

The Rôle of Aphrodite in Sappho Fr. 1

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SAPPHO'S *Hymn to Aphrodite*, standing so near to the beginning of our evidence for the religious and poetic traditions it embodies, remains a *locus* of disagreement about the function of the goddess in the poem and the degree of seriousness intended by Sappho's plea for her help. Wilamowitz thought sparrows' wings unsuited to the task of drawing Aphrodite's chariot, and proposed that Sappho's report of her epiphany described a vision experienced *ὄναρ*, not *ὑπαρ*.¹ Archibald Cameron ventured further, suggesting that the description of Aphrodite's flight was couched not in the language of "the real religious tradition of epiphany and its effect on mortals" but was "Homeric and conventional"; and that the vision was not, therefore, the record of a genuine religious experience, but derived rather from "the bright world of Homer's fancy."² Thus he judged the tone of the ode to be one of seriousness tempered by "a vein of prettiness and almost of playfulness" and concluded that there was no special urgency in Sappho's petition itself. While more recent opinion has tended to regard the episode as a poetic fiction which serves to 'mythologize' a genuine emotion, Sir Denys Page has not only maintained that Aphrodite's descent is a "flight of fancy, with much detail irrelevant to her present theme," but argued further that the poem as a whole is a lightly ironic *mélange* of passion and self-mockery.³ Despite a con-

¹ *Sappho und Simonides* (Berlin 1913) 45, with *Der Glaube der Hellenen*³ II (Basel 1959) 109; so also J. Geffcken, *Griechische Literaturgeschichte* I (Heidelberg 1926) 90 (and W. Schadewaldt *Sappho* [Potsdam 1950] 94), untroubled by the absence of elements of the *χρηματισμός* or 'divine dream' *topos* as found in Homer, Sappho 63 and 134 L.-P., and others; cf. E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (= *Sather Lectures* 20, Berkeley 1951) 102ff. The 'fundamentalist' position is still represented in C. M. Bowra, *Greek Lyric Poetry*² (Oxford 1961) 198ff, but the mystical experience he seems to have had in mind is characteristic of later stages of Greek culture: cf. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety* (Cambridge 1965) 69ff.

² A. Cameron, "Sappho's Prayer to Aphrodite," *HThR* 32 (1939) 1-17, esp. 7 and 16.

³ D. Page, *Sappho and Alcaeus* (Oxford 1955) 12ff, esp. 18 [hereafter PAGE]. Among those who regard the occasion for the poem (Sappho's rejection) as real but appear to agree that the epiphany is a projection, using (Homeric) literary fantasy in externalizing the psychological phenomena of restored confidence and reciprocity of affection: H. Fränkel, *Dichtung und Philosophie des frühen Griechentums*³ (Munich 1969) 200ff (= Engl. transl. [Oxford 1975] 177f); A. Lesky, *History of Greek Literature*² (London 1966) 143; and G. Kirkwood, *Early*

siderable body of objection to this view, a fresh look at Sappho's language will, I believe, reveal that while the descent of Aphrodite is no mere decorative interlude, as Page suggests, it serves nevertheless to establish a tone and a field of reference that support his interpretation of the poem as an essay in irony.

For Page, the key to the poem is to be found in Aphrodite's address to Sappho: her manner is one of exasperation, indicated by the triple repetition of *δηῦτε* (15, 16, 18), softened by her amused smile and by the indulgent tone of 21ff: "If she is running away, she will soon be running after you"⁴—with the added irony that by then (taking *διώκειν* as 'to pursue one fleeing'), Sappho will have lost interest and will shun her pursuer and her gifts in favor of yet another object of affection. The speech, in effect, may be paraphrased: "'Why do you keep calling me? Who is it this time, Sappho? It has all happened so often before, and the end has always been the same. Today it is you who love and she who is reluctant; tomorrow it will be she who chases, you who run. So inconstant is your passion, so transient your suffering'."⁵ Thus the poem reveals Sappho, at a moment of intense emotion, still able to objectify, even to judge, her mood: "in the moment of her agony she has the wit to understand and the heart to express the variety and impermanence of her passion."⁶

Alarmed by the possibility of irony in Sappho and by such "umorismo troppo salottiero, e anche troppo britannico"⁷ (or, alternatively, "troppo ellenistico"⁸), Page's critics have for the most part been con-

Greek Monody (= *Cornell Studies* 34, Ithaca 1974) 108ff. A. J. Beattie, *JHS* 76 [1957] 321, on the other hand, seems to suggest that the invocation is a parody, and M. L. West, "Burning Sappho," *Maia* 22 (1970) 307–30, characterizes the invocation-petition as a mere frame for the "ornately pretty centrepiece," the epiphany of Aphrodite; he suggests that the poem is intended to say no more than "Oh dear, I am in love again." A representative selection of opinion may be found in G. A. Privitera, "La rete di Afrodite," *QUCC* 4 (1967) 7–58; a very nearly exhaustive if somewhat indiscriminating survey of discussion up to 1970 is offered by H. Saake, *Zur Kunst Sapphos* (Paderborn 1971) 39ff [hereafter, *SAAKE*]; his views are summarized with further bibliography in *Sapphostudien* (Paderborn 1972) 55ff.

⁴ Page, 14.

⁵ Page, 15.

⁶ Page, 18.

⁷ O. Longo, "Moduli epici in Saffo, fr.1," *AIV* 122 (1963) 343–66, esp. 362 n.83.

⁸ A. Luppino, "In margine all'ode di Saffo ad Afrodite," *ParPass* 11 (1956) 359–63, esp. 360 n.1. It should hardly be necessary to suggest that it is perilous to attribute to any particular temperament or period a monopoly of ineptitude in dealing with Sappho as poet or figure—though some might wish to reserve a special place for the verse Grillparzer puts into her mouth (*Sappho*, 160): "Pfui doch, der argen, schlechtgestimmten Leier!"

cerned to discredit the whole by refuting specific points in his argument. A few examples will indicate the trend of reaction. Longo, objecting to Page's contention that Aphrodite smiles because she is amused, maintains that the aorist participle *μειδιαίαιε*' (line 14) simply reflects the "innografia epigonale" of *hAphr* (10) 3, *αἰεὶ μειδιάει*.⁹ But it is clear from *hAphr* (5) 48ff that Aphrodite's famous smile was seen to convey an element of mockery as well as charm; and among her human devotees it would seem inevitable—whatever the emotion imputed to her—that this smile would be regarded with some suspicion by the lovelorn in their paranoia.¹⁰ As for irony on Sappho's part, Krischer, reading in 18–19 an indication that Sappho has been spurned by a former protégée,¹¹ proceeds to the un-Greek—one might say inhuman—assertion that "Die ironische Selbstkritik kann sich nur auf die Situation der Werbung beziehen, nicht auf dies des Verlassenwerdens."¹² Rivier,¹³ leaving aside the problem of self-mockery entirely, maintains that *ἀδικεῖν* in 20 is to be taken in a legal sense: reviving the groundless and obsolete theory that Sappho presided over a *θίακος* of young women united by a religious bond,¹⁴ he proposes that the ode is a plea for Aphrodite's aid in returning to Sappho's circle a girl who has broken her vow of sodality by joining a rival association. And there has been nearly universal objection to Page's restriction of the meaning of *διώκειν* (21) to the pursuit of an object in flight, in favor of its tropic use in later erotic vocabulary as a synonym for *φιλεῖν*.¹⁵

Saake, in his concern with the problem of poetic unity, objects to

⁹ Longo, *loc.cit.* (*supra* n.7); cf. Privitera, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 37 n.36, representing what we may style the 'neo-orthodox' point of view: "La convenzionalità [del sorriso] . . . è il risultato . . . di una viva fede religiosa che identifica la divinità con un processo di rigorosa astrazione. È lo stesso principio che rivivrà nelle iconi ortodosse: il loro valore liturgico è inscindibile dalla loro fissità."

¹⁰ Cf. D. D. Boedeker, *Aphrodite's Entry into Greek Epic* (= *Mnemosyne* Suppl. 32, Leiden 1974) 23ff, esp. 35ff, for the variety of nuance achieved in Homer by the use of the formulaic *φιλομμειδής* itself.

¹¹ T. Krischer, "Sapphos Ode an Aphrodite," *Hermes* 96 (1968) 1–14. On the textual problem at issue, see pp.313f below.

¹² *ibid.* 4.

¹³ A. Rivier, "Observations sur Sappho, 1,19 sq.," *REG* 80 (1967) 84–92.

¹⁴ Restated by R. Merkelbach, "Sappho und ihr Kreis," *Philologus* 101 (1957) 1–29; but cf. Page, 110ff and 126ff; Lesky, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 146; and West, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 324ff. For an attempt at compromise see L. Koenen on *P. Colon. inv.* 5860, *StPap* 15 (1976) 43f.

¹⁵ See especially G. L. Koniaris, "On Sappho, fr.1 (Lobel-Page)," *Philologus* 109 (1965) 30–38; but cf. Krischer, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.11) 5, who finds his argument inconclusive, and my remarks below, pp.316f.

the notion of irony in Aphrodite's speech as inconsistent with the seriousness of her presentation throughout as *πότνια δάμναια*—a goddess of overwhelming might. He therefore argues for the 'orthodox' view of the ode as a genuine *epiklesis* and considers the descent of Aphrodite an effective device for conveying the sense of religious awe she produces in Sappho.¹⁶ Leaving aside for the moment certain tendentious elements in Saake's reasoning, we may still ask (with Fränkel) why, if we are to take the hymn as a serious narrative of an actual religious experience, Sappho has not confined herself to a description of what she might actually have seen and heard;¹⁷ why (in Page's words) "she devotes a quarter of her poem to such a flight of fancy"—and how, as Kirkwood puts it, the vision serves as the 'myth' of the poem.¹⁸

In traditional analyses of Sappho's use of language in Fr.1 there has been a tendency to regard its substantial Homeric element simply as an inevitable "obbligato stilistico" (in Marzullo's phrase¹⁹) to the past: "L'omerismo . . . costituisce un tesoro di esperienze letterarie che nessun poeta ripudierebbe, la possibilità stessa di essere poeti . . . Non dipendenza passiva . . . ma rapporto dialettico, vitale."²⁰ More recently Gregory Nagy and Ann Bergren have sought to demonstrate that much of what in early lyric has been described as epic influence derives rather from an independent and even earlier poetic fund whose formulae have been adapted to hexameter poetry, as well as preserved intact in their original metres by lyric tradition.²¹ On this hypothesis, the archaic poet could draw upon either source according to his intentions on a given occasion. Nagy maintains, for example, that a number of line-endings in Sappho 44 which appear to be truncated Homeric formulas represent in fact the original form of earlier lyric phrases prior to their later elaboration to suit heroic verse; nevertheless, the use of *θεοεικέλο[ις]* in line 34 he takes as a calculated reference to usage in the *Iliad*: in applying to Hektor and Andromache

¹⁶ Saake, pp.50ff; cf. the similarly schematic approach of Privitera, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3).

¹⁷ Fränkel, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 201.

¹⁸ Kirkwood, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 113f.

¹⁹ B. Marzullo, *Frammenti della lirica greca*² (Florence 1967) 50 on lines 21–24.

²⁰ Marzullo, *Studi sulla poesia eolica* (Florence 1958) 202; cf. Longo, *loc.cit.* (*supra* n.7), and A. E. Harvey, "Homeric Epithets in Greek Lyric Poetry," *CQ* 51 (1957) 206–23, esp. 208f.

²¹ G. Nagy, *Comparative Studies in Greek and Indic Meter* (= *Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature* 33 [Cambridge (Mass.) 1974]), and A. L. T. Bergren, *The Etymology and Usage of πείραξ in Early Greek Poetry* (= *American Classical Studies* 2 [1975]) esp. 119ff.

an epithet reserved by Homer for Achilles, Sappho achieves an artfully ironic foreshadowing of things to come.²² "Here, then, is an indication that Sappho was intensely aware of epic diction in general and of the *Iliad* in particular. The metrical and formulaic repertory of her pentameter is cognate with that of the Homeric hexameter, and the consequent structural similarities in the two genres present manifold opportunities for allusion. Using parallel traditional material, the poetess can highlight or shade well-known Panhellenic epic passages. But Sappho's medium can remain her own . . ." ²³

The situation in Fr.1 appears to be rather different. Here the relationship of phrase to metre does not lend itself to isolation of glyconic formulae as in 44; and in the Adonic verses, where Sappho is at liberty to reproduce hexameter formulae intact, she avoids doing so despite the freedom with which she adjusts Homeric collocations to the hendecasyllabic scheme elsewhere in the poem. Again, words traditional to epic are juxtaposed without any apparent consistency to words associated with lyric usage. Thus while Sappho appears to be evoking the Aphrodite of the *Iliad* and the *Homeric Hymns*, it remains to establish whether her epic allusions are a matter of casual borrowing or reflect conscious design.

The directness and brevity of the invocation (1–10) is unusual, as Cameron observed,²⁴ in omitting safeguarding qualifications and the traditional recital of powers, functions and areas of domination; a terse genealogy alone remains. All else has been compressed into three epithets: *ποικιλόθρον'*, *ἄθανάτ'* and *δολόπλοκε*. Forms of *ἄθάνατος*, though rarely applied in Homer to individual gods, are nevertheless attested for the Olympians as a class and for certain lesser deities (Thetis, Circe, Proteus);²⁵ the other two, while non-Homeric, are of compound epic type.²⁶ In thus invoking the potent and eternal god-

²² Nagy, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.21) 118–39.

²³ *ibid.* 139.

²⁴ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 2.

²⁵ Cf. Page, 5, on the disputed formula *τὸν ἄθάνατος τέκετο Ζεύς*.

²⁶ Privitera, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 16ff, interprets *δολόπλοκε* as 'weaver of hunting-nets' and *δάμνα* as 'capture in a net'; but Sappho, as we shall see, develops the figure of Aphrodite rather in terms of warrior than huntress. R. Neuberger-Donath, "Sappho Fr.1.1," *WS* 3 (1969) 15–17, argues for *ποικιλόθρων* on the grounds that it conveys an aspect of Aphrodite rooted in tradition, coincides with Sappho's style and leads the reader *in medias res*; but cf. Marzullo, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.19) 46 on 1: "La variante *ποικιλόθρων* sembra banale, tautologica nei confronti del successivo *δολόπλοκε*." As for the problem of translating *ποικιλόθρον'*, I find it difficult to accept the linguistic and archaeological speculations offered against 'richly-enthroned' by G. Bolling, "Poikilos and Throna," *AJP* 79 (1958) 275ff, and L. Lawler, "On

ness of seductive wiles, Sappho suggests a Homeric atmosphere while at the same time emphasizing only those aspects of Aphrodite which concern her present need. Further, in lines 3–4, in language that couples Homeric δάμνα+θῦμον with the non-Homeric μή μ' ἄσαισι μηδ' ὀνίαισι,²⁷ Sappho proceeds to alter the traditional conception of an Aphrodite who subdues by means of deceptive persuasion and beguiling charm²⁸ to a more intensely personal notion of a goddess capable of overwhelming her victims by heartache and grief. It remains clear, however, that the Aphrodite of epic is her point of departure: for in Sappho's striking alteration of the common formulaic line-end πότνια μήτηρ/"Ἡρη, etc., Homeric expectation is aroused by πότνια in the Adonic 'dactyl', only to be frustrated by θῦμον in the ensuing spondee.

Vernacular and personal reformulation continues in the second stanza, where in line 6, without any metrical compulsion, Sappho substitutes Aeolic τυίδ' ἔλθ'²⁹ for the more formal and traditional

Certain Homeric Epithets," *PQ* 27 (1948) 80–84 (cf. M. C. J. Putnam, "Throna and Sappho I," *CJ* 56 [1960] 79ff, who paraphrases "richly clad with charms of love, perhaps flowers," and Lawler, "Pepoikilmena zoia," *ibid.* 349, who would add living creatures to the figures she suggests are embroidered on Aphrodite's robe). As Marzullo, *loc.cit.*, Page *ad loc.*, and others have pointed out, the conventional interpretation seems justified by the parallel usage of Homeric εὐθρονος and χρυσόθρονος, and the lively subsequent tradition of -θρόνος compounds (e.g., ὑψίθρονος and ἀγλαόθρονος of Pindar, λιπαρόθρονος of Aeschylus, etc.), together with the common glyptic representations of seated goddesses in Daidalic and archaic art (cf. W. Fuchs' brief survey in *Die Skulptur der Griechen* [Munich 1969] 246ff and 586, and H. Möbius, "Archaische Sitzstatue aus Didyma," *Antike Plastik* 2.2 [1963] 23–29). Cf. Privitera, *op.cit.* 12, who argues that Sappho's hearers would have been less likely to associate the compound with the rare θρόνα (in Homer a *hapax* at *Il.* 22.441) than with the more common θρόνος. The context, finally, suggests that at the outset of her poem Sappho is presenting an Aphrodite defined more by authority than by charm (cf. Saake, 76, who overdraws the contrast); thus while both 'richly-enthroned' and 'richly-clad with love-charms' are linguistically possible, the former appears more appropriate to its immediate surroundings. As we shall see, however, the duality of Aphrodite in the poem as a whole suggests that Sappho may well have intended to strike a keynote designed to convey a certain ambiguity, however latent at the moment. It would be unwise, therefore, to exclude either translation.

²⁷ Cf. Marzullo, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.19) 47 nn.3ff, and Longo, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.7) 346ff.

²⁸ For δαμνῆναι cf. *hAphr* (5) 3 and 17, and *Il.* 14.199; for πεπιθεῖν and ἀπαρῆσαι cf. *hAphr* (5) 7 and 33, and Hera's imitative παραιπιθεοῦσα in *Il.* 14.208; for leading the mind astray, *hAphr* (5) 36 and *Il.* 14.217; for love, charm, sweet-talk and allurements as her means, cf. *Il.* 14.198 and 215f; and 3.399ff (where Aphrodite's subsequent threat [414ff] involves not so much direct punishment as the suffering Helen will endure from both warring sides as a result of Aphrodite's withdrawal of protection). (For Sappho's acquaintance with *hAphr* (5) cf. T. W. Allen *et al.*, *The Homeric Hymns*² [Oxford 1934] 351.)

²⁹ For τυίδ' ἔλθ' elsewhere in Sappho cf. 5.2 and 17.7 L.–P.

δεῦρ' ἴθ' (as in the solemn invocation of fr.2.1, δεῦρὺ μ' ἐκ Κρήτας ἐπ[ὶ τόνδ]ε ναῦον, and 127, δεῦρο δηῦτε Μοῖσαι χρύσιον λίποιμαι . . .); to Homeric εἶ ποτε Sappho adds the insistent κατέρωτα; and the formulaic line-end ἔκλυεν αὐδήν/-ῆς is reversed, expanded by the plural αὔδαα and another Homeric verb of hearing, αἰοῖα, and interrupted by the intrusively Aeolic πῆλοι.

Though minimally correct in form, the invocation thus serves primarily to emphasize neither ritual conformity nor conventional reverence: the terseness of the form of *anaklesis*, the one-sidedness of the choice of epithets and the imperative urgency of the surprising negative form of μή . . . δάμνα . . . ἀλλὰ τυῖδ' ἔλθ' communicate above all the anguish of Sappho's present emotion;³⁰ and in contriving to interrupt the flow of conventional formulae with the expression of this emotion, Sappho is openly imposing the terms of her own experience upon Homeric language, myth and belief.

But in lines 7ff as Sappho pauses in retrospective fantasy, lingering over the details of Aphrodite's previous descent from Olympus, the tone relaxes as lyric elements yield before the onset of more consistently Homeric language and imagery. Indeed, Homeric phrases are here subjected to combination or interruption not with lyric or Aeolic elements but rather with further Homeric phrases.³¹ In περὶ . . . | πύκνα δίννευτες πτέρ' Sappho appears to be adapting the language of *Il.* 11.454, περὶ πτερὰ πυκνὰ βαλόντες, and expanding it to accommodate reference to the traditional line-end γαῖα μέλαινα³²; and in 11–12 she combines Homeric ἀπ' οὐρανόθεν + δι' αἰθέρος—perhaps to reinforce by means of synecphonesis and enjambement the imagery of continuous descent.

At the same time Sappho makes certain unusual combinations of traditional motifs as well; Aphrodite does not normally use a chariot for conveyance, any more than other goddesses, even when they are delivering heavy goods (*Il.* 18.614ff); she simply darts through the air, as in *hAphr* (5) 291, ἤϊξε. Nor is the chariot introduced here merely to

³⁰ For the note of urgency conveyed by the substitution of the present imperative for the aorist more common in petition, see W. F. Bakker, *The Greek Imperative* (Amsterdam 1966) 104ff.

³¹ To the point of a certain confusion: Homeric parallels may be adduced for construing χρύσιον with either δόμον or ἄρμ'; cf. Page *ad loc.* and Longo, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.7) 355f.

³² Cf. Marzullo's suggestion (*op.cit.* [*supra* n.19] 48 on 10ff) that περὶ is used in tmesis with δίννευτες rather than as equivalent to (ὅ)πέρ (cf. *Archil.* 7.6 [D.] and *Alcm.* 27.2–3 [PMG], etc.) with γαῖα μέλαινα as a Homeric genitive of aim or direction (cf. also *Tyrt.* 9.12, *Alc.* 38A.4 and *Sappho* 107).

add grandeur to her epiphany: Sappho imagines Aphrodite equipped for war, in terms—despite their brevity—reminiscent of the armed intervention of Hera and Athena recounted in *Iliad* 5.722ff, which, as Page notes, was doubtless the prototype of the scene.³³ Thus Sappho's description of the descent extends and actualizes, by transferring it to Aphrodite, the attitude of militance implied in the first stanza, though not fully expressed until in the final stanza the correlations—observed by Castle³⁴—between *μη* . . . *δάμνα* (3, “do not overpower me in war”)~*κύμμαχος* ἔσσο (28, “be my ally in war, my comrade in arms”), and *λίτσομαι* (2, a supplication not to ‘subdue’ Sappho, *i.e.*, make her a captive in war)~*λύσον* (25, ‘release’ or ‘ransom’ a war-captive) make it quite explicit.

Now, we know from Fr.16 L–P that Sappho is no militarist, however tart, even vindictive, she may elsewhere appear. It is surprising, not to say ludicrous, to find her driven to the point of invoking Aphrodite's aid in a figurative declaration of war upon her beloved; and indeed, even as she transforms the vehement language of stanza 1 into the warlike image of stanza 3, Sappho skilfully allows certain incongruities to emerge, undercutting and thus exposing the vainglory of her mood: the war-chariot may be, like Hera's, golden, but it is driven not by horses *μεμαυί* ἔριδος καὶ αὐτῆς (*Il.* 5.732) bounding to earth *ὕψηχέεσ* (*ibid.* 772) but by fluttering sparrows, symbolically joining to the idea of strife that of diminutive charm.³⁵ The humor of the visual image is enhanced by the turn of formula, in which the Homeric fifth-foot *ᾠκεεσ* is followed not by the conventional *ἵπποι* but by the un-

³³ Page, 7 n.8; cf. *hAphr* (5) 8ff, where Aphrodite is explicitly dissassociated from the Athena-inspired war-chariot. The earliest pictorial association of Aphrodite with a chariot of any sort is found in a Naxian amphora of ca. 675–50 B.C., where Aphrodite and Ares are drawn by a pair of winged horses in a wedding procession (presumably their own, and the chariot Ares'); cf. C. Karusos, “Eine naxische Amphora des früheren siebenten Jahrhunderts,” *JDAI* 52 (1937) 166–97, esp. 172ff, and pls. 10–12. Again, in the François vase, ca. 570 B.C., Ares and Aphrodite appear riding in the wedding procession of Peleus and Thetis. In neither case is the mythological situation analogous to the purely literary fantasy of Sappho's vision, nor is there any support for Boedeker's suggestion, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.10) 14 n.2, of a link between Sappho 1 and the cult of Ἐφροδίτη Ἄρμα at Delphi (Plut. *Amat.* 23 769A, cited by Mrs Boedeker as Ἄρμα). Aphrodite's later appearances riding swans, geese, hippocamps, as well as chariots, belong to quite different stages of religious feeling; the most one can say is that while Sappho does not seem to reflect a previous iconographic tradition, she may have influenced a subsequent one.

³⁴ W. Castle, “Observations on Sappho's *To Aphrodite*,” *TAPA* 89 (1958) 66–76, esp. 73.

³⁵ Just how far we should follow the tradition represented, among others, by Athenaeus (9.391f) in viewing Aphrodite's sacred sparrows as a symbol of restless lubricity is uncertain; cf. Page's collection of citations, pp.7f.

expected *τροῦθοι*. And although Aphrodite's arrival is described with a simple metrical expansion of Homeric *αἶψα δ' ἴκοντο* along with the traditional *μάκαιρα*,³⁶ her smile is not recalled with a predictable epithet or formula but rather with a phrase which echoes the advance of Ajax to his inconclusive duel with Hektor in *Iliad* 7.212, *μειδιῶν βλοσυροῖσι προσώπασι*.

But Aphrodite's epiphany in warlike guise carries with it certain painful associations as well. It was in the sortie of *Iliad* 5 that her intervention proved most ineffective: ingloriously wounded by Diomedes, she dropped her own son in the act of rescuing him and was forced to borrow Ares' chariot so that Iris could drive her, weak and bleeding, back to Olympus. The allusion only reinforces the irony of the present situation: whatever victories Aphrodite helped Sappho to achieve in this particular past engagement, their impermanence does not augur well for the present involvement.

Viewed in the framework of the past episode, the effect produced by Aphrodite's ambiguous smiling calm offers a marked contrast both to her own portentous arrival in a war-chariot and to Sappho's anguish (implied by 6, *τὰς ἔμας αὔδας*). The precise cause of Sappho's previous despair is obscured for us by textual difficulties at the beginning of line 19.³⁷ Earlier efforts to deal with discrepancies in the codices—which offer initial *κ* or in one instance *μ* corrected to *β*—have proven unsatisfactory, and Page is content to print *]. κάγην [ἐς τὰν φιλότατα;]*.³⁸ *P.Oxy.* XXI 2288, though carefully written, is broken at the beginning of line 19. Lobel suggested the restoration [*ᾶ*]ψ *κ(ε) ᾶγην* and replacement of *τὰν* of the Mss. by *Φάν*, with the meaning, "Whom shall I now persuade to lead you back into her friendship?" Sappho's crisis thus appeared to involve reconciliation rather than a new conquest, though neither Page's translation nor his discussion make this clear.

³⁶ For the Homeric use of *μάκαιρα* etc., cf. Longo, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.7) 363ff, and Marzullo, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.19) 48f, to which may be added the reading of *hAphr* (10) 4 found in *M(osquiensis)*, *χαίρε μάκαιρα κυθήρης εὐκτιμένης μεδέουσα*; cf. Allen, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.28) 391 *ad loc.*

³⁷ To Saake's bibliography (pp.54ff) may be added E. G. Turner, *The Papyrologist at Work* (= *GRBM* 6, Durham, N.C. 1973) 21ff; Kirkwood, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 246f; and R. van Bennekom, "Sappho 1, 18–19," *Mnemosyne* 25 (1972) 113–22, and "A Reexamination of *P.Oxy.* 2288 (Sappho 1 LP)," *XIV Int. Congress of Papyrologists* (= *Graeco-Roman Memoirs* 61, London 1975) 325–30.

³⁸ Cf. Page, 9f. On Blass' *πέιθω|μαι κ(οι) ᾶγην ἐς τὰν φιλότατα* revived by Saake (p.61), who translates "Wen denn wieder in deine Liebe zu führen soll ich dir willfährig sein?," and Z. Stirnimann, "Zu Sappho 1,18–19 LP," *Münchener Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft* 27 (1969) 111–21, see Turner, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.37) 24.

Turner has reëxamined the papyrus³⁹ and reports that there is at the beginning of line 19 space for one initial letter, followed by what appear to be traces of ψ , ϕ or α ; there is no space, however, for an *iota* before the ensuing *sigma* and half-stop, both of which he considers beyond doubt. The dot seems to indicate separation of elided $\epsilon(\omicron\iota)$ and $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\eta\nu$, where one might have expected crasis instead; but despite possible mispunctuation in line 8 (where $\chi\rho\acute{\upsilon}\epsilon\iota\omicron\nu$ is construed with $\delta\acute{\omicron}\mu\omicron\nu$), Turner considers it unlikely that the scribe would here misdivide a word.

In attempting to meet the requirements of the papyrus, van Bennekom suggests that the initial trace in line 19 is part of a continuous curve, which he interprets as a circumflex and reads: $\tau\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha$ $\delta\eta\acute{\upsilon}\tau\epsilon$ $\Pi\epsilon\acute{\iota}\theta\omega\nu$ | $[\alpha]\acute{\iota}\epsilon'$ $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\eta\nu$ $\acute{\epsilon}\epsilon$ $\epsilon\acute{\alpha}\nu$ $\phi\acute{\iota}\lambda\acute{\omicron}\tau\alpha\tau\alpha$, "Whom will it befall this time to be led by Peitho to your love?"⁴⁰ But in his discussion of the concept of $\alpha\acute{\iota}\epsilon\alpha$ van Bennekom provides no justification for the notion of Aphrodite or Peitho as agents of 'due time'; and the 'impersonal aloofness' he sees in the passage introduces an element of formality I find inconsonant with Aphrodite's appearance taken as a whole.

If the trace is a circumflex, the restoration $[\beta]\acute{\alpha}\epsilon(\alpha)$ would make reasonable sense and fill the space better; but the direction of the stroke seems in Turner's photograph (pl.5a) to be vertical rather than oblique, and too far above the line for an *alpha*. For the present, therefore, it seems best to resort to Lobel's more recent suggestion:⁴¹ $[\acute{\alpha}]\psi$ $\epsilon(\omicron\iota)$ $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\eta\nu$ $\acute{\epsilon}\epsilon$ $\epsilon\acute{\alpha}\nu$ $\phi\acute{\iota}\lambda\acute{\omicron}\tau\alpha\tau\alpha$, taking $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\eta\nu$ as an unattested aorist infinitive passive ("Whom am I to persuade this time to be returned again to your friendship?") or, with Kirkwood, who offers the same text,⁴² as a result infinitive ("Whom am I to persuade so as to bring her back for you to your friendship?").

Finally, the context itself suggests that reconciliation is at issue, both in the past affair and in the present one, rather than a new conquest; for while one might with Archilochus and others after him represent the suit of an object of desire in terms of besieging a city,⁴³ one would hardly take the field against her, as Sappho here proposes; overblown

³⁹ Turner, *loc.cit.* (*supra* n.37).

⁴⁰ van Bennekom, "Reexamination" (*supra* n.37) 328.

⁴¹ *apud* Turner, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.37) 25.

⁴² Kirkwood, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 246f.

⁴³ Cf. West, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 322 n.43.

as it may be, the military metaphor of Fr.1 is more appropriate to the jealous anger of betrayal than to unrequited longing.

Aphrodite's questions reveal that she, at any rate, suffers no uncertainty about the reason for her summons, and there is a distinctly teasing irony in the way in which she proceeds, with Homeric rhetoric in a paratactic crescendo of questions,⁴⁴ from the general to the specific source of unhappiness. Again, as Page notes, Aphrodite's triple repetition of *δηῦτε* underlines the effect of humorous chiding:⁴⁵ this is not the first time this has happened nor, clearly, the first time Aphrodite's assistance in fulfilling Sappho's desires has gone awry. Her climactic *τίς σ' . . . ἀδικήει*, though strong, as Rivier observed⁴⁶—too strong, perhaps, for mere indifference or rejection—would be perfectly right for the goddess of love to use in characterising a rupture and betrayal of the bond of love, right for a poet who places prime importance upon the world of her emotions; but in the context of smiling mockery and pretended exasperation this strikingly non-Homeric usage conveys a note of melodramatic exaggeration: "What ails you *this time*? . . . Why have you summoned me *this time*? . . . What are you so bent on in your mad desire? . . . Whom must I reconcile with you *this time*? . . . Who, O Sappho, is doing you this *dreadful* injustice?"

The blend of humorous solicitude, hyperbole and assumed ignorance, though far more elaborate here, is not unlike Dione's address to Aphrodite herself on her inglorious rout from the field of battle in *Iliad* 5.373, *τίς νύ σε τοιάδ' ἔρεξε, φίλον τέκος, Οὐρανιῶνων . . .*; and just as Dione proceeds to comment with resignation on the sorrows the gods bring on themselves when they intervene in human affairs (383ff,

⁴⁴ Cf. G. S. Kirk, *The Songs of Homer* (Cambridge 1962) 169, and Marzullo, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.19) 49 on 17f.

⁴⁵ Page, 13; cf. also Sappho fr.130.1; the citations from Alcman, Ibycus and Anacreon listed by West, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 130; and the similar Homeric usage of *αἶ* discussed by P. Shorey, "The Pathos and Humor of *αἶ*," *CP* 23 (1928) 285–87, notably Odysseus' weary (though not yet erotic) plaint on awakening on the island of Scheria (6.119): "ὦ μοι ἐγώ, τέων αἶτε βροτῶν ἐς γαῖαν ἰκάνω; To Shorey's list may be added perhaps the most heartfelt and amusing of all, Pl. *Soph.* 249C–D, where one feels that Theaetetus' *αἶ* is drawn truly from the depths. These examples should be sufficient evidence that commonplace words do not necessarily convey naïve emotions, as Kirkwood would have it, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 112 (or religious ones, as Privitera believes, *op.cit.* [*supra* n.3] 43f).

⁴⁶ Rivier, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.13). The commonly-accepted parallel from Theognis, 1283f (cf. Krischer, *op.cit.* [*supra* n.11] 3 n.1, and Saake, p.66), is rejected rather defensively by Rivier, p.86 n.3: "L'association de deux *ἑταῖροι* comprenait d'autres liens que la seul *παιδικὸς ἔρω*, à supposer que celui-ci fût présent."

πολλοὶ γὰρ δὴ τλήμεν Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχοντες | ἐξ ἀνδρῶν, χαλέπ' ἄλγε' ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισι τιθέντες), so Sappho's Aphrodite passes on almost casually, certainly calmly, to what is neither a pact to join in the battle nor an explicit promise of aid but rather a simple prediction of the future. For against the notion that we have in stanza 6 the binding formulas of magical incantation⁴⁷ must be set the fact that the 'spells' of this *πότνια δάμναισα* have been short-lived at best, or the occasion for the summons would not have arisen. Thus with tender but amused reserve Aphrodite is reminding Sappho that with or without her aid things will take the course they always do willy-nilly, given the ironic reversals in love, as in all things human.⁴⁸

In the context of the present, the irony of the situation—another difficulty with *another* relationship—gains in complexity, Sappho's awareness of which is betrayed by the element of flattery in her reminder of her previous *makarismos* (ὦ μάκαιρα . . . ἀθανάτω προσώπῳ).

Again on Sappho's lips the repetition of Aphrodite's chiding questions and the mimicry of her direct quotation with its insistent *δηῦτε* and emphatic ὦ *Ψάπφ'* resemble the strategy of a child coyly attempting to disarm a scolding by anticipating it; for in her present appeal, as Cameron observed, Sappho could hardly be asking for another lecture.⁴⁹

There is, of course, no reason to suppose with Page that Sappho avoided the reconciliation (however short-lived) when it was offered in the past or that she is likely to do so again. Saake and others have pointed out that it is unlikely Sappho would pray for something she knows she will reject.⁵⁰ More than that, Aphrodite's language (21ff)

⁴⁷ Saake, 51f; Cameron, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 8ff.

⁴⁸ While I cannot agree with Privitera (*op.cit.* [*supra* n.3] 45) that Aphrodite's words are "incalzanti, suonano minacciose, vengono da una dea dopo che la sua norma è stata calpestatà," he rightly perceives that they possess "il carattere di assolutezza che si addice all'affermazione di una legge generale." That this law, however, can be interpreted more positively than I have done above would, on the face of it, hardly accord with Aphrodite's view of Sappho's recurrent experience of separation and loss. It is perhaps surprising to hear Aphrodite enunciate a principle of rhythmic alternation in mortal experience which we associate with early lyric, preëminently with Archil. 58, 67A and 68 D. (cf. Fraenkel, *op.cit.* [*supra* n.3] 149ff, Engl. ed. 134ff); but Archilochus is elaborating ideas already implicit in the *Iliad* (24.527ff) and eloquently stated by Odysseus (*Od.* 18.129ff). The question is rather one of divine responsibility—and here Aphrodite seems to hedge.

⁴⁹ A. Cameron, "Sappho and Aphrodite Again," *HThR* 57 (1964) 237–39, esp. 238, arguing against Page's interpretation of Aphrodite's tone.

⁵⁰ Saake, 51f, a criticism which applies equally to Privitera's interpretation of line 24

describes the actions and the attitudes of the friend, not of Sappho herself. On the other hand, taking *διώξει* as equivalent to 'love'⁵¹ weakens the effect of *φιλήσει* in 23 as the climax of an artful progression from external juxtaposition (flee/chase), through gestures of feeling (spurning/offering gifts) to the inner emotion itself (absence of love/love, with the same involuntary affection for Sappho that Sappho herself now feels). We lose nothing in subtlety if we assume Aphrodite intended *φεύγει* as 'shun', 'avoid', and *διώξει* as 'come running after'. Whatever mixed emotions Sappho felt at the previous reunion are simply not expressed. What is at issue here is her ambivalence now, indicated by the dramatic pause following stanza 6.⁵² For as Sappho repeats the speech in the midst of her present turmoil, recalling Aphrodite's former reminder of the irrational reversals that characterize her relationships, the folly of her evocation of Aphrodite as warrior-goddess is exposed to the light of common-sense; the ephemeral nature of the upheavals and the reconciliations of the past become inescapably clear.

The progression of style reflects the movement of the poem to this point: the union of epic and lyric language forged by the willful emotion of the first two stanzas dissolves in stanza 3, where, as we have seen, a virtual invasion of Homeric words and phrases accompanies Aphrodite's arrival. In Aphrodite's address to Sappho (stanzas 4–5) her last two questions alone contain usage alien to epic, both critical of Sappho's emotion: *κῶττι μοι . . . μαινόλα θυμῶ, τίς ε' . . . ἀδικήει*;⁵³ But while Homer does not normally couple forms of *μαίνομαι* with *θυμός*, it is clear from *Od.* 18.406f (*δαιμόνιοι, μαίνεσθε*

(op.cit. [supra n.3] 48ff), *κῶ ε θέλοισαν οἱ κῶ κε θέλοισαν*: "sii sicura; ti amerà comunque; persino se tu non volessi più; perché la sua colpa esiste ormai di per sé"—an interpretation which Privitera seeks to justify by placing the ode in the context of archaic conceptions of the *lex talionis*.

⁵¹ Cf. n.15 above.

⁵² Cf. Saake, 74f (where the quotation from Cameron is taken out of the context of a criticism of Page, not of Sappho).

⁵³ Cf. the parallels in language and structure cited by Marzullo, *op.cit. (supra n.19) 48ff*, and Longo, *op.cit. (supra n.7) 363ff*; Longo's treatment of lines 15–24 as a unit leads him to mischaracterize the second half of the poem: "la componente omerica appare qui assai più modesta, sia sul piano formulare che su quello lessicale"; in describing the style of Aphrodite's speech merely as that of "linguaggio parlato" he overlooks the patterns of Homeric rhetoric involved; nevertheless, on the basis of structural parallels to *κῶττι . . . μάλιστα θέλω γένεσθαι* and *μαινόλα θυμῶ* he concedes "qui, ancora più sensibilmente che altrove, l'epicità si mantiene dunque sul piano di una polivalenza allusiva che conferisce all'insieme un carattere composito, musivo."

καὶ οὐκέτι κεύθετε θυμῶ | βρωτῶν οὐδὲ ποτῆτα . . .) that the *θυμός* is the seat of *μανία*. Thus while Aphrodite's words do not reproduce formulaic usage, they serve nevertheless to answer, in terms conceptually Homeric, Sappho's collocation of *πότνια*, *θῦμον* in line 4: for although Sappho has attempted to associate her impetuous desire with Aphrodite, Aphrodite is here revealed as having already rejected responsibility with a certain humorous disdain: the persistent fault, the continuing excess, is Sappho's.⁵⁴ And the impression of teasing exaggeration in *ἀδικήει* is confirmed by the fact that Aphrodite does not suggest vengeful punishment but rather that more subtle form of retribution, a reconciliation; for the Aphrodite here is not Sappho's violent deity of stanza 1 but the traditional goddess of persuasion and beguilement: *τίνα δηῦτε πείθω . . .*;⁵⁵ In line 24 at the close of a speech quoted with an Aeolic inflection, Aphrodite's last word (*ἐθέλοισα*) nevertheless retains the Homeric augment:⁵⁶ goddess and lover remain separated by language and by mood; Sappho's attempt to assimilate the Aphrodite of epic into her world of lyric intensity has failed. How then to conclude her appeal?

We fail Sappho if we attempt to explain stanza 7 simply as the fulfillment of liturgical or formal requirements or as her response to a belligerence on Aphrodite's part supported neither by language nor by logic. After the pause of insight provoked by the recollection of Aphrodite's speech, Sappho appears to abandon the lesson of her fantasy and the counsels of self-knowledge with a sudden return to the vehemence of stanza 1 and a renewed attempt to refashion Aphrodite to suit her emotion of the moment. Refusing to heed the

⁵⁴ For Homeric *θυμός* as the 'organ of feeling' cf. Dodds, *The Greeks . . .* (*supra* n.1) 16, and B. Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind* (Oxford 1953) 18ff. *μαίνομαι* is used in the *Iliad* commonly of savage abandon in battle (as in *Il.* 5.717, and Zeus' rebuke of Hera and Athena in 8.413); but for consuming desire, cf. *ἐπιμαίνομαι* in *Il.* 6.160, of Anteia (cf. Anacreon's use of *(ἐπι)μαίνομαι* in 359 and 398, and the suggestion of nymphomania in *μαίνωλις γυνή* of line 20 of the Cologne Epode currently attributed to Archilochus).

⁵⁵ Saake, 60, is forced by his insistence on a rigid unity in the ode to assert, "dass Aphrodite nicht mit Überredung, sondern durch die ihrer Art eigene bereits erwähnte Kraft und Gewalt eingreift."

⁵⁶ Assuming, of course, that the much-disputed *κῶνκ ἐθέλοισα* is justified; cf. the survey of discussion in Saake, 67ff, and Privitera, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 46ff. Notwithstanding Gomme's unconvincing suggestion ("Interpretations of Some Poems of Alkaios and Sappho," *JHS* 77 [1957] 255–66, esp. 264) that Lesbian *θέλω* becomes *ἐθέλω* after *οὐκ*, it seems right that Sappho should say *θέλω* (line 17) and that Aphrodite should use a recurrent Homeric formula for reluctance, feigned or real (cf. *Il.* 6.165; *Od.* 2.110, 19.156 and 24.146; cf. 2.50 and 5.155). See also E.-M. Hamm, *Grammatik zu Sappho und Alkaios* (Berlin 1957) 126 n.297.

criticism implied in *μαινόλα*, she seizes upon the Homeric military connotations of Aphrodite's *φεύγει . . . διώξει*, and interpreting *κωνκ ἐθέλοισα* as a threat, turns the speech to her own use, forcing both Aphrodite's rôle and the meaning of her words.⁵⁷ Sappho's *ἔλθε μοι καὶ νῦν . . . ὄσσα δέ μοι τέλεσσαι | θῦμος ἰμέρρει τέλεσον* is as far from conventional piety as her militance is from the self-submission of the mystic:⁵⁸ her language, with the sole lyric intrusion of *μερίμναν*, seems in fact to be a brusque paraphrase of the formulaic courtesy with which Homeric divinities speak of their respective areas of potency, whether one think of the response of Aphrodite to Hera's lying appeal for aid in resolving another 'discord' in *Iliad* 14.195f, Hephaistos' cordiality to Thetis in *Iliad* 18.426f, or Calypso's ironical reception of Hermes in *Odyssey* 5.89f:⁵⁹ *αὔδα, ὅ τι φρονέεις τελέσαι δέ με θυμός ἄνωγεν, | εἰ δύναμαι τελέσαι γε καὶ εἰ τετελεσμένον ἐστίν*(ν). There is a certain pertness, not to say insolence, in the way in which Sappho reasserts the demands of her *θυμός* in the face of Aphrodite's reproach; and her pointed omission of the conditional *εἰ τετελεσμένον ἐστίν* suggests the arrogation of a quasi-divine status of equality on Sappho's part which is strikingly reinforced by the climactic belligerence of *σύμμαχος ἔσσο*, where we have in the final Adonic a last emphatic collocation of a lyric coinage with an epic form.⁶⁰ But the calm formality of Homeric discourse, seen beyond the distorting medium of Sappho's resurgent emotion, serves to expose once again the degree of her self-dramatization and her presumption.

The reader is left with a series of contradictions emphasized by disjunctions of time, of tone and of language: a Sappho torn between an uncharacteristically militant state of frenzy and a reflective sense

⁵⁷ As does Marzullo, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.19) 50, citing *Il.* 22.158: *πρόσθε μὲν ἐσθλὸς ἔφηνγε, δίωκε δέ μιν μέγ' ἀμείνων*, "La contrastata vicenda di amore viene espressa in crudi termini di combattimento."

⁵⁸ For *τελέω* in more casual invocation, *cf.* *Od.* 2.34, 4.699, 10.483, 15.112, 17.399, 20.236 and 344. The usage in Sappho fr.5.4 is of this type.

⁵⁹ Saake, p.62, following Puccioni and Putnam, stresses the first of these occurrences only, drawing no conclusions about the attitude of Sappho; Privitera, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 33ff, on the basis of differences in situation, denies that there is any intentional dependence on Homer in Sappho.

⁶⁰ *Cf.* Marzullo, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.19) 51: "Un ultimo a più clamoroso omerismo è nel finale *ἔσσο . . . di cui sconcerta la desinenza media.*" Regarding *σύμμαχος*, Longo's citations (366 n.99) from Aeschylus seem insufficient to establish its 'sacral' connotations for Sappho; despite the brevity of the quotation in Plutarch, Archilochus' usage (in 75 D.) appears to confirm the specifically military emphasis of Sappho. For the novel character of the compound itself, *cf.* B. Snell in *Entretiens Hardt* 10 (1964) 169.

of irony; a visionary evocation of an Aphrodite at once potent and calmly chiding, whose equipment and fitness to join in Sappho's amorous battles are in question and who can offer only reversals, not permanent peace; and an unstable—certainly changing—stylistic mixture whose Homeric component Sappho forces beyond fantasy close to the point of fustian. A partial resolution of these contrasts may be found if we see beneath the dramatic charm of Aphrodite's epiphany, beyond the formal structure of invocation, sanction and petition, a dialogue between momentary passion and reflection, between present illusion and self-knowledge gained from the past, in which Aphrodite speaks in the epic language of collective experience as Sappho's *alter ego*, by her words and her manner of appearance exposing Sappho's individual lyric extravagance to the scrutiny of truth.⁶¹

At the same time, the failure of Sappho's *persona* to heed the voice of self-knowledge emerges as apparent only, if we observe that the use of *ἀθάνατος* in equivalent position both in line 1 and again at the midpoint of the ode in line 14 links the Aphrodite of deception and heartache with the Aphrodite of insight and smiling reminder: it appears that Sappho the artist means to indicate that the two conceptions of the goddess are not mutually exclusive but represent rather the two enduring and inseparable aspects of the same experience of love (or desire) of which the epiphany of *ποικιλόθρον'*⁶² Aphrodite in her sparrow-drawn war-chariot serves as an integrating symbol, uniting aspects of strength and weakness, persistence and inconstancy, violence and charm, anguish and delight. From this perspective it becomes clear why Sappho has not expressed her dismissal of 'collective experience' with a schematic displacement of Homeric language by characteristically lyric speech: her final petition, phrased in a mixture of epic and lyric elements even more boldly juxtaposed than earlier, reveals her consciously reuniting the two Aphrodites in a commitment to the total experience of love. In terms whose paradoxical character suggests that she is observing herself

⁶¹ Cf. Castle, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.34) 76: Aphrodite is the "unconscious personification of the self-critical faculty of her personality which stands aside and views with detached amusement the appetitive element of her nature. . . ." Cf. Sappho 22.15, where, though the text is uncertain, there may be reference to a criticism by Aphrodite of Sappho's prayers (West, *op.cit.* [*supra* n.3] 310). Kirkwood, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 113, prefers the simple view: "Sappho . . . is creating a picture of the beneficent sway of Aphrodite over the loves of Sappho."

⁶² Cf. n.26 above.

with both irony and humor, Sappho rejects not self-knowledge but impotent withdrawal, preferring the risk of involvement and the tears of answered prayers. For unlike Archilochus (76a D.), who regards his *θυμός* as the source of reckless as well as trustworthy impulses, Sappho here as elsewhere (e.g., 16 L.-P.) relies upon her emotions—even when their quality is divided (as in fr.130)—to provide the source and principle of consistency and unity in her existence. Above all, she persists in asserting a link between Aphrodite and the urgings of her *θυμός*; and in thus clinging to the divine dimension of her experience of the law of alternation as enunciated by Aphrodite, Sappho, ἴσα θεόειν, transcends it.⁶³

Viewed thus, the ode is not simply a *Kultlied* or a purely subjective expression of momentary passion,⁶⁴ still less a merely playful jest on the theme of invocation, but rather an essay in self-observation and self-understanding that transforms its immediate provocation into the occasion for a complex and embracing statement about the central concern of Sappho's life. Appropriately, the Alexandrians accorded it the place of epigraph to her collection.⁶⁵

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⁶³ This interpretation appears to support Snell's observation, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.54) 59f, that "Sappho and Anacreon . . . begin to suspect that the contradiction inherent in all feelings cannot be explained merely by an alternation in time, an unending oscillation between passion and tranquillity, between good fortune and misery, but that the present moment itself contains the seeds of discord . . . Sappho . . . discovers the area of the soul and defines it as fundamentally distinct from the body . . . For the death-likeness of love is, particularly in Sappho's view, the greatest tension of which the soul is capable. The early poets conceive of this new mode of feeling as something supranatural; a divine impulse powerful enough to determine their values for them."

⁶⁴ Cf. Saake, 77 and n.210.

⁶⁵ Cf. E. Lobel, *ΣΑΠΦΟΥΣ ΜΕΛΗ* (Oxford 1925) xv.