

Sappho, The Brothers Poem

ἀλλ' ἄϊ θρύλησθα Χάραξον ἔλθην
νᾶϊ σὺν πλήϊαι. τὰ μὲν οἶομαι Ζεῦς
οἶδε σύμπαντες τε θεοί· σὲ δ' οὐ χρῆ

4 ταῦτα νόησθαι,

ἀλλὰ καὶ πέμπην ἔμε καὶ κέεσθαι
πόλλα λίσσεσθαι βασιλῆαν Ἥραν
ἐξίκεσθαι τυίδε σάαν ἄγοντα

8 νᾶα Χάραξον

κᾶμμ' ἐπεύρην ἀρτέμεας. τὰ δ' ἄλλα
πάντα δαιμόνεσσιν ἐπιτρόπωμεν
εὔδισθαι γὰρ ἐκ μεγάλαν ἀήταν

12 αἶψα πέλονται.

τῶν κε βόλληται βασίλευς Ὀλύμπω
δαίμον' ἐκ πόνων ἐπάρωγον ἦδη
περτρόπην, κῆνοι μάκαρες πέλονται

16 καὶ πολύολβοι·

κᾶμμες, αἶ κε τὰν κεφάλαν ἀέρρη
Λάριχος καὶ δὴ ποτ' ἄνηρ γένηται,
καὶ μάλ' ἐκ πόλλαν βαρυθυμίαν κεν

20 αἶψα λύθειμεν. ⊗

Meter: Sapphic Stanzas

- u - x | - u u - | u - x

- u - x | - u u - | u - x

- u - x | - u u - | u - x

- u u - x

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Commentary

The Digital Sappho: <http://digitalsappho.org/fragments/the-brothers-poem/>

- 1 αἶ Aeol. for αεί, always
θρύλλημι to chatter, to keep talking about (Aeol. form of the 2nd sg. pres. act. ind.)
Χάραξος (ὁ) Charaxos, Sappho's brother
ἔλθην (aor. act. inf. from ἔρχομαι) to come or go. Obbink 2014 (42) suggests this infinitive expresses a wish (that C. should come). Ferrari 2014 (4) prefers to maintain the past tense of the aorist (that C. has arrived). Joshua Langseth (forthcoming) argues for "that C. has left," a reading that maintains the tense and best fits the poem's narrative.¹
ναῦς (ἡ) ship (dat. sg.)
- 2 σύν + dat. with
πλήος, α, ον Aeol. for πλέως, full (dat. sg. fem.)
οἶομαι I believe (a parenthetical aside)
Ζεὺς, Διός (ὁ) Zeus
- 3 οἶδα to know (3rd sg.)
σύμπας, -πασα, -παν all together, as a whole
θεός (ὁ) god
χρή + acc. + inf. it is necessary (for x to do y)
- 4 ταῦτα these things (acc. pl. neut.)
νόημι to think about (pres. mid. inf.)
- 5 καί also
πέμπω to send (pres. act. inf., depending on σέ...χρή in v. 3)
κέλομαι to command, urge, tell (pres. mid. inf., also depending on σέ...χρή in v. 3)
- 6 πόλλα (adverbial) often, many times
λίσσομαι to pray to + acc.
βασίληα (ἡ) queen
Ἥρα (ἡ) Hera
- 7 ἐξικνέομαι to arrive, reach (aor. mid. inf.)
τυίδε (to) here
σάος, α, ον safe and sound (acc. sg. fem. modifying νᾶα, ship)
ἄγω to lead, drive, guide (pres. act. partic. modifying Χάραξον). Note the interlocked word order.

¹ Dirk Obbink, 2014, "Two New Poems by Sappho," *Zeitschrift Für Papyrologie Und Epigraphik* 189: 42. Franco Ferrari, 2014, "Sappho and Her Brothers, and Other Passages from the First Book," *Zeitschrift Für Papyrologie Und Epigraphik* 192: 4. Joshua Langseth, forthcoming, 20.

9 *κᾶμμε* = *καί* + *ἄμμε* *Aeol. for ἡμέας*, us (*acc.*)
ἐπεύρην *Aeol. for ἐφευρίσκειν*, to find (*pres. act. inf.*)
ἀρτεμῆς, ἐς safe and sound (*acc. pl.*)
τὰ δ' ἄλλα πάντα everything else (*acc. pl. neut.*)

10 *δαίμων, ονος (ὁ)* god (*dat. pl.*). *For the ending, see Smyth 250 D 2.*
ἐπιτρέπωμεν *Aeol. for ἐπιτρέπωμεν*, Let us entrust, turn over (*hortatory subjunctive*)

11 *εὐδία (ἡ)* fair weather
ἐκ + *gen.* from, out of
μέγας, μεγάλη, μέγα great (*gen. pl. masc.*)
ἀήτης (ὁ) wind, gale (*gen. pl.*)

12 *αἶψα* quickly
πέλομαι to come into existence (*here*); to become, be (*as in v. 15*)

13 *τῶν κε* those of whom / whomever, *a partitive genitive based on κῆνοι in v. 15*: They are blessed, those of whom the king of the gods wishes a helper god to divert from suffering.²
βόλλομαι to wish, will, be willing
βασιλεὺς (ὁ) king, *i.e.* Zeus
ἽΟλυμπος (ὁ) Mt. Olympus, *home of the gods*

14 *πόνος (ὁ)* trouble, distress, suffering
ἐπαρωγός (ὁ) helper; *in apposition with δαίμονα*, a helper god, or god as a helper
ἤδη already, now

15 *περτρόπην* *Aeol. for περιτρέπειν*, to divert, turn away from (*pres. act. inf.*; *τῶν...κῆνοι acts as the direct object, attracted to the case of their own clause*)
κῆνος, α, ον *Aeol. for ἐκεῖνος*, that person
μάκαρ, μάκαιρα, μάκαρ blessed, fortunate

16 *πολύολβος, ον* very wealthy, rich in blessings

17 *κᾶμμες* = *καί* + *ἄμμες* *Aeol. for ἡμεῖς*, We also (*the subject of λύθειμεν in v. 20*)
αἶ (*Aeol. for εἰ, if*) + *κε* introduces a future more vivid condition, with subjunctives in the protasis and an optative (+ *κεν*) in the apodosis: If Larichos lifts... and becomes... we may be freed.... See *Smyth 2323-2326.*
κεφαλή (ἡ) head
ἀέρρω *Aeol. for ἀείρω*, to lift, raise up (*3rd sg. pres. act. subj.*). The expression "to lift up his head" has archaic parallels with our own idiom, meaning to have pride in oneself. The idea here seems to be that Larichos should be proud of his aristocratic roots.³

² For *τῶν*, see Ferrari 3. For *κε*, see Obbink 44.

³ Langseth, forthcoming, 3.

- 18 Δάριχος (ὁ) Larichos, *Sappho's brother*
 ποτέ at some time, ever
 ἀνὴρ (ὁ) man (*as in*, a grown man, a gentleman, a man of status)
 γίγνομαι to become (3rd sg. aor. mid. subj.)
- 19 μάλ' ... πόλλαν very great
 βαρυθυμία (ἡ) heaviness of heart, heart break, depression (*gen. pl.*)
- 20 λύθειμεν (1st pl. aor. pass. opt. from λύω) we may be freed. An optative in the apodosis expresses a wish.

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