nearly 80' or 'over 80'). He held supreme power as *aesymnetes* in Mytilene for ten years from 590/89 and spent the remaining ten years of his life in retirement (Diogenes).

The 40th Olympiad (620/16) is mentioned in a commentary on Alcaeus (test. 9e): it is possible that the reference is to the date of his birth, since it appears that he was too young to take part in the overthrow of Melanchrus: the *Suda* has it that 'Pittacus and the brothers of Alcaeus' removed the tyrant in the 42nd Olympiad; and in fr. 75 Alcaeus may refer to the incident in the words, 'I (do not) remember; for I, still a small child, was sitting upon . . .'. This scheme will suit the date of the Sigeum episode if that is assigned, not as in the *Suda* to Olympiad 42, but as in Jerome's version of Eusebius to 607/6–604/3, since Alcaeus was by then old enough to take part in the fighting (fr. 428). If the earlier date for the Sigeum fighting is upheld, then the date of Alcaeus' birth will be closer to 630, and fr. 75 will refer not to the removal of Melanchrus but to some other event.

A well-known poem (fr. 350) welcomed Antimenidas, brother of Alcaeus, on his return home from

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mercenary service with the Babylonian army. Fr. 48 mentions Babylon and the destruction of Ascalon, which is dated to December 604 (test. 1 n. 4), and it is likely that Antimenidas took part in this campaign. Sappho too was absent from Lesbos in 604 or a few years later: her exile in Sicily belongs to a date in the period 604/3 to 596/5 (Sa. test. 5 n. 2). It may well be that Alcaeus' first exile, spent at Pyrrha on Lesbos (schol. fr. 114), is contemporary with the absence of Antimenidas and/or the exile of Sappho: his exile was the result of an unsuccessful plot against Myrsilus, who had succeeded Melanchrus as tyrant. Eusebius noted under 600/599 (or one or five years later: Sa. test. 6) that Sappho and Alcaeus were then 'famous': this entry may be based on the date of Sappho's exile; it need denote no more than a known date in their lives.

Pittacus now reappears in the fragmentary picture: Alcaeus, in exile on Lesbos near a sanctuary of Hera, complains that Pittacus, having sworn to fight to the death with Alcaeus' companions, 'trampled the oaths underfoot and devours our city' (fr. 129, 130B); fr. 70 throws more light on the situation: let Pittacus 'devour the city as he did in company with Myrsilus'. It seems that Pittacus deserted the alliance with Alcaeus' party, joined Myrsilus and shared power with him.

In 590/89 Myrsilus died and Alcaeus called for riotous celebration (fr. 332); but his gaiety must have been shortlived, since it was Pittacus who was chosen as dictator (*aesymnetes*) 'to deal with the exiles' (fr. 348). Alcaeus' opposition continued with at least a brief success (fr. 306(g), test. 7), but Pittacus seems to have been able to end the strife before re-

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linquishing power in 580. It is possible that Alcaeus continued to grumble about the outcome of Pittacus' statesmanship (see fr. 119); but Pittacus is said to have forgiven him in the end (test. 8).

Other events of Alcaeus' career cannot be securely fitted into this outline: his 'second exile' and 'a third return', implying three periods of exile in all, are mentioned in a commentary (test. 9c); the 'third return' is somehow linked with war between the Lydians and Medes, and 'the action at the bridge' may be the famous 'eclipse battle' of 585. Earlier Lydian intervention in the politics of Lesbos is attested by fr. 69. Alcaeus is known to have been in Egypt at some time in his life, as is Sappho's brother; and there are hints that he knew Boeotia (see fr. 325). His reference to his 'grey chest' (fr. 50) suggests that he did not die young. There was a disputed theory that he perished in 'the action at the bridge' (test. 9c).

Alcaeus must have belonged to one of the noble houses which competed for political power in Mytilene. He talks of inherited wealth, 'in possession of which my father and my father's father have grown old' (fr. 130B. 5-6), and his values are those of the aristocrat, descended 'from noble parents' (fr. 72. 13: cf. 6. 13-14, test. 25). In later ages he was seen as a champion of freedom (test. 7), and Quintilian found a valuable contribution to ethics in the political poems (test. 21): but the other side of the coin is revealed by Strabo's balanced comment that Alcaeus, despite his abuse of Pittacus, Myrsilus, Melanchrus and others, was not himself above suspicion of revolutionary intent (test. 1). His aim was doubtless to see one of his own family or party in power.

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Scholarly work on Alcaeus began with the school of Aristotle—Aristoxenus, Dicaearchus and Chamaeleon; Aristotle had himself used his poems as a source for the political history of Mytilene (fr. 348). In the heyday of Alexandrian scholarship his poems were edited by Aristophanes of Byzantium *c.* 200 B.C. and some two generations later by Aristarchus (test. 11). They were probably divided into ten books; at any rate, we have no reference to any book with a number higher than ten. The division seems to have been based on subject-matter (see test. 10 n. 2), and it may have been late, since Strabo refers not to a book number but to ‘the so-called stasiotic poems’ (test. 1). The papyrus which contains fr. 120 indicates that one of the books had more than 1000 verses; the figure of 800 verses, attested opposite the text of fr. 143, may belong to the same book or to another.

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