4.4 New Philology and Ancient Editors

Some Dynamics of Textual Criticism

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Introduction

This paper discusses the place of New Philology in the history of textual criticism of ancient texts. In particular, I will look at the benefits and drawbacks of applying this approach to the textual edition of ancient Greek poetry, by comparing modern editing techniques with what we know about their ancient transmission and editing techniques.

Modes of textual criticism

In his monograph on textual criticism, Paul Maas makes clear the problem that everyone who seriously wishes to study ancient texts inevitably comes across:

We have no autograph manuscripts of the Greek and Roman classical writers and no copies which have been collated with the originals; the manuscripts we possess derive from the originals through an unknown number of intermediate copies, and are consequentially of questionable trustworthiness. The business of textual criticism is to produce a text as close as possible to the original (constitutio textus).

Although textual criticism has a history of at least 2300 years, it is mainly in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that the study of texts and manuscript traditions gets a theoretical underpinning. To determine or reconstruct what an author wrote, three modes of textual criticism can be distinguished, which show some overlap in method. Of these methods, the first is that of eclectic criticism, where the editor determines, based on the evidence of contrasts between various witnesses of one text what the most plausible reading should be, without
necessarily singling out one manuscript as being most reliable. The comparison between manuscripts in this process makes it akin to the second method, copy-text editing.\(^3\) In this second procedure first a single most trustworthy manuscript (the base text), often but not always the oldest testimony at hand, is selected and compared to other copies, after which errors in the base text are remedied with the help of these other witnesses. This has been the dominant method until the nineteenth century.

Finally, the most rigorous is that known as stemmatology, in which, on the basis of comparison of the surviving manuscript evidence (\textit{recensio}) a family tree of surviving manuscripts is reconstructed in order to determine what the archetype of a text hypothetically looked like. This paradigm, known as Lachmann’s method,\(^4\) was first developed in the nineteenth century for the textual criticism of medieval literary texts and New Testament studies, but later applied successfully by Karl Lachmann, most famously in his edition of Lucretius’s \textit{De Rerum Natura}. Thence it became a staple of classical philology. The steps followed in this process are the following:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{Recensio} (also \textit{selectio}): Sorting through and collating the surviving manuscript evidence (and the creation of a stemma or cladorama)
  \item \textit{Examinatio}: An attempt to establish the earliest possible version of a text (the reconstruction of a (hyp)archetype)
  \item \textit{Emendatio}: Correcting the text when none of the surviving manuscripts appears to preserve the correct reading; this may include making a conjecture\(^5\)
\end{itemize}

The procedure results in a text edition with a critical apparatus (in which editorial decisions, conjectures and \textit{variae lectiones} are noted) and a \textit{stemma codicum}. This method is still employed and is usually justified by pointing out that it is essential to possess as much knowledge as possible of the assumed original text in order to study factual content in a responsible way (e.g., if one wishes to know whether a certain general in Thucydides is called \textit{Philippides} or \textit{Pheidippides}), but also if one wishes to reach decisions on matters of style and linguistics.

Stemmatology generally involves a strong evaluative element: some manuscripts or readings are dubbed ‘inferior’, others ‘superior’; one speaks of ‘corruption’ or ‘contamination’ of manuscripts when a scribe has not followed a single tradition, but combined two. It should moreover be noted that despite its aura of scientific objectivity, several objections have been raised against this mode of text constitution.\(^6\) For instance, the assumption that scribes only alter texts by mistake is a famous misconception (they may, of course, ameliorate them). Likewise, the idea that commonality of error implies common origin, is only defendable in cases where the text critic is able to identify the error, i.e., where the error is
recognizable as such – which it may not always be. Another problem (raised by Joseph Bedier in the nineteenth century) was that the method clearly favored bipartite stemmata, whereas in many cases alternative, more complex, family trees were imaginable. Despite these attacks on the alleged rigor and scientific soundness of the method, the stemmatic approach has remained the dominant way of constituting medieval and classical texts.

Meanwhile, in the wake of sociological studies in historical research in the first half of the twentieth century, a systematic interest in the *Sitz im Leben* of texts and their bearers came more and more to the foreground in literary, and also, finally, philological studies. Awareness of the historical context of the production of a text was an already Rankean procedure,7 but it took a long time before existing practices translated into something like the program suggested by the label of 'New Philology' as a discipline. It was in the 1970s that this discipline was finally developed by James Lockhart, in the wake of a second development in historical study, namely anthropology, particularly the anthropological approach of ethnologists studying the written and oral cultures or Meso-America.8

To return to the topic of text editing classical and medieval texts, it was in 1989, informed by insights from these quarters that the French medievalist Bernard Cerquiglini, in his book *Éloge de la Variante: critique de la philologie*, polemically stated that the stemmatic method really amounts to a fallacy in the case of medieval poetry in the vulgar languages. His argument was taken up in 1990 (in the journal *Speculum*) by a group of American medievalists, who proposed that ‘New Philology’ was indeed what was called for: an approach that recognizes the specific nature of this poetry, namely its oral transmission alongside the written records. Because of its orality, poetry of this type is more flexible than texts that are both conceived and transmitted in written form. This explains the high number of variants in the manuscripts of poets like the medieval Walther von der Vogelweide. Typically, these variants take the shape of (1) different text order, (2) different wording, and (3) sizeable omissions (or additions of text passages).9

These variants cannot be considered ‘mistakes’ of transcription, nor should they be regarded as ‘inferior interpolations’. Rather, they are manifestations of the text that are all equally valuable and authentic. Apart from this, the *Speculum*-New Philologists promoted so-called multiformal or multiform editions, which allow the reader to see at a glance the numerous variants, without trying to establish a stemmalike model.

It may be noted that such multiform editions are not entirely new as a concept, in the sense that earlier so-called *variorum* editions had already been produced (in which various manuscript readings were placed side by side in an edition, and accompanied by the notes of various scholars).10 Even a critical apparatus has potential elements of the multiform, in that it records various traditions. The
most important conceptual difference between this and the multiform is that stemmatology aims mainly at constituting a hypothetical archetype, and pays less attention to the later manuscript traditions.

Although, certainly in the world of medieval and classical textual criticism, traditional and New Philology seemed destined to become polemically opposed disciplines, a kind of synthesis and some degree of mutual adaptation has now in many cases been reached.\(^\text{11}\)

A number of classicists have recently argued that this New Philological way of editing should also be fully applied to the text criticism of archaic Greek poetry, because here we are also dealing with oral transmission mixed with written records. Of course, an awareness of the *Sitz im Leben* of ancient texts was well established in *Altertumswissenschaften* almost from their beginning, but the curious fact remained that this was not always taken into account in editing practices, as I have tried to make clear in the above. In the rest of this paper I will focus on the question what the theoretical benefits and problems with a New Philological approach to editing might be in the case of Greek poetry.\(^\text{12}\)

### New Philology and archaic Greek poetry: Which genres?

Clearly, some genres in ancient Greek poetry more readily lend themselves to a New Philologist editorial approach than others. A genre like Pindaric choral victory ode, for instance, is so complex in metrical structure, thought and wording that any possibility of a truly fluid state of the text (resulting from improvisation and a dominant oral transmission) needs to be dismissed. Pindaric lyric poetry was heavily scripted and was moreover ‘protected’ by its complex metrical structure (with its close metrical responsions) from interpolations. In cases like this, there *must* have been a single authentic text (allowing perhaps a reworking by the author for reperformance),\(^\text{13}\) and editors may well strive to approximate it as closely as possible.

Homeric or other epic poetry (and to a lesser extent early elegy), on the other hand, originates from long traditions of oral transmission, and hence employs a relatively simple metrical scheme, a specific vocabulary, the repetition of typical scenes and formulaic verses, which facilitate improvisation, and hence justifies a New Philologist approach.

Or rather, it should be noted that the oral nature of Homeric poetry has been recognized since at least Friedrich Wolf (1759-1824), and has developed into a field of study wholly *sui generis* (the famous *Homerica Question*), but nevertheless presents noteworthy parallels and overlaps with the approaches of New Philology, although until recently, multiform editions were not available.
An interesting field between these two extremes is monodic lyric (i.e., poetry sung by an individual to the accompaniment of a lyre), exemplified by the songs of Sappho or Alcaeus. This type of poetry seems to result from single authorship, rather than from an improvisational tradition. Hence, here we might perhaps ultimately postulate an, albeit elusive, original text. In length, Sappho’s songs are, of course, no comparison with either Pindaric lyric, or Homeric epic. Moreover, monodic lyric is mainly a performative and therefore oral art. It does not possess the complex structures of Pindaric choral lyric. These last two features would have encouraged textual variation by oral repetition and improvisation to a greater extent than Pindaric lyric allows.

In the following, I look at Homeric epic in order to identify the parallels in the approaches of orality studies and New Philology, and will then turn toward the field of monodic lyric, to see what the benefits and drawbacks of New Philology are in this latter genre.

Homer illustrates the paradox of the ‘oral text’ perfectly. Since the work of Lord and Parry, the oral nature of Homeric poetry, which had already been postulated by Wolf in 1795, has been generally accepted, though not perhaps in the extreme form Wolf envisaged. This entails acceptance of the fact that it is impossible to reconstruct a single authoritative version of these poems, because each oral performance would have been –however slightly – different, and would have constituted an original in its own right.

Nevertheless, while paying lip service to this creed, some editors still treat their editions of Homer as though they could in fact reconstruct a single authoritative text. The projected archetype of this version is presumed to have been written down or dictated at some early point (some say the seventh century BC), and from it all later written copies are believed to derive. While, of course, there may have been a single, earliest written down version of the Homeric epics, the subsequent continuation of the oral performances by rhapsodes, and the written versions that resulted from these performances, ensure that the postulation of such a version has a different status from what is usually subsumed under the header of ‘authoritative text’.

Quotations in ancient authors and remarks in the scholia attest to the very early existence of alternative versions, as Wolf already noticed. The scholia to the Venetus Marcianus codex (A, the so-called Viermänner Kommentar) attest that in antiquity, from very early onward, i.e., in sixth century, various texts of Homer circulated in editions either named after their city of origin (ekdoseis kata poleis,
from places as widely apart as Marseille, Argos and Sidon) or their editor (ekdosesis kat’ andra, of which the earliest known is that of Antimachus, c. 404 BC); these may well have been transcriptions of different oral traditions. Indeed, it has been estimated that when the Alexandrian scholars in the Hellenistic era created their editions of Homer, they may have had as many as 400 different versions of the Homeric poems available.17

Since the nineteenth century we also possess the amazing testimony of the numerous Ptolemaic Homer papyri (third to first century BC). What makes these ‘wild’ or ‘eccentric papyri’ so intriguing are the notorious ‘plus lines’, extra lines, sometimes amounting up to 33% of a single fragment. These lines do not appear in the witnesses later than 150 BC, i.e., not in the so-called ‘vulgate’ versions on which our text of Homer is based. Moreover, the lines are so numerous and blend so organically into the surrounding text that they cannot be discounted as ‘mistakes’ or random interpolations: they are variants, examples of different traditions.18 In this sense they resemble the medieval traditions of the songs of Walther von der Vogelweide mentioned above.

The date of 150 BC appears to have been a watershed, presumably somehow related to Aristarchus’s edition of the Homeric epics.19 The model of an authoritative archetype from the seventh century leading to a more or less consistent manuscript tradition can hardly be correct therefore, and should not inform modern editions of Homer. A number of scholars in fact now insist that the multitextuality of the tradition should be acknowledged and made visible in digital editions, and this is currently being worked on at the Homer multitext website of the Harvard Center for Hellenic Studies. The resemblance to the editing ideals of some radical New Philologists is clear. One might wonder what such choices mean for the time-honored distinction between aoidoi (creative singers, ‘poets’) and rhapsodoi, the singers of traditional tales, which they embellish but do not create wholesale: if all versions of the text are put on a same level, then, theoretically, the difference between these categories diminishes or even disappears.

Without wishing to discredit this line of investigation, it remains a rather striking thought that New Philology editing and its aims (i.e., to show that there is not a single retrievable Homer text, and to celebrate the variants of the tradition) theoretically seem to run counter not only to ‘traditional’ philology, but also to recognizable currents in the philological approaches throughout antiquity.

Consider the following: the ancient Greeks apparently wished to put one name to the author of the Iliad and the Odyssey – the blind bard Homer; in order to make him a more tangible character, they provided him with several biographies. It is also clear that from a very early point onwards general opin-
ion held that only *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were authentic (together with the now lost comic poem *Margites*) as distinct from the largely anonymous later so-called ‘cyclical’ epics.\(^{20}\) We moreover hear (although this is nowadays generally considered a legend) that as early as the sixth century BC there was an attempt to standardize, protect and privilege a certain version of Homeric epic, in Athens, the so-called Peisistratean recension. Even if this story may be a later fabrication,\(^{21}\) the fact that textual editions were made as early as 404 BC by individual scholar-poets like Antimachus points toward the wish to privilege *one* form of the text. At the same time, these ongoing attempts at standardization demonstrate if anything how difficult it must have been to standardize Homer’s text.

The most systematic attempt at standardization took place in the Hellenistic era, the great age of Greek scholarship, when Zenodotus, Aristophanes of Byzantium and Aristarchus produced their so-called *diorthoseis* (emended versions), *ekdoseis* (editions, presumably mainly for scholarly consultation), and *hypomnemata* (commentaries). This undertaking points toward the attempt to reach some authentic core of Homeric material, distinct from later accretions. Scholarly opinions differ on how the Homeric critics actually went about these editions, but clearly they did not yet possess the refined stemmatological method. It seems most likely that their attempts were more similar to the copy-editing style of textual criticism. From what we can retrieve from the *scholia*, they apparently selected a single manuscript (presumably an old one they considered to be reliable) and clarified by means of marginal signs (like the famous *obelos*) whether they thought the text at the passage in question was authentic or not. They did not cut from or add to the text; their separate commentaries (*hypomnemata*) presumably explained their editorial choices. The idea of ‘what was fitting’ for Homer (*to prepon*) often played an important role in their decisions about authenticity.\(^{22}\) Indeed, the common sense idea that Homer should be clarified out of his own texts (*Homeros ex Homerou safenizein*) informs Aristarchus’s critical choices.\(^{23}\)

It may be noted that not many of the suggestions of the Alexandrian editors made it into the vulgate, but it does seem likely that the vulgate represents the reliable text they chose to work with.\(^{24}\) What needs consideration, then, is the fact that throughout antiquity, next to the unstable improvisational oral transmissions, a tendency toward a single, authentic text has also always played an important role in the Homeric tradition. Indeed, without it, we might not even have any Homer to speak of.
Monodic lyric

Let us now briefly turn to monodic lyric. This is a challenging field because it lies between the two extremes of improvisational oral epic and extensively scripted Pindaric lyric. To begin with, the material is multifarious. The few fragments we have of Sappho, Ibycus and Alcaeus are very different from, e.g., the voluminous collection known as the *Theognidea*, which comprises a nucleus of poems that appear to be by a certain Theognis of Megara (sixth century BC), and much traditional symposium-related material besides, which we also encounter in other elegists. For this reason, and also because of the fact that elegy and monodic song presumably served different purposes, one would probably need different theoretical approaches in the editing of such texts.

Also, concentrating for the purposes of this paper, for instance, on the case of Sappho, the obvious challenge presents itself that we have far less material; there is not, as with Homer, a vulgate against which we can compare ‘variant versions’. For all we know, fragments of Sappho’s poetry of which we now possess a single version might otherwise have been ‘variants’. Besides, as in the case of Homer, we have very little reliable knowledge of the composition and early transmission of these texts although some guesses may be made on the basis of circumstantial evidence.

First, and perhaps most importantly, we do not know whether Sappho actually existed as a historical person, even if it seems highly likely, perhaps more so than in Homer’s case. Secondly, it is unclear how Sappho’s poetry was composed: in writing? It may have been, or it may have been dictated or written down soon afterwards. And how and where was it first preserved? In the cases of other early authors, such as Alcaeus, we hear of author copies of texts that are deposited in temples (for safekeeping, but presumably also to enable eventual transcription). And what form did these early texts take? Were they poetry collections written on papyrus, or other materials, and if so, was there a definite order to these collections? Did the order of the poems matter, and was it decided on by the author herself?

With regard to the early transmission scholars struggle with the same amount of uncertainties: how was Sappho’s poetry first transmitted beyond her own circle, and when did this begin? Quotations in other early texts make it clear that Sappho’s poetry was known outside of Lesbos from as early as the sixth century onwards. Her songs may well have traveled orally: there is a record for learning these songs from hearing them. One, regrettably late, and therefore not entirely trustworthy, anecdote relates how Solon asked his nephew to teach him a song by Sappho, which he overheard the boy singing. Testimonies like these apart, it is certain that written copies (serving as scripts for performance, as aide-mémoire for the singer) were also involved right from the start and throughout. As An-
drew Ford argues, the scribes of these very early texts, however, presumably did not strive with scholarly rigor for an authoritative version of the poem. Rather, texts were means toward an end: the oral performance. Only in the Alexandrian era, again, do we find an attempt at standardization of Sappho’s works.

This explains why the written record shows that Sappho’s texts were transmitted in widely different versions, both on a word level, and on the level of strophes or actual poems, that is to say their ordering, and inclusion or omission of texts. The following example, taken from a forthcoming article by André Lardinois, illustrates this well:

1) Ostracon Flor.  
ἔνθα δὴ σὺ… ἔλοισα Κύπρι  
χρυσίαισιν ἐν κυλίκεσσιν ἀ<β>ρως  
<ὁ>μ<με>ιέμενον θαλίαισι νέκταρ  
<οἰ>νοχόαισον  
Where you, having taken up (wreaths?), Cypris,  
pour nectar gracefully  
in golden cups  
mingled with the festivities.

2) Athenaeus 11.463e  
... ἐλθέ, Κύπρι,  
χρυσίαισιν ἐν κυλίκεσσιν ἁβρῶς  
συμμεμιγμένον θαλίαισι νέκταρ  
oinochorouσα  
... Come, Cypris,  
pouring nectar gracefully  
in golden cups  
mixed with the festivities.

Of course, if we would consider a digital multitext edition of Sappho, such variants are all part of the transmission history. However, assuming that there was – different perhaps from the case of Homer – a poet called Sappho and that she composed her songs in writing, when we edit her songs in different versions, we are really recording different stages in the later transmission. But there may have been, again, differently from Homer, originally, a single authoritative written text. This is a fundamentally different point of departure. It is, of course, also clear that such a hypothetical text must forever remain elusive. In this sense the way in
which Sappho’s poetry was transmitted does come close to some of the medieval
poems by Walther von der Vogelweide.

In Sappho’s case there appears not to have been a pervasive attempt at stand-
ardization such as we saw in the case of Homer. This may be due to lack of
surviving evidence, but other explanations are readily conceivable. It might, for
instance, point to the fact that the material was not so wildly prone to variants as
the Homeric epics, or, equally importantly perhaps, was not considered to be of
the same Panhellenic cultural importance as Homer’s epics.

As noted, the first real attempt at producing an authoritative and standard-
ized text of Sappho’s poetry is attested, again, with the age of the great Alexan-
drian scholars, who made editions of her works. In this case we may ask: what
texts did they possess for Sappho? The Alexandrian edition of Sappho’s poetry
is said to have amounted to nine books of poems (i.e., nine scrolls of papyrus), so
there must have been quite some (written) material around.

A final intriguing piece of information related to Alexandrian editing concerns
the Hellenistic scholar-poet Callimachus and his Pinakes, a (now lost) 120-scroll
catalogue of authors kept in the Alexandrian Library, and their works ordered ac-
cording to genre. This catalogue seems to have listed not only incipits of the works
of these authors, but also the number of verses they contained. This raises the
question what Callimachus would have done with poetry collections, like Sap-
pho’s: did he list the incipits of all poems on the scroll (thus preserving or estab-
lishing an ’authentic’ ordering), or just the incipit of the first poem?

The information that he wrote down the total number of verses is even more
fascinating, because this suggests that there was a more or less definite version of
the work in question. This verse total could then serve as a kind of safeguarding
of this version. Of course, we have no way of knowing how Callimachus deter-
mined the correct number of lines.

By way of conclusion

New Philology editing seems a fully justified approach to forms of Greek poetry
that find their origin in oral improvisation, like epic and elegy. In the case of
Greek monodic lyric too, it seems a viable idea to produce, e.g., a website show-
ing all available variants of a text, in order to enable readers to see synchronically
and diachronically what evidence there is for any given poem. This will certainly
provide a more realistic image of the history of such texts and their users than a
traditional text edition with a necessarily limited apparatus criticus. Yet, it must be
kept in mind that an author’s copy may well have once existed, even if it is now –
and has probably been for the longest time even in antiquity – ultimately elusive.
Also, we do well to recognize that alongside the unstable and often unorganized transmission of texts in antiquity there existed an important tendency that did focus on authorship, authenticity and standardized texts, and to which, in great part, we probably owe the actual survival of these texts. It is an interesting paradox that this tendency toward standardization should be included in the multiform-oriented approaches of New Philology, and that the rigorous and scientifically inspired nineteenth-century stemmatological approach too could and indeed should be accounted for in the new, historicizing digital text editions, which record the life of a text in all its facets. Contextualization, anthropology and awareness of the Sitz im Leben of texts become central to textual criticism, a discipline that entered the twentieth century with a much more closely circumscribed, philologically centered outlook, and which was all about determining whether a reading was inferior or superior.

Notes


3 The name of this method was given by Ronald Kerrow in his 1904 edition of Thomas Nashe’s works, but the method had been in use for a long time, it forms the basis for, e.g., Erasmus’s famous edition of the New Testament in Latin.

4 Although it had been developed by others, Lachmann was the first to make it famous. See Sebastiano Timpanaro, La genesi del metodo di Lachmann (Florence: Le Monnier, 1963), first translated in German in 1963, second revised edition 1971, later translated and edited by Glenn Most, The Genesis of Lachmann’s Method (Chicago, 2005).

5 See Maas, Textual Criticism, 1. The wording here is adapted from G.D. Bird, Multitextuality in the Homeric Iliad: The Witness of the Ptolemaic Papyri (Cambridge, MA, 2010), 1-2.

6 Cf. Reynolds and Wilson, Scribes and Scholars, 192-194.

7 Indeed, already in the sixteenth century, with the rise of antiquarianism, consciousness grew as to the context in which ancient texts, notably the Old and New Testaments were made: for whom, under which circumstances, with what kind of cultural presuppositions, etc. Antiquarians had a growing awareness of the material history of the circulation of texts and their transmission. This adumbrated such studies as those of Friedrich Wolf c.s., on which more below.
10 Nicolaas Heinsius's edition of Claudian (1661) is a good example.
12 I have left out the discussion of ancient prose. Although prose was (also) a performative genre in antiquity, it is nevertheless a text type that is less readily available for improvisation or misquotation, albeit on different grounds. Prose became an artistic text type much later than poetry in ancient Greece, and it arose more or less together with the rise and spread of writing. It was, moreover, certainly in the classical period, not performed in the same kind of social contexts as poetry (i.e., at the symposium or the religious festival), due to its generally more technical nature.
13 It is assumed that Pindar's patrons received the text, probably with the musical accompaniment in written form as well, in order to enable such (private) reperformances. But, as is the case with so much about ancient transmission, this is not entirely certain.
16 Useful graph in Bird, Multitextuality in the Homeric Iliad, 41. He posits his own model on page 43.
17 E. Pöhlmann, Einführung in die Überlieferungsgeschichte und in die Textkritik der antiken Literatur (Darmstadt, 1994), 36.
19 Bird, Multitextuality in the Homeric Iliad, 75-78.
20 At least as early as Aristotle, as the Poetica attests, i.e., fourth century BC.
21 Sources for this story include the scholia to the second-century BC grammarian Dionysius Thrax, and some late Lives of Homer.
22 On the editing techniques of the Hellenistic scholars, see, e.g., Pfeiffer, History of Classical Scholarship; Reynolds and Wilson, Scribes and Scholars; Pöhlmann, Einführung in die Überlieferungsgeschichte; R. Nünlist, The Ancient Critic at Work (Cambridge, 2009).
23 See Pfeiffer, History of Classical Scholarship, 229.
24 See for numbers: Pöhlmann, Einführung in die Überlieferungsgeschichte, 36-37.
26 The case of Sappho has been discussed in the light of New Philology by A. Lardinois, 'The New Sappho Poem (P. Koln 21351 and 21376), Key to the Old Fragments', in Greene and Skinner (eds.), The New Sappho on Old Age (Cambridge, MA, 2009), 41-57, and idem, New Philology and the Classics.
27 We know of an edition of Alcaeus's poetry, which was kept in the Apollo temple at Delos (IDel 1400, 70).

29 Sappho, *Test. 10* Voigt = Stobaeus *Anth.* 3.29.58.


33 Cf. the Vienna Papyrus (*P. Vindob. G 40611*), of the third century, which contains a list of about 240 epigram *incipits*. 