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<td>AP</td>
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Introduction

Included in the ninth book of the *Greek Anthology* is a poem by Antipater of Thessalonica, who lived during the Roman Augustan period, listing nine “divine-voiced” (θεογλώσσους) female poets (*AP* 9.26), in imitation of an anonymous Alexandrian canon of lyric poets (*AP* 9.184).¹ These nine poets are (in the order listed by Antipater) Praxilla, Moero, Anyte, Sappho, Erinna, Telesilla, Korinna, Nossis and Myrtis.² Much has been written on Sappho, whose place in the literary tradition in antiquity is confirmed by the comparatively substantial survival of her works, especially through quotation by subsequent authors as well as her inclusion in the canonisation of lyric poets (*AP* 9.26).³ However, very little survives of the others, particularly of Praxilla, Telesilla, and Korinna in the Classical period. It is only in the early Hellenistic period that a more coherent picture of women’s poetry composition can begin to be formed, through female poets mainly writing in the epigrammatic tradition: Moero, Anyte, Erinna, and Nossis.

Originally for public inscriptions purposes, declaring information about the person or event being commemorated, the epigram form was mainly sepulchral or dedicatory in content. From around the end of the fourth century BC, the epigram became more of a literary art form, viewed as an aesthetic object. It gained popularity through the brevity and conciseness of its form which appealed to the

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¹ The exact dating of this anonymous epigram is debatable; however, Page notes that nothing in the epigram would suggest a dating later than the *Garland of Philip* in the first century AD (1981), 341.
² For general discussion of women writers in the ancient world, see Snyder (1989).
³ For discussion of Sappho and her poetry, see Page (1955); Campbell (1983); Snyder (1989), 1-37.
highly literary tastes of the Hellenistic age.\textsuperscript{4} The epigrammatists of the Hellenistic period expanded the original dedicatory and sepulchral forms into other types of epigrams, which did not necessarily accompany any specific object, and played with expectations of genre within the epigram form. Most pertinent to the discussion in this dissertation is the development of a conscious authorial identity and personal voice in the epigram genre, from the original anonymity of the author of inscriptional epigrams, in the transition into the Hellenistic period.\textsuperscript{5}

The majority of Greek epigrams extant today survive through the \textit{Greek Anthology}, a compilation of various anthologies from antiquity, preserved mainly in two medieval manuscripts: the 10th century \textit{Anthologia Palatina} and the 14th century \textit{Anthologia Planudea}. Most of the Hellenistic epigrams originally came from the \textit{Στέφανος (Garland)} of Meleager of Gadara, the earliest known anthology of Greek epigrams. Meleager himself, working in the first century BC, was also an epigrammatist, in addition to collecting the epigrams of forty-six of his predecessors into his anthology. These forty-six he lists in the proem to his anthology (\textit{AP 4.1}), in which he assigns a flower or herb to each poet. The four female epigrammatists mentioned above all survive through inclusion among Meleager’s forty-six, along with their female predecessor, Sappho.

Although Sappho, primarily a lyric poet, and the epigrammatists work in different literary genres, their gender inevitably encourages comparison between their works, particularly the epigrammatists as literary inheritors of a female poetic

\textsuperscript{4} Gutzwiller (2007), 107. For further discussion on literary aesthetics and practices of the Hellenistic period, see Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004), Gutzwiller (2007).

\textsuperscript{5} For discussion of development of voice and identity in Hellenistic epigrams, see Tueller (2008).
tradition from Sappho. Therefore, this dissertation will examine the influence Sappho had on the development of the female voice in the Hellenistic period and how the female epigrammatists followed in Sappho’s footsteps in expressing a female voice within the traditionally male-dominated literary sphere. The fame and survival of Sappho’s poetry, despite (or perhaps, because of) the female voice projected in her poetry, seems to suggest that she offered something ‘other’ from the conventions of her time which appealed to the wider male public as well as the close community of her female companions. Of particular concern is the development of the reception of Sappho as a poetic figure and how it influenced expression and perception of female poetry in the Hellenistic period.

While echoes of Sappho’s poetry can be seen in literature in the generations following when she flourished, it is hard to determine an accurate picture of the attitudes towards Sappho, publicly and in literature, during the period between the (late) Archaic and the early Hellenistic period, as very few sources referring to Sappho as a poetic figure, or even her poetry, survive.

By the Classical period, Sappho was known particularly for her erotic poetry. In Plato’s *Phaedrus*, the character of Socrates names Sappho, together with Anacreon, as one of the wise men and women of old who were more authoritative than Lysias on the subject of love (235bc). Here, she is given the epithet καλή, which ‘is not a comment on Sappho’s physical appearance, but a response to the

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6 These comparisons may be made by the female epigrammatists themselves, as Nossis does in 11 *HE* (= *AP* 5.170), or by later generations. For full discussion on the idea of a “women’s poetic tradition” in ancient Greece, see Bowman (2004).

7 Skinner (1996), 190-1.

8 The earliest representations of Sappho survive in visual art, as portraits on vases, from the sixth and fifth centuries BC (Snyder (1989), 6-7). For discussion of these depictions of Sappho, see Yatromanolakis (2007), 51-164.
connection between *eros* and beauty in her poetry." 9 While the eroticism of Sappho’s poetry is seen here in Plato positively and as a powerful attribute of her poetic skill, this was not always the case. As with other literary figures, such as the tragedians Euripides and Aeschylus, Sappho too seemed to have been reduced into a stereotype: a stock character in comedy in the fourth century, on account of her reputation as a love poet. 10 In Diphilus’ *Sappho*, she was apparently cast as the lover of Archilochus and Hipponax (Athenaeus *Deipnosophistae* 13.599d), while Menander’s *Leukadia* plays on the legend of her love for a ferryman named Phaon. 11 There are numerous plays titled *Sappho* and comedies which allegedly relate to Sappho attested from the Classical period, but very few fragments survive and very little is known of the actual subject and plot of these plays; however, it seems to suggest that Sappho was a popular figure for comedy to represent. 12 It is also worth noting that the comedies titled *Sappho* may not have actually been about Sappho the poetess, but rather that a female protagonist was named Sappho in the play ‘who, through her action, reminded the audience of the figure and the poetry of Sappho.’ 13 While it may not have been Sappho herself who was a character in the play, it nevertheless would be suggestive of the contemporary reception of Sappho, if more of the plays survived.

In contrast to the emphasis on the erotic nature of her poetry in antiquity, some scholars have focussed on a line quoted by Hephaestion, a grammarian in the

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11 Snyder (1989), 4-5.
12 For mentions of and in-depth analysis of the representation of Sappho in comedy, see Yatromanolakis (2007), 295-307.
second century AD, as an example of an acatalectic epionic trimeter, also known as the Alcaic dodecasyllable (*Enchiridion de Metris* 14.4): ἱόπλοκ’ ἄγνα μελλιχόμειδε Σάφρω. This line has subsequently been attributed to Alcaeus (384 LP), as an indication of his admiration for Sappho and his reception of Sappho as a ‘holy’ (ἀγνα) figure. However, the attribution of this fragment to Alcaeus is questionable, as it is not specified by Hephaestion that the line was composed by Alcaeus himself, just that the metre was one which Alcaeus used and, presumably, was famous for. Furthermore, the reading μελλιχόμειδε Σάφρω is questionable here, if it was written by Alcaeus, as elsewhere in Lesbian poetry Sappho’s name is spelt Ψάφρω. Regardless, there is little elsewhere to suggest that there was an emphasis on Sappho as a particularly religious or chaste figure, even when she is not depicted as a licentious woman.

Instead, the most remarkable aspect of Sappho for the ancient audience was that she was a woman. Thus, Alcidamas in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* (1398b) remarks:

Πάριοι γοῦν Ἀρχίλοχον καίπερ βλάσφημον ὄντα τετιμήκασι, καὶ Χῖοι Ὀμηρον οὐκ ὄντα πολίτην, καὶ Μυτιληναῖοι Σαφρώ καίπερ γυναῖκα οὕσαν...

The novelty of Sappho as a female poet continues into the Hellenistic period, by which time Sappho has come to be presented as the archetypal female poet. She became, for the female literary tradition, what Homer was for the poetic tradition.

14 Yatromanolakis (2007), 169.
15 Campbell (1982), 405.
16 Yatromanolakis (2007), 169-70. It could be argued that, if Sappho is indeed being addressed, the line was actually written by a later poet, as the form Σαφρώ was more commonly used in later periods (Yatromanolakis (2007), 102-3).
This I shall examine in further detail in my first chapter, in which I look at the reception of Sappho during the Hellenistic period, specifically as she was represented in the epigrams included in Meleager’s Στέφανος. In particular, the trope of Sappho as a tenth or mortal Muse, which arises in Hellenistic epigram, and its implications on female poetics will be explored. There will also be a survey of the poetry Sappho was associated with, aside from the lyrics which survive. Of particular interest are the three epigrams which have been attributed to Sappho in Meleager’s Στέφανος, which prompt questions of what such an attribution suggests about the reception of Sappho and her poetry during this period, as well as a re-examination of her place in the tradition of epigram.

In the second chapter, I will focus on the epigrams of Erinna, Moero, Anyte, and Nossis, observing how they develop a sense of female subjectivity, and the extent to which they fully express a distinct female identity in their extant poetry. Using Sappho as the point of comparison, I will examine how traditionally masculine poetic traditions and themes are reused by female poets in their respective genres to express a female voice.

Finally, in the third chapter, I shall examine how the female Hellenistic epigrammatists were received in antiquity, particularly how the reception of Sappho influenced the reception of her female poetic successors in antiquity.
Chapter One – Reception of Sappho in Hellenistic Epigrams

While the echoes of Sappho’s erotic poetry are easily traced in the Hellenistic period – especially in the development of Hellenistic erotic epigram\(^{18}\) – there tends to be greater concern for the endurance of her fame and poetry among Hellenistic epigrammatists in the reception of Sappho herself as a literary figure. In contrast to earlier caricatures of her as a licentious erotic figure such as in comedy, as discussed in the introduction, epigrammatists of the Hellenistic period tended to ‘[locate] her love instead within a sacred sphere’ and emphasise her association with the Muses and Aphrodite.\(^{19}\) This association with the Muses, in particular, was a continuation of Sappho’s own identification of her poetic fame as a gift bestowed from the Muses. This chapter will therefore discuss how this theme, prevalent in Sappho’s own poetry, was developed by the Hellenistic epigrammatists and what the implications of their use of the theme were, particularly in their understanding of female poets in comparison with other famed poets such as Homer. The second half of the chapter will then focus upon the reception of Sappho’s poetry as a corpus in the Hellenistic period, examining which genres Sappho was associated with and famed for in the Hellenistic period. Of particular interest will be epigrams which have been attributed to Sappho in the *Greek Anthology* and what implications such an attribution may have had on the epigrammatic tradition.

Concerns of memory and poetic immortality are a recurring interest in Sappho’s own poetry, as she seems to predict her own lasting reputation:

\(^{18}\) For further discussion on Sappho’s influence on erotic epigram, see Acosta-Hughes and Barbantani (2007), 448-452; Acosta-Hughes (2010), 87-92.

\(^{19}\) Acosta-Hughes and Barbantani (2007), 438.
μνάσεσθαι τινά φαμί καὶ ἕτερον ἄμμέων (147 LP). In another fragment, she repudiates another woman for being uncultured (55 LP).  

κατθάνοισα δὲ κείση ὀψώ δοτα μναμοσόνα σέθεν ἐσσετ' ὀψω πόθα εἰς ὑστερον· οὐ γὰρ πεδέχης βρόδων τὸν ἐκ Πιερίας, ἀλλ' ἁφάνης κἀν Λίδα δόμω φοιτάσης πεδ' ἀμαύρων νεκών ἐκπεποταμένα.

Here she places great emphasis on the other woman’s future obscurity, declaring that there will be no memory or longing for her in the future (1), describing her as ἁφάνης (3) and predicting her fate of wandering among the shadowy dead (ἀμαύρων νεκών, 4); ἀμαύρος can also metaphorically mean “unknown.” The reason for the unnamed woman’s worthlessness, Sappho says, is that she has “no share in the roses from Pieria” (2-3), symbolising the gift of the Muses - that is, poetic skill - in the image of roses. This is set in contrast to Sappho’s own (alleged) proclamation of her affiliation with the Muses, who had made her blessed (ὦλβιαν) and enviable (ζηλωτήν), ensuring that she would not be forgotten even after her death (Aristides Orationes 28.51 = 193 LP). For Sappho, her fame is ensured by the Muses, with several invocations of the Muses in the surviving fragments (127, 128, 103.8 LP), while it is usually assumed that it was the Muses who honoured Sappho with the gift of their works (32 LP).

Furthermore, Sappho seems to define herself as one of the μοισοπόλοι (150

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20 Plutarch says, in one instance, that these lines were addressed to some uncultured and ignorant woman (πρός τινα τῶν ἄμουσων καὶ ἄμαθῶν γυναικῶν, Quaestiones convivales 646f. ἄμουσος literally means “without the Muses”) and in another, that Sappho addresses a rich woman (πρός τινα πλουσίαν, Coniugalia praecerta 146a).

21 LSJ s.v. ἄμωρος Ι.2

22 Campbell (1983), 261-2).
LP), if, as Maximus of Tyre says, the fragment is addressed to her daughter, which would suggest that the house of the μοισοπόλοι was her own.\footnote{Campbell (1983), 261; Burnett (1983), 211.} Generally understood to mean “those who serve the Muses,”\footnote{Campbell (1982), 161.} the word first occurs in extant Greek literature here, and may have been coined by Sappho herself.\footnote{Hauser (2016), 142n47.} As Hauser argues, Sappho’s self-identification as a poet in this way changes the dynamics of the poet-Muse relationship, where the -πόλος suffix places her as if she were physically close to the Muses, rather than merely metaphorically.\footnote{Hauser (2016), 141, 145-6.} This contrasts the sense of distance and subservience implied by Hesiod when he defines the ἀοιδός as Μουσάων θεράπων (“servant/worshipper of the Muses”, \textit{Theog.} 100).\footnote{Hauser (2016), 144.}

Epigrammatists in the Hellenistic period build upon Sappho’s concerns of poetic fame and her self-declared connection with the Muses in their reception of the lyric poetess. As mentioned above, flowers, and roses in particular, are used by Sappho as a symbol of the Muses’ gift of poetic skill and feature frequently in her poetry, becoming ‘something of a signature image of Sappho.’\footnote{Gosetti-Murrayjohn (2006), 22.} Therefore, when Meleager, in the first century BC, assigns the rose to Sappho, and only Sappho,\footnote{Gosetti-Murrayjohn makes a point that ‘no other poet shares the image of the rose with Sappho’ while other poets named by Meleager are sometimes assigned the same floral species ((2006), 22). The importance of Meleager’s assignment of the rose is not so much that it is unique to Sappho here, but rather that he emphasises that the epigrams he includes in his anthology, ‘though few, are roses’ as a declaration of the quality of her poetry.} in the proem of his Στέφανος (Σαπφοῦς βαΐα μὲν ἄλλα ῥόδα, \textit{AP} 4.1.6), he is

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{Campbell1983} Campbell (1983), 261; Burnett (1983), 211.
\bibitem{Campbell1982} Campbell (1982), 161.
\bibitem{Hauser2016} Hauser (2016), 142n47.
\bibitem{Hauser20161} Hauser (2016), 141, 145-6.
\bibitem{Hauser20162} Hauser (2016), 144.
\end{thebibliography}
recalling her use of the roses of Pieria as a metaphor for a woman’s (poetic) fame of which Sappho’s addressee will have no share (οὐ γὰρ πεδέχετις βρόδων / τῶν ἐκ Πιερίας, 55.2-3 LP). Through this allusion, Meleager thus establishes Sappho’s enduring fame, that she, unlike her addressee, does have a share in the roses from Pieria.

Prior to Meleager, Nossis in the late fourth, early third century BC also uses flowers in association with Sappho’s poetic fame in AP 7.718. Although she does not explicitly name the ἄνθος in line 2 as the rose, Nossis is undoubtedly reminding her reader of Sappho’s roses of Pieria. In particular, her declaration of being dear to the Muses and to “her”, presumably Sappho (Μούσαισι φίλαν τήν τε, 3), is reminiscent of Sappho’s own self-identification of her affiliation with the Muses, as discussed above (32, 150, 193 LP). Furthermore, Nossis makes the suggestion of Sappho taking on the role of the Muses as a source of poetic inspiration, implied by the use of ἐναυσόμενος, a verb which ‘means something like to be inspired with.’ Rather than the Muses’ explicitly, the ἄνθος here is of Sappho’s own poetry: τᾶν Σαπφοῦς χαρίτων ἄνθος. We begin to see Sappho being considered to have a similar function for her literary successors as Muses do for poets in general, a topos which is expanded upon, setting Sappho up as a tenth or a mortal Muse.

The topos of equating Sappho to the status of a Muse is arguably found earliest in a distich attributed (probably falsely) to Plato (AP 9.506): 32

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30 Gow and Page (1965), 442.
32 For discussion of attribution and dating of the “Plato” epigrams in the Greek Anthology, see Ludwig (1963).
Ἐννέα τὰς Μούσας ψαθίν τινες ὡς ὀλιγώρως:

ηῶδε καὶ Σαπφὼ Λεσβόθεν ἡ δεκάτη.

Emphasis is placed on the addition of Sappho into the canon of the Muses, increasing from nine (ἐννέα) to ten (ἡ δεκάτη). Sappho is identified by her homeland (Σαπφὼ Λεσβόθεν), a common form by which she is defined, as seen also in AP 7.407, by Dioscorides in the first century AD, in which Sappho is addressed and becomes known as ‘the Muse in Aeolian Eresos’ (1-4):

"Ἡδιστόν φιλέουσι νέοις προσανάκλιμ’ ἐρώτων
Σαπφὼ, σὺν Μούσαις ἡ ρά σε Πιερίη
ἡ Ελικών εὐκίσσος ἵσα πνείουσαν ἐκείναις
κοσμεῖ τὴν Ἐρέσω Μοῦσαν ἐν Αἰολίδι

Here, Dioscorides again plays with the topos of Sappho’s enrolment into the company of the Muses through the use of the verb κοσμεῖ, which evokes the image of order and arrangement, particularly in a military sense. Pieria and Helicon themselves are implicit in the formal elevation of Sappho into a Muse. Furthermore, the idea of Sappho herself having the inspirational qualities, suggested in Nossis AP 7.718, is raised again here as she is described as ἵσα πνείουσαν ἐκείναις (3).

Antipater of Sidon in the second century BC employs the topos in two different epigrams. However, there is an emphasis on Sappho’s mortality, describing her as ‘a mortal Muse among the immortal Muses’ (τὰν μετὰ Μούσαις / ἀθανάταις θνατὰν Μοῦσαν, AP 7.14), and imagining Mnemosyne’s surprise that “the mortals have a tenth Muse” in the figure of Sappho (Μναμοσύναν ἥλεθαμβος, ὅτ’ ἐκλείπε τὰς μελιφώνου / Σαπφοῦς, μὴ δεκάταιν Μοῦσαν ἐχουσί βροτοί, AP 9.66).
While other archaic poets are associated with the Muses in Hellenistic epigram, they were not necessarily depicted as being inducted into the company of the Muses. Nor did they seem to have been given the same inspirational qualities that were bequeathed to Sappho in identifying her as a Muse, even though Hellenistic epigram, as well as other genres, were heavily influenced by their literary predecessors. The singling out of Sappho among lyric poets is thus exemplified in AP 9.571:

"Εκλαγεν ἐκ Θηβῶν μέγα Πίνδαρος· ἐπνεε τερπνά
ἡδυμελεῖ φθόγγῳ μοῦσα Σιμιωνίδεων·
λάμπει Στησίχορος τε καὶ Ἱβυκος· ἦν γλυκὸς Ἀλκιμάν·
λαρὰ δ’ ἀπὸ στομάτων φθέγξατο Βακχολίδης·
πειθῷ Ἀνακρεόντι συνέσπετο· ποικίλα δ’ αὐδᾶ
Ἀλκαῖος κύκνῳ Λέσβιος Αἰλιδί.
ἀνδρῶν δ’ οὐκ ἐνάτη Σαπφῷ πέλεν, ἀλλ’ ἐρατειναῖς
ἐν Μοῦσαις δεκάτη Μοῦσα καταγράφεται.

Compared to AP 9.184, which is also a canon of the nine lyric poets, including Sappho, but is not particularly concerned with distinguishing any one poet over the others, AP 9.571 was, as Page notes, ‘written for the sake of the point in its last couplet – that Sappho is not a ninth lyric poet but a tenth Muse.’ By concluding the poem with καταγράφεται (‘is inscribed’), the poet effectively executes Sappho’s induction into the company of the Muses: ‘it is at once the description of

33 Homer is called the star of the Muses and Graces (Μουσάων ἀστέρα καὶ Χαρίτων, AP 7.1) and various sepulchral epitaphs describe him as honoured by the Muses (AP 7.2B); Pindar is described as εὐφώνων Πιερίδων πρόπολος (AP 7.35) and Μουσάων ιερὸν στόμα (AP 9.184); the Muse of sweet-voiced Simonides breathes delights (AP 9.571); Dioscorides calls Anacrean τερπνότατε Μοῦσῃς (AP 7.31).

the enrollment and the enrollment itself.’

The identification of Sappho as one of the Muses undeniably shows the epigrammatists’ great appreciation of the quality of her poetry, going as far as deifying her, and is perhaps an acknowledgement of the ‘inherently female nature of literary creativity.’ Sappho’s poetic immortality, a recurrent theme of concern in her own poetry, is being confirmed by the epigrammatists by inducting her into the company of the Muses with whom she associated her poetic immortality. However, the elevation of Sappho to the divine status of the Muses is perhaps not straightforwardly complimentary. The association of Sappho with the Muses, who were ‘conventionally female figures of inspiration,’ emphasises that the most outstanding aspect of her fame is her gender – that she was, first and foremost, a woman. Therefore, the only way for the (male) Hellenistic epigrammatists to understand Sappho’s poetic skills was to place her ‘beyond the bounds of ordinary humanity.’ She may become a source of inspiration, and is situated as the exemplar of women’s poetry, but she is simultaneously restricted to the sphere of women’s poetry; no matter how great a poet she is, at the end of the day, she is still a woman.

This emphasis on Sappho as a woman can also be seen in Antipater’s comparison of her to Homer (AP 7.15):

Οὖνομά μεν Σαπφώ, τόσσον δ’ ὑπερέσχον ἄοιδάν

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35 Acosta-Hughes (2010), 85.
36 Snyder (1989), 155.
37 Rosenmeyer (1997), 134.
39 Rosenmeyer (1997), 134.
The emphasis is on her as the exemplary female poet. The antithesis of θηλειάν ἀνδρόν asserts that the focus of this distich is that she is female, and therefore, as much as she surpasses other women in song, she would never be as great as Homer, ὁ Μαιονίδας.40 Similarly, in AP 9.26, Antipater again compares Sappho to Homer, referring to her glory as θῆλυν Ὁμηρον (3).41 Again it is her gender that is being explicitly acknowledged; her fame and reputation is qualified specifically as female.

The emphasis on Sappho being a woman first, and a poet second also seems to have influenced the epigrammatists’ understanding of what her poetry and poetic corpus entailed during the Hellenistic period. As with other Archaic and Classical poets, Sappho’s poetry began to be edited and collated into standardised editions under Alexandrian scholars.42 However, it is uncertain how exactly Sappho’s poetry was arranged by the Alexandrian editors, although it is generally accepted that they were organised into books according to metre rather than occasional context or genre as other poets’ works were.43 Also highly debated is the exact number of books into which her works were arranged, although it is now generally assumed that there were nine books.44 However, this may have been...

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40 Rosenmeyer (1997), 135.
41 There is a debate over whether θῆλυν Ὁμηρον refers to Ἀνύτης στόμα or Σαπφὼ κόσμον, with many going with the former, although grammatically θῆλυν is a masculine(/feminine) accusative going with κόσμον rather than the neuter στόμα. Sappho’s superior status in antiquity also makes me more inclined to argue that it is Sappho who is being described as the “female Homer.” For further discussion of this line, see Werner (1994).
42 Hopkinson (1988), 4-6.
43 Yatromanolakis (1999), 180.
44 For further discussion on Alexandrian edition(s) of Sappho’s poetry, see
influenced by the epigram by Tullius Laurea, from the first century BC, in which an imagined Sappho’s voice refers to writing nine books, to correspond with the number of Muses (ἡν δὲ με Μουσάων ἐτάσης χάριν, δὸν ἄφ’ ἐκάστης / δαίμονος ἄνθος ἐμὴ θηκα παρ’ ἐννεάδιν, AP 7.17.5-6). The aim of Tullius Laurea’s poem here is not an accurate attestation of the number of books in the Alexandrian edition(s) of Sappho, but to exploit the topos of Sappho as a tenth Muse and the associative immortality of her poetry and reputation as an honour bestowed by the Muses.45

There are, however, definite indications of active preservation and perhaps even editorialising of Sappho’s poetry, at least by the time of Posidippus of Pella in the first half of the third century BC. In his epitaph for Doricha (122 AB = 17 HE), Posidippus plays with the idea of the longevity of Sappho’s poetry, and the role her poetry plays in memorialisation, as ‘Sappho’s bright sounding columns of lovely song remains and will still remain’ to keep the memory of Doricha alive (Σαπφώ οί μένουσι φύλης έτι καὶ μενέουσιν / φόδης αί λευκαί φθεγγόμεναι σελίδες, 5-6).46 Posidippus characterises Sappho’s poetry as physical words, arranged in “bright sounding columns” (λευκαί φθεγγόμεναι σελίδες, 5), which seems to evoke ‘the imagery of the papyrus roll in turn enfolding its song.’47 Thus, by the late fourth, early third century BC, Sappho’s poetry was certainly being received as written literature, rather than purely as an oral performance.

Furthermore, Posidippus is able to provide insight into how Sappho’s verses

Yatromanolakis (1999); Acosta-Hughes (2010), 92-104.


46 This is all the more poignant in the modern day, as Doricha (also known as Rhodopis) is mentioned in the surviving fragments of Sappho’s songs (7, 15 LP).

47 Acosta-Hughes (2004), 44.
may have been received and characterised in the Hellenistic period. When he describes song as Sappho’s (or Sapphic) elsewhere (55.2 AB, and conjectured in 51.6 AB), there is an implication that there was a general understanding of Sappho’s song not as the actual songs composed by her but as a certain style of poetry: Sappho seems to become a metaphor for a certain type of poetry; in Posidippus’ epigrams, she seems to have been particularly associated with funerary lament, despite her own apparent aversion to songs of lament, as suggested by 150 LP (οὐ γὰρ θέμις ἐν μοισοπόλων οἶκω / θρῆνον ἔμεν’· οὔ κ’ ἀμμὶ πρόποι τάδε).49

The association of Sappho with specific poetic genres would also suggest that Sappho was known in antiquity for composing in genres and forms other than the lyrics which survive. The entry on Sappho in the Suda notes that, in addition to her lyric poems, she had also written epigrams, elegies (or elegiac couplets), iambics and monodies.50 This information was probably based on the inclusion of epigrams ascribed to Sappho and on earlier biographies such as that preserved in P. Oxy. 1800 (dated to the late second or early third century AD), which mentions that she had one book of elegies as well as (possibly) nine books of lyrics.51 Certainly, in addition to the lyrics which survive to us in the modern day, it is part of tradition that Sappho had written in other metres and for other occasions, including, according to Dioscorides, epithalamia and laments (AP 7.407), and

49 Battezzato (2003), 38.
50 Suda s.v. Σαπφώ (Σ.107).
51 It is uncertain how exactly the compiler of the Suda distinguished between ἐπιγράμματα and ἔλεγχοι, whether it was based on metre, length or subject matter, although Yatromanolakis (1999) suggests that ἔλεγχοι may have referred to threnodies such as the (non-extant) Lament for Adonis specifically, not just elegiac couplets (185-6).
perhaps hexameters as well, if we are to read the final distich of AP 9.190 as a
direct comparison between Erinna’s and Sappho’s poetic competence in specific
metres.\textsuperscript{52} Even though she is not now associated with the genre, Sappho must have
written epigrams, and been known for her epigrammatic compositions, for three
epigrams in the \textit{Greek Anthology} to have been attributed to her with little to no
question in antiquity and for Meleager to include her in his own anthology (\textit{AP}
4.1.5-6):

\begin{quote}
πολλὰ μὲν ἐμπλέξας Ἀνύτης κρίνα, πολλὰ δὲ Μοιροῦς

λείρια, καὶ Σαπφοῦς βαιὰ μὲν ἄλλα ῥόδα
\end{quote}

Not only has Sappho been placed early in Meleager’s catalogue,\textsuperscript{53} but her name is
also the first to appear by itself in a single line.\textsuperscript{54} This undoubtedly hints at her
importance within the epigram tradition and therefore encourages us to re-examine
the reception of Sappho’s poetry and her relationship with the epigrammatic
tradition.\textsuperscript{55}

Three epigrams in the \textit{Greek Anthology} have been attributed to Sappho (\textit{AP}
6.269, 7.489, 7.505). However, they are most probably not genuinely written by
Sappho herself, as at least two are most likely composed during the Hellenistic
period (\textit{AP} 7.489, 7.505), while \textit{AP} 6.269 has the heading ὡς Σαπφοῦς - as

\textsuperscript{52} West (1977) argues that the last couplet means ‘simply that she [Erinna] was the
supreme hexameter poetess as Sappho was the supreme lyric poetess’ (95 note 1).
However, the ὥσσον ... τόσσον seems to suggest that both Sappho and Erinna wrote both
lyrics and hexameters to make such a comparison, even though either were not famed for
the opposite genre of poetry.

\textsuperscript{53} She is placed third overall, after Anyte and Moero, who are also both female poets and
chronologically early poets among the Meleagrian poets.

\textsuperscript{54} Acosta-Hughes (2010), 83.

\textsuperscript{55} Acosta-Hughes (2010), 83.
opposed to simply Σαπφοῖς - which suggests some doubt from the anthologist about the ascription.\(^{56}\) The fact that two of the three epigrams are on funerary themes reasserts the association of Sappho with threnodic poetry in antiquity, even though none of her surviving fragments are laments and she herself seems to have discouraged songs of lament in 150 LP. Nevertheless, the attribution of these epigrams, whether genuinely Sappho’s or not, and her apparent association with funerary themes sets Sappho within the epigrammatic tradition. Sappho’s ascribed position as an epigrammatist therefore places her as a direct predecessor to the four female poets discussed in the following chapter.

\(^{56}\) Page (1981), 181.
Chapter Two – The Female Voice

I now turn to the four female poets of the Hellenistic period: Moero, Erinna, Anyte and Nossis. Aside from fragments of hexameters by Erinna (generally agreed to be from her *Distaff*), and a ten-line quotation of Moero’s hexameters in Athenaeus’ *Deipnosophistae* (11.491b), their only surviving works are the epigrams which were collected by Meleager for his Στέφανος and are preserved in the *Greek Anthology*.

The development of poetry from a purely performative setting into a literary experience in the Hellenistic period arguably allowed a more subjective, female voice to be expressed by female poets in a more public sphere.\(^{57}\) This was particularly accessible through the form of epigrams, whose origins as inscriptions to be read by the common passer-by, determined an enduring sense of publicity within the genre. This would have been especially applicable in the earliest years of the Hellenistic period, when these female epigrammatists were working.\(^{58}\) The tension between the publicity of the epigram genre and a growing trend of the voicing of a personal voice in poetry finds itself encapsulated by female epigrammatists. Through a literary dialogue with their predecessors, in particular Homer and Sappho, and reuse of masculine imagery through a female perspective, these female poets of the Hellenistic period, to varying extents, develop and express a sense of female subjectivity within a traditionally masculine genre, playing with the dichotomy between the public male and private female poetic spheres.

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\(^{57}\) Murray and Rowland (2007), 212.

\(^{58}\) The exact dates of these poets are unknown, but it is generally agreed that all four were working in the late fourth century and early third century BC (Barnard (1978), 204).
Moero

Very little survives of Moero’s poetry: aside from the two epigrams in the *Greek Anthology*, only a ten-line hexameter fragment of a poem titled *Mnemosyne* survives, through quotation by Athenaeus (*Deipnosophistae* 11.491b).

Although Moero’s two extant epigrams do not project an overtly personal female voice, the sensitivity towards nature expressed in her poetry is, arguably, a trait associated with female Hellenistic poetry specifically.\(^{59}\) This is particularly evoked in 1 *HE* (= *AP* 6.119), a dedication of a bunch of grapes to Aphrodite:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Κεῖσαι δή χρυσέαν ὑπὸ παστάδα τὸν Ἀφροδίτας,} \\
\text{βότρυ, Διωνύσου πληθόμενος σταγόνι,} \\
\text{oὐδ’ ἔτι τοι μάτηρ ἔρατόν περὶ κλῆμα βαλοῦσα} \\
\text{φύσει ὑπὲρ κρατὸς νεκτάρεον πέταλον.}
\end{align*}
\]

While the characterisation of the vine as a mother of grape or wine is used elsewhere,\(^{60}\) it is not usually expressed in such intimate or humanistic sentiments as by Moero here.

Whether or not it accompanied an actual dedication of grapes, and whether the dedication was a real bunch of grapes or just a representation, Moero’s epigram expands beyond simply a description of a dedication, into an ecphrastic description of the motherly embrace of the vine in the second couplet. While ostensibly dedicatory, the epigram is rather more funereal in tone, with the opening *κεῖσαι* commonly associated with sepulchral epigram, as well as the sorrow of separation expressed by *οὐδ’ ἔτι* at the beginning of the second


\(^{60}\) cf. Aeschylus *Persians* 614-5; Euripides *Alcestis* 757; *Anacreontea* 56.7.
couplet. The use of the adjective ἐρατόν humanises the vine branch, ‘[focalising] the speaker’s identification with the grape cluster, for whom the vine is a mother offering “lovely/loving” protection’ with a shelter of “nectarous leaves.” Gow and Page note that the adjective νεκτάρεον is ‘somewhat oddly applied to the leaves’ by Moero in this epigram. It is more commonly used of the more fragrant parts of plants which would more naturally be described as “nectarous”, such as the bloom of the rose (ῥόδου τ’ ἐνὶ ἄνθεϊ Ἡδέι νεκταρέῳ, Cypria fr. 4.4-5), or the plant as a whole (φυτὰ νεκτάρεα, Pindar Dithyrambs fr. 75.5), or libations (νεκταρέαις σπονδαῖσιν, Pindar Isthmian Odes 6.37).

νεκτάρεος is also used by Homer, twice, both times to describe garments, a use which is not found elsewhere. The first instance is used of Helen’s robe when she is being fetched by Aphrodite to be returned to Paris (νεκταρέου ἑαυτοῦ, Il. 3.385). The obvious connection here would be the presence of the goddess in both this scene and as the dedicatee in Moero’s epigram. The “fragrant robe” which is instrumental in Helen being objectified now mourns the separation between the fragrant leaves of the vine and it’s ‘child’, the grapes being offered to Aphrodite. Moero recasts a scene of animosity between human woman and goddess in Homer into a poignant image of mourning within the natural world. The pathos becomes more heavily loaded with a comparison with the other instance of νεκταρέος, used of Achilles’ “fragrant tunic” when he receives the news about Patroclus’ death (νεκταρέῳ δὲ χτιτῶνι, Il. 18.25), thus equating the vine to Achilles. Furthermore, the context of the epigram, which personifies the relationship between the vine and

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62 Gutzwiller (2017b), 411.
63 (1965), 415.
the grape as mother and child, perhaps also recalls the simile in *Iliad* 16 comparing Patroclus to a child running after their mother (7-11), implicating Achilles as ‘Patroclus’ warrior mother.’" Supplemented by the central role women have in lamentation in the *Iliad*, Moero thus, by alluding to Homer and readapting a scene of martial mourning into pseudo-familial scene, evokes a sense of grandeur through a female and more personal perspective in the natural image of a simple offering of grapes to Aphrodite. It is almost as if the offering of the cluster of grapes is as heroic as the death of Patroclus.

Whether the excessively funeral tone and high-flown metaphorical language of Moero 1 *HE* is too ‘affected’ and ‘artificial,’ or an underhanded ‘paratragic’ parody of typical sepulchral epigrams, Moero’s generic fusion of sepulchral and dedicatory epigrammatic elements is typical of the literary tastes of the Hellenistic period, and perhaps even innovative of the transitioning of epigrams to a more cultured literary genre, as she was dated to the early years of the Hellenistic era. Moero plays with the generic expectations to create a sense of human sympathy for the separation of the grapes from their mother vine, expressed through a particularly female perspective of a mother’s loss in the last couplet.

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64 Gaca (2008), 163.
65 The likening of the grape to Patroclus, a fallen soldier, is reinforced by the verb κεῖσαι, which is often used of fallen or buried corpses in sepulchral epigrams (Skinner (2005), 101).
66 Snyder (1989), 85.
68 Gutzwiller (2017b), 409.
69 Greene (2005), 141.
Erinna

The subject of at least five epigrams by other poets in the *Greek Anthology*, Erinna seemed to have received the most admiration for her hexameter verses, and in particular her epyllion lamenting the death of her childhood companion Baucis, titled the *Distaff*. Her poetry seemed to have been instrumental in the development of epic poetry in the Hellenistic period and the adaptation of the epic narrator’s voice into the personal voice of *goos*; however, the loss of most of her work makes it difficult to determine the true extent of her influence here.  

She was also well known for her epigrams and was assigned the crocus by Meleager in the proem of his *Στέφανος*: γλυκὴ Ἑρίννης παρθενόχρωτα κρόκον (*AP* 4.1.12). Three of her epigrams survive in the *Greek Anthology*. The authenticity of her authorship, especially of the epigrams, has been questioned, most notably by West, who argues that the three epigrams were the works of others, and that the ‘exceptional ingenium [...] married to considerable ars’ of the *Distaff*’s author could not possibly have been written by a girl ‘forced to devote herself to [spinning and weaving]’. However, there is no substantial evidence to refute the attribution of these works to Erinna, especially purely based on what is expected of women’s poetic skills, as West does.

In all three of the surviving epigrams, Erinna’s focus on fellow women as her subjects (Baucis in 1 and 2 *HE* (= *AP* 7.710, 7.712), and Agatharchis in 3 *HE* (= *AP* 6.352)) made her poetry distinctly feminine and seemingly ‘a Lesbian in the

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70 On Erinna’s development of the epic genre, see Gutzwiller (1997), 203-11; Stehle (2001), 185-200.


72 For defence of Erinna, see Pomeroy (1978), 19-21; Arthur (1980); Gutzwiller (2017a).
modern sense, if not physically, at least psychologically.\textsuperscript{73} Although the two epitaphs on Baucis are conventional in form and content, certain features in both epigrams, 1 HE in particular, discourage inferences that they were necessarily physical inscriptions on Baucis’ tomb.

Στάλα καὶ Σειρῆνες ἔμαι καὶ πένθυμε κροσσῆ
δόστις ἔχεις Ἀίδα τὰν ὀλίγαν σποιδάν,
τοῖς ἐμὸν ἐρχομένῳι παρ’ ἡρίον εἴπατε χαίρειν,
αἰτ’ ἀστοι τελέθωντ’ αἰθ’ ἐτερόπτόλεις:
χῶτι με νύμφαν εἰδον ἔχει τάφος’ εἴπατε καὶ τό,
χῶτι πατήρ μ’ ἐκάλει Βαυκίδα, χῶτι γένος
Τηνία, ὡς ειδόντι, καὶ ὤτι μοι ἄ συνεταιρίς
’’Ηρινν’ ἐν τόμῳ γράμμ’ ἐχάραξε τόδε.

(1 HE = AP 7.710)

Νύμφας Βαυκίδος εἰμί, πολυκλαύταν δὲ παρέρπων
στάλαν τῷ κατὰ γὰς τοῦτο λέγους Ἀίδα’
‘βάσκανος ἐσσ’, Ἀίδα’. τὰ δὲ τοι καλὰ σάμαθ’ ὀρῶντι
ὡμοτάταν Βαυκοῦς ἀγγελέοντι τύχαν,
ὡς τὰν παιδ’ Ὕμέναιος ἐφ’ αἷς ἀείδετο πεῦκαις
τᾶςδ’ ἐπι καδεστὰς ἐφλεγε πυρκαῖς,
καὶ σὺ μὲν, ὦ Ὕμέναιε, γάμων μολπαῖον ἀοιδάν
ἐς θρήνοιν γοερὸν φθέγμα μεθαρμόσαο.

(2 HE = AP 7.712)

\textsuperscript{73} Barnard (1978), 208.
In these epitaphs, Erinna is naturally concerned with lamentation and memory. Erinna’s focus on her close companionship with Baucis, emphasised by the use of συνεταιρίς (1.8 HE), echoes the intimacy between women explored by Sappho in her poetry. By echoing Sappho’s use of ἐταιρα in reference to the intimate relationships between women (ἀπάλας ἐτα<ι>ρας, 126 LP; ἐταιρας ταις ἐμας, 160 LP), there seems to be an undertone of (homo-)eroticism in Erinna’s epitaph to Baucis. This is further evoked by the request for the tomb to farewell the passersby (χαίρειν, 1.3 HE), recalling Sappho’s parting words to her departing friend (χαίροις, 94.6 LP). However, while Sappho’s songs express a shared experience for the continuation of the community of women, the genre of epigram naturally sets up Baucis’ words in Erinna’s epitaph for a public memorialisation, regardless of whether or not it was actually inscriptional.

In 3 HE, Erinna plays with the dichotomy between visual arts and poetry, as well as expression of the concerns of the woman, in this case Agatharchis, silenced in portraiture, the artifice of a, presumably, male artist:

Ἐξ ἀταλάν χειρὸν τάδε γράμματα· λῶστε Προμαθεῦ,
ἐντι καὶ ἄνθρωποι τιν ὡμαλοι σοφίαν.
ταῦταν γοῦν ἐτύμως τὰν παρθένον ὡστὶς ἔγραψεν
αἰ καλῆν ποτέθηκ’ ἡς κ’ Ἀγαθαρχίς ὅλα.

The γράμματα (1) and ἔγραψεν (3), at first, may be assumed to be referring to the writing of the epigram itself. It is really only with the wish for a voice to make Agatharchis whole being expressed in the last line that the reader realises that τάδε γράμματα is describing a portrait of the woman and understands that the demand

74 Rayor (2005), 66.
75 Murray and Rowland (2007), 224.
for Prometheus to look is to compare the skills of the artist with Prometheus himself. Erinna, with the declaration that ‘even among mortals there are some who are comparable in skill’ to Prometheus (3), makes a comparison between the production of life by Prometheus and the imitation of life through art by the artists. However, without a voice in art, the depiction of Agatharchis is ultimately not completely human; imitation of life is merely just that, no matter how skilled an artist is.76

By describing the depiction of Agatharchis with the vocabulary also used of writing, Erinna is reflecting on the writing of the description of the depiction itself: the (presumed) male artist and the female poet are being equated through their shared act of creating τάδε γράμματα.77 This is reflected in the phrase ἐξ ἀταλῶν χειρῶν (“from delicate hands”, 1). A Homeric adjective, ἀταλός is used elsewhere primarily to describe young women, and here would raise the expectation that it was describing the woman being depicted, not the hands of the artist, highlighting the subjectivity of the epigrammatist as a viewer in creating this ecphrastic poem.79 Thus the artist’s hand, and the artist himself by extension, becomes feminised and perhaps suggests that the artist shares the youthful tenderness of Agatharchis.80 The ἀταλῶν χειρῶν could equally be referring to Erinna’s own female, “delicate hands” as the epigrammatist writing τάδε

76 Skinner (2001), 208.
77 Murray and Rowland (2007), 225. The gender of τίν (3) would suggest that the artist was either male, or unknown (Gow and Page (1965), 284). It is probably safe to assume that the painter was male, ‘given the norms of the patriarchal culture that Erinna and her original readers inhabited’ (Murray and Rowland (2007), 224).
80 Gutzwiller (2002), 88n.7.
γράμματα. It is through Erinna’s female hand that a voice is supplied for the incomplete woman, silenced in portrait. Erinna makes Agatharchis whole again with the completion of the epigram, substantiated by δόλα at the conclusion of the epigram (4). Through the subjectivity evoked by ἔξ ἀπολλαν χειράν, simultaneously linking the anonymous artist with his named subject, as well as the artist with the writer, Erinna ultimately shows that she is praising the subject of the work of art rather than the skill of the artist. The focus of the epigram is Agatharchis, who is given a voice by a female poet.

Erinna’s focus on women and the intimacy expressed between herself and the subject in her epigrams naturally suggests comparison with Sappho’s poetry. However, where Sappho expresses a communal voice, Erinna in her epigrams is the one who is able to give a voice to a silenced woman through written text, as exemplified by the concluding sphragis in her epitaph for Baucis (1.8 HE): Ἡρων ἐν τῷμβῳ γράμμι ἐχάραξε τόδε.

Anyte

Out of the four female epigrammatists, the most survives of Anyte’s epigrams, with twenty-four epigrams ascribed to her in the Greek Anthology. At least nineteen of these are generally agreed to be genuinely written by Anyte, with the other five in dispute. She seems to have also been known as a lyric poetess in antiquity, as suggested by the ascriptions on her epigrams where she is frequently referred to as μελοποιός (4, 5, 7, 8, 12, 16, 23 HE), and in one instance as λυρική.

81 Gutzwiller (2017a), 281.
(9 HE); none of these lyric poems survive. In an anecdote about the founding of a temple to Asclepius at Naupactus, Pausanias refers to Anyte as Ανύτην τὴν ποιήσασαν τὰ ἔπη (10.38.13), which seems to suggest that she also wrote in hexameters. Meleager assigns the κρίνα to Anyte, which, as mentioned above, is often synonymous with the λείρια of Moero (AP 4.1.5-6) and may suggest a close literary affiliation being made between the two poetesses. The choice of κρίνα, ‘an emblem of death,’ is perhaps indicative of the reputation Anyte had for sepulchral epigrams.

The style of Anyte’s epigrams has raised much debate about whether or not the voice she projects in her poems is distinctly feminine. Skinner, in particular, argues that the impersonal tone of Anyte’s epigrams, especially in her dedicatory epigrams, makes Anyte a conventional epigrammatist, that is traditionally masculine as the default. Certainly, a number of Anyte’s epigrams do seem to conform to a conventional masculine perspective, most notably in her martial themed epitaphic epigrams. In 1 HE (= AP 6.123), she is ostensibly lauding the courage of the Cretan Echekratidas (ἀγγέλλ᾽ ἀνορέαν Κρητᾶς Ἐχεκρατιδᾶ, 4), while 21 HE (= AP 7.232) memorialises Amyntor, son of Philippos, who died in battle. However, even within these two epigrams which handle the most conventionally masculine themes, there are undertones of female concerns being voiced. In 1 HE, the first three lines, addressing the κράνεια βροτοκτόνε and

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84 Gow and Page (1965), 90. As with the association of Erinna with lyric poetry above, this assignment may be more reflective of ‘the tendency to conceive all female poets in Sapphic terms’ than a reality of Anyte being a lyricist (Gutzwiller (1998), 54n.23).  
85 Gow and Page (1965), 89-90.  
86 Skinner (2005), 103.  
commanding it to retire from war, projects a voice more concerned with the consequences of war.\textsuperscript{88} Battle does not just bring glory to the soldiers; it is a destroyer of man (βροτοκτόνε, 1) and leaves behind deaths to be mourned, typically by women (λυγρόν ... φόνον, 1-2). Meanwhile, in 21 HE, it is significant that a point is made of the manner in which Amyntor did \textit{not} die - through illness - in contrast to his actual manner of death, on the battlefield. Furthermore, the language used of the illness that did not kill him is typically employed to reconfigure the untimely death of a maiden or new bride as a marriage to Death, following Hades’ rape of Persephone; Amyntor, if he had died from illness, would have been led into the house of Night as if he were a bride (νόσος δόμον ἔγαγε Νυκτός, 3).\textsuperscript{89} Thus, by emphasising that Amyntor is not a bride, therefore not female, Anyte makes a conscious decision to project an excessively masculine voice, in order to undermine the traditional masculine perspective of such sepulchral epigrams.

Anyte’s intricate dialogue between masculine traditions and female values is more strongly brought out with her epigrams on subjects which were atypical of her time.\textsuperscript{90} Anyte’s use of animals, especially pets, as the subject of six of her extant epigrams (9-14 HE), and her public expression of sympathy and affection towards them would have been seen as a particularly female-gendered concern, where grief expressed by a man for an animal other than to commemorate and honour it as a companion of his athletic and competitive endeavours would have

\textsuperscript{88} Gutzwiller (1998), 57-8.
\textsuperscript{89} Murray and Rowland (2007), 230-1.
\textsuperscript{90} Skinner (2001), 209.
encouraged ridicule by others.  

The interaction between the expressions of masculine and feminine concerns by Anyte is particularly seen in 5 and 8 *HE*, both of which depict the mourning of a mother for her daughter. In 5 *HE* (= *AP* 7.486), the mother Kleina is explicitly depicted in her grief for the death of her daughter:

Πολλάκι τῷ ὀλοφυδνῷ κόρας ἐπὶ σάματι Κλείνα
μάτηρ ὁκύμορον παιδ’ ἔβοασε φίλαν,
ψυχὰν ἀγκαλέουσα Φιλαινίδος, ἀ πρὸ γάμιο
χλωρὸν ὑπὲρ ποταμοῦ χεδὶ’ Ἀχέροντος ἔβα.

Here, Anyte accentuates the mourning of Philaenis’ premature death in Homeric terms, ὁκύμορον, used by Thetis in her grief for Achilles’ imminent death. Thus by equating Philaenis to Achilles here, Anyte recasts the heroic death into the immediate, ordinary life of women.

Meanwhile in 6 *HE* (= *AP* 7.490), Anyte reimagines Penelope’s situation with the suitors in the *Odyssey* into the lament of the unmarried Antibia:

Παρθένον Ἀντιβίαν κατοδύρομαι, ᾧ ἐπὶ πολλοὶ
νυμφίοι ἤμενοι πατρὸς ἵκοντο δόμον
κάλλευς καὶ πινυτάτος ἀνὰ κλέος’ ἄλλ’ ἐπιπαντῶν
ἐλπίδας οὐλομένα Μοῖρ’ ἐκύλισε πρόσῳ.

By referring to Antibia’s reputation for her beauty and wisdom as κλέος, most typically used of Homeric heroes’ fame, Anyte elevates her to a heroic status,

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92 cf. *Il.* 1.417, 1.505, 18.95, 18.458.
93 Greene (2005), 145.
situating her death in the Homeric tradition. Furthermore, κάλλευς καὶ πινυτάτος, virtues (particularly the latter) which were often associated with Penelope in the *Odyssey*,\(^4\) recalls Penelope’s prayer to Artemis, in which she alludes to the daughters of Pandareus, who were gifted beauty and wisdom (εἰδός καὶ πινυτήν) by Hera but died prematurely (*Od. 19.70-1*). Anyte thus casts the loss of a maiden’s worth to her father as a bride into the perspective of female concern, by resituating Penelope’s desire for death into a lamentation of Antibia’s death. Rather than necessarily expressing ‘only the senseless destruction of the goodness and beauty in life’ in these epigrams,\(^5\) Anyte’s use of Homeric images of lamentation ‘validates the public expression of female grief,’ memorialised in the generic publicity of the epigram form.\(^6\)

**Nossis**

Like the other three female epigrammatists, Nossis too focuses predominantly on women as the subjects of her poetry, particularly in her appreciation of the female form.\(^7\) Yet, Nossis stands out among these four female poets in her expression of an explicitly female voice and her conscious identification as Sappho’s successor in her epigrams, something for which she was notable even in antiquity. Antipater of Thessalonica describes her as ὅηλυγλωσσος (*AP 9.26*), which may be taken to mean either “one who spoke like a woman” or

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\(^5\) Gutzwiller (1998), 60.

\(^6\) Greene (2005), 141.

\(^7\) Twelve epigrams have been ascribed to Nossis in the *Greek Anthology*, of which eleven are considered to be accurate attribution; 12 *HE (= AP 6.273)* is headed with Ὅς Νοσσίδος, not Νοσσίδος, which suggests doubt of the ascription. Eight of the eleven considered to be genuinely written by Nossis have women as the subject.
“one who spoke specifically to women;”98 both interpretations place an emphasis on the female subjectivity expressed in her poetry. Her established reputation as an erotic poet is exemplified in Meleager’s proem to his Στέφανος, in which he dedicates a whole distich to Nossis (AP 4.1.9-10):

σὸν δ’ ἀναμιξ πλέξας μυρόπνουν εὐάνθεμον ἱρὶν
Νοσσίδος, ἣς δέλτοις κηρὸν ἐτηξέν Ἐρως

Meleager’s specification of love as a dominant theme in Nossis’ epigrams recalls Nossis 1 HE (=AP 5.170), which is now widely accepted as a programmatic prologue for a collection of her epigrams:99

"Ἄδιον οὐδὲν ἔρωτος, ἢ δ’ ὀλβία δεύτερα πάντα
ἐστιν· ἀπὸ στόματος δ’ ἐπτυσά καὶ τὸ μέλι.
τοῦτο λέγει Νοσσίς· τίνα δ’ ἡ Κύπρις οὐκ ἑφίλασεν
οὐκ οἰδεν ἥκηνα τ’ ἄνθεα ποῖαι ρόδα.

An evocation of Hesiod’s description of the relationship between a poet and the Muses (ὁ δ’ ὀλβίος, ὄντινα Μοῦσαι / φιλονται γλυκερή οἱ ἀπὸ στόματος ρέει αὐδή, Theog. 96-7), here, Nossis declares the superiority of love’s sweetness, even in comparison to honey, which she spits from her mouth. This sentiment echoes Sappho 16.1-4 LP, where she declares that the most beautiful thing on earth is that which one loves. While the epigram could be read simply as an expression of the excellence of love, the sphragis, τοῦτο λέγει Νοσσίς (3), seems to imply that it is a programmatic statement of her poetic intentions: Love is the primary concern in her poetry. Furthermore, the concluding statement, that whomever Aphrodite does

not love does not know what kind of flowers her roses are, seems to be an intertextual reference to Sappho’s Pierian roses in 55 LP, which, as we have already established in Chapter One, are a symbol for Sappho’s poetic skill.¹⁰⁰ Thus, by ending this epigram with ἄνθεα ποιὰ ρόδα, Nossis is setting her poetry in Sapphic terms, rejecting Hesiod as her poetic model and substituting him with Sappho.¹⁰¹

Nossis explicitly iterates her identification with Sappho in 11 HE (= AP 5.170):

Ὦ ξεῖν’, εἰ τὸ γε πλεῖς ποτὶ καλλίχορον Μιτυλήναν
tὰν Σαπφοὺς χαρίτων ἄνθος ἐναυσόμενος
eἰπεῖν ὡς Μούσαισι φίλαν τήν τε Λοκρίς γὰ
tίκτε μ’ ἵσαις δ’ ὅτι μοι τοῦνομα Νοσσίς ἴθι.¹⁰²

By declaring that she is “dear to the Muses” (Μούσαισι φίλαν, 3), and by setting in parallel Locris, her birth place, and Mitylene, the home of Sappho, Nossis reinforces her poetic kinship with Sappho.¹⁰³ The mock-epitaph form of the epigram, introduced by the typical address of the passerby of a tomb, Ὦ ξεῖν’, thus replaces the conventional delivery of the message of the deceased to their family and birthplace with Sappho and Mitylene. As the recipient of Nossis’ message, Sappho is claimed as Nossis’ poetic “family” and Mitylene as her literary “home.”¹⁰⁴ Nossis, with this epigram, identifies Sappho as her creative mother,

¹⁰⁰ Skinner (2002), 70.
¹⁰¹ Gutzwiller (1998), 76.
¹⁰² I follow Gow and Page’s emendations here (1965, 442).
¹⁰³ Bowman (1998), 41.
from whom her literary career is descended.

The identification of a female poetic inheritance in Nossis’ poetry is exemplified in 3 *HE* (= *AP* 6.265):

"Ἡρα τιμάεσσα, Λακίνιον ἃ τὸ θυύδες
πολλάκις οὐρανόθεν νισομένα καθορῆς,
δέξαι βύσσινον ἐίμα τοι μετὰ παιδός ἀγανας
Νοσσίδος ṃφανεν Θευφιλίς ἃ Κλεόχας.

This is ostensibly a dedication to Hera Lacinia of a robe woven by the poetess under the tutelage of her mother, Theuphilis. By naming Theuphilis as the primary dedicator and herself as ‘her noble daughter’ (παιδός ἀγανᾶς, 3), Nossis places herself in the tradition of the female craftsmanship handed down through generations of mothers and daughters. ¹⁰⁵ This is further indicated by the matronymic used to identify Theuphilis herself as the daughter of Cleocha (Θευφιλίς ἃ Κλεόχας, 4). The matronymic perhaps signifies an intended primary audience of women, as it has been identified that matronymics, rather than patronymics, were more commonly used within the private female community as a method of identification. ¹⁰⁶ Even if she was not writing for a primary female audience before publication, ¹⁰⁷ Nossis here expresses an explicitly female poetic identity through the use of the matronymic, as well as the implication of weaving (ἀφανεν, 4) for female poetic creativity. ¹⁰⁸ By ending the epigram with a line

¹⁰⁶ Skinner (1987), 41.
¹⁰⁷ For rejection of Skinner’s suggestion of a primary female audience, see Bowman (1998),46-51.
¹⁰⁸ For weaving as a metaphor for poetry, and in particular the female voice in poetry, see Pomeroy (1978); Snyder (1981).
connecting mothers and daughters (Νοσσίδος ... Θευφιλίς ... Κλεόχας), and with the placement of the matronymic at the closure of the poem, Nossis is emphasising a female line of textile and poetic creativity.¹⁰⁹

Nossis’ overtly female identity further manifests itself in an epigram spoken in the voice of the (male) burlesque dramatist Rhinthon, who is described as Μουσάων ὀλίγα τις ἀηδονίς (10 HE = AP 7.414). The hyper-feminisation of ἀηδονίς, which was already associated with specifically female song,¹¹⁰ by the -ίς suffix, draws attention to Nossis’ female presence beneath the mask of Rhinthon’s male voice.¹¹¹ Nossis’ ability to articulate a proclamation of her female authorship through a public celebration of male poetic skill thus reinforces her distinctly female voice already established through her claim of literary inheritance from her biological mother, Theuphilis, and poetic “mother”, Sappho.¹¹²

¹¹² Hauser (2016), 156.
Chapter Three – Reception of Female Hellenistic Epigrammatists

All four of the female epigrammatists discussed were respected throughout antiquity, even though the true extent of their influence on literature, in both the Hellenistic period and later, cannot be fully determined due to the meagreness of the survival of their works.

Moero, in particular, seems to have been more greatly appreciated, even into the sixth century AD, than the survival of merely two of her epigrams would suggest. Christodorus of Coptus’ descriptions of the statues erected in the gymnasium at the Baths of Zeuxippus, which makes up the second book of the Greek Anthology, includes a description of a statue of Moero’s son Homerus of Byzantium, of which three of the seven lines are focused on Moero (AP 2.407-413):

"Ἰστατο δ᾽ ἄλλος Ὑμηρός, δὴ οὐ πρόμον εὐεπίαων
θέσκελον νὰ Ἔλληντος ἐὕρρειόντος ὅιο,
ἀλλὰ δὸ Ὑρηκίησι παρ᾽ ἡσιοὶ γείνατο μήτηρ
Μοιρὼ κυδαλήμη Βυζαντίας, ἢν ἔτε παιόνην
ἐτρεφον εὐεπίης ἐρωθίον ἱδίμονα Μοῦσαι:
κεῖνος γὰρ τραγικῆς πινυτῆν ἑσκήσατο τέχνην,
kοσμήσας ἐπέσσιν ἐὰν Βυζαντία πάτηριν.

Most notably, he is identified as the son of his mother, whose own poetic skills are also emphasised, rather than by his paternal lineage which would have been more
common and expected.\textsuperscript{113} Evidently, even into the sixth century AD, when Christodorus flourished, Moero was very well respected as a poetess in her own right. Here, she is described as κυδαλίμη (410), an adjective commonly used in Homer as an epithet of heroes.\textsuperscript{114} She is also specifically associated with the epic genre, in particular heroic epic (ἐὔεπίς ἥρωιδος, 411), which, it is emphasised, she composed while still a child (ἔτι παιδήν, 410). Although not explicitly compared to Homer, Moero and her poetry are nevertheless described in a manner which evokes an association with Homeric poetry, with the repetition of εὐεπίαων, when Christodorus points out that the Homerus he is describing is not the famous epic poet (407-8), and εὔεπίς (411).

Erinna was also compared to Homer, albeit in more explicit terms. An anonymous epigram on Erinna’s Distaff declares that her three hundred hexameter are equal to Homer’s (οἱ δὲ τριηκόσιοι ταῦτης στίχοι ἴσοι Ὅμηρῳ, AP 9.190.3), a sentiment reiterated in her Suda entry (οἱ δὲ στίχοι αὕτης ἐκρίθησαν ἴσοι Ὅμηρῳ).\textsuperscript{115} Like Moero, Erinna was also mentioned by Christodorus in his descriptions of the statues; however, she has the distinction of being one of the statues described (AP 2.108-10):

\begin{quote}
Παρθένικη δ’ Ἡριννα λιγύθροος ἔξετο κούρην,
οὐ μίτον ἀμφιφώσα πολύπλοκον, ἀλλ’ ἐνι στιγῆ
Πιερικῆς ῥαθάμιγγας ἀποσταλάωσα μελίσσης.
\end{quote}

The image of Erinna distilling drops of honey from the Pierian bee here links her

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{113} Skinner (2005), 92.
\textsuperscript{114} It is used of Menelaus (Il. 4.100, 4.177, 7.392, 13.591, 13.601, 17.69; Od. 4.2, 4.16, 4.23, 4.46, 4.217, 15.5, 15.141), Ajax (Il. 15.415), Nestor (Il. 19.238), Achilles (Il. 20.439), Odysseus (Od. 3.219, 22.89, 22.238).
\textsuperscript{115} Suda s.v. Ἡριννα (H.521).
\end{flushright}
to the two other instances of the Πιερική μέλισσα in Christodorus’ poem: Sappho (Πιερική δὲ μέλισσα, λυγόθροος ἔξετο Σαπφώ, 69), and Homer (Πιερικὴ δὲ μέλισσα πέρι στόμα θείον ἀλάτο, 342). With these intratextual links, Christodorus was probably alluding to Erinna’s effective appropriation of Homeric epic themes into a personal Sapphic voice, a reputation which had already been implicitly concluded in the final distich of AP 9.190:

Σαπφώ δ’ Ἡρίνης ὄσσον μελέσσιν ἀμείνων,

"Ἡρίννα Σαπφοῦς τόσσον ἐν ἔξαμέτρῳ (AP 9.7-8)

The sentiment of this couplet may be simply that she was considered ‘the best hexameter poetess as Sappho was the best lyric poetess.’ However, the construction of the comparison, with the careful balancing of ὄσσον ... τόσσον and Σαπφώ δ’ Ἡρίνης ... "Ἡρίννα Σαπφοῦς, would heavily suggest that Sappho and Erinna both wrote lyrics and hexameter, even though nothing of Sappho’s hexameters or Erinna’s lyrics survive. There are no mentions of Erinna writing lyrics elsewhere. Similarly, as mentioned in Chapter Two, Anyte is defined as λυρικὴ in the ascription to 9 HE, and μελοποιός to seven of her epigrams; Nossis, too, is described as μελοποιός in the heading of 10 HE. There are also no other mentions of Anyte or Nossis as lyricists. The conception of these poetesses as lyricists, with the lack of surviving evidence, probably arose from ‘the tendency to conceive all female poets in Sapphic terms,’ rather than a reality of them actually being composers of lyric poetry.

Sappho’s incredible reputation as a female poet, with an emphasis on her

116 West (1977), 95n1.
117 Gow and Page (1965), 282.
118 Gutzwiller (1998), 54n.23.
gender, further resulted in the common belief that all women poets after Sappho ought to be compatriots or contemporary companions of Sappho.\textsuperscript{119} Thus the ethnic Μιτυληναίας is added to the heading of Anyte 23 $HE$ (= $AP$ 7.492), Erinna 1 $HE$ (= $AP$ 7.710), and Λεσβίας of Nossis 4 $HE$ (= $AP$ 9.332). Erinna is given the ethnicity of Lesbian, in addition to the possibilities of Teian, Telian and Rhodian, as well as described as ἑταίρα Σαπφοῦς καὶ ὁμόχρονος,\textsuperscript{120} even though, as Gow and Page show, the surviving fragments of her work conclusively sets her as a Hellenistic poet, rather than Archaic.\textsuperscript{121} Similarly, an alternative heading for Nossis 11 $HE$ suggests that Nossis was a companion of Sappho of Mitylene: εἰς Νοσσίδα τὴν ἑταίρα Σαπφοῦς τῆς Μιτυληναίας.

This theme of female poets recurrently associated with Sappho may have influenced the reputation and reception of these female epigrammatists, especially in light of how Sappho herself was received as a distinctly female poet. As Antipater of Thessalonica proclaims ($AP$ 7.15):

Οὔνομά μεν Σαπφώ. τόσσον δ’ υπερέσχον ἀοιδάν

θηλειάν, ἀνδρῶν δόσσον ὁ Μαιονίδας.

In particular, certain connotations of femininity seem to be implied in the θῆλυς when used in association with Sappho. Although the θῆλυν Ὄμηρον in Antipater of Thessalonica’s canon of female poets is most likely to be describing Σαπφώ κόσμον, some scholars take it in apposition to Ἀνυτης στομα, which would imply that Anyte had a status comparable to Homer’s, or perhaps her poetry employed

\textsuperscript{119} Gow and Page (1965), 89; Barnard (1978), 208.

\textsuperscript{120} Suda s.v. "Ἡριννα (H.521).

\textsuperscript{121} (1965), 281-2.
reminiscences of Homeric style (AP 9.26.3). However, although her influence in the epigrammatic tradition, particularly in bucolic and sepulchral epigrams, was not insignificant, it is unlikely that Antipater would have made Anyte superior to Sappho. Undeniably, by placing the phrase between Ανυτης στομα and Λεσβιδων Σαπφω κόσμον ἐγκλοκάμων, Antipater does create ambiguity as to whether he is referring to Anyte or Sappho as the “female Homer,” and perhaps is an indication of Anyte’s otherwise indeterminable reputation in antiquity, as well as a further association of Anyte with Sappho as poets who are θηλυς.

The characterisation of θηλυς as a suggestive poetic gender term may be explored further with the use of the adjective θηλυγλωσσος to describe Nossis in AP 9.26. Whether it is taken to imply “one who speaks like a woman” which would be ‘a curiously redundant epithet for a canonical woman poet’ or “one who speaks specifically to women,” the intimacy between women expressed by Nossis in her poetry is particularly evocative of Sappho’s erotic poetry, of which Nossis herself proclaims to be an inheritor in her two programmatic epigrams (1 and 11 HE). By claiming Sappho, who gained her fame despite (or perhaps even due to) her female-centred eroticism, as her poetic model, Nossis ensured her own reputation as a female erotic poetess, in the style of Sappho.

Despite her induction into the company of Muses, and perhaps the consequent desexualising of Sappho as a poetic figure by Hellenistic epigrammatists, Sappho was still primarily known as an erotic poetess. The ridicule Sappho’s reputation was previously subjected to in comedy (see

122 Geoghegan (1979), 9.
123 Werner (1994), 256.
Introduction) may therefore have encouraged a disassociation from the type of poetry Sappho had a reputation for. Instead, there seems to be an emphasis on the youth and innocence of maidenhood in the portrayal of certain poetesses. The main emphasises in the epitaphic epigrams on Erinna are on, understandably, her age and brevity of life (AP 4.1.12, 7.11.2, 7.12.1-4, 7.13.1-2, 9.190.4), and the fact that, although she did not write much (probably due to her early death), her work was of the highest quality (AP 7.11.1-3, 7.713.1. 9.190.1-2).

In a unique instance of a female epigrammatist possibly referring to a near contemporary, or slightly earlier, fellow female poet, Anyte herself may have been referring to Moero in AP 7.190, further contributing to the association between the two women. If Anyte’s Μυρώ was indeed Moero, it is intriguing that she is depicted as a young girl, mourning the loss of her pets, her παίγνια, when Moero is known to have at least reached adulthood and had a son. Together with the sixth century AD testimony of Moero’s fame by Christodorus emphasising that she was “still a girl” when the Muses gifted her poetic knowledge, it seems that Moero was most admired for the poetry she had written as a maiden before marriage and childbirth, after which either she stopped writing or her writing was not as appreciated; however, this hypothesis does not stand up with the fact that she was

125 She is traditionally said to have died at the age of nineteen.
126 Μυρώ seems to have been an alternative spelling of Moero’s name, as suggested by the ascription above 2 HE (Gow and Page (1965), 413-4). Skinner (2005) suggests that it may perhaps been an invented sobriquet (105).
127 The use of παίγνια to refer to her grasshopper and cicada, both ‘quintessential songsters and emblems of [Greek poets’] craft,’ could be literarily significant here, being the title of the bucolic poetry of Moero and Anyte’s older contemporary, Philetas (Skinner (2005), 105).
praised specifically in conjunction with her son by Christodorus.\textsuperscript{128} Perhaps, instead, Moero herself presented the voice of a young maiden voice specifically to avoid the comedic ridicule and stigma attached to her most famed female predecessor, Sappho.\textsuperscript{129}

Anyte and Moero seemed to have been closely associated, if not recognised by themselves, at least by other epigrammatists. Antipater of Thessalonica names Moero right before Ἀνύτης στόμα (\textit{AP} 9.26.3). Meanwhile, Meleager assigns varieties of the same flower, the lily, to them, κρίνα to Anyte and λείρια to Moero,\textsuperscript{130} which, within the πόλλα μέν ... πόλλα δέ clause, suggests that Meleager saw some literary link between the two poets, as contrasting aspects of similar poetic style or themes perhaps.\textsuperscript{131} Indeed, even just from the two surviving epigrams of Moero, the ‘distinctly female sensitivity to the natural world’ expressed in them is only really shared elsewhere in Hellenistic epigram in Anyte’s epigrams.\textsuperscript{132}

Ultimately, much of the reputation of the female epigrammatists (as well as other female poets of other periods) seems to have been influenced by the reception of Sappho throughout antiquity. The \textit{topos} of enrolling Sappho as one of the Muses, reinforcing and restricting her poetic space within the female sphere (see Chapter One), is reconfigured into the reception of subsequent female poets. So Leonidas (or Meleager) imagines Erinna plucking the flowers of the Muses as a metaphor for the production of her poetry (Μουσῶν ἄνθεα δρεπτομέναν \textit{AP

\textsuperscript{128} Skinner (2005), 105-6.
\textsuperscript{129} Skinner (2005), 106.
\textsuperscript{130} κρίνα and λείρια are often used synonymously (Gow and Page (1965), 597).
\textsuperscript{131} Skinner (2005), 103.
\textsuperscript{132} Gutzwiller (2017b), 405.

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7.13.2), recalling the image of the roses of Pieria used by Sappho as an image for the Muses’ gift and employed by Hellenistic epigrammatists to refer to Sappho’s poetry. Similarly, just as Sappho is inducted into the company of the Muses, Erinna is envisioned to have joined the chorus of the Muses after her death, as an insurance of the endurance of her fame (σὸς δ’ ἐπέων, Ἡριννα, καλὸς πόνος οὖ σε γεγονεῖ / φοίσθαι, ἑχειν δὲ χοροῦς ἄμμια Πιερίσιν, AP 7.12.5-6). Meanwhile, Moero is defined in distinctly female poetic terms, as the mother (μήτηρ, AP 2.409) of Homerus, and herself raised by the Muses, as if one of their own children, and not merely one inspired by the Muses.

Such identification with the Muses reflects the opening lines of Antipater of Thessalonica’s list of outstanding female poets (AP 9.26), where Helicon and Pieria, places commonly associated with the Muses, are said to have raised (ἔθρεψε) these nine women. Where Heaven raised nine Muses for the immortals, Earth bore nine for mortals:

ἐννέα μὲν Μούσας μέγας Οὐρανός, ἐννέα δ’ αὐτᾶς

Γαῖα τέκεν, θανατοῖς ἀφθιτον εὐφροσύναν.

With the iconic topos of Sappho as a Muse already established by the time of Antipater of Thessalonica in the Imperial Period, Antipater thus inducts Praxilla, Moero, Anyte, Erinna, Telesilla, Corinna, Nossis and Myrtis into the company of Sappho.
Conclusion

In the reception of Sappho as a poetic figure during the Hellenistic period, and into the early Imperial period, epigrammatists tended to concentrate on her gender, expressed through comparisons with Homer, which emphasised her status as θῆλυ (AP 7.15, 9.26.3-4), as well as by creating a topos of inducting her into the company of the Muses, casting her as a tenth and/or mortal Muse (AP 7.14, 7.407, 9.66, 9.506). By appropriating the imagery through which Sappho expressed concerns of memory and poetic immortality, for herself and for other women, Hellenistic epigrammatists establish and ensure the endurance of Sappho’s fame. However, her overt expression of a female voice and focus on fellow women in her poetry, associated with “conventionally female figures of inspiration,” simultaneously distinguished her as the archetypal female poet, lauded for the quality of her poetry, and restricted her to the female community, segregated from genuine appraisal in the conventional male poetic sphere.¹³³ Sappho’s outstanding abilities as a female poet could only be understood if she was figured as beyond ordinary humanity, in the image of a Muse, which gave her inspirational qualities but, at the same time, seems to implicate that future female poets having her as their model would be a futile endeavour.

Sappho’s distinguished reputation as the exemplary female poet ensured that later female poets would be held in comparison to her. Thus, the four female epigrammatists discussed in this dissertation were received and appreciated in distinctly Sapphic terms. However, it is difficult to infer conclusively the direct influences Sappho’s poetry may have had on the female Hellenistic

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¹³³ Rosenmeyer (1997), 134.
epigrammatists, since little survives of Sappho’s works and even less of the epigrammatists’. However, the survival of their poetry, even the small amount which we do have, and even just the knowledge of their name and an understanding of the reputation they had in antiquity suggest that their poetry offered something which, while distinctly female, appealed to the literary tastes of their contemporaries and successors in a way which Sappho had previously during the Archaic period.\textsuperscript{134} They refocussed traditionally male themes in epigram by using language more conventionally associated with the private female community and traditionally appropriate to female poetic expression; at the same time, they successfully translated aggressively masculine imagery, particularly that of Homer’s martial world, into a new understanding of the female perspective. Thus, even in the epigrams which are ostensibly conventional dedicatory and sepulchral epigrams, they were able to express an undertone of the female perspective. This interaction with both their male and female predecessors by the female epigrammatists in their poetry allowed them to achieve an alternative and distinctly female voice within a traditionally public (and therefore male, by default) genre.

Furthermore, the epigram’s traditional association with commemoration accentuated a conscious awareness by the female epigrammatists of the endurance of their female voice within the public, male literary sphere. Erinna provided a voice for her fellow women, silenced by death, as Baucis was, or, like Agatharchis, by art. Similarly, Anyte’s vocalisation of Homeric goos through a female perspective, especially in her sepulchral epigrams, validated the expression of

\textsuperscript{134} Skinner (1996), 190-1.
female lamentation through the publicity of the epigram form.\textsuperscript{135} Meanwhile, Nossis was able to formally set in stone her identification as a female inheritor of Sappho. In contrast to the concern of memory as a preservation and continuation of the female community in Sappho’s lyrics, by writing in the traditionally memorialising genre of epigram, these epigrammatists ensured that the female voice was expressed and heard in a domain which otherwise silenced women’s voice.

Thus, Sappho and her poetic immortality, which was a thematic concern frequently expressed in her poetry, endures not only through the survival of (the fragments of) her poetry, but also through the (partial) survival of her female poetic successors, who looked to her as their poetic inspiration, their creative “mother.”

\textsuperscript{135} Greene (2005), 141.
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