

SAPPHO & OLD GREEK

An analysis of a Poetic prayer

One century ago approximately fifteen percent of teaching and publishing classicists were clergymen or children of ministers. This situation afforded the classical fields opportunities to shape the minds of succeeding generations for the benefit of a nation. The whole field has changed now and few ministers are found within their ranks and where they can be found they influence little. Unfortunately, the lack of Christian religion—as a moral compass--has brought us to a place where “classics” are not looked upon as tools by which each generation may be molded, but points of departure for critical hypotheses lacking merit throughout the whole of the corpus of Greco-Roman literature.

I contend that for the Christian ministry to be as effective as it needs to be preachers must once again train themselves or be trained in the eccentricities of the humanities in order to effectively discharge their duties in the pulpit. We may reasonably conclude that, few in academia will relish a return of ministers to the classical field but scholarship in general and Old and New Testament publications particularly will reap untold riches. For two thousand years classical literature has provided streams of wisdom; our constitution, legal system, educational models, science ethos and other artistic and critical skills derive from Greco-Roman and Near East origins.

Sappho, at one time, was a great study for the ancients. Christians often saw ancient Greek poetry as a way to sharpen their blades on old stones from the past. Words like “parthenos” as well as “pascha” are found in Sapphic lyric writings, a truly diachronic study of linguistic change should be initiated with the perusal of her materials. Too bad that the poetess once called the Tenth Muse by Plato is now the patron saint for Feminists and other personages who have broadly painted her with an immoral brush, reconstructing poetry lines according to their liking and interpreting verses in ways the Victorians would find unrecognizable. So it is that we must seek to rescue one whose writings were greatly esteemed--by Catullus, Horace, Ovid and others—from the hands of those who have no interest in the appreciation of her literature but in the fanciful criticisms which have popularized their publications.

What can we know of Sappho and her background? The startling answer to such a probing question is, not much. Constructing character sketches of the gods in Hesiod’s writings is a far easier task than inventing a biography of Sappho. We must admit from the outset that it is difficult to reconstruct her life, and the ancient authorities do very little to aid us in the endeavor. Plato refers to her as a Tenth Muse, in the sense that her poetry was on a level resembling godlike quality. In fact, she was considered by many ancients to be a canonical author worthy of study by all Greeks. When Solon of Athens, the son of Execestides, heard a young man reciting one of her compositions he asked for it to be repeated so that he might “learn it and die”. Whether or not this early anecdote

is fact or fiction it is certainly original. Sappho was held in great esteem by most all of antiquity.

The fragmented parts of her life are not much better preserved than the few pieces which we now have of her poetry. According to Historians, the famed library of Alexandria, Egypt claimed to hold approximately nine volumes of her works but all that remains now are a few complete poems and a series of words and short phrases of exquisite beauty, no doubt. Sappho was born into an aristocratic family and Attic comedians assert that she went on to marry well, supposedly a merchant of some means.

She also had a daughter named Cliaus—possibly named after her grandmother. Other evidences posit that her family was exiled to Syracuse on the island of Sicily because of political upheavals. Accordingly, she began life anew. It is recorded that she had three brothers: Charaxus, Larichus, and Eurigius. Only a few literary remarks have come down to us through time of two of the siblings with nothing on the third. As one might guess the sketches of her life are nearly all supposition.

As far as her occupation, no one knows what she did for a living and the psycho-analytical assessments in publication today are all theoretical, unfounded and based upon twentieth century socio-cultural methods which have driven us further from the real Sappho and the originality of her work. One historian, among several who remarked on her, Plutarch, credits her with the creation of her own musical form and monody.

Whether she was in charge of some type of debutante finishing school or was a high priestess of Aphrodite is anybody's guess, but two things are certain: (1) her poetry evokes imagery the likes of which were rare in sixth and seventh century BC timeframes, (2) examinations of her use of Greek grammar and metaphorical language is critical for observing changes in Greek meter and vocabulary up to New Testament times.

As a parallel to a woman's station in ancient times allow me to offer this aside: Roughly twenty-eight hundred years ago a female temple singer dwelt in ancient Egypt by the name of Meresamun. The University of Chicago has recently begun to publish informative but brief analyses on the landmark discovery of her body and coffin. At present, we are unable to ascertain concrete specifics about her life but the social reconfigurations naturally begin with the demotic papyri and hieroglyphic scripts concurrent with her tenure as a singer for the god Amun—and found on the exterior of the coffin--in the area of Karnak.

Even the physical evidence derived from a highly sophisticated Cat-Scan implies that she was well to do, a likely “Mistress of the House”, with great influence over a cadre of personnel. The manner in which she was mummified renders these arguments. And human fossil records tend to add some color to the world of women about the time of seven hundred BC. Like the Egyptian songstress, Sappho appears to have had the oversight of a small circle of influence, suffered too from affluence and composed songs highly religious in nature.

The coffin in which Meresamun lies is covered with pictorial language. Stories so easily understood then are grave mysteries today. Scholars must now work to reconstruct ‘what they believe’ her to have been through philological means. This parallels the work that needs accomplishment in Sapphic studies presently. Sappho’s popularity today is built on a false foundation, one that is mixed with cultural interpretations rather than true philological cement. *Greek Lyric Poetry, a new translation by M.L. West* contains many of Sappho’s poems. There is nothing contained therein to lead a reader to believe she was anything other than a normal everyday woman writing beautiful song and poetry.

The later idea asserting Sappho’s books were attacked and burned on account of its subject matter is wholly unfounded. Some supposed book burning of 380AD is offered as the reason for the lack of MSS now extant. Truthfully, there were Latin writers like Petronius, Martial and even Catullus who were studied and were far ruder in their speech and declarations than Sappho, yet they were studied continuously. So the ‘censored’ theme runs aground when studied with a critical eye. It is common knowledge she was read right into the eleventh century when the Suda was composed. This document offers various historical perspectives on Sappho and her lives. Our problem is in learning how to critically judge the content of the biographical lines.

To be sure, by medieval times, literary tastes, in many regards, were changing. The shadow of the Roman church loomed large and we have records of the church’s private licentiousness and of their attempt to censor various ancient writers. By the late nineteenth century tastes were changing among the decadent and new targets were sought out for debasement. Pierre Louys, a French novelist, published, in 1894, a volume entitled “*Songs of Bilitis*” in which he fabricated the story of a 6th century BC poetess-lesbian (who was a friend of Sappho).

Not only did the poetess and her poems prove false, but also the bibliography, and there were never any authentic Aeolic Greek texts brought to the attention of the scholarly world. However, his purpose was achieved: a literary stigma was attached to one of the great

composers of ancient Greece. Today, it seems the situation is not much better. The church world knows far too little of classical literature to even become vocal on this issue. So the tenured masses have a field day putting forth hypothetical reconstructions and reorienting modern minds in the direction of unsavory ideas.

Sappho's poetry is a mirror of the inner-workings of a human mind emerging from the grips of Homeric literature. Where Homer's Iliad and Odyssey possessed creative genius in its descriptions of warfare caused by a fatal love connection, Sappho used Homeric personages in her poetic worlds to plausibly show what would be if history was penned by her. Writing between the eras of the Israeli prophets, Isaiah and Jeremiah, she lifted the Greek banner over the small island of Lesbos. By introducing Helen, Priam, Troy and others into her poetry Sappho provides us with a glimpse not only of her own inter-textuality but of how Homer was known and appreciated throughout the known world; particularly on Lesbos Homer is utilized not for the human struggles in conflict but for human interactions involving love and emotion.

The below text of Sappho's first poem contains one hundred and fifty Greek words, the vast majority of which may be found in New Testament Greek. This is the case with most of the writings of ancient Greek. Heraclitus, of fifth century BC times wrote the following lines in fragment #24: ἀρηϊφάτους θεοὶ τιμῶσι καὶ ἄνθρωποι—*Gods and men honor those slain {in battle} by Ares*. This terse comment appears many centuries later in the works of Titus Flavius Clemens (150AD-215AD), he was also known as Clement of Alexandria. Obviously citing this to be used for Christian apologetical purposes he displays his familiarity with ancient non-Christian texts as did the Apostle Paul, Christianity's foremost theologian. Once again, as we pore over the writings of Greek authors we find a permanent value to old Greek texts. Another train of thought encourages the reading of the '*Greek anthology*', especially the section of *Christian epigrams* from churches prior to 1000AD.

The reason for studying ancient texts should be obvious but this is rarely the case. Locutions do change meanings as time passes by, and, at the same time, various definitions also originate during the same time-frames although in different situational arenas. Thus unless word/signs are observed in multiple settings and genres a limited understanding is guaranteed to cripple the biblical linguist. So below I have pasted in the entire text of the poem, with supra linear glosses—and sub linear transliterations, in order for you to be able to perform your own literary studies.

SAPPHO FRAGMENT #1

(lines 1-4)

Oh Aphrodite, immortal enthroned with many colors

Ποικιλόθρον', ἀθάνατ' Ἀφρόδιτα,
poikilothron aqanat Afrodita

Child, of Zeus, the bewitcher, I implore thee

παῖ Δίος, δολόπλοκε, λίσσομαί σε
pai Dio~ doloploke lissomai se

No, not with grief nor reproach crush my

μή μ' ἄσαισι μήτ' ὀνίαισι δάμνα,
mh m asaisi mhd oniaisi damna

soul lady

πότνια, θῦμον·
potnia thumon

(lines 5-8)

However, come to this {place} if ever

ἀλλὰ τυῖδ' ἔλθ', αἵποτα κᾶτέρωτα
alla tuid elth ai pota katerwta

You are hearing my voice from afar

τᾶς ἔμας αὐδῶς αἰόισα πῆλυι
ta~ ema~ auda~ ai>ousa phlui

Then, leaving your father's dwelling

ἐκλυες, πάτρος δὲ δόμον λίποισα
eklue~, patro~ de domon lipouisa

golden, you've come

χρῦσιον ἦλθες
crusion elthe~

(lines 9-12)

bound chariot; then beautifully you are brought

ἄρμ' ὑποζεύξαισα· κάλοι δέ σ' ἄγον
arm upadeuxaisa : kaloi de s agon

by swift doves around the blackened earth

ὄκεες στρουθοὶ περὶ γᾶς μελαίνας
wkee~ strouqoi peri ga~ melaina~

thick wings fluttering from the heavens

πύκνα δινεῦντες πτέρ' ἀπ' ὠράνω αἴθε-
pukna dinnente~ pter ap wranwi aethe~

through the midst
ρας διὰ μέσσω.
ras dia messw,

(lines 13-16)

Suddenly they arrived, but you O blessed
αἴψα δ' ἐξίκοντο· τὸ δ', ὦ μάκαιρα,
aipsa d eksikonto. tu d, w makaira,

Smiling with immortal face
μειδιάσαισ' ἀθανάτω προσώπῳ,
mediaisai~ athanatw proswpw

Asked what is it that has hurt me
ἤρε', ὅτι δηῦτε πέπονθα κῶττι
hre otti dhute pepontha kwtti

Why I cry aloud now
δηῦτε κάλημι,
dhute kalhmmi,

(lines 17-20)

And most of all, what do I desire to become
κῶττι μοι μάλιστα θέλω γενεσθαι
kwtti moi malista thelw genesqai

With my crazy heart? Whom do I persuade
μαινόλα θύμῳ· τίνα δηῦτε Πείθω
mainola thumw. tina dhute peithw

.....who, you
{μαῖ}ς ἄγην ἐς σὰν φιλότατα, τίς σ', ὦ
mays aghn e~ san filotata ... ti~ s W

{who is it} Sappho that wrongs thee

Ψάφ', ἀδικήεις;
Sapf, adikhei ...

(lines 21-24)

For should he flee, he will quickly follow
καὶ γὰρ αἰ φεύγει, ταχέως διώξει,
kai gar ei feugei tacew~ diwxei

But and if he doesn't receive gifts, he will give
αἰ δὲ δῶρα μὴ δέκετ' ἀλλὰ δώσει,
ai de dwra mh deket, alla dwsei

And then, if he does not love love, he will quickly love

αἰ δὲ μὴ φίλει, ταχέως φιλήσει
ai de mh filei tacew~ filhsei

And not.... {.....}

κωὺκ {ἑθέλοισα}.—Reconstruction w/feminine ending
kwuk etheloisa.

(lines 25-28)

So Come to me now but the cruelty release

ἔλθε μοι καὶ νῦν, χαλεπᾶν δὲ λῦσον
elqe moi kai nun, calepan de luson

From thought, as much as, to me to be finished

ἐκ μεριμνᾶν, ὅσσα δέ μοι τελέσσαι
ek merimnan, ossa de moi telessai

Heart desires, finish it! And you yourself

θῦμος ἰμέρρει, τέλεσον· σὺ δ' αὐτὰ
qumo~ imerrei, teleson. su d auta

Be my battle-ally

σύμμαχος ἔσσο.
summaco~ esso

There is a natural beauty to the above piece. Its microstructure is compact and there is rapidity to each line as images race back and forth in abundance. By my own slow and methodical tally more than one hundred of the above poem's words are locatable in the New Testament Greek text. Multiple idioms, prefixes and root stems from centuries prior to the compilation of the extant Greek Koine have wandered through time and found their way into pages read daily around the world. Translators work out sophisticated textual problems with the field apparatus known to them, however, there is little regard for the circumference of lingual data available in ancient Greek materials.

The poem is written in what is studied today as Aeolic Greek. It is doubtful that Sappho or others of her era would have looked upon their writings as anything other than the standard Greek of the day, albeit, written in meter with long and short vowel variations. Indeed if we recount the history of early Greek dialects as we know them from texts, we encounter one problem after another. There was no standard language governing the region as is so often posited in New Testament scholarship. In Homer's works his terms describe several peoples of diverse areas, the Hellas, Achaean, Argean or Danean. Communication was not much of a problem for them as can be seen in historical texts where interaction occurred, but they were not a confederation of united states either as we tend to think of unified groups.

Greek belongs to the stream of languages popularly known as Indo-European. Lately, the Sanskrit dialect has been thought of as akin to if not parental in the formation of descendant languages of Indo origin. Greek, like Old English and German, is an inflected tongue, which means that suffixes and syntax style is a matter of comprehension and decipherment rather than strict pattern. We refer to Sappho's poetry as Aeolic only to locate and limit certain distinct features of changes in its literary composition.

With so little information from Lesbos and/or Aeolis it is amazing that we dare separate its language from the whole of Greek experience and speech. Yet, since linguists need something to do this will be a matter of specialty for some time to come; although their efforts have not furthered our understandings of these divisional needs. For a more thorough study of these aspects of language change please direct your attention to *Greek Grammar* by Herbert Weir Smyth—revised by G. Messing, 1956.

CRITICAL NOTES AND COMMENTARY

The codices containing bits and pieces of Sappho's genius are few. Any manuscript tradition is bound to be faulty since much of the history and extant MSS are unreliable. Therefore from the corpus of poetry extant many hands have sought to reconstruct what may presumably be the text in its original form. This type of textual criticism is useful and never complete. An emendation, popularly received today, may in someone else's hands prove itself to be weak or plain wrong. Poem #1 is a complete poem and so the energy exacted on this work is only slightly lessened. To begin with we note its oral structure. Ordinarily, one would cite the strophe and mark out the long and shorts. This is useful but unneeded now. My main purpose is to accentuate the sound quality of the narrative. That being the case, I encourage you to read the poem aloud. This is the way of the ancients, the ear being as important as the eye.

1. Her choices of wording figure prominently into this thought as each morpheme reveals the deep meditations of one whose soul is reaching out to her eternal goddess. Language has always been used to probe the heavens for answers to lingering queries. It is no less so here. Sappho envisions a many colored throne of beauty fit for deity. This is an eleven syllable verse with similar verbal textures. The 'theta' in the first two words contrasts well with the 'delta' in Aphrodite. {line 1}

2. The poetess writes as though god{dess} is one to play tricks on the mortal. And Sappho's approach within the confines of an ancient Greek Temple is one of reverence and caution. She comes not seeking judgment and condemnation but deliverance. Depending on whether or not you read the diphthongs with an improvised ancient method or use the Modern Greek way will affect each verse's euphony. I prefer the controlled euphonic quality of Modern Greek. {lines 2 -4}

3. Sappho understands the mythic narratives of Greece well. Her plea is for a visitation in which the everlasting goddess would hear and heed a personal plea. Notice Sappho's knowledge of the gold chambered domain of the father. Sappho's measured tones of arrival and descent is eurhythmic and suitably placed--*αἶ-πο-τα κᾶ-τέ-ρω-τα* {lines 5-8}

4. Some see or envision Aphrodite riding the rays of the sun spiraling downward to the earth with birds of the air as signs of her presence. These words guide us in our ancient understanding of gods and their saddled chariots--coming forth suddenly! {lines 9-12}

5. The Greek text gives an impression of her familiarity with the goddess. Sappho refers to her as “O blessed {one}”. Her descriptions are on point and exact: the eternally countenanced smile et cetera. Behind the beauty of her presence Aphrodite muses about why she has been summoned..?{lines 13-16}

6. Sappho’s poem is a sneak peek into the old Greek world’s private ancient prayer with all of the liturgy and superstition involved. She has given the reader of her verse and occasion to enter the Greco holy of holies where the gods appear to consol the one making petition. {lines 17-20} *This theology is out of step with the poet Lucretius, who later writes of the god’s disinterest in the affairs of men—See Lucretius’ classic, *De Rerum Natura*.

7. The question of gender: whether the pursuer or giver is male or female has exasperated many. Historically her poetry was read from a male perspective. Newly reconstructed texts have added feminine markers to “select” verbs. So prevalent is this kind of textual emendation, cultural inferences of today have loaded spurious interpretations onto each passage. Sappho’s request is for a change in her lover’s heart—who is male. {lines 21-24}

8. Sappho concludes by requesting Aphrodite to become her battle ally and to fulfill the mission brought to her attention. Interestingly enough, the Greek word τελέσσαι is the word from Jesus’ declaration “It is finished!”—Gospel of John 19:30. Sappho is resolved to see the conclusion to this harsh matter which binds her heart so. {lines 25-28}

It is remarkable to me that so few take the time to situate a text and apply strict principles of investigation to it. More than a poem, this is a treatise of prayer. It can shine much light on the Apostle Paul’s journey to Athens (Acts 17: 22-23) where he saw the altar to an unknown god. ‘Mars Hill’ was the high place where judges sat and heard cases. Qualifications for suing or submitting litigation required that credible proofs and evidences be proffered to substantiate one’s claims. The apostle Paul chose a popular forum to introduce the claims of Christ among men and it certainly stirred up the locals. Far more provincial in antiquity than now, Athens was steeped in the religion of their Grecian ancestors.

The religion—from Lat., ‘to bind back’—of Athens was tied to the lore of days gone by. Athenian conscience was bound to historic thought from millennia past. Understandably, Paul’s entrance with the testimony of Christ’s resurrection was an inconceivable belief. The gods were capable of many things but not atoning for men’s sins and alleviating guilt and sorrows; to be exact, in Greek mythic legend the gods were behind a great deal of pain, agony and harmful judgments felt by men.

We are now properly positioned, atop the shoulders of our predecessors, to view history amid yesterday's future. Homer's world is lost to most of our current crop of students but this was not the case years ago. Homer's epics were 'first readers' for children in classical times. Homer's gods were the deities of later Greco-Roman theological constructs, and if understanding is to be gained of New Testament times and customs someone must take the time to acquaint one's self with the 'Bible of the Greeks'.

With this motif in the background Paul's message of a suffering savior exalted man's theology of the one true God who lifted men out of shame and degradation, all of which are linked to sin. The Homeric and Hellenistic environments of Sappho and Paul's day viewed the gods as the creators of circumstances leading to greater hardships and calamities. Let us look once again at a line from Sappho's supplication: μή μ' ἄσαισι μήτ' ὀνίαισι δάμνα,. Observe the language—"No, not with grief nor reproach crush." She prays because she should, but we are not led to believe that a hopeful thrill fills her soul. On the other hand, Paul affirms the fact that God is the one "in whom we live, move and have our being"—even quoting one of their ancient Greek authors in his apology.

ETYMOLOGICAL ESSAY

Etymological studies consist of uncovering, not only the true sense of a word but also its original meaning. For this department of philology to function properly a panoramic focus is needed in order to measure, compare and weigh the value of varied definitions in a diachronic manner. Naturally, this would imply that to the best of one's ability, Greek is to be studied historically. It was the redoubtable classicist W.G. Headlam who early on in his career decided that the best training for his proposed Hellenistic work was to read the whole of the extant corpus of Greek literature—in all its designs—from Homer down unto the time of the Fall of Byzantine. Mastering materials in this way transforms one's mental compartment into a Cineplex of ideas and memories.

Sapphic Greek must be studied alongside the writings of her poet contemporary, Alcaeus. It should also be examined under Homer's umbrella of nuances. Sappho's verbal compounds are locatable too in Second Temple era Greek and further along in the Patristic age. In line 2 she uses a compound word with the prefix δολό from δολόπλοκε. It is a tag for trickery, guile and deception-Lat. *dolus*. Often utilized by New Testament writers you will find it glossed in English as the word *guile*, c.f. Jn 1:47; II Cor 12:16; I Thess 2:3; I Pet 2:1; Rev 14:5. The English '*guile*' is an appropriate equivalent for the Greek term because it encompasses the crafty core inherent in the prefixed stem. Moreover it is found in the classical writings of Homer, Aeschylus, and Xenophon.

For another example, ἄσαισι--ὀνίαισι from line 3: The root stem *aisi* encapsulates the central meaning connected to judgment, reproach, guilt, shame et cetera. In the New Testament this stem is compounded in many forms, c.f.-the word '*shame*' in Lk. 14:9; I Cor. 11:6; Eph. 5:12; Heb. 12:2, Rev. 3:18. In many ways the root relates to senses and perception, with the resultant shame or reproach derived from discernment. But this line of thought is carried throughout the Hellenistic era. Plato, Herodotus and Sophocles all use this form

illustrating its embodiment of a moral characteristic. Sappho's employment of it is evidence that its root meaning was well established even in her time.

As the above references display, many Greek forms retained their usual senses for more than one thousand years. Any good linguist will be able to show changes of meaning through time maybe even connect the dots and do the inter-linguistic homework for you. I prefer to set before you a brief sketch and allow you to work out your own scheme as you trace the etymological histories of compound words. It is a road to discovery and one which will repay a rider richly. Our New Testament Greek Language owes much to Old Greek and it is now time that we tip our hat in acknowledgement of this fact.

Sappho's poetry is unique to classical literature since few MSS authored by women have survived. Her uniqueness may not have been as special (as we suppose) in antiquity if female poets were already a thriving community at the time of her appearance on the literary circuit. Some writers of old took a more grim view of a woman's status. Hipponax wrote the trite little couplet: "*Woman brings pleasure twice to man, the wedding night and her funeral*". Hopefully crude thoughts like this were not superimposed upon the workmanship of Sappho. But if so, it matters little because from what we have to study presently Sappho's insightful poetry is a useful link to yesteryear, and for comparative philologists and historical linguists her poetic verse is well worth mastering.

*The below translations were appended to show the manner in which translation may be carried out when judicious methods of interpretation are utilized. Each is from a time never to be seen again in the ranks of critical theory and language science:

Beautiful-throned, immortal Aphrodite,
Daughter of Zeus, beguiler, I implore thee,
Weigh me not down with weariness and anguish
 O thou most holy!

Come to me now, if ever thou in kindness
Harkenedst my words,--and often hast thou hearkened--
Heeding, and coming from the mansions golden
 Of thy great Father,

Yoking thy chariot, borne by the most lovely
Consecrated birds, with dusky-tinted pinions,
Waving swift wings from utmost heights of heaven
 Through the mid-ether;

Swiftly they vanished, leaving thee, O goddess,
Smiling, with face immortal in its beauty,
Asking why I grieved, and why in utter longing
 I had dared call thee;

Asking what I sought, thus hopeless in desiring,
Wildered in brain, and spreading nets of passion--
Alas, for whom? and saidst thou, 'Who has harmed thee?'

'O my poor Sappho!

'Though now he flies, ere long he shall pursue thee;
'Fearing thy gifts, he too in turn shall bring them;
'Loveless to-day, to-morrow he shall woo thee,
'Though thou shouldst spurn him.'

Thus seek me now, O holy Aphrodite!
Save me from anguish; give me all I ask for,
Gifts at thy hand; and thine shall be the glory,
Sacred protector!

T. W. Higginson, 1871

Glittering-throned, undying Aphrodite,
Wile-weaving daughter of high Zeus, I pray thee,
Tame not my soul with heavy woe, dread mistress,
Nay, nor with anguish !

But hither come, if ever erst of old time
Thou didst incline, and listenedst to my crying,
And from thy father's palace down descending,
Camest with golden

Chariot yoked: thee fair swift-flying sparrows
Over dark earth with multitudinous fluttering,
Pinion on pinion, through middle ether
Down from heaven hurried.

Quickly they came like light, and thou, blest lady,
Smiling with clear undying eyes didst ask me
What was the woe that troubled me, and wherefore
I had cried to thee:

What thing I longed for to appease my frantic
Soul: and Whom now must I persuade, thou askedst,
Whom must entangle to thy love, and who now,
Sappho, hath wronged thee?

Yea, for if now he shun, he soon shall chase thee;
Yea, if he take not gifts, he soon shall give them;
Yea, if he love not, soon shall he begin to
Love thee, unwilling.

Come to me now too, and from tyrannous sorrow
Free me, and all things that my soul desires to
Have done, do for me, queen, and let thyself too
Be my great ally!

J. Addington Symonds, 1893