

P.A. ROSENMEYER

Pamphylian Damophyle and Claudia Damo: Partners in Poetry

My paper suggests that Damophyle of Pamphylia, mentioned by Philostratus, may have been a contemporary of Sappho, writing lyric love poems and hymns in her native Perga. She may have influenced Claudia Damo, writing under Hadrianic patronage, whose elegiac verses self-consciously imitate archaic lyric style. If we take Damophyle seriously as a historical figure, we can posit her (lost) poetry as a model for Damo's verses, and also for other female lyric voices in antiquity.

In Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, the sage, showing off his literary erudition, mentions a woman from Pamphylia who "is said to have associated with Sappho, and to have composed the hymns sung in honor of Artemis of Perga, in the Aeolian and Pamphylian modes...this clever woman is called Damophyle, and it is said that she had girlfriends and companions just like Sappho, and composed poems, some of them love songs and others hymns" (1.30). In his chapter arguing for the fictional nature of Philostratus' *Life*, E.L. Bowie (in *Greek Fiction* 1994) concludes that the poet in question is "surely bogus". But if she is "bogus", why does Apollonius choose this particular subject as a marker of his literary expertise? Elsewhere he analyzes portents in Homer (1.22) and criticizes Dio of Prusa's style (5.40). How does Damophyle fit in with these figures? If we assume that Apollonius is showing off, wouldn't it make more sense for Damophyle to be both obscure and "real"? If she is real, we may note her strong resemblance to her "associate" Sappho, her female companions, and her adaptation of lyric modes to native Pamphylian tastes. I point to Damophyle as evidence for another woman writing in the archaic period, whose poetry, in part because of Sappho's supremacy, did not survive, but who may have been influential for later writers.

One later female poet who might have imitated Damophyle was Claudia Damo, an Athenian in Hadrian's entourage whose four lines of elegiacs survive inscribed on the colossal statue of Memnon in Egyptian Thebes (T.C. Brennan, *CW* 1998). M.L. West (in *Kyklos* 1978) says Damo "considers herself a genuine lyric poetess", but he argues for the influence of Sappho on her self-presentation as a reborn archaic singer, complete with obsolete *barbitos*. I propose instead that this otherwise unattested poet identifies herself as "Damo" in direct emulation of Pamphylian Damophyle, particularly since her signature line reads "song-loving Damo", *philaoidos Damo*, thus inverting Damo-phyle, her putative model, to read *phila-...Damo*. This is precisely the kind of obscure literary joke that her patron, the philhellenic Hadrian, would have enjoyed.

In sum, although the evidence may be slim, the implications of a female archaic poet other than Sappho who might have influenced later imitators are exciting. In this case, Pamphylian Damophyle does not offer a different voice, since she is presented in Philostratus as a kind of Sapphic clone, but rather an additional one. Given the paucity of our evidence, that is surely a good thing.