

V. Anacreon, Fr. 5 Diehl

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Athenaeus 13. 599C-D: Ἐν τούτοις ὁ Ἑρμῆσιάνᾱξ σφάλλεται
 συγχρονεῖν οἰόμενος Σαπφῶ καὶ Ἀνακρέοντα, τὸν μὲν κατὰ Κῦρον καὶ
 Πολυκράτην γενόμενον, τὴν δὲ κατ' Ἀλυσίαν τὸν Κροίσου πατέρα.
 Χαμαιλέων δ' ἐν τῷ περὶ Σαπφῶς καὶ λέγειν τινὰς φησιν εἰς αὐτὴν
 πεποιθῆσθαι ὑπὸ Ἀνακρέοντος τάδε.

Σφαῖρῃ δηῦτέ με πορφυρέῃ
 βάλλων χρυσοκόμης Ἔρωσ
 νήνι ποικιλοσαμβάλῳ
 συμπαῖζειν προκαλεῖται.
 5 ἡ δ', ἐστὶν γὰρ ἅπ' εὐκτίτου
 Λέσβου, τὴν μὲν ἐμὴν κόμην,
 λευκὴ γάρ, καταμέμφεται,
 πρὸς δ' ἄλλην τινὰ χάσκει.

1 δηῦτε Seidler: δευτε 2 πορφυρέῃ Pauw: πορφυρενι A 3 Seidler: νηνι
 (νυνι) ποικίλος λαμβανω 5 Barnes: ηδεστι γαρ απευκτικου 8 ἄλλην] ἄλλον Barnes
 (sequentibus Pauw, Dalecamp, Bergk, Edmonds).

The context in which Athenaeus quotes Anacreon's lines, so far from assisting their interpretation, has rather hindered editors* by its perpetuation of the idiotic suggestion (which Chamaeleon ought to have known better than to repeat) that Sappho was herself the Lesbian lass who repulsed the aging Anacreon. We must

* I quote the fragments of Anacreon by the numeration of E. Diehl, *Anthologia Lyrica Graeca* 1.4² (Leipzig 1935), and the *Anacreontea* by the numeration of J. M. Edmonds, *Elegy and Iambus* 2 (London 1931). I refer to the following works by author's/editor's name only: *Anacreon Teius* . . . emendatus . . . operâ . . . Josuae Barnes (Cambridge 1705) 272-75 [No. 101]; T. Bergk, *Poetae Lyrici Graeci* 3³ (Leipzig 1882) 258-59 [Anacr. 14]; C. M. Bowra, *Greek Lyric Poetry* (Oxford 1936) 294-95; J. M. Edmonds, *Lyra Graeca* 2 (London 1924) 144-47 [Anacr. 15]; G. S. Farnell, *Greek Lyric Poetry* (London 1891) 189-90, 350 [Anacr. 6]; H. Fränkel, *Dichtung und Philosophie des frühen Griechentums* (New York 1951) 379-80; B. Gentili, *Anacreon* (Rome 1958) 12, 141 [No. 13]; B. Lavagnini, *Aglaia* (Paravia [1937]) 172-73 [Anacr. 5]; J. A. Moore, *Selections from the Greek Elegiac, Iambic and Lyric Poets* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1947) 36-37, 97 [Anacr. 5]; H. W. Smyth, *Greek Melic Poets* (London 1900) 46-47, 288 [Anacr. 7]; U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Sappho und Simonides* (Berlin 1913) 116-17.

start with the words of the poem themselves, realizing that neither the girl nor the speaker is further identified and that we do not know even the sex of the speaker (a point which may be of some importance for the interpretation of the second stanza).

Σφαίρη: emphatic, to judge by its position; the speaker has been hit unawares by a ball and is surprised. *δεῦτε* (*si uera lectio*; it is preferred by Bergk and Diehl) ought to mean “come (and look),” but Seidler’s *δηδτε* (“What, again?”, cf. Denniston, *Particles*² 228) gives better sense; a ball is not only a toy (*AP* 6.280.1–2, of a girl; 282.5, 309, of boys) and an appurtenance of certain dances (*Od.* 6.100–17, 8.370–80; *Ath.* 1.14D–E), but a wooer’s gift (*AP* 12.44.1–2); and it is in the last of these senses that the speaker understands it. *πορφυρέη*: like the ball in *Od.* 8.373; the epithet may, but obviously does not have to, be merely literary. (Gentili asserts that *πορφυρέος* here = *ποικίλος*, but does not explain why.) *βάλλων*: “someone threw it at me—but who?” Clearly *χρυσοκόμης* “*Ερως*, not of course in person (though *Eros* is a notorious ball-player in later literature, cf. *Ap.Rhod.* 3.132–41, *AP* 5. 214¹), but because the speaker assumes that the thrower’s action is intentional, and therefore the ball must be an invitation; the epithet *χρυσοκόμης* might be merely literary, suggesting that the speaker is rather bored by the whole business,² but since *χρυσοκόμης* is a standard epithet of *Apollo* from *Tyrtæus* (fr. 3.4 Diehl) onwards, and is also applied to *Dionysus* (*Hes. Theog.* 947), it may be that we should understand that this love is the child of wine and music. There is an obvious contrast, too, between *χρυσοκόμης* here and the *λευκή κόμη* of the second quatrain. Anyhow, when the speaker finally looks to see who actually threw the ball, the answer is plain: a girl (*νήνι*), though at the moment the only thing of special note about her is that she wears gaily-decorated sandals (*ποικιλοσαμβάλλω*).³ *συμπαίζειν*: as Wilamowitz saw, *συμ-* implies that *Eros* himself will be a player in the game; perhaps he will be on the speaker’s side, and if so the game is won before it starts (cf. *AP*

¹ Cf. Fränkel: “In Fg. 34 . . . ist ein andres Kinderspielzeug, die Astragalen, als Symbol für das Spiel verwandt, das *Eros* mit seinen Opfern treibt.”

² Love is conventionally “golden” from *Iliad* 3.64 onwards; for Anacreon Love has wings of golden sheen (fr. 53.2), and *Eros* is *χρυσοκόμος* again in *Eur. IA* 548; he is *χρυσοχαίτας* in *Anacreont.* 43.12.

³ To appreciate Seidler’s emendation here one should have contemplated the gruesome hash which Barnes made of this line; no wonder Bentley thought that Barnes knew about as much Greek as an Athenian blacksmith.

5.93). In any case Eros challenges (*προκαλείται*) the speaker (cf. *Anacreont.* 16.24–25: *χεῖλος οἶα Πειθοῦς/προκαλούμενον φίλημα*), and the speaker (one may presume that the girl is now completely visible) wordlessly accepts the challenge.

But now the atmosphere of “fun and games” darkens. *ἡ δέ:* But the girl . . . *ἐστὶν γὰρ ἀπ’ εὐκτίτου Λέσβου*: for she comes from “well-founded” (i.e. both populous and civilized) Lesbos . . . *τὴν μὲν ἐμὴν κόμην, λευκὴ γάρ, καταμέμφεται*: finds fault with my hair, for it is white . . . *πρὸς δ’ ἄλλην τινὰ χάσκει*: and gapes after another. This quatrain is not so easily analyzed as the first, but the general lines of the situation are clear: when the girl sees the speaker’s hair, she complains that it is white and turns her attention to another. Thus the essential facts of the situation seem to be that the speaker saw the girl’s feet before the rest of her became visible, and that she did not see the speaker’s hair until after line 4. The speaker then must be supposed to have been lying down with head concealed until roused by the ball. Such a situation would obviously be possible in the later stages of a symposium (cf. *Plat. Symp.* 223B–D, where it is reasonable to suggest that the guests might be sleeping *ἐγκεκαλύμμενοι*); and the order of the words in the first quatrain makes it easy to imagine someone *somno uinoque sepultus* suddenly roused, perhaps not for the first time that evening (“A ball? What, again?”), squinting at it from under cover (“A purple one—ah, a love-challenge. Who from, I wonder?”), and then seeing a pair of feet in stylish sandals (“A girl—and a smart one too, to judge by her footwear”). So up the speaker sits, with hair revealed for the first time, only to hear the girl in her strange Aeolic accent abuse the hair for its whiteness and to see her turn to another. The idea that the scene is to be supposed to have taken place at a symposium, first put forward (so far as my knowledge goes) by Wilamowitz, and accepted by Bowra, Lavagnini and Fränkel, is a natural one and leads necessarily to the assumption that the speaker is a man. But in that case what is the girl’s status, and how about *ἄλλην*?

Wilamowitz’ view was that the girl was at the symposium in a professional capacity (he calls her bluntly “die Dirne”), that is, she was either a “companion” (who must have come with one of the guests, or been hired by the host to make herself affable to those guests who had no companion of their own) or, as Fränkel suggests, a hired musician; but if either of these hypotheses is the

correct one, we must ask whether the girl would be in a position to rebuff a guest to whom she had (however accidentally) offered a challenge (assuming that she had been hired by the host), or to offer a challenge to an unknown guest (assuming that she had come in the company of one of the guests).⁴ It must therefore, I think, be supposed that the parenthesis, "for she is from well-founded Lesbos," is not simply a reference to the girl's moral idiosyncrasy (it may not be one at all),⁵ but implies that she is at the party as an equal of the speaker, with a right to pick and choose her own associates. As a native of Lesbos, with its traditional care for women's education and its famous beauty-contests, she not only thinks that she knows how to choose for herself but can remain unembarrassed under the appraising looks of a potential lover. That her criteria are false, since she has no idea of the superiority of experience over youth in amorous affairs (cf. Anacr. fr. 88) or of the doctrine, so often insisted on in the *Anacreontea*, that people are as young as they feel,⁶ may increase the wooer's chagrin at the girl's far from discreet rejection (one may wonder what spoken Aeolic sounded like—was there something in the girl's very tone which made the slight more wounding?). But if I am right about the social status of the girl, the occasion cannot have been a normal symposium (since no woman could be at such a symposium as a guest)⁷; it is more likely that we should suppose the incident to have occurred at a *pannychis*, at which persons of free birth and respectable character could associate on equal, and sometimes on embarrassingly free and easy, terms (cf. the contretemps in Menander's *Epitrepontes*, or Theocr. 2). Besides, if the speaker were lying on the ground (as would be more likely at a *pannychis* than at a symposium) rather than on a couch, it would be easier

⁴ Lucian's Philinna (*Dial. mer.* 3) risked everything by leaving Diphilus for Lamprias at a symposium, but even she was not so imprudent as to offend Lamprias too.

⁵ Note the purely geographical reference to *Λέσβιοι* . . . *ἔρωτες* in the "Leporello" catalogue, *Anacreont.* 14.14–17. I do not insist that all the material in the *Anacreontea* goes back to Anacreon himself, but the Anacreontists knew their master's works better than we do, and it seems safe to assume that many of the themes (and some at least of the actual words) in the *Anacreontea* were taken over from Anacreon himself.

⁶ Cf. *Anacreont.* 37.4–6, 39, 43.12–16, 51, 53.7–8, 63. All these references are to old men; but I take it that, given the right social climate, they might be taken to apply to women too.

⁷ I except such abnormalities as the female symposium in Lucian, *Dial. mer.* 5, and also strictly feminine occasions such as the Thesmophoria.

to understand why the girl's sandals were the first things about her to strike the observer's eye. So the sex of the speaker is still undetermined; and with that fact in mind we may go on to consider afresh the interpretation of the last line: *πρὸς δ' ἄλλην τινὰ χάσκει*.

It may be as well to deal first with *χάσκει*. It is an appropriate word for lions and other voracious monsters (such as Scylla); but Barnes added a new (and undeservedly neglected) touch to the picture by interpreting *χάσκω* as "*Desiderantum more Inhio*," and quoting as a parallel *πέτονται τε περὶ τὸν τῆς ὀχέας καιρὸν χάσκοντες*, which he claimed to have found in "*Aristot. Histor. Animal. 1.9.c.8*." The same reference is still to be found s.v. *χάσκω* in Valpy's edition of Stephanus' *Thesaurus*, but the words are not to be found in any reliable edition of Aristotle; they come, as Valpy shows, from Athenaeus (9.389E), where they are added, as information from an anonymous source (*φασὶ δὲ καὶ . . .*), to Athenaeus' summary of *HA* 9.614A.2–28. The subject of *πέτονται* is *πέρδικες*, both female and male; and partridges are notoriously highly sexed (*Arist. HA* 1.488B.4). Barnes does not draw any explicit conclusion from this parallel; but he must have accepted its applicability to the present case, since he prints *ἄλλον* in his text, with a note "*pro ἄλλην, quod prius obtinuit, ἄλλον lego*" (Pauw and others, to whom this suggestion is attributed in later *apparatus critici*, may have taken it from Barnes). It is natural to suppose that Barnes felt certain scruples about discussing the sexual aspects of the matter, even in Latin (which was, after all, a much more perspicuous language to Barnes and his contemporaries than it is to most people to-day).⁸ We are thus brought up against a fundamental difficulty. All the reported manuscripts of Athenaeus read *ἄλλην* at this point, and it must be presumed that that is what their archetype had; but is it what Anacreon wrote?⁹ Farnell thought the change to *ἄλλον* unnecessary, and Gentili calls it simply "bad"; but Edmonds made the dilemma clear by printing *ἄλλον* in his text and commenting "*mss. corr. in mal. part. ἄλλην*." If it could be shown conclusively that the speaker in Anacreon's poem was a woman, then

⁸ No doubt even an Athenian blacksmith might have hesitated to discuss openly the question whether a lady's affections were perverted, especially if (like Barnes in this case) he did not believe that they were.

⁹ I waste no time on the suggestion, put forward by Smyth and accepted by Gentili, that *ἄλλην* refers to *κόμην*.

there could be no doubt: ἄλλην, however distasteful it might be to us, would be right; but since the poem tells us nothing definite about the speaker's sex,¹⁰ the question is open and cannot be settled on the evidence available to us. We do not know when "Lesbian" acquired its modern connotation, but it is doubtful if Anacreon could have understood Λέσβιος in the sense which ἄλλην would require; Aristophanes did not, and it seems unlikely, to say the least, that Catullus can have. All that is necessary is to suppose (with Edmonds) that the semantic change in the meaning of "Lesbian" took place in time for Anacreon's parenthesis about the girl's origin to influence the scribe of our Athenaeus archetype (and that is established by Lucian, *Dial. mer.* 5). We must therefore frankly confess ignorance (but an ignorance tempered by doubt); *pace* Bowra, we do not know whether the girl is to be supposed to have had "the traditional affections of her island," or even whether those affections had become traditionally associated with Lesbos by the time at which Anacreon was writing. Of the other accusations which have been leveled against Anacreon's treatment of her, I think that we can safely prefer Moore's judgement that χάσκει is "a brutal word" (though it may be suspected that Moore did not fully understand just how brutal the word really is) to Bowra's, that "χάσκει . . . implies a certain amount of stupidity."

We need not waste time on refuting the view, ascribed by Bergk to Welcker, that the second quatrain is spurious; but we may fairly ask whether the poem is complete as we have it. We do not know who the speaker is, or who the girl, nor do we know who "the other" may have been; but we know that the speaker was left to suffer "grinding torments" and that the girl, like "Chloris . . . the cruel fair" well known to composers of Latin elegiacs, "left her lover to despair" and to boiling fury. Light as the tone of the opening lines certainly is, it is, I think, impossible to accept Fränkel's view of the poem as having nothing to do with "hohe Leidenschaft" but simply with "ein blosses 'Spielen.'" Certainly it all began as a game, with what seemed like a harmless toy,

¹⁰ The balance of probability certainly inclines to the view that the speaker is male and may well represent Anacreon himself; but it can hardly be emphasized too often that it is a fundamental error in literary interpretation to assume that when a writer uses the first person singular, he or she must be speaking *in propria persona*. In any case, even if our speaker is Anacreon himself, it does not follow from that that the episode which he describes must actually have happened to him (or to anyone else).

and for the girl it doubtless remained a game to the end; but Anacreon knew that Love's toys could be very dangerous (cf. fr. 34: ἀσπραγάλαι δ' Ἐρωτός εἰσιν | μανίαι τε καὶ κυδοιμοί), and in the wrong circumstances even the gayest of balls may prove as explosive as any bomb. What ought to have happened, we may see from *Odyssey* 6; the Lesbian girl's ball roused Anacreon's "me" just as effectively as the cry of Nausicaa's maids, when their ball fell into the river, roused Odysseus from his θάμνος; and out "I" crept from "my" retreat, never for a moment supposing that "my" response to the girl's challenge would prove less welcome to her than Odysseus' appearance was to Nausicaa. But whereas Nausicaa (being a regular royal princess and sensitive even to the dried peas under other people's mattresses) behaved with perfect self-control, and was vouchsafed in due time the power to see through Odysseus' immediately unprepossessing exterior to the ideal husband within, the Lesbian girl (whose manners were appalling, for all her pride of origin) did not spare her suitor's feelings at all; she not only uttered an explicit (and presumably generally audible) rejection, but rammed the insult home by gaping after someone else. Thus, so far from "me" being in a position to take the initiative with "my" Nausicaa, "I" was left like Hera after the judgment of Paris, to stomach as best "I" could a bitter blow to "my" self-esteem.¹¹ What Hera did to console herself, we all know; but "I" could not stage even a small-scale invasion of Lesbos to recoup "myself" for this *spretae iniuria formae*; all that "I" could do was to compress my furious hate and resentment into that last blistering word χάσκει. (Even if we discount, as I think we ought to, the possibility that Anacreon wrote ἄλλην, with its obvious implication of perversion, χάσκει with its savage suggestion of "Vénus tout entière à sa proie attachée" seems to go far beyond anything which we could rightly call, with Fränkel, "gutmütiger Spott.") It might be argued, I think, that the enormity of the final comparison ("I" = Hera planning the destruction of Troy¹²) might have restored the speaker's good humor; but my own feeling is that, if that were so, the poem would have ended on some other note than the hiss of χάσκει. The whole picture, it seems to me, is as complete as it

¹¹ Lavagnini was obviously right to headline the poem "Ripulsa."

¹² For a similar audacity, compare *Anacreont.* 26, in which the speaker compares his own ἀλώσεις (by the bright eyes of the fair) with those of Thebes and Troy.

needs to be; and I think it may therefore be safely claimed that in these eight lines we have one of the few poems by Anacreon which are complete.

Moore, with better judgment than most commentators, summed up this poem as "not . . . pleasant"; but even so there can be no denying that it is a very notable piece of writing. Fränkel has a fine evaluation of the technique of the poem in his famous paper, "Eine Stileigenheit der frühgriechischen Literatur" (*NGG* 1924, now in *Wege und Formen frühgriechischen Denkens* [Munich 1955], 60–61); and the charm and lightness of the first quatrain are plain to every reader. Perhaps the poem should formally be classed with the *vers de société*, along with the Lockers and the Praeds; but the range of emotions so dramatically displayed in so small a compass puts Anacreon's poem right at the top of the class. Leigh Hunt's "Jenny kissed me . . ." and Austin Dobson's triolet, "I intended an ode . . .," are in their own way as complete, as vivid and as neat as Anacreon's two stanzas, but can they be compared with their predecessor as poetry?