WRITING SAMPLE

The following is a writing sample taken from the first 15 pages of chapter 2 from my dissertation, "Reading 1 Corinthians with Philosophically Educated Women." In this chapter, I set up my argument for the presence of philosophically educated women in first century Corinth by placing these women in the broader context of Greek and Roman education. Philosophy was not the only discipline that women learned: primarily medicine, writing, and poetry, and secondarily dance, athletics, oratory, and music. An important pattern emerges from this evidence: (1) education of women is typically acquired in a household setting and (2) these women are almost always associated with a wealthy family.

CHAPTER 2:
EDUCATED WOMEN IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

This dissertation approaches three major elements in 1 Corinthians in light of what can be known about philosophically educated women in the ancient world. Many New Testament scholars have already identified strong relationships and parallels between Pauline thought and ancient philosophies. The ongoing *Corpus Hellenisticum* project has focused on the Stoic Hierocles and the neo-Pythagorean pseudepigraphon, but its contributors have not considered how philosophically educated women would have read 1 Corinthians. Similarly, the members of the *Hellenistic Moral Philosophy and Early Christianity Section of SBL* and other scholars who have found parallels to Paul in Pythagorean, Platonism, Cynicism, Stoicism, and Epicureanism have not addressed this question. The histories of philosophically educated women are severely marginalized in classical scholarship.

In chapters two and three, I will review the histories of philosophically educated women in both Greece and Rome. It is important to consider the women philosophers of the classical period because thinkers of the Roman period refer to these women as examples and inspiration for women of their time. I will argue that the histories of philosophically educated women indicate a strong tradition of the involvement of women in every school of popular philosophy which NT scholars have found useful for interpreting Paul: (neo-)Pythagoreanism, Platonism, Cynicism, Stoicism, and Epicureanism. I will also argue that the tradition indicates that women from a broad social background had access to philosophy: female teachers who were poor, women who were married or related to poor teachers, elite women who were educated as girls, and elite patronesses who supported philosophers and could bring teachers into their homes. In

this chapter I will discuss the education of women; in chapter three the active involvement of women in philosophy.

Educated Women in the Ancient Greece and Rome

The evidence for the education of women needs to be addressed in the context of education in general, and the scope of this chapter requires a brief discussion of early Greek education as well as education during the Roman period.[1] These next two chapters will prepare for the subsequent discussion of 1 Corinthians by examining the education of women in the ancient world. Considering that women were involved in all other aspects of Greek and Roman education, we can expect that some women would receive some education in philosophy. The female students and teachers of Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle for example, should be contextualized in the early Greek art and papyri that testify to the education of women during those time periods. Similarly, the later traditions of the involvement of women in philosophy as students and teachers can be contextualized in monuments, statues, and letters written to and by women during the Roman period. In this chapter, I will discuss the involvement of women in every form of education: primarily medicine, writing, and poetry [which may require literacy], and secondarily dance, athletics, oratory, and music [which does not require literacy], and finally their participation in philosophy. A word of caution is needed at this juncture: the historical record is partial and frequently more interested in men than women. Of necessity, our approach

---

[1] E. W. Bower, "Some Technical Terms in Roman Education," *Hermes* 89, no. 4 (1961): 462-477; Alan D. Booth, "Litterator," *Hermes* 109, no. 3 (1981): 371-378; J. J. Eyre, "Roman Education in the Late Republic and Early Empire," *G&R* 2nd ser. 10, no. 1 (1963): 47-59; Felix Reichmann, "The Book Trade at the Time of the Roman Empire," *The Library Quarterly* 8, no. 1 (1938): 40-7; Robert A. Kaster, "Notes on "Primary" and "Secondary" Schools in Late Antiquity," *TAPA* 113, (1983): 323-346.

will therefore be wide-ranging and eclectic. Nevertheless, a picture emerges of women educated in various disciplines and for a range of tasks.

I will ask several questions of this large body of research. First, what is the reliability of the historical existence of philosophically educated women? In other words, how historically reliable are the ancient witnesses, both epigraphic and in some cases, portraits and depictions of education concerning philosophically educated women? Secondly, what did these women know and how did they learn? The questions, of course, overlap, and I will attempt to untangle it in such a way that demonstrates that philosophically educated women would have heard and interacted with 1 Corinthians.

The Educated Woman at Work: Doctors, Scribes, and Merchants

Education during the Greek and Roman periods can be measured in two interwoven ways: evidence for literacy, and evidence of learning and teaching.[2] We know that the ability to read and write may not include education in science, logic, mathematics, and philosophy. Some philosophers and other thinkers could not read or write, having memorized texts that were read to them, and employed literate slaves or freedpersons to read and write for them.

---

[2] S. Cole, "Could Greek Women Read and Write?," in *Reflections of Women in Antiquity*, ed. Helene P. Foley (New York: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers, 1981), 219–45; Emily A. Hemelrijk, *Matrona Docta: Educated Women in the Roman Élite from Cornelia to Julia Domna* (London: Routledge, 1999); A. Ellis Hanson, "Ancient Illiteracy," in *Literacy in the Ancient World*, ed. M. Beard et al. (Ann Arbor: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1991), 159–98, elaborates on this point, also made in W. V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 32-3; Sarah Pomeroy, *Women in Hellenistic Egypt from Alexandria to Cleopatra* (New York: Schocken Books, 1984), 59-72.

William Harris argues, along with several other scholars, that literacy in the Greek and Roman worlds can be divided into three types: literacy, semi-literacy, and illiteracy.[3] Literacy is described as the full literacy of a portion of the (typically) elite – they were able to read literature and philosophy. An example of a fully literate woman is the first century historian Pamphila of Epidaurus. She is a scholar who is said to have produced 33 books on Greek history (of which 11 fragments remain), and showed an interest in Greek historians, philosophers, and politicians.[4] Like other philosophically educated women, she learned from a family member and then practiced philosophy herself. One fragment of her writing indicates that she learned from her husband, but Plant points out that she must have also had access to a great library, and produced much of her work on her own.[5] Semi-literacy is a quite broad category into which most literate people in the ancient world fit: it was the level of literacy that was required of artisans to do their jobs, including but not limited to accounting, recording inventory, and writing receipts, and even the person who could read graffiti or make a single letter on an ostraca to vote. The great majority of people in the ancient world were illiterate.

---

[3] For bibliography see Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 7-8, 327-8. These levels of literacy are a common theme in the book, and Harris provides many examples. Cf., Nicholas Hornfall, "Statistics or State of Mind," in *Literacy in the Roman World,* ed. Mary Beard, et al. (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1991): 59-76.

[4] Diog. Laert. 1.24, 68, 76, 90, 98, 2.24; 3.23, 5.36; Aul. Gell. 15.23 and Phot. Bibl. *Library*, cod. 175, 119.

[5] Plant, *Women Writers*, 127.

Literacy is most clearly associated with occupations that required some literacy.[6] Some level of literacy is required of scribes, medical practitioners (doctors, midwives, and nurses), and merchants; women served in all of these capacities.[7] Female scribes in the ancient world were mostly of the lower class, serving as slaves or freedpersons in a household or in a public setting.[8] K. Haines-Eitzen has found eleven female scribes in CIL, all of them dated 1st BCE to 2nd CE. Some examples are useful to mention:

> In these inscriptions we meet with Hapate, a shorthand writer of Greek (*notariae Grece*) who lived twenty-five years (CIL 6.33892); Corinna, who was a storeroom clerk or scribe, *cell*(*ariae*) *libr*(*ariae*) (CIL 6.3979); and Tyche, Herma, and Plaetoriae, all three of whom are identified as *amanuenses* (CIL 6.9541; CIL 6.7373; CIL 6.9542). We also find four women who are identified by the title *libraria*, a term that not only denoted a clerk or secretary, but also more specifically a literary copyist.[9]

---

[6] See note 185; cf., William A. Johnson and Holt N. Parker, eds., *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Johnson, *Readers and Reading Culture in the High Roman Empire: A Study of Elite Communities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[7] For women in the workplace, see Susan Treggiari, "Jobs for Women," *AJAH* 1 (1976) 76-104; Treggiari, "Lower Class in the Roman Economy," *Florilegium* 1 (1979): 65-86; Natalie Kampen, *Image and Status: Roman Working Women in Ostia* (Berlin: Mann, 1981); Riet Van Bremen, "Women and Wealth," in *Images of Women in Antiquity*, ed. Averil Cameron and A. Amelie Kuhrt (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1983): 223-241.

[8] Kenneth Quinn, "The Poet and his Audience in the Augustan Age," *ANRW* 2.30.1 (1982): 75– 180; Thomas Keith Dix, "Private and Public Libraries at Rome in the First Century B.C.: A Preliminary Study in the History of Roman Libraries" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1986); Lorne Bruce, "Palace and Villa Libraries from Augustus to Hadrian," *Journal of Library History* 21 (1986): 510–52. For a helpful summary of the literary evidence for bookshops in Roman antiquity see Raymond J. Starr, "The Circulation of Literary Texts in the Roman World," *CQ* 37 (1987): 213–23; K. Haines-Eitzen, "Literacy, Power, and the Transmitters of Early Christian Literature" (Ph. D. diss. The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1997); "'Girls Trained in Beautiful Writing:' Female Scribes in Roman Antiquity and Early Christianity," *JECS* 6 (1998): 629–46.

[9] Her list is 6.3979, 7373, 8882, 9301, 9525, 9540, 9541, 9542, 33892, 37757, 37802, "Scribes," 634, n. 16. Cf., Natalie Kampen, *Image and Status*, 118; Mary Lefkowitz and Fant, *Woman's Life,* 223; Treggiari, "Jobs," 76-104.

These scribes were not mindless copyists:[10] they interacted with the text, correcting grammatical and syntactical errors, and sometimes even revising the texts to their liking.[11] Furthermore, female scribes sometimes worked for female patrons:

> …a certain Grapte is identified in one inscription as the amanuensis of Egnatia Maximilla —a woman who, according to Tacitus, accompanied her husband, Glitius Gallus, when he was exiled by Nero. Furthermore, we know that this Egnatia Maximilla had a substantial personal fortune; it should not be surprising, therefore, that she had her own personal amanuensis.[12]

Haines-Eitzen's analysis of the inscriptions brings several important points to light. Most of the female scribes were lower class slaves or freedpersons, all of them were in urban contexts, were educated at home or from an apprenticeship, and were typically supported by patrons or patronesses who were wealthy.

Rebecca Fleming has recently analyzed the evidence relating to female physicians in the ancient world, concluding that several female physicians from all around the Mediterranean were literate and contributed to medical knowledge through writing in the Roman period.[13] Two examples are instructive of the role that educated women played in the practice of medicine:

> The funerary stele of 'Mousa, physician, daughter of Agathocles', from Hellenistic Byzantium, for example, shows her holding a book-roll (as do a handful of representations of male physicians); and, in early imperial Rome, the freedwoman Naevia Clara is labeled 'physician and scholar' (*medica philologa*) on the stele that commemorates both her and

---

[10] S. A. Goudsmit, "An Illiterate Scribe," *AJA* 78, no. 1 (1974): 78.

[11] M. McDonnell, "Writing, Copying, and Autograph Manuscripts in Ancient Rome," *CQ* 46 (1996): 469–91.

[12] Haines-Eitzen, "Scribes," 635; Tac. *Ann*. 15.71

[13] Rebecca Flemming, "Women, Writing and Medicine in the Classical World," *CQ* 57, no. 1 (2007): 257-279; there is a useful bibliography available online at http://www.people.ku.edu/~jyounger/GenSxl.html, accessed Feb. 6, 2012.

her husband L. Naevius, also a freedman, and 'physician and surgeon' (*medicus chirurgus*).[14]

There are a few monuments that attest to female doctors:

ʼΑντιοχὶς Διοδότο[υ] | Τλωὶς μαρτυρηθεῖ –
σα ὑπὸ τῆς Τλωέων | Βουλῆς καὶ τοῦ δη–
μου ἐπι τῇ περὶ |τὴν ἰατρικὴν τε–
χνην ἐνπειρίᾳ | ἔστησεν τὸν ἀν–
δριάντα ἑαυτῆς.

Antiochis, daughter of Diodotus, of Tlos, marked by the council and people of Tlos for her achievement in the medical art, erected this statue of herself.[15]

The Empiricist Heraclides of Taras addresses Antiochis as a colleague in a letter.[16] Soranus of Ephesus (1st century CE) writes that the midwife should be trained in theory by reading books and by practice.[17] How these women learned medicine is important to my argument. Antiochis is

---

[14] Flemming, "Women," 260. Cf., E. Pfuhl and H. Möbius, *Die ostgriechischen Grabreliefs* (Mainz am Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1977), 1.151 (no. 467): Μοῦσα ʹ Αγαθοκλέους ἰατρείνη (Samama [n. 2], no. 310); and for Naevia see Flemming, "Writing," (no. 2), 386 (no. 9). Cf., A. Hillert, *Antike Ärztedarstellungen* (Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, 1990).

[15] Greek text in H. W. Pleket, *Epigraphica II: Texts on the Social History of the Greek World* (Leiden: Brill, 1969), no. 12; cf., no. 20. Translation by Holt N. Parker, who gives a long interpretation of this inscription in the context of other female patrons in "Women Doctors in Greece, Rome, and the Byzantine Empire," in *Women Healers and Physicians: Climbing a Long Hill,* ed. Lilian R. Furst (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1997), 131-50. Parker says that there are forty such inscriptions dedicated to female doctors, cf., Vivian Nutton, *Ancient Medicine* (London: Routledge, 2005), 197-8. An alternative translation is in Lefkowitz and Fant, "Women's Life," 369.

[16] K. Deichgräber, *Die griechische Empirikerschule* (1930; 2nd ed 1975); F. Kudlien, "Medical Education in Classical Antiquity," in *The History of Medical Education*, ed. C.D. O'Malley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 34 n.70.

[17] Sor. *Gyn.* 1.3-4. A. Ellis Hanson and M. H. Green, "Soranus: methodicorum princeps,"*ANRW* 2.37.2, 968–1075, and also Flemming, "Writing," n. 2.

referenced in Galen as an authority for various remedies (12.691 and 13.250, 13.341).[18] Most likely, her father taught her the art of medicine. Antiochis's father, Diodotus, is almost certainly the notable physician Diodotus mentioned in Dioscorides.[19] The father teaching sons or daughters his craft could be indicative of the poor artisan, whereas the wealthier doctors could learn from books, slaves, or famous doctors.

Soranas describes the qualifications of an ideal midwife, which includes literacy and a quick intellect:

> ἐπιτήδειος δέ ἐστιν ἡ γραμμάτων ἐντός, ἀγχίνους, μνήμων, φιλόπονος, κόσμιος καὶ κατὰ τὸ κοινὸν ἀπαρεμπόδιστος ταῖς αἰσθήσεσιν, ἀρτιμελής, εὔτονος, ὡς δ' ἔνιοι λέγουσιν καὶ μακροὺς καὶ λεπτοὺς ἔχουσα καὶ τοὺς τῶν χειρῶν δακτύλους καὶ ὑπεσταλκότας ταῖς ῥαξὶν τοὺς ὄνυχας. γραμμάτων μὲν ἐντός εἶναι, ἵνα καὶ διὰ θεωρίας τὴν τέχνην ἰσχύσῃ παραλαβεῖν· ἀγχίνους δὲ πρὸς τὸ ῥᾳδίως τοῖς λεγομένοις καὶ γινομένοις παρακολουθεῖν· μνήμων δέ, ἵνα καὶ τῶν παραδιδομένων ἀποκρατῇ μαθημάτων μάθησις γὰρ ἐκ μνήμης γίνεται καὶ καταλήψεως·
>
> A suitable person will be literate, have her wits about her, possessed of a good memory, loving work, respectable and generally not unduly handicapped as regards her senses, sound of limb, robust, and according to some people, endowed with long slim fingers and short nails at her fingertips. She must be literate in order to be able to comprehend the art through theory too; she must have her wits about her so that she may easily follow what is said and what is happening; she must have a good memory to retain the imparted instructions (for knowledge arises from memory of what has been grasped).[20]

---

[18] The 1st CE doctor Cleopatra the Physician was also used extensively by Galen, 12.235, 381, 405, 446. Plant notes that she is known to Titus Statilius Crito (2nd CE), Galen (3rd CE), Aëtus of Amida, 8.6 (6th CE), Paulus of Aegina 3.2.1 (7th CE), and John Tzetes (17th CE). Nothing is known concerning her biography.

[19] Dioscorides, 1Pr.5; John Scarborough and Vivian Nutton, "The Preface of Discorides' Materia Medica: Introducion, Translation, and Commentary," *Transactions and Studies of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia* 4 (1982): 187-227.

[20] Soranus, *Soranus' Gynecology*, trans. Owsei Temkin (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1956), 5.

Generally speaking, most ancient medical practitioners were of lower social status, and doctors were often viewed as untrustworthy and unreliable.[21] However, some higher status writers remember women doctors who were, at least in their opinion, gifted healers. Galen (c. 129-217 CE) attributes many remedies to women, some of which were written by women.[22] Other writers refer to the contributions of women for their understanding of medicine: Pliny the Elder (*NH* 28.38, 28.83, 28.81, 20.226), pseudo-Galen (19.767), and Aetius (16.12).[23] Other women doctors are attested in ancient sources: Philinna of Thessaly, Salpe of Lesbos (Plin. *HN* 28.7), Laïs of Corinth (late 1st CE, Plin. *HN* 28.23; Plut. *Nic.* 15), Olympias of Thebes (1st CE, Plin. *HN* 28.77), and Sotira (1st CE, Plin. *HN* 28.23); Elephantine (1st CE, Mart. 12.43.4; Suet. *Tib.* 43.2; Gal. 12:416; Plin. *HN* 28.81).

Women learning medicine from a family member (at least in part) reflects the fact that while there were "ancient medical schools" in Cos, Cnidus, Alexandria, Rome, Pergamon, Symrna, and Ephesus, most doctors learned medicine in an apprenticeship to a member of the

---

[21] Darrell W. Amundsen presents several well-known references from Greek and Roman writers concerning the mistrust for doctors in ancient times, famous for killing or extorting people using the knife or poisons, "The Liability of the Physician in Roman Law," in *International Symposium on Society, Medicine, and the Law*, ed. H. Karplus (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1973), 17-31. S. L. Mohler suggests that most doctors in the ancient world were freedmen, and slave boys were their apprentices, "Slave Education in the Roman Empire," *TAPA* 71 (1940), 265 n. 6. Laws concerning doctors were often combined with supersticions concerning magic, Clyde Pharr, "The Interdiction of Magic in Roman Law," *TAPA* 63 (1932): 269-95.

[22] From Fleming, "Writing," 265: Gal. *Comp. med. loc*. 7.2, 4 and 8.3 (13.58, 85 and 143 K): Origenia's remedies for coughs, bringing up blood, and for the stomach; *Comp. med. loc*. 9.2 (13.244 K): Eugerasia's remedy for the spleen; *Comp. med. loc*. 9.6 (13.310 and 311 K): Samithra's anal application and Xanthite's very useful hemorrhoids remedy; *Comp. med. gen.* 5.13 (13.840): Maia's excellent dry application for callused and cracked skin, *Scrib. Larg. Comp.* 59, 60, 70, 271.

[23] Plant, *Women Writers*, 110-24.

family (a father or spouse) or one's master (whether the student is a male or female slave). The physician Glycon honored his wife Panthea, also a physician, with the inscription, "[you] raised high our common fame in healing – though you were a woman you were not behind me in skill."[24] Restituta (Rome, 1st CE) learned medicine as a freedwoman or slave under her patron,[25] and Aurelia Alexandria Zosime and Auguste most likely learned from their husbands (who are mentioned in their inscriptions). There may even be an example of a woman teaching another woman medicine. Terentia Prima is known as a *medica* in Rome in the first or second century CE, and she perhaps had a freedwoman apprentice.[26] Minucia Asste, also a *medica,* may have learned medicine from her matron.[27] This is not unlike how women and men would learn philosophy (and indeed, the histories of medicine and philosophy significantly overlap). The

---

[24] Lefkowitz and Fant, *Women's Life,* no. 175; Pleket, *Epigraphica,* no. 20. James Malcolm Arlandson situates this inscription with other roles that lesser class women served which required some level of literacy, *Women, Class, and Society in Early Christianity: Models from Luke-Acts* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997), 48.

[25] IG 14.1751 = CIG 6604 = IGRR 1.283 = IGUR 645. Herman Gummerus, *Der Ärztestand im Römischen Reiche nach den Inschriften* (Helsinki: Akademische Buchhandlung, 1992), no. 146; J. Korpela, *Das Medizinalpersonal im antiken Rom* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1987), 166.

[26] CIL VI.9616. Gummerus, *Ärztestand*, no.113. Korpela, *Medizinalpersonal*, no. 203. Lefkowitz and Fant, *Women's Life,* no. 371. For interpretation see Étienne Pivert de Senancour, *Libres méditations*, 3rd ed, intro. et comm. Béatrice Le Gall, Textes littéraires français 172 (Genève: Droz, 1970), 128 no. 3 and Natalie Kampen, *Image and Status: Women Working in Ostia* (Berlin: Mann, 1981), 116 n. 40.

[27] Rome 1st BCE or 1st CE. CIL 6.9615 (33812); Gummerus, *Ärztestand*, no. 112; Korpela, *Medizinalpersonal*, no. 43.

medical historian Plino Prioreschi writes, "medicine did not develop by itself, in a vacuum, on the basis of purely empirical evidence, but was first an integral part of philosophy."[28]

In both the Greek[29] and Roman[30] periods, women served other vocations that required some level of literacy and education. Three fourth century BCE inscriptions mention female grocers: Mania,[31] Thraitta,[32] and Parthenia.[33] A mid-second century CE relief shows a butcher at work, with his wife seated, keeping the books.[34] Two late second century CE reliefs found at Ostia depict women selling a wide variety of items.[35] A grocer in Greek or Roman times would have to manage several relationships: their many wholesalers, customers, and their patron who may lease a place to sell at the markets. Some sizable transactions would likely have been written for bookkeeping and legal reasons.[36]

---

[28] Plino Prioreschi, *A History of Medicine,* 2nd ed. (Omaha: Horatius, 1996), 2:204; Philip J. Van der Eilk has contributed many essays concerning this inter-relationship in his book *Medicine and Philosophy: Doctors and Philosophers on Nature, the Soul, Health and Disease* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[29] Susan I. Rotroff and Robert D. Lamberton, *Women in the Agora* (Athens: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 2006).

[30] Francis Bernstein, "Pompeian Women," in *The World of Pompeii*, ed. John J. Dobbins and Pedar W. Foss (London: Routledge, 2007), 526-37.

[31] IG 3.387.G. Lefkowitz and Fant, *Women's Life,* 324.

[32] D. M. Lewis, "Attic Manumissions," *Hesperia* 28 (1959), 203-8. Lefkowitz and Fant, *Women's Life,* 329.

[33] IG 3.3.68, 69. Lefkowitz and Fant, *Women's Life*, 337. Cf., Mary R. Lefkowitz, "Wives and Husbands," *G&R*, 2nd ser. 30, no. 1 (1983): 44.

[34] Dresden, Staatliche Kuntstsammlungen, Inv. ZV 44. Eve D'Ambra, *Roman Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 137.

[35] Ostia, Museo Ostiense, inv. 134 and 198. There is also a relief of a successful shoemaker in Ostia, CIL 14.supp.4698. Cf., Elaine Fantham, et al, *Women in the Classical World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 378.

[36] Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 200.

The Educated Woman: Greek and Roman Poets

The education of women in the ancient world is demonstrated most clearly in poetry.[37] Greek and Roman female poets were quite popular in ancient life, and the traditions related to female poets are as old as Homer.[38] Sappho of Lesbos is perhaps most intriguing because she is the most ancient female poet and enjoys enduring popularity.[39] In her lifetime, it is likely that she ran a school of poetry for girls.[40] Her poetry was cited by a wide variety of ancient poets, philosophers, and thinkers.[41] Maximus of Tyre says that Socrates learned of love from a foreigner: either Sappho of Lesbos (the poet = Pl. *Phaedr.* 230e, 235c) or from a woman from

---

[37] For text, translation, and critical commentary on many of the poets mentioned in this section, see Kathryn J. Gutzwiller, *Poetic Epigrams: Hellenistic Epigrams in Context* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); for the general context of poetry without a focus on women, particularly the competitive and symposium contexts, see Derek Collins, *Master of the Game: Competition and Performance in Greek Poetry* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

[38] Sylvia Barnard, "Hellenistic Women Poets," *CJ* 73, no. 3 (1978): 204-13; Laurel Bowman, "The 'Women's Tradition' in Greek Poetry," *Phoenix* 58, no. 1/2 (2004): 1-27.

[39] Sappho's biographical information is preserved in P. Oxy. 1800 and the *Suda*, 'Sappho;' cf., OCD, "Sappho." Bibliography and online text and translation for the *Suda* is available by Raphael Finkel et al, "Suda On Line: Byzantine Lexicography," *Suda On Line: Byzantine Lexicography*, April, 2007, http://www.stoa.org/sol//, accessed Feb 6, 2012. Aelian reckons Sappho among the Sages, *Var. hist.* 12.19.

[40] Lefkowitz gives a thorough tradition of the life of Sappho as preserved in literary sources, Mary Lefkowitz, *The Lives of the Greek Poets* (London: Duckworth, 1981), 36-7 and 61-4; K. J. Dover critically analyzes the sources in *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 174-5; Jane McIntosh Snyder uncovers the various approaches in Sappho's poetry, "Public Occasion and Private Passion in the Lyrics of Sappho of Lesbos," in *Women's History and Ancient History*, ed. Sarah B. Pomeroy (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 1-19.

[41] David Robinson, *Sappho and Her Influence* (London: G. G. Harrap, 1924); Robert A. Greenberg, "'Erotion,' 'Anactoria,' and the Sapphic Passion," *Victorian Poetry* 29, no. 1 (1991): 79-87.

Mantinea (the philosopher Diotima = Pl. *Symp.* 201d).[42] Ancient tradition links Sappho with Corinth: the first century BCE poet Antipater of Sidon tells us that Sappho died there (EG 3448).[43]

Sappho's popularity is demonstrated by her early and frequent depictions in art. She is found on ancient vases, coins, and mosaics.[44] Christodorus of Thebes (late 5th BCE, gymnasium Zuexippos, Constantinople), Cicero (Sialion, 4th BCE, Syracuse), Antipater (1st BCE, Pergamon), indicate that statues were made of Sappho though none survive.[45] There are three painted vases from the fifth century BCE that depict Sappho in action, reciting her poetry or playing the lyre. Some coins dated in the first through the third centuries CE from Mytilene and Eresos are stamped with a likeness of Sappho, sometimes with an inscription.[46]

While the context of most early Greek poetry was in competitions, Sappho's performances were mostly restricted to the *symposia*.[47] Although Sappho's poems were compiled into nine books in antiquity, only one poem survives intact, and like so many other early figures, the

---

[42] Maximus of Tyre, 18.7.

[43] Gisela M. A. Richter, *The Portraits of the Greeks: Abridged and Revised by R.R.R. Smith* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 194-6. Mary Lefkowitz gives a thorough tradition of the life of Sappho as preserved in literary sources, *The Lives of the Greek Poets* (London: Duckworth, 1981), 36-7 and 61-4; K. J. Dover critically analyzes the sources in *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 174-5. Lefkowitz argues that the traditions concerning Sappho's school are directly based on her poetry, 64.

[44] For art depicting Sappho, I am following Richter, *Potraits of the Greeks*, 194-96.

[45] Christodorus in *Anth. Pal.* 2.69; Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.126; for Antipater, see M. Fränkel and C. Habicht, eds., *Die Inschriften von Pergamon,* Altertümer von Pergamon 8.1-2 (Berlin: Spemann, 1890-95), no. 198.

[46] Richter, *Potraits of the Greeks*, 194.

[47] W. J. Henderson, "Criteria in the Greek Lyric Contests," *Mnemosyne* 42, no. 1 (1989): 28; cf., D. Page, *Sappho and Alcaeus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955), 133-40.

remainder of our information comes from secondary sources that offer conflicting information.[48] Sappho's poetry is important for our understanding of ancient female sexualities,[49] but is especially valuable due to her clear distinction between the loved and beloved.[50] Sappho portrays a woman that is different from Aristotle's view which would later become dominant in Western philosophy: women are only able to participate in life as a human being as a mutilated male striving for maleness.[51]

According to Pausanias, Telesilla was a fifth century BCE warrior-poetess who was renowned for her lyric poetry and military prowess. Her military might is mentioned in Plutarch (46-120 BCE/CE, *Mor*. 245d-e) and Pausanias (fl. 2nd CE, 2.9-11), and her poetry is remembered

---

[48] While Sappho wrote in 6th-7th BCE, the popularity of her work is endearing. Plutarch comments on the value of her poetry in *Mor.* 397a and 406a. Several of the famous first century Latin poets either mention Sappho explicitly or rely on her work. Martial alludes to Sappho in *Epigrams* 7.69.9 and 10.35.15; Catullus 11.21-24, 51,62, and 65.19-24 and his usage of Lesbia rely on Sappho. Ovid applauds her in *Ars amatoria* 3.331; cf., the pseudo-Ovidian *Epistle of Sappho to Phaon* available in English in *The Songs of Sappho*, trans. Marion Mills Miller and David Moore Robinson (New York: Frank-Maurice, 1925). M. J. Edwards argues for her influence on Juvenal, "A Quotation of Sappho in Juvenal Satire 6," *Phoenix* 45, no. 3 (1991): 255-7. Given the context of the *Satire* as seething with hatred for women, we should not consider this quotation as a compliment. Juvenal complains about the education of women in *Satire* 6: those conversant in Homer, Virgil, and many others.

[49] The interpretation that Sappho addressed female sexualities may be a forced reconstruction. Her poetry was not interpreted as such in the classical period. Judith P. Hallett, "Sappho and Her Social Context: Sense and Sensuality," *Signs* 4, no. 3 (1979): 447-64; Ellen Greene, "Apostrophe and Women's Erotics in the Poetry of Sappho," *TAPA* 124 (1994): 41-56.

[50] Diane J. Rayor, *Sappho's Lyre: Archaic Lyric and Women Poets of Ancient Greece* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1991).

[51] Prudence Allen, *The Concept of Woman: The Aristotelian Revolution 750BE-1250CE* (Montréal: Eden Press, 1985).

also by several other writers. Eight tiny fragments of her poetry are extant.[52] Snyder suggests that her poetry was composed for the singing by girls at festivals.[53] The popularity of Telesilla's poetry is enduring – she is known from Eusebius of Caesarea (263-309 BCE, *Chronicon,* Olympiad 82.4), Antipater of Thessaloniki (fl. 15CE, *Anth. Pal.* 9. 26), Apollodoros (fl. late 1st BCE, *Biblioteka* 3.5.5), and of course Plutarch (46-120 BCE/CE, *Mor*. 245d-e), Pausanias (fl. 2nd CE, 2.9-11), Maximus of Tyre (fl. 2nd CE, *Anth. Pal.* 37.5), and the Christian apologists Tatian (120-180 CE, *Ad. Gr.* 33) and Clement of Alexandria (150-215 CE, *Strom*. 4.19).

---

[52] Euseb. *Chron.* 82. 4 [449 B.C.]; Maximus of Tyre, *Dissertations* 37.5; Heph. 11.2; Ath. 11. 437; 14.619b; Hesychius, *Glossary*, "*beltiotas*;" Julius Pollux, *Onomastikon* 2. 223; Scholiast on the *Od.* 13.289. The classical references are collected in translation by Professor John Paul Adams at www.csun.edu/~hcfll004/telesilla.html, accessed Feb 6, 2012.

[53] Snyder, *Lyre*, 60.