

Erinna's *Distaff* and Sappho Fr.94

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SCHOLARS HAVE frequently noticed a general similarity in situation between Erinna's *Distaff*, in which Erinna recalls her life with Baucis, and Sappho fr.94 (L.-P.), which presents a similar picture of the relationship between Sappho and a female companion.¹ In the words of Bowra,

it is tempting to see some likeness in one respect between her art and that of Sappho. In this poem Erinna moves quickly and naturally from one memory to another, and much of her success lies in the clarity and delicacy with which she recalls the past. Once at least Sappho did the same thing, when she recalled the happy times passed with her lost friend, its flowers, its feasts, its ceremonies.²

Despite such observations little effort has been made to explain the connection between the two poems. A closer examination of both works suggests that the relationship between the *Distaff* and Sappho 94 is a generic one, and that both are examples of farewells addressed to female companions who leave to be married. To demonstrate this it is first necessary to review the poetry of Erinna and to examine the content and themes of the *Distaff*.

Erinna's reputation in antiquity rested on her poem the Ἡλακάτη, or *Distaff*, which tradition held she completed shortly before her death at the age of nineteen.³ The *Distaff* survives in an

¹ E.g. M. Skinner, "Briseis, The Trojan Women, and Erinna," CW 75 (1982) 269 n.13; L. Rissman, *Love as War: Homeric Allusion in the Poetry of Sappho* (= *Beitr. zur kl. Phil.* 157 [Königstein 1983]) 143 n.11; and J. Snyder, *The Women and the Lyre. Women Writers in Classical Greece and Rome* (Carbondale 1989) 96.

² C. M. Bowra, *Problems in Greek Poetry* (Oxford 1953) 167f.

³ Her dates and birthplace are uncertain; for biographical material see M. L. WEST, "Erinna," ZPE 25 (1977: hereafter 'West') 95f, and SCHOLZ, "Erinna," A&A 18 (1973: 'Scholz') 15-21.

extensive papyrus fragment⁴ which shows that the subject of the poem was the marriage and subsequent death of Erinna's childhood friend, Baucis. Two hexameter fragments of Erinna that were known before the papyrus was discovered can easily be fitted into the context of the poem as we know it now,⁵ but a third fragment has resisted inclusion. This is a farewell prayer addressed to the pompilos, a fish of good omen to sailors, asking the creature to grant safe voyage to a certain "sweet friend" (*Suppl.Hell.* 404, from Ath. 7.283D),

πομπίλε, ναύτησιν πέμπων πλόον εὖπλοον ἰχθύ,
πομπεύσαις πρύμναθεν ἔμᾶν ἀδεΐαν ἑταίραν.

These lines have been rejected from the *Distaff* because their alliteration seems harsh compared to Erinna's style elsewhere in the poem, and because Athenaeus, who quotes them, expresses doubt that they really are Erinna's ("Ἡριννά τε ἢ ὁ πεποιηκώς τὸ εἰς αὐτὴν ἀναφερόμενον ποιημάτων).⁶ Evidence strongly suggests, however, that this farewell is indeed by Erinna and furthermore that it must have appeared in the *Distaff*.

Ancient testimonia repeatedly emphasize Erinna's small output and praise her Callimachean qualities: her work is small, sweet, and worth all of Homer, and her swan-like voice has secured an

⁴ *Suppl.Hell.* 401 (*PSI* 1090; Pack² 365), discussed at length along with reconstruction of the poem most recently by West 96–114.

⁵ Stobaeus 4.50a.14 (= *PSI* 1090.46) and 4.51.4 (*Suppl.Hell.* 402), τουτόθεν εἰς Ἀΐδαν κενεὰ διανήχεται ἀχώ. | σιγὰ δ' ἐν νεκύεσσι, τὸ δὲ σκότος ὅσση καταγρεῖ. The latter, while clearly from the *Distaff*, remains unplaced; see discussion by Scholz 38 and West 101.

⁶ R. Reitzenstein, *Epigram und Skolion* (Giessen 1893) 143f, n.1, whose arguments have been generally accepted, e.g. by D. N. Levin, "Quaestiones Erinneanae," *HSCP* 66 (1962) 199, and M. Arthur, "The Tortoise and the Mirror: Erinna *PSI* 1090," *CW* 74 (1980) 55. Stylistic arguments, however, are not compelling; compare, for example, the mannered address to the pompilos in Apollonius Rh. fr.8 Powell (*infra*). U. Lisi, *Poetesse greche* (Catania 1933) 151, does take the fragment as genuine, but assigns it to a poem earlier than the *Distaff*. West 116–19 is apparently alone in believing that the pompilos fragment is from the *Distaff*; noting Athenaeus' hesitation he goes on to argue that the *Distaff* itself is spurious and that the figure of Erinna is a literary hoax. His conclusions are criticized by S. Pomeroy, "Supplementary Notes on Erinna," *ZPE* 32 (1978) 19–21, and by Arthur 54–58.

undying fame among an unequal generation that follows.⁷ Antipater of Sidon is typical (*Anth.Pal.* 7.713):

παυροεπής Ἡριννα καὶ οὐ πολὺμυθος ἀοιδαῖς,
 ἀλλ' ἔλαχεν Μούσης τοῦτο τὸ βαιὸν ἔπος.
 τοιγάρτοι μνήμης οὐκ ἤμβροτεν, οὐδὲ μελαίνης
 νυκτὸς ὑπὸ σκιερῇ κωλύεται πτέρυγι·
 αἱ δ' ἀναρίθμητοι νεαρῶν σωρηδὸν ἀοιδῶν
 μυριάδες λήθη, ξεῖνε, μαραινόμεθα.
 λωΐτερος κύκνου μικρὸς θρόος ἢ ἐκ κολοιῶν
 κρωγμὸς ἐν εἰαριναῖς κιδνάμενος νεφέλαις.

Such statements clearly comment on the refined style of Erinna's poetry, and it is plain that the *Distaff*, small though it was, held a high place in the esteem of later poets who could see in her work a forerunner of Callimachean aesthetics.⁸ But there is not a poem on Erinna that does not stress her early death,⁹ and whether or not Erinna herself was consciously 'Callimachean', the picture that emerges from the repeated testimony is that Erinna was known only for the one poem, and that she presumably did not live to write another.¹⁰ This suggests that the three epigrams attributed to Erinna in the *Anthology* are probably spurious, and indeed, upon examination they offer no evidence for a body of work beyond the *Distaff*. The first epigram, 6.352, is a commonplace, and presents nothing to support Erinna's authorship.¹¹ The others, 7.710 and 7.712, treat the death of Baucis and simply repeat themes from the *Distaff*, which would be odd if Erinna were the author, but perfectly

⁷ *Anth.Pal.* 7.11.1 (Asclepiades); 7.12.1f; 9.190.1ff.

⁸ Most clearly articulated by Antiphanes, who attacks Erinna as the darling of the mindless followers of Callimachus (τῶν μεγάλων κηλῖδες, ἐπ' Ἡρίννη δὲ κομῶντες, *Anth.Pal.* 11.322.3; cf. Hor. *Sat.* 1.10.19, *nil praeter Calvum et doctus cantare Catullum*).

⁹ See 7.13 (Leonidas); 7.11.3f; 7.12.2ff; 9.190.5f; and Antipater's poem quoted above.

¹⁰ The situation is clearly articulated by K. Latte, "Erinna," *NA&G* (1953) 91f (= *Kleine Schriften* [Munich 1968] 522); cf. A. and A. Cameron, "Erinna's *Distaff*," *CQ* N.S. 19 (1969) 285f.

¹¹ Cf. Scholz 21–24, whose extensive interpretation of the poem assumes Erinna's authorship. West 115 would assign this epigram to Nossis; cf. G. Luck, "Die Dichterinnen der griechischen Anthologie," *MusHelv* 11 (1954) 171.

natural in another poet who wished to pay her a tribute.¹² Leonidas' apparent quotation of 7.712 in his own poem on Erinna (7.13.4 Βάσκανος ἔσσ', "Αἶδα=7.712.3) is also valueless as evidence, since both works could be quoting the *Distaff* independently;¹³ but even if Leonidas is quoting from 7.712, it would show only that the epigram passed under Erinna's name in the third century B.C.

In light of these considerations, one is inclined to say that the pompilos fragment, if it is accepted as genuine, must have appeared in the *Distaff*, and support for this view is provided by the testimony of Athenaeus himself. In his discussion of sacred fishes, Athenaeus scrupulously cites each work that he quotes when several were written by the author in question; only in Erinna's case does he refer simply to "the poem" (τὸ ποιημάτιον) attributed to her.¹⁴ In this context it is reasonable to conclude that he is quoting the pompilos fragment directly from the *Distaff* and not from some other work recognized as spurious, and consequently that the farewell most likely appeared in Erinna's poem.¹⁵

If the pompilos fragment is granted to the *Distaff*, it remains to enquire what place it could have occupied in the poem. There are two possibilities: the farewell could have been presented at the death of Baucis, whom Erinna mourns in the surviving portion, or at Baucis' marriage, which is referred to in the poem and which must have been mentioned earlier. Farewells could indeed be spoken to the dead,¹⁶ but the pompilos had no connection with death; the fish was instead sacred to Aphrodite, and through her was associated with love.

¹² Thus West 114f.

¹³ A strong suspicion, given Leonidas' εἶπ' ἐτύμως ἅ παις (7.13.4); cf. West 115.

¹⁴ The term ποιημάτιον aptly reflects the general Hellenistic assessment of the *Distaff*; cf. ps.-Longinus *De subl.* 33.5, who uses the word to describe Eratosthenes' lost poem the *Erigone* (διὰ πάντων γὰρ ἀμώτατον τὸ ποιημάτιον), a work that must have been of comparable scope and ambition (see F. Solmsen, *Kleine Schriften* I [Hildesheim 1968] 225-48).

¹⁵ West 96 argues similarly concerning Athenaeus' citation, but is silent on the rôle of the farewell in the *Distaff*.

¹⁶ E.g. *Iliad* 23.19, χαῖρε μοι, ὦ Πάτροκλε, καὶ εἰν 'Αἶδαο δόμοισι; and cf. Catullus 101.10, *ave atque vale*.

This erotic aspect of the pompilos argues strongly that Erinna's farewell was made on the occasion of Baucis' marriage.

The pompilos was regarded as a sacred fish in antiquity. Its habit of swimming in the wake of ships gave rise to the belief that it was the guide and rescuer of ships in distress (Ath. 284D).¹⁷ But the first fact about the pompilos mentioned by Athenaeus is that the fish was born at the same time as Aphrodite, emerging with her from the divine blood (ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανίου αἵματος), and hence is an erotic creature (ζῷον ἐρωτικόν, 282E–F). The picture here is clearly aetiological; the pompilos was born as an attendant of Aphrodite, and its habit of swimming in the wake of ships is emblematic of its origin in the company of the goddess as she rose from the sea.

The pompilos thus has a double aspect. As a creature sacred to Aphrodite, he figures in her cult as the sea goddess, Aphrodite Euploia, whose worship was widespread throughout the Mediterranean,¹⁸ and like Aphrodite Euploia he was regarded as a protector of ships. But this association with Aphrodite means that the influence of the pompilos was not confined solely to maritime matters, for like the goddess, he could favor sailors' fortunes in love. Athenaeus quotes Nicander on this point, who refers to the pompilos thus (fr.16 Gow/Scholfield):

πομπίλος, ὃς ναύτησιν ἀδημονέουσι κελεύθους
μηνύει φιλέρωσι καὶ ἄφθογγός περ ἀμύνων.

Athenaeus reports an additional legend about the erotic nature of the pompilos. According to a story told by Apollonius Rhodius in the *Founding of Naucratis*, the pompilos was once a fisherman, named Pompilos, who was changed into a fish by Apollo after he interfered in the god's attempt to rape a river nymph of Samos named Ocyroe. While at Miletus, where she had gone to celebrate a feast of Artemis, Ocyroe, who knew of Apollo's imminent attempt to seize her, implored the fisherman to rescue her and to take her home (fr.8 Powell=Ath. 7.283F):

¹⁷ See D'Arcy Thompson, *A Glossary of Greek Fishes* (Oxford 1947) 208f.

¹⁸ Roscher, *Lex. s.v.* "Euploia."

πατρὸς ἐμοῖο φίλου συμφράδμονα θυμὸν ἀέξων,
 Πομπίλε, δυσκελάδου δεδαῶς θοὰ βένθεα πόντου,
 σῶζέ με.

Angered, Apollo punished Pompilos by changing him into a fish, but paid him an honor by putting him in charge of the safety of all ships, just as he protected Ocyroe when he was a man.

There is no reason to doubt that these legends, or versions of them, were current at the time the *Distaff* was composed. The two rôles of the pompilos revealed in these stories, first as a protector of ships and sailors, and second as a guardian in love, are both pertinent to the occasion of Baucis' marriage in the *Distaff*. We can see this same double aspect of the pompilos reflected in Erinna's prayer. She begins with what amounts to an aretalogy, invoking the pompilos as a protector of sailors: πομπίλε, ναύτησιν πέμπων πλόον εὐπλοον ἰχθύ. Now, however, Erinna produces her friend as a new charge for the pompilos, πομπεύσαις πρύμναθεν ἐμὰν ἀδείαν ἑταίραν. Baucis is obviously not a sailor, and the prayer makes a clear contrast between the aid that the pompilos gives to sailors and the new duty he is asked to undertake for Erinna's friend.¹⁹

When she married, Baucis quite probably had to depart with her husband to a new home. But in marrying, Baucis also had to leave the world of maidenhood which she shared with Erinna, and which from the *Distaff* it is clear Erinna still leads (lines 36–41; see *infra*), to enter into a new life as a married woman. The pompilos can thus be seen invoked in its double aspect to guide Baucis as she leaves to assume the new rôle of wife. The story of Ocyroe would underline this point, for like the nymph, Baucis faces the end of her maidenhood, and the pompilos is asked to protect Erinna's friend now, just as he protected Ocyroe. In addition, this interpretation fits naturally into the situation as presented by the surviving portions of the *Distaff*. The fragment

¹⁹ This contrast is underscored by the adjective "sweet," ἀδεία, with its erotic connotations: see G. Lanata, "Sul linguaggio amoroso di Saffo," *QUCC* 1 (1966) 73f.

(54 lines, about one-sixth of the whole)²⁰ takes Baucis' wedding as a given, suggesting that it was presented earlier in the poem, and it is easy to imagine the farewell appearing there in an account of Baucis' departure.²¹

This reconstruction of the *Distaff* illuminates the parallels with Sappho fr.94 noted above, for in that poem Sappho too presents herself bidding farewell to a dear companion. As it stands, fr.94 begins abruptly with a declaration of Sappho's wish to die, and it continues with an account of the words spoken between Sappho and her friend at the time of their parting:

τεθνάκην δ' ἀδόλως θέλω·
ἄ με ψισδομένα κατελίμπανεν

πόλλα καὶ τόδ' ἔειπέ . [
ῶμ' ὡς δεῖνα πεπ[όνθ]αμεν·
5 Ψάφ' ἦ μάν σ' ἀέκοισ' ἀπυλιμπνάνω.

τὰν δ' ἔγω τάδ' ἀμειβόμαν·
χαίροισ' ἔρχεο κᾶμεθεν
μέμναισ', οἴσθα γὰρ ὡς σε πεδήπομεν·

αἰ δὲ μή, ἀλλά σ' ἔγω θέλω
10 ὄμναισαι [...].[...].αι
..[] καὶ κάλ' ἐπάσχομεν·

πό[λλοις γὰρ στεφάν]οις ἴων
καὶ βρ[όδων]κίων τ' ὕμοι
κα ..[] πὰρ ἔμοι περεθήκαο

15 καὶ πό[λλαις ὑπα]θύμιδας
πλέκ[ταις ἀμφ' ἀ]πάλαι δέραι
ἀνθέων . [] πεποημμέναις

καὶ π.....[] . μύρω

²⁰ We know that the *Distaff* was three hundred lines long from *Anth.Pal.* 9. 190.3, οἱ δὲ τριηκόσιοι ταύτης στίχοι ἴσοι Ὀμήρω. Cf. West 112, who argues on the basis of column lengths that the fragment comes from the end of the *Distaff*.

²¹ Note the description of departure that begins Sappho fr.94 (see *infra*).

- 20 βρενθείω .[]ρυ[..*v*
 ἐξαλείψαιο κα[*ι* βασ]ίληίω

 καὶ στρώμν[αν ἐ]πὶ μολθάκαν
 ἀπάλαν πα . [] ... ων
 ἐξίης πόθο[ν] . νίδων,

 25 κωῦτε τισ[]..τι
 ἴρον οὐδύ[]
 ἔπλετ' ὅππ[οθεν ἄμ]μες ἀπέσκομεν

 οὐκ ἄλλος . [].ρος
]ψοφος
]...οιδιαι

When Sappho says "Farewell, remember me" (χαίρισ' ἔρχεο κᾶμεθεν μέμναισ', 7f), she invokes a convention of Homeric farewells, exemplified by Nausikaa's parting words to Odysseus, Χαίρε ξεῖν', ἵνα καί ποτ' ἐὼν ἐν πατρίδι γαίῃ μνήσῃ ἐμεῖ' (*Od.* 8.461f).²² It would appear that Sappho is about to begin an account of those things she has done for her friend that are deserving of remembrance (Nausikaa, for example, has saved Odysseus' life [8.462]: ὅτι μοι πρώτη ζῳάγρι' ὀφέλλεις), but in actual fact the catalogue that follows does not present Sappho's acts of kindness; instead, it is entirely taken up with the actions of the woman, actions that have clearly endeared her to Sappho.

Sappho first mentions the public and social activities that she and her companion have enjoyed together, starting with a banquet scene and a description of her friend bedecked with garlands (12–14). She then proceeds to mention the wreaths that the woman wears upon her soft neck (13–17), the perfumed ointment that her friend wore on her breast (18–20), and pictures her friend (with Sappho presumably nearby, 14), as she satisfies her longing upon soft pillowed couches (21–23). The catalogue thus moves almost imperceptibly from the setting of a social gathering to the physical charms of her friend—her neck, breast, perfume—and culminates in what can only be a de-

²² The verbal parallel is noted by W. Schadewaldt, "Zu Sappho," *Hermes* 71 (1936) 367.

scription of love-making.²³ From this point of intimacy and passion, the catalogue moves back into the public world, with mention of the shrines (24ff) and the groves (27) visited by Sappho and her friend. The end of the poem is unfortunately lost, but it is apparent that the catalogue returns to the beginning and to the pose of friend that Sappho assumed there.²⁴

Commentators typically assume that Sappho's insistence on remembering these times together is meant to console her grieving friend.²⁵ This interpretation, however, is not borne out by the poem, for Sappho simply does not present a consolation, nor, in fact, does she show any interest in her friend's emotions.²⁶ The words *χαίροις' ἔρχεο κάμεθεν μέμναις', οἶσθα γὰρ ὡς σε πεδήπομεν* (7f) are not an exhortation to cheer up; they are simply the "Goodbye" that is so frequent in Homer and elsewhere.²⁷ But what is more important, Sappho fails to present exempla of heroes or deities who suffered the same fate that she and her friend suffer, something that would be essential if the

²³ For the controversy surrounding this interpretation see especially G. Zuntz, "De Sapphus carminibus ē 3, ē 4, ē 5," *Mnemosyne* SER. III 7 (1938) 89. D. Page, *Sappho and Alcaeus* (Oxford 1955) 79f (on line 21) and 143f; Lanata (*supra* n.19) 70; J. G. Howie, "Sappho, FR 94 L.-P.," *Papers of the Liverpool Latin Seminar* 2 (1979) 323; A. Burnett, "Desire and Memory, Sappho Frag. 94," *CP* 74 (1979) 23f; and Zuntz, all see an erotic encounter in the poem.

²⁴ Compare Howie's analysis (*supra* n.23) 318, which divides the catalogue into two parts, the first (lines 12–23) describing the private, the second (lines 24 to end) the public pleasures shared by Sappho and her friend.

²⁵ E.g. Schadewaldt (*supra* n.22) 368; Page (*supra* n.23) 81f; Howie (*supra* n.23) 310–15.

²⁶ The tendency to see a consolation here is due in part to the influence of Menander Rhetor (398.27ff) who prescribes a consolation as one part of the farewell speech which he calls the *προπεμτικὴ λαλιά* (see F. Cairns, *Generic Composition in Greek and Roman Poetry* [Edinburgh 1972] 53ff). Sappho, however, does not exhibit any other of Menander's elements in the poem. For a discussion of the development of the *lalia* and for cautionary words on the application of Menander's treatise to earlier poetry, see the commentary of Russell and Wilson (Oxford 1983) xxxi f.

²⁷ E.g. *χαίρετον, ᾧ κούρω* (*Od.* 15.151); *χαῖρε, ξεῖν'* (8.461); *σὺ δὲ χαῖρε καὶ ἔμπης* (5.205); and for participial uses parallel to fr.94: *σὺ δὲ μοι χαίρων ἀφίκοιο* (*Od.* 15.128); *χαίρων εὖ τελέσειας ὁδὸν μεγάλου διὰ πόντου* (*Theog.* 691); *ἦτι χαίρων* (*Ar. Eq.* 498).

catalogue were in fact a consolation.²⁸ Instead, Sappho recalls the very things that she loses with the departure of her friend, things which, now that the friend is gone, cause her sorrow. Sappho thus presents the opposite of a consolation: her poem presents a lament; and it invokes memory in the same way as numerous other laments in Greek literature.²⁹

But we must note another aspect of Sappho's insistence on remembering in fr.94. Wilamowitz argued that Sappho's words, "You know how we cherished you, but if not, let me remind you" (8–10), imply that the woman has forgotten Sappho's kindness and is somehow ungrateful;³⁰ but the motive for Sappho's words becomes clearer when we examine memory and forgetting in Sappho's other poems, for it appears that these themes are closely associated with separation caused by marriage, and they suggest that marriage is the reason Sappho's friend must leave in fr.94.³¹

In fr.96, Atthis longs for her friend who is at Sardis, and Sappho consoles Atthis with the thought that her former companion still remembers her (15–17):

πόλλα δὲ ζαφοίταισ', ἀγάννας ἐπι-
μνάσθεις' Ἀτθιδος ἡμέρω
λέπταν ποι φρένα κ[.]ρ... βόρηται.

²⁸ For consolations see R. Kassel, *Untersuchungen zur griechischen und römischen Konsolationsliteratur* (=Zetemata 18 [Munich 1958]). The nature of such consolatory catalogues is well illustrated by Howie (*supra* n.23) 317f, who cites *Il.* 5.382–402 (Dione consoling the wounded Aphrodite), Archilochus 13 W., and Pindar *Pyth.* 3 (to the ill Hieron). Howie argues that Sappho consoles "indirectly" by creating "a mood of luxury and sensuous relaxation" (322), and shows her friend how to avail herself of "social blessings" in her new home (328).

²⁹ For the rôle of memory in the ritual *goos* see E. Reiner, *Die Rituelle Totenklage der Griechen* (=Tübinger Beitr. 30 [Stuttgart/Berlin 1938]), and Skinner (*supra* n.1) 266.

³⁰ *Sappho und Simonides* (Berlin 1913) 48–52. The view has been revived by G. Caduff, "Zu Sapphos Fragment 94 L.–P. (=96 D.)," *Serta Philologica Aenipontana* 2 (1972) 9–12. See Howie (*supra* n.23) 304 for criticisms of this "Untreuetheorie."

³¹ It is sometimes casually asserted that the woman leaves to be married (e.g. Schadewaldt [*supra* n.22] 366). Cf. Rissman (*supra* n.1) 120f, who reads fr.94 in the context of a Lesbian girls' society, headed by Sappho, that prepares its members for marriage.

The reason for the friend's departure to Sardis is not given, but the woman is described as a γύνη (6f), not a παρθένος, and it is reasonable to infer that she has married and gone with her husband. In fr.16 it is Anactoria who is gone, and Sappho recalls her through a comparison with Helen, who ran off with Paris and who "forgot" her husband and children under the overwhelming influence of Aphrodite (6–11):

ἀ γὰρ πόλυ περσκέθοισα
 κάλλος [ἀνθ]ρώπων Ἑλένα [τὸ]ν ἄνδρα
 τὸν [πανάρ]ιστον

καλλ[ίποι]σ' ἔβα 'ς Τροίαν πλέοι[σα
 κωὺδ[ὲ πα]ῖδος οὐδὲ φίλων το[κ]ήων
 π[ά]μπαν] ἐμνάσθη.

Helen is presented here as an exemplum of the power of love. Her departure with Paris is in essence her second marriage; Helen leaves, infatuated with her new husband, rejecting the former ties that bound her. The implication here is that Anactoria has also left to follow a man, and that she too has married, leaving Sappho to remember her.

Whether or not Sappho was mistress of some sort of 'finishing school', it is clear that the separation of companions was not an uncommon theme in her poetry, and that in these poems memory and forgetting are associated with marriage and describe the effects that marriage has on female companions. The woman who marries "forgets" her former life and loves, while the companion who is left behind remains mindful of her. In this context Sappho's claim in fr.94 that her friend has forgotten her takes on added meaning, for it suggests that the woman is leaving to be married. This also explains Sappho's extreme grief: she and the woman were lovers, and nothing of this can remain once the woman has married. Indeed, marriage is a transition every bit as final to their relationship as death would be. Sappho's insistence on reminding her friend of their life together is thus both an attempt to preserve the intimacy they have shared and at the same time a statement of her own grief.

Returning to the *Distaff*, we find that Erinna's poem presents

the same themes of lament and forgetting that appear in Sappho's farewell. Erinna, like Sappho, is alone, and she grieves for Baucis in terms that are clearly taken from ritual lament (e.g. lines 18, 31–34, 47f, 54).³² Sappho mourned as though her companion had died; for Erinna, it seems, Baucis' marriage and death are closely joined, developing explicitly the equation between marriage and death that is inherent in Sappho's lament, and perhaps incorporating the idea of the Bride of Death.³³ In addition the surviving fragment finds Erinna in the midst of a catalogue of memories of her life with Baucis that is quite similar to Sappho's catalogue in fr.94, and which includes a description of Baucis and herself as children playing a tag game called the 'Tortoise' (*Suppl.Hell.* 401.14–17):³⁴

. .]υκᾶν μαινομεν[αἰ]αἰ ἔγώ, μέγ' ἄῦσα· φ[. .]ομένα μεγάλασ[].[. .]υκμα[]]. σσίναφ.[.]π.[] χελύννα] χορτίον αὐλᾶς·
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with wild (feet you leaped from the white horses into) the wave.

³² This quality was immediately recognized when the papyrus was first discovered: see Bowra (*supra* n.1) 163, Scholz 38, and Skinner (*supra* n.1) 266.

³³ See the testimony of *Anth.Pal.* 7.712.3–8, τὰ δέ τοι καλὰ σάμαθ' ὀρῶντι | ὤμοτάταν Βαυκοῦς ἀγγελέοντι τύχαν, | ὡς τὰν παῖδ', Ὑμέναιος ἔφ' αἷς | ἀεῖδετο πύκαις, | ταῖσδ' ἐπι καδεστάς ἔφλεγε πυρκαϊᾶ· | καὶ σὺ μὲν, ὦ | Ὑμέναιε, γάμων μολπαῖον ἀοιδάν | ἐς θρήνων γοερὸν φθέγμα μεθαρμόσαο. Lines 5f are problematical; the text is that of Gow and Page, *The Greek Anthology. Hellenistic Epigrams* (Cambridge 1965), who translate, "with the torches to whose accompaniment Hymen was hymned, her father-in-law consumed the maiden on this pyre." For a recent assessment of the Bride of Death topos see E. Vermeule, *Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry* (Berkeley 1979) 55 with n.25. The tradition of Erinna's own early death causes her to be cast in this rôle by Leonidas (7.13). Just as the bride 'dies', so too in a sense does the friend who is left behind; note Sappho's τεθνάκην δ' ἀδόλωσ θέλω (fr.94.1). Could Erinna have uttered a similar wish in the *Distaff*?

³⁴ The game is described by Pollux 9.125, and was first recognized here by Bowra, *New Chapters in the History of Greek Literature*, 3rd ser., ed. Powell (Oxford 1933) 181f (cf. *Problems in Greek Poetry* [Oxford 1953] 154). In the game the tortoise was 'It', and the leap from white horses into the sea signaled her tag of another, who then became the tortoise. The game might have had a symbolic connection with marriage; see Arthur (*supra* n. 6) 59 and Pomeroy (*supra* n.6).

Alas, I shouted loudly...(as) the tortoise (I ran about) the enclosure of the spacious courtyard.³⁵

The catalogue is interrupted at this point by Erinna's lament (18–21):

τα]ῦτα τὺ, Βαῦκι τάλαι[να	]χεισα γόημ[]
τα]ῦτά μοι ἐν κρα[δ	]...χνια κεῖται
θέρμ' ἔτι· την[	]·υρομες ἄνθρακες ἤδη·

These things I lament, poor Baucis, (heaving heavy sighs); these (amusements) are still warm in my heart, (but those others that once we played) are already ashes.

Recollections of Baucis resume in the following lines (22–27), which are difficult to reconstruct, but in which it appears that Erinna pictured herself and Baucis playing with dolls. It seems that she also recalled how as children they feared Mormo, a traditional bogey, and aided Erinna's mother in household chores.³⁶

Immediately following these memories, however, is the statement that Baucis has forgotten these things (28–30):

ἀνίκα δ' ἐς [λ]έχος [	]όκα πάντ' ἐλέλασο
ἄσσ' ε. [].. ηπιας..τ.[	] ματρὸς ἄκουσας,
Βαῦκι φίλα· λαθα...ε.[	] Ἄφροδίτα·

But when (you went) to the marriage bed, you forgot all (those things) which you heard (from) your (?) mother as a child, dear Baucis; Aphrodite (set) forgetfulness (in your heart).

Baucis' forgetfulness is clearly the forgetfulness of marriage and is the same as that of Sappho's companion in the farewell of fr. 94. It reflects the irrevocable split that came between Erinna

³⁵ The text is that of Lloyd-Jones and Parsons. The translation is based primarily on West's supplemented text, 112f.

³⁶ Latte (*supra* n.10) 85f (= *Kl.Schr.* 515), followed by Scholz 36f, suggests that Mormo here represents the fear of marriage; but compare the testimony of *Anth. Pal.* 9.190.5f, ἢ καὶ ἐπ' ἠλακᾶτη μητρὸς φόβω, ἢ καὶ ἐφ' ἰστῶ ἐστήκει Μουσέων λάτρις ἐφαπτομένη. For more on Mormo see West 107.

and Baucis when Baucis married; Baucis forgets the life she led, just as Helen, the exemplum of the infatuated bride, forgot her ties in Sappho fr.16.³⁷ Erinna's statement that she still cherishes these memories parallels Sappho's assertion that the past has been good, καὶ κάλ' ἐπάσχομεν fr.94.11); but like Sappho, Erinna is left behind when her companion marries, and grieves over the memories of their former life.

Recognition that Erinna has bid farewell to Baucis and that the latter has left to join her husband helps clarify a problematical circumstance in the poem. Erinna for some reason is unable to join in public mourning for Baucis (31–35, cf. 43):

τῶ τυ κατακλα[ί]οισατα[	].[ ]...ε λείπω[.]
οὐ [γ]άρ μοι πόδες...[...].[	].ο δῶμα βέβαλοι·
οὐδ' ἐσιδῆν φαε.[	]κυν οὐδὲ γοᾶσαι
γυμναῖσιν χαιτᾶς.ν[	]. νικεος αἰδῶς
δρῦπτει μ' ἀμφι..[

And so bewailing you (I lament those things but) leave off (the rest), for my feet are not profane (to leave the house); nor (am I allowed) to see (your body with my eyes) nor to mourn with my hair unbound. (But) blushing shame marks me about (my cheeks).

Several interpretations have been offered: Erinna might have been a priestess and hence debarred from funerals (cf. βέβαλοι in 32);³⁸ she might have been excluded as a woman of child-bearing age,³⁹ or because she was not Baucis' blood relative,⁴⁰ or again because of her status as an unmarried woman.⁴¹ However, a more natural reason for Erinna's absence is at hand if we recognize the context of Erinna's farewell to Baucis as it must have appeared earlier, namely that Baucis did not die on Telos, but

³⁷ Cf. Scholz 36f, who stresses Baucis' specific disregard of some warning received from her mother as suggested by line 29.

³⁸ Bowra (*supra* n.2) 160.

³⁹ West 108f, who also observes on the basis of τῶ in 31 that the fact of Baucis' marriage somehow seems to prevent Erinna from mourning.

⁴⁰ Skinner (*supra* n.1) 268.

⁴¹ Arthur (*supra* n.6) 63f.

abroad, where she had gone to join her husband,⁴² and consequently that Erinna can only imagine the actual funeral that has perhaps already taken place far away.⁴³

One final point in this regard remains to be considered: Erinna's inability to mourn is somehow connected to feelings of shame (34f). Why should this be so? Quite probably because Erinna and Baucis, like Sappho and her companion, were lovers. Erinna's reaction to the loss of Baucis, who died as a married woman, is inappropriate, and the blush of shame that marks Erinna's cheeks serves to reveal her true feelings, feelings which now must be suppressed.⁴⁴ Under normal circumstances lament is a public rite that integrates mourners with their community; but Erinna's grief is an isolating force; she must remain at her spindle, the emblem both of her former life with Baucis and of her present seclusion. "You are nineteen years old," Aidos apparently tells her, "and still with your mother, looking upon your distaff" (37ff, ἐννεα[καὶ]δέκατος .[| Ἑριννα[. .] ἐφίλαι π.[| ἀλακάταν ἐσορεῖ). In a very real sense Erinna remains tied to her companion and unable to let go of the life they shared.⁴⁵

In summary, this reconsideration of the *Distaff* and of the place that the pompilos farewell must have occupied in it throws some light on the similarities between Erinna's poem and Sappho fr.94. Both poems present farewells made to women; in both the speaker remembers times that she and her departing friend have shared and when doing so accuses the friend of forgetting those times. Both works contain laments over the departed friend, and finally, both are primarily concerned with the speaker's state and emotions, not with those of the companion. These similarities are thematic. There is nothing in any

⁴² This situation was suggested by Wilamowitz (*supra* n.30) 229f on the basis of *Anth.Pal.* 7.710.

⁴³ Line 50, ὠρυγᾶς ἀϊοισο, seems to imply that Erinna hears someone wailing, but we do not know whom, nor does this necessarily imply that the funeral itself was literally within earshot.

⁴⁴ Cf. the inhibiting power of αἰδώς in Sappho fr.137, apparently also in an erotic context.

⁴⁵ It is interesting to note the reappearance of αἰδώς at line 42, somehow in connection with Erinna's virginity and the threat of spinsterhood; see West 111.

of this to indicate that Erinna simply imitated Sappho directly; rather, the nature of the affinity between the two poems suggests that a farewell addressed to women who married might have been a recognized type. Although both the *Distaff* and Sappho fr.94 have marriage as their occasion, they are not in any sense epithalamia; they are instead personal poems that take the form of a farewell. Companions were no doubt frequently separated at marriage, and goodbyes must have been spoken. The reality of such a personal experience perhaps provided material for a poem in which a woman did not simply say farewell to her companion, but also lamented the loss of her love to the powers of Aphrodite.⁴⁶

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