

SAPPHO, FR. 44.12 VOIGT AND VIRGIL, *AENEID* 4.173

ABSTRACT

This note shows that Virgil's description of Fama at Aen. 4.173 is inspired by Sappho, fr. 44.12 Voigt.

Keywords: Sappho; Virgil; Rumour

After the pseudo-marriage of Aeneas and Dido in Virgil's *Aeneid*, Fama spreads the news among the Libyan suitors (4.173):

extemplo Libyae magnas it Fama per urbes.

It seems to have escaped notice that this phrase and its context are inspired by a Sapphic verse on the marriage of another Trojan prince, Hector, to Andromache (fr. 44.12 Voigt):

φάμα δ' ἦλθε κατὰ πόλιν εὐρύχορον φίλοις.

Virgil's *magnas it Fama per urbes* is a word-for-word translation of φάμα δ' ἦλθε κατὰ πόλιν εὐρύχορον, *magnas* being a well-attested though probably not strictly literal interpretation of εὐρύχορον that relies on a perceived derivation from χώρος ('of broad spaces') rather than from χορός ('of broad dancing-floors').¹ Commentators typically compare the Virgilian verse to personifications of Rumour in Homer, particularly Ὅσσα δ' ἄρ' ἄγγελος ὤκα κατὰ πόλιν ὄχετο πάντη, | μνηστήρων στυγερὸν θάνατον καὶ κῆρ' ἐνέπουσα (*Od.* 24.413–14), which is certainly relevant as a verbal parallel to the image of Rumour spreading through a city swiftly (ὤκα/*extemplo*).² Thematically, however, the resemblance is not close, since the Homeric passage involves at most a frustrated hope for marriage (on the part of the suitors, cf. *Od.* 1.225–6, 6.270–84, 23.133–51). Sappho's poem on the wedding of Hector and Andromache not only supplies εὐρύχορον as the model for *magnas*, which *Od.* 24.413 lacks, but also, and more importantly, presents a clear thematic link to the episode in the *Aeneid*: both passages are concerned with the (pseudo-)marriage of a Trojan prince (Hector/Aeneas) to a foreign bride (Andromache/Dido) in an exotic location (Troy/Carthage), and both unions will end prematurely owing to historical-mythical events of a higher order that are dictated by fate (the fall of Troy/the mission to Italy).

¹ See *Lfgre* s.v. εὐρύχορος for glosses that render the epithet as μεγάλη in reference to cities. Beyond this, the Greek aorist (ἦλθε) is the expected counterpart to Virgil's historic present (*it*) in epic-style narrative (cf. M.L. West, *Hellenica* [Oxford, 2011–2013], 1.266), and therefore the only real discrepancy is the slight shift from singular to plural (πόλιν/*urbes*).

² See most recently G. Binder, *P. Vergilius Maro: Aeneis. Ein Kommentar* (Trier, 2019), 3 vols., 2.307, and most fully A.S. Pease, *Publi Vergili Maronis Aeneidos liber quartus* (Cambridge, MA, 1935), 211–13. P. Hardie, *Rumour and Renown: Representations of Fama in Western Literature* (Cambridge, 2012), 86–7 n. 31 cites the Sapphic verse only as an 'earlier example of the report of a wedding', and notes neither the verbal nor the thematic parallels (see below; I owe this reference to Prof. S. Harrison). On the association between wedding and Rumour in early Greek poetry, see C. Neri, *Saffo, testimonianze e frammenti* (Berlin and Boston, 2021), 639 and F. Budelmann, *Greek Lyric: A Selection* (Cambridge, 2018), 143.

The correspondence is more broadly significant as a particularly clear piece of evidence for Sappho's presence in the *Aeneid*, which scholarship has only recently begun to detect.³ Book 4 opens with metaphorical descriptions of female passion ultimately traceable to Sappho ('love as a wounding battle', 'love as fire': *Aen.* 4.1–2, cf. Sappho, fr. 1.27–8, 31.9–10), and so at this early stage of Dido's romance with Aeneas the Sapphic reference is very suitable. Yet the news of the wedding will spread, not to the Trojan φίλοι but to the hostile local suitors, recalling Nausicaa's fear of a φῆμιν ὀδευκέα on the part of the Phaeacians if she were seen to marry a foreigner (Hom. *Od.* 6.273).⁴ The poet's comment on Dido's *culpa*, in her belief that she is now married to Aeneas (*Aen.* 4.172), leads the reader to expect a reversal in the manner of a tragic (rather than lyric) victim of love, and eventually the Sapphic love-metaphors become real, in Dido's suicide by a fatal stab on an actual pyre (4.630–66). At that point Rumour again spreads the news (*concussam bacchatur Fama per urbem*, 4.666) and thus makes explicit the foreboding undertone that was contained in the memory of Hector and Andromache's ill-fated wedding at her earlier appearance (*magnas it Fama per urbes*, 4.173).

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NAPE *VERTIT*: A NOTE ON OVID, *AMORES* 1.12*

ABSTRACT

The hairdresser who carries Ovid's invitation to his puella in Amores 1.11 is almost immediately blamed for his rejection in 1.12, before that blame is transferred to the tablets carrying that invitation. Nape (the enslaved hairdresser of the puella) has been linked to the character Dipsas, appearing in 1.7, specifically through the descriptor sobria. By focussing on the use of the verb uerto, the reference to the mythical strix, and curses related to the old age of both Dipsas and the tablets in 1.7 and 1.12, this note demonstrates that the supernatural word choice further connects Nape with Dipsas.

Keywords: Ovid; *Amores*; Latin elegy; *lena*; intratextuality; supernatural; witches

In Ovid's *Amores* 1.12, the second poem of the diptych that recounts a rejected invitation, we find the first-person narrator (ostensibly Ovid himself) transfer his hostility at this rejection from the *puella* to her enslaved hairdresser (who carried the message

³ E.E. Prodi, 'Sappho', in R.F. Thomas and J.M. Ziolkowski (edd.), *The Virgil Encyclopedia* (Malden, Mass., 2014), 1118–19; S. Harrison, 'Shades of Sappho in Vergil', in T.S. Thorsen and S. Harrison (edd.), *Roman Receptions of Sappho* (Oxford, 2019), 137–50; and, for general context, L. Morgan, 'Sappho at Rome', in P.J. Finglass and A. Kelly (edd.), *The Cambridge Companion to Sappho* (Cambridge, 2021), 290–302.

⁴ See Hardie (n. 2), 86–7 n. 31 on this and further epic models.

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