



Diachronic Sappho: some prolegomena

Citation

Nagy, Gregory. 2015.10.22. "Diachronic Sappho: some prolegomena." Classical Inquiries. http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hul.eresource:Classical_Inquiries.

Published Version

<https://classical-inquiries.chs.harvard.edu/diachronic-sappho-some-prolegomena-2/>

Permanent link

<http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:39666389>

Terms of Use

This article was downloaded from Harvard University's DASH repository, and is made available under the terms and conditions applicable to Other Posted Material, as set forth at <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:dash.current.terms-of-use#LAA>

Share Your Story

The Harvard community has made this article openly available.
Please share how this access benefits you. [Submit a story](#).

[Accessibility](#)

Classical Inquiries

Editors: Angelia Hanhardt and Keith Stone

Consultant for Images: Jill Curry Robbins

Online Consultant: Noel Spencer

About

Classical Inquiries (CI) is an online, rapid-publication project of Harvard's Center for Hellenic Studies, devoted to sharing some of the latest thinking on the ancient world with researchers and the general public.

While articles archived in DASH represent the original *Classical Inquiries* posts, CI is intended to be an evolving project, providing a platform for public dialogue between authors and readers. Please visit http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hul.eresource:Classical_Inquiries for the latest version of this article, which may include corrections, updates, or comments and author responses.

Additionally, many of the studies published in CI will be incorporated into future CHS publications. Please visit http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hul.eresource:CHS.Online_Publishing for a complete and continually expanding list of open access publications by CHS.

Classical Inquiries is published under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](#). Every effort is made to use images that are in the public domain or shared under Creative Commons licenses. Copyright on some images may be owned by the Center for Hellenic Studies. Please refer to captions for information about copyright of individual images.

Citing Articles from *Classical Inquiries*

To cite an article from *Classical Inquiries*, use the author's name, the date, the title of the article, and the following persistent identifier:

http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hul.eresource:Classical_Inquiries.

For example:

Nagy, G. 2019.01.31. "Homo Ludens at Play with the Songs of Sappho: Experiments in Comparative Reception Theory, Part Four." *Classical Inquiries*. http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hul.eresource:Classical_Inquiries.

[Home](#) » [By Gregory Nagy, Sappho](#) » [Diachronic Sappho: some prolegomena](#)

Diachronic Sappho: some prolegomena

October 22, 2015 By Gregory Nagy listed under [By Gregory Nagy, Sappho](#)

Comments off [Edit This](#)

In my posting for Classical Inquiries 2015.10.08, I offered my own working translations of some songs attributed to Sappho, complementing my interpretations as posted for Classical Inquiries 2015.10.01. These songs, currently known as “the newest Sappho,” are part of a set of new discoveries of papyrus fragments. In my posting here for Classical Inquiries 2015.10.22, my current interpretations of the “newest Sappho” songs are integrated with my earlier interpretations of the “old Sappho” songs that I have been studying ever since the early 1970s. I am thinking here especially of my work on Songs 1, 16, 31, and 44 of Sappho. The reasons for my giving the title “Diachronic Sappho” in this posting for 2015.10.22 will be explained as I now proceed to present my essay.



Detail from Attic krater attributed to the Brygos painter, 480-470 BCE. Line drawing by Valerie Woelfel.

§1. It was my good fortune to be invited by Boris Maslov and Rocco Rubini to a workshop that they organized on the subject of Lyric and Epic. The workshop took place at the University of Chicago on Thursday and Friday, October 15 and 16, 2015. My friend Roland Greene and I were asked to preside over the conversation dealing with Lyric on Thursday. Then, on Friday, both of us actively joined the conversation dealing with Epic; this time around, the presiders were Nandini Pandey and David Quint. On both Thursday and Friday, I concentrated on the songmaking of Sappho, especially on the songs currently known as the “newest Sappho,” and, in the course of our conversations, I shared my working translations for most of these songs. These translations, as we see them published in my posting for [Classical Inquiries 2015.10.08](#), complement the interpretations that I summarize in my posting for [Classical Inquiries 2015.10.01](#). In the course of the conversations that were generated in Chicago, it dawned on me

Share This



Classical Inquiries (CI) is an online, rapid-publication project of Harvard's Center for Hellenic Studies, devoted to sharing some of the latest thinking on the ancient world with researchers and the general public.

Editor

Keith Stone
kstone@chs.harvard.edu

Search for:

Subscribe Now!

Subscribe to this site to receive email updates about the latest research—just one or two notices per week.

[EU/EEA Privacy Disclosures](#)

Now Online

that my current interpretations of the “newest Sappho” songs need to be presented together with my earlier interpretations of the “old Sappho” songs that I have been studying ever since the early 1970s. I am thinking here especially of my work on Songs 1, 16, 31, and 44 of Sappho. My views about these songs are consistent for the most part with my newer views about the songs collectively described as the “newest Sappho.” But even if these old-and-new views of mine are internally consistent, I find it difficult to reconcile them with views currently held by a number of other Classicists about Sappho. What makes my views different is that my approach to the songmaking of Sappho is diachronic as well as synchronic, whereas the corresponding approaches taken by the Classicists I have in mind are exclusively synchronic. And a big problem for these Classicists is that the various arguments generated by their various synchronic-only approaches are for the most part inconsistent with each other and cannot be mutually reconciled. I offer here merely a general critique of exclusively synchronic approaches, because my own argumentation is not meant to take aim ad homines.

§2. In building a model that I describe as a diachronic Sappho in the title, I am following the model of a diachronic Homer as developed in other projects of mine.¹ The terms synchronic and diachronic, as I use them here in describing my approaches to Sappho as well as Homer, come from linguistics.² When linguists use the word synchronic, they are thinking of a given structure as it exists in a given time and space; when they use diachronic, they are thinking of that structure as it evolves through time.³ From a diachronic perspective, the structure that we know as Sappho’s songmaking can be viewed, I argue, as an evolving medium.

§3. That said, I now offer a working inventory of some exclusively synchronic views that I think stand in the way of achieving a coherent understanding of Sappho’s songmaking. In each case, I write the given view in italic font and then I offer a diachronic counter-view in roman font. These counter-views are based on work published in relevant books and essays of mine that I list in the Bibliography below. I refer to these books or essays here simply by name (Nagy, abbreviated as N) followed by date of publication: for example, N 1974. What follows, then, is my working inventory of some exclusively synchronic views, followed by a brief write-up of diachronic counter-views:

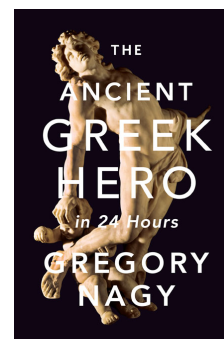
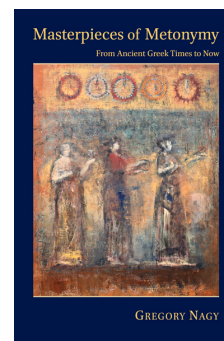
A. Sappho wrote poems. No. There is no proof that the composition of songs by Sappho depended on the technology of writing. In N 1974 as also in the Appendix to N 1990a, I offer proof that a composition like Song 44 of Sappho was created by way of a formulaic language that is cognate with the formulaic language used in the compositions that we know as the Homeric Iliad and Odyssey. As I argue further in N 2011b:155–156, the composing and the transmission of the songs attributed to Sappho—and to Alcaeus—cannot be divorced from the performing of these songs. To put it as simply as possible: the songs of Sappho—and of Alcaeus—were meant to be performed, not read as texts. And here is one other point that I need to make already now: the compositions attributed to Sappho are not simply poems. They are songs. More on this point below, at D.

B. Sappho is a historical person, to be dated around 600 BCE, who intended her songs for other historical persons who are named or unnamed in the wording of these songs. Before we can speak of the historicity of Sappho, we must first ask ourselves this all-important question: for whom were her songs intended? The answer, as I argue in N 2015a, is that Sappho’s songs were originally “intended” for all the people of Lesbos. So, these songs are “intended” not only for family, not only for some inner circle of women and girls, not only for some sub-group of people who are participating in a specific event. And I view the concept of “intention” diachronically here, not only synchronically. The persons to whom Sappho speaks in her songs become personae or—let’s say it more simply—characters in the world of these songs, just as Sappho by virtue of speaking (1) to these characters and (2) about these characters and (3) about herself becomes a character in her own right. The ancient Greek word for the functioning of personalities or personae or characters in the world of song is *mimēsis*, as I argue with specific reference to Sappho in Classical Inquiries 2015.10.01. A more extended argument, with reference to Greek songmaking in general, is made in N 2013b.

C. The occasion for the songs of Sappho can be determined by whatever the words of these songs have to say about the world of Sappho. No. As I argue in N 1993, 1994–1995a, 1994–1995b, 2007a, 2007b, 2010, 2015a, the occasion for each of the songs was determined by the historical circumstances that shaped the traditions of performing the songs, and these circumstances changed over time.

D. The medium of Sappho, in the performance of her songs, was (1) choral or (2) sympotic or (3) “concertizing.” From a diachronic and a historical point of view, as I argue especially in N 2007b, 2010, 2015a, all three of these media fit the songmaking of Sappho. From an exclusively synchronic point of view, on the other hand, Classicists are sometimes forced to choose, depending on the context that they are reading: it is as if the songs of Sappho must be only choral or only sympotic or only “concertizing.”

E. The personality of Sappho shows that she is a woman who loves girls. Here we see an overly narrow typing of Sappho as represented by the words of her songs. The songs of Sappho, as I will argue in the postings that follow this one, reveal a kaleidoscope of female personae. She can be a middle-aged woman or even an old woman, but she can also be a young girl. She can be a woman who loves girls, or a girl who loves another girl or is loved by other girls or by women. She can behave in a wide variety of ways, ranging from the



Top Posts & Pages

[The Last Words of Socrates at the Place Where He Died](#)

[Who is the best of heroes, Achilles or Odysseus? And which is the best of epics, the Iliad or the Odyssey?](#)

[A Roll of the Dice for Ajax](#)

Most Common Tags

[Achilles](#) [Aphrodite](#) [apobatēs](#) [Ariadne](#)

[Aristotle](#) [Artemis](#) [Athena](#) [Athens](#)

[Catullus](#) [Chalcis](#) [chariot fighting](#)

Commentary [Delphi](#)

[Demodokos](#) [Dionysus](#) [etymology](#)

[Euripides](#) [Gregory Nagy](#) [H24H](#) [HAA](#)

[travel-study](#) [Helen](#) [Hera](#) [Herodotus](#)

[Hippolytus](#) [Homer](#)

Homeric epic Iliad

[Jean Bollack](#) [lament](#) [Lelantine War](#) [mimesis](#)

[Minoan Empire](#) [Mycenae](#) [Odysseus](#)

Odyssey Pausanias

[Phaedra](#) [Pindar](#) [Plato](#) [Poetics](#) [Posidippus](#)

Sappho [Theseus](#) [weaving](#) [Zeus](#)

Archives

|₁ He appears [phainetai] to me, that one, equal to the gods [isos theoisin], |₂ that man who, facing you |₃ is seated and, up close, that sweet voice of yours |₄ he listens to, |₅ and how you laugh a laugh that brings desire. Why, it just |₆ makes my heart flutter within my breast. |₇ You see, the moment I look at you, right then, for me |₈ to make any sound at all won't work anymore. |₉ My tongue has a breakdown and a delicate |₁₀ —all of a sudden—fire rushes under my skin. |₁₁ With my eyes I see not a thing, and there is a roar |₁₂ my ears make. |₁₃ Sweat pours down me and a trembling |₁₄ seizes all of me; paler than grass |₁₅ am I, and a little short of death |₁₆ do I appear [phainomai] to myself.

Sappho Song 31⁸

5) Song 1

|₁ ποικιλόθρον' ἀθανάτ'Αφρόδιτα, |₂ παῖ Δίος δολόπλοκε, λίσσομαι σε, |₃ μή μ' ἄσαισι μηδ' ὀνίαισι δάμνα, |₄ πότνια, θύμον, |₅ ἀλλὰ τuiδ' ἔλθ', αἶ ποτα κἀτέρωτα |₆ τὰς ἔμας αὔδας αἰοισα πῆλοι |₇ ἔκλυες, πάτρος δὲ δόμον λίποισα |₈ χρύσιον ἦλθεσ |₉ ἄρμ' ὑπασδεύξαισα· κάλοι δέ ε' ἄγον |₁₀ ὤκεες στρουθοῖσι περὶ γὰρ μελαινας |₁₁ πύκνα διννεντες πτέρ' ἀπ' ὠρᾶνῶϊθει|₁₂ρος διὰ μέσσω· |₁₃ αἴψα δ' ἐξίκοντο· cὺ δ', ὦ μάκαιρα, |₁₄ μειδιᾷσαισ' ἀθανάτωι προσώπωι |₁₅ ἦρε' ὅττι δηῦτε πέπονθα κῶπτι |₁₆ δηῦτε κἀλημμι |₁₇ κῶπτι μοι μάλιστα θέλω γένεσθαι |₁₈ μαινόλαι θυμωι· τίνα δηῦτε πείθω |₁₉ βαῖς ἄγην ἐς cὴν φιλότατα;⁹ τίς c', ὦ |₂₀ Ψάφ', ἀδικήει; |₂₁ καὶ γὰρ αἶ φεύγει, ταχέως διώξει, |₂₂ αἶ δὲ δῶρα μὴ δέκετ', ἀλλὰ δῶσει, |₂₃ αἶ δὲ μὴ φίλει, ταχέως φιλήσει |₂₄ κῶκ ἐθέλοισα. |₂₅ ἔλθε μοι καὶ νῦν, χαλέπαν δὲ λύσον |₂₆ ἐκ μερίμναν, ὅσσα δὲ μοι τέλεσσαι |₂₇ θυμὸς ἱμέρρει, τέλεσον, cὺ δ' αὔτα |₂₈ cὺμμαχος ἔσσο.

|₁ You with pattern-woven flowers, immortal Aphrodite, |₂ child of Zeus, weaver of wiles, I implore you, |₃ do not dominate with hurts and pains, |₄ Mistress, my heart! |₅ But come here [tuide], if ever at any other time |₆ hearing my voice from afar, |₇ you heeded me, and leaving the palace of your father, |₈ golden, you came, |₉ having harnessed the chariot; and you were carried along by beautiful |₁₀ swift sparrows over the dark earth |₁₁ swirling with their dense plumage from the sky through the |₁₂ midst of the aether, |₁₃ and straightaway they arrived. But you, O holy one, |₁₄ smiling with your immortal looks, |₁₅ kept asking what is it once again this time [dēute] that has happened to me and for what reason |₁₆ once again this time [dēute] do I invoke you, |₁₇ and what is it that I want more than anything to happen |₁₈ to my frenzied [mainolās] heart [thūmos]? “Whom am I once again this time [dēute] to persuade, |₁₉ setting out to bring her to your love? Who is doing you, |₂₀ Sappho, wrong? |₂₁ For if she is fleeing now, soon she will be pursuing. |₂₂ If she is not taking gifts, soon she will be giving them. |₂₃ If she does not love, soon she will love |₂₄ even against her will.” |₂₅ Come to me even now, and free me from harsh |₂₆ anxieties, and however many things |₂₇ my heart [thūmos] yearns to get done, you do for me. You |₂₈ become my ally in war.

Sappho Song 1 = Prayer to Aphrodite¹⁰

6) Song 16

|₁ [ο]ἱ μὲν ἰππήων στρότον οἱ δὲ πέδων |₂ οἱ δὲ νάων φαῖς ἐπ[ι] γᾶν μέλαι[ν]αν |₃ [ἔ]μμεναι κάλλιστον, ἔγω δὲ κῆν' ὄτ-|₄-τω τις ἔραται· |₅ [πά]γχνυ δ' εὔμαρες cύνετον πόησαι |₆ [π]ᾶντι τ[ο]ῦτ', ἄ γὰρ πόλυ περκεθέθοισα |₇ κἀλλος [ἀνθ]ρώπων Ἐλένα [τὸ]ν ἄνδρα |₈ τὸν [πανάρ]ιστον |₉ καλλ[ί]ποισ' ἔβα 'c Τροίαν πλέοι[ca] |₁₀ κῶδ[ε] [ε] πα[ί]δος οὐδὲ φίλων το[κ]ήων |₁₁ ἡ[ἀ]μναν ἐμνάσθη, ἀλλὰ παράγγ' αὔταν |₁₂ [...]σαν [...] |₁₅ [...]με νῦν Ἀνακτορί[ac ὄ]γέμναι-|₁₆ [-c' οὐ] παρεοίcas, |₁₇ [τᾶ]c <κ>ε βολλοίμαν ἔρατόν τε βᾶμα |₁₈ κάμάρυγμα λάμπρον ἴδην προσώπω |₁₉ ἦ τὰ Λύδων ἄρματα †κανοπλοιοι |₂₀ [πεcδομ]ᾶχεντας.

|₁ Some say a massing of chariots and their drivers, some say of footsoldiers, |₂ some say of ships, if you think of everything that exists on the surface of this black earth, |₃ is the most beautiful thing of them all. But I say it is that one thing |₄ that anyone passionately loves [eratai].¹¹ |₅ It's really quite easy to make this understandable |₆ to everyone, this thing. You see, that woman who was by far supreme |₇ in beauty among all mortals, Helen, |₈ she [...] left her best of all husbands, |₉ him she left behind and sailed to Troy, |₁₀ caring not about her daughter and her dear parents, |₁₁ not caring at all. She was swept along [...] |₁₅ [All this] reminds me right now of Anaktoria. |₁₆ She is [not] here.¹² |₁₇ Oh, how I would far rather wish to see her taking a dancing step that arouses passionate love [= eraton], |₁₈ and to see the luminous radiance from the look of her face |₁₉ than to see those chariots of the Lydians and the footsoldiers in their armor |₂₀ as they fight in battle [...].

Sappho Song 16¹³

7) Sappho Π²

ἔγω δὲ φίλημ' ἄβροσύναν, ...] τοῦτο καί μοι | τὸ λάμπρον ἔρωσ ἀελίω καὶ τὸ κάλον λέλι
ορχε.

But I love delicacy [(h)abrosunē] [...] this, | and passionate love [erōs] for the Sun has
won for me its radiance and beauty.

Sappho F 58.25–26 V = Π² 25–26¹⁴

8) Sappho Song 105a

οἶον τὸ γλυκύμαλον ἐρεύθεται ἄκρωι ἐπ' ὕδωι, | ἄκρον ἐπ' ἀκροτάτῳ, λελάθοντο δὲ
μαλοδρόμηες, | οὐ μὲν ἐκλελάθοντ', ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐδύναντ' ἐπίκεσθαι.

Just like the sweet apple that blushes on top of a branch, | the topmost apple on the
topmost branch. It has eluded the notice of the apple pickers. | Oh, but no. It's not that
they haven't noticed it. They just couldn't reach it.

Sappho Song 105a¹⁵

9) Sappho (PMG Fragmentum Adespotum 976)

ἔδουκε μὲν ἂν κελάννα | καὶ Πληϊάδες, μέσαι δὲ | νύκτες, παρὰ δ' ἔρχετ' ὥρα· | ἐγὼ δὲ μόνα
καθεύδω

The moon has set beneath the horizon | And the Pleiades as well. It is the middle of the
| Night, over and over. Time [(h)ōrā] goes by. | But I sleep alone.¹⁶

Sappho PMG Fragmentum Adespotum 976

Bibliography

- Clay, D. 2011. "Sappho, Selanna, and the poetry of the night." *Giornale Italiano di Filologia* 2:3–11. A rewriting of his 1970 article, "Fragmentum Adespotum 976." *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 101:119–29.
- Nagy, G. 1972. Introduction, Parts I and II, and Conclusions. *Greek: A Survey of Recent Work* (F. W. Householder and G. Nagy) 15–72. *Janua Linguarum Series Practica* 211. The Hague.
- Nagy, G. 1973. "Phaethon, Sappho's Phaon, and the White Rock of Leukas." *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 77:137–77. Recast as Chapter 9 in Nagy 1990b:223–62.
- Nagy, G. 1974. *Comparative Studies in Greek and Indic Meter*. Harvard Monographs in Comparative Literature 33. Cambridge MA.
- Nagy, G. 1979. *The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry*. Revised ed. with new introduction 1999. Baltimore.
- Nagy, G. 1990a. *Pindar's Homer: The Lyric Possession of an Epic Past*. Baltimore.
- Nagy, G. 1990b. *Greek Mythology and Poetics*. Ithaca NY.
- Nagy, G. 1993. "Alcaeus in Sacred Space." *Tradizione e innovazione nella cultura greca da Omero all'età ellenistica: Scritti in onore di Bruno Gentili* (ed. R. Pretagostini) vol. 1, 221–25. Rome. In Nagy 2014 v3.
- Nagy, G. 1994–1995a. "Genre and Occasion." *MHTIS: Revue d'Anthropologie du Monde Grec Ancien* 9/10:11–25. In Nagy 2012 v1.
- Nagy, G. 1994–1995b. "Transformations of Choral Lyric Traditions in the Context of Athenian State Theater." *Arion* 3.2:41–55.
- Nagy, G. 1996a. *Poetry as Performance: Homer and Beyond*. Cambridge.
- Nagy, G. 1996b. *Homeric Questions*. Austin.
- Nagy, G. 2003. *Homeric Responses*. Austin.
- Nagy, G. 2004. "Transmission of Archaic Greek Symptotic Songs: From Lesbos to Alexandria." *Critical Inquiry* 31:26–48. In Nagy 2012 v2.
- Nagy, G. 2007a. "Lyric and Greek Myth." *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Mythology* (ed. R. D. Woodard) 19–51. Cambridge. In Nagy 2012 v1.
- Nagy, G. 2007b. "Did Sappho and Alcaeus Ever Meet?" *Literatur und Religion: Wege zu einer mythisch-rituellen Poetik bei den Griechen I* (ed. A. Bierl, R. Lämmle, and K. Wesselmann) 211–69. *MythosEikonPoiesis* 1.1. Berlin and New York. In Nagy 2012 v2.

Nagy, G. 2008|2009. Homer the Classic. [Online](#) | [Printed version](#). Hellenic Studies 36. Cambridge MA and Washington DC.

Nagy, G. 2009|2010. Homer the Preclassic. [Online](#) | [Printed version](#). Berkeley and Los Angeles.

Nagy, G. 2009b. "[The Fragmentary Muse and the Poetics of Refraction in Sappho, Sophocles, Offenbach.](#)" Theater des Fragments: Performative Strategien im Theater zwischen Antike und Postmoderne (ed. A. Bierl, G. Siegmund, Ch. Meneghetti, C. Schuster) 69–102. Bielefeld. In [Nagy 2012 v1](#).

Nagy, G. 2010. "[The 'New Sappho' Reconsidered in the Light of the Athenian Reception of Sappho.](#)" The New Sappho on Old Age: Textual and Philosophical Issues (ed. E. Greene and M. Skinner) 176–99. Cambridge MA and Washington DC.

Nagy, G. 2011a. "[Diachrony and the Case of Aesop.](#)" Classics@. Issue 9: Defense Mechanisms in Interdisciplinary Approaches to Classical Studies and Beyond.

Nagy, G. 2011b. "[The Aeolic Component of Homeric Diction.](#)" Proceedings of the 22nd Annual UCLA Indo-European Conference (ed. S. W. Jamison, H. C. Melchert, and B. Vine) 133–79. Bremen. In [Nagy 2012 v1](#).

Nagy, G. 2013a. The Ancient Greek Hero in 24 Hours. [Online](#) | [Print version](#). Cambridge MA.

Nagy, G. 2013b. "[The Delian Maidens and their relevance to choral mimesis in classical drama.](#)" Choral Mediations in Greek Tragedy (ed. R. Gagné and M. G. Hopman) 227–56. Cambridge. In [Nagy 2014 v3](#).

Nagy, G. 2015a. "[A poetics of sisterly affect in the Brothers Song and in other songs of Sappho.](#)" http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hinc.essay:NagyG.A_Poetics_of_Sisterly_Affect.2015. A shorter printed version is available as Ch. 21 in The Newest Sappho (P. Obbink and P. GC Inv. 105, frs. 1–5) (ed. A. Bierl and A. Lardinois) 449–492. Leiden.

Nagy, G. 2015b. [Masterpieces of Metonymy: from ancient Greek times to now](#). Cambridge MA and Washington DC.

Saussure, F. de. 1916. Cours de linguistique générale. Critical ed. 1972 by T. de Mauro. Paris.

Notes

[1](#) See especially Nagy 2013.

[2](#) See Nagy 2003:1, with reference to Saussure 1916:117.

[3](#) On diachronic as distinct from historical perspectives, see Nagy 2011a.

[4](#) In this transcription, the sign "[...]" is not meant to indicate the number of letters that are missing: it is merely a short-hand indication of lacunae.

[5](#) H24H Hour 4 Text D.

[6](#) H24H Hour 4 Text E.

[7](#) H24H Hour 4 Text F.

[8](#) H24H Hour 5 Text E.

[9](#) On the reading βαῖτ' ἄγην at line 19, see Nagy 1996a:98n34.

[10](#) H24H Hour 5 Text F.

[11](#) Here is a transliteration of the first stanza: oi men ippēōn stroton oi de pesdōn | oi de nāōn phais' epi gān melainan | emmenai kalliston egō de kēn' ot|tō tis erātai.

[12](#) In the papyrus fragment, the negative 'not' is not visible, but its restoration is supported by editors.

[13](#) H24H Hour 5 Text H.

[14](#) H24H Hour 5 Text I. On the reading ἔρωc ἀελίω instead of ἔρωc τῶελίω, see Nagy 2010. In terms of the first reading, ἔρωc ἀελίω, the Sun is the objective genitive of erōs, 'passionate love'. In terms of the second reading, ἔρωc τῶελίω, the translation would be ... 'Passionate love [erōs] has won for me the radiance and beauty of the Sun'.

[15](#) H24H Hour 5 Text J.

[16](#) For background: when the moon-goddess Selene sets beneath the horizon, she goes to sleep with her lover Endymion. For a persuasive demonstration that this song should be attributed to Sappho, see Clay 2011.

Tags: [diachronic](#), [Sappho](#)

Comments are closed.

« "The mother, so sad it is, of the very best": The lament of Thetis in Iliad 18

Homo ludens in the world of ancient Greek verbal art »



Classical Inquiries, edited by Keith Stone, is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](#).

[EU/EEA Privacy Disclosures](#) [Cookie Policy](#) [CHS GR Privacy Notice](#)

Classical Inquiries powered by [WordPress](#) and [The Clear Line Theme](#)