SAPPHO AND THE HEROIC IDEAL:

ἔρωτος ἀρετή

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THE LYRIC POETS reacted in various ways to the pervasive presence of the Homeric poems in the life of Archaic Greece; some aspects of Sappho's response to the "normative" force of epic can be traced by a close examination of the terms in which she casts erotic encounters.[1] The Homeric combat, the duel between heroes, is the pivotal moment which validates the entire system of aristocratic perquisites in epic, and we have evidence contemporary with Sappho for the continuing centrality of such confrontations in the Archaic period.[2] Sappho's concern, on the other hand, is with the *erotic* encounter;[3] it is around this that she builds her most intense poetry, and an entire way of life. Sappho's description of the "erotic life style" in terms redolent of the Homeric-aristocratic paradigm of male heroism[4] suggests that she was sensitive to the operation of similar dynamics in both. If Sappho will appear to be playing upon these dynamics – and doing so *deliberately*, not merely employing instinctively the familiar terms and categories of the epic tradition – then her purpose may be argued to be simultaneously an exposure of the code of Homeric chivalry to a certain inevitable irony, and a redirection and exploitation of the normative power of epic, its ability to substantiate a version of ἀρετή.

A comparison of Sappho's *Ode to Aphrodite* (fr. 1 LP) with material from the *Iliad* reveals striking similarities between the ways in which two very dissimilar situations, erotic and military, are handled in early Greek poetry. The implications go beyond mere verbal echoes – although it is worth noting that Sappho's language in this poem evokes Homeric models rather more often than is usual with her[5] – and even beyond matters of formal construction and incident, such as the resemblance of the manner of praying in the Aphrodite poem to a type common in Homer,[6] or the startlingly leisurely description of the goddess' journey to meet Sappho, recalling in the space of so brief a work the battlefield advent of goddesses in the *Iliad* (e.g., 5, 720ff.). It is the series of promises made by Aphrodite to Sappho in lines 21-4 of the poem which most clearly reflect the poet's values and desires, as well as recalling crucial epic situations. These promises will

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provide initial evidence for the standards which Sappho sets in her erotic relationships, and suggest the relevance of heroic prototypes to those standards.

There is a striking obliquity to Aphrodite's description of the reversal in positions which she promises to bring about between Sappho and the other, unnamed woman in fr. 1. Sappho has been the victim of an ἀδικία[7] at the hands of a woman to whom she has offered spurned love-tokens, whose affection she has tried unsuccessfully to elicit, whom she has "pursued" as the woman fled from her. "Do not break my spirit with pain and anguish," she asks the goddess (μή δάμνα θῦμον, which should not be rendered "do not break my heart"). "Rather be my battlepartner, my σύμμαχος." There is much pithiness and deft force in the three conditional sentences of Aphrodite's reply: "If she is running away now (φεύγει), she'll soon be in pursuit (διώξει); if she does not accept your gifts, well, soon *she'll* be the giver; if she loves you not, soon she will love you, though all unwilling." These three details are picked out (the last a composite of two elements, φεύγει and οὐκ ἐθέλοισα, whose sense is clear even if the exact reading is not) to display the thorough and swift metathesis which Aphrodite will bring about.[8] How Sappho herself perceives the dynamics of her relationship with the other woman is made unmistakable by σύμμαχος (28); the metaphorical word is precise, brilliantly placed, instantly evocative of martial contest. But the primary focus is upon the *other* woman and how *she* will be beaten. Sappho is not promised happiness, after all; only the chance to get what she wants, which is something rather different (especially in Greek literature), and to engage in a complete exchange of roles. The exchange is expressed, as commonly in early Greek thought, as a reversal between what are conceived to be polar terms.[9] The terms indicating the positions to be switched are hunter and prey, giver and receiver of gifts, lover and non-lover; these figure forth the structure both of Sappho's current and hoped-for relationship with the other woman, and must be examined carefully.

Διώκω and φεύγω form a standard pair in Greek, indicating the two poles of the predator-prey relationship. One creature "seeks to catch another with harmful intent" (διώκει), which the second "attempts to evade" (φεύγει).[10] Commonly the words are applied to battle situations and to the hunt;[11] their seemingly natural extension to describe a love encounter may be expected to entrain vestigial as-

sociations from their primary field of usage. Militarily, of course, flight and pursuit constitute the overarching pattern of chivalric combat; in those mêlées which pass for Homeric strategy, heroes not actively engaged in combat are likely to be chasing one another, with reversal of prey and predator a frequent occurrence.[12] Indeed, the template for the entire *Iliad* itself is a series of reversals between predators and prey, writ large as Greeks and Trojans. The most emotionally intense realization of this is *Iliad* 22. The second reversal of Greeks and Trojans has occurred with the terrible abruptness of Achilles' shout; the final phase in the running down of Troy to the kill is about to begin. The Trojans have plummeted from the very edge of success to the condition of frightened, hunted animals.[13] Hector is now going to run the race for his life, and lose.

Most interesting at this point in the *Iliad* is the conflation between the two pairs of roles, predator-prey and giver-receiver of gifts, which occurs in the odd and moving soliloquy delivered by the doomed Hector as he watches the onrush of Achilles with deepening dismay. Hector has just rejected the plea of prudence which parental love makes (22. 25-92); yet, at this late stage in his fate, still casting about hopefully for some escape from the obvious and only resolution of what he and Achilles, Greeks and Trojans have come together for – at this point he conceives the notion of disarming himself and approaching the berserker Achilles and offering him... a gift! (111-128) Most superficially, of course, what Hector has in mind as to "buy off" the Greeks by a kind of restitution-cum-indemnity. But when the idea is rejected, it becomes clear what sort of associations Hector has for the relationship he would vainly be trying to establish with Achilles:

> οὐ μέν πως νῦν ἔστιν ἀπὸ δρυὸς οὐδ' ἀπὸ πέτρης
> τῷ ὀαριζέμεναι, ἅ τε παρθένος ἠΐθεός τε,
> παρθένος ἠΐθεός τ' ὀαρίζετον ἀλλήλοιιν. (126ff.)

This falls, with the use of the love word ὀαρίζειν[14] and the pathetic repetition of παρθένος ἠΐθεός τε, somewhere between wistfulness and a rough and rueful humor; the language chosen, and its emotional associations, are most surprising, and are perhaps recalled by Achilles' view of the human contact which Hector tries almost to the end to establish with him: "There is no way," he says, "for you and me to φιλήμεναι one another" (265); no φιλότης can be founded between us by gifts or pleading. As the pre-eminent hero of the *Iliad,* Achilles is

pre-eminent also, not so much in receiving, as in extorting gifts, which he on occasion will reject; in this he resembles the cruel beloved.

Although we are quite satisfied that Hector has no chance in this grim little interlude, the poet characteristically troubles himself to mark out the influence of the gods on what will come to pass. Asks Zeus, before the fatal footrace begins,

> ὤ πόποι, ἦ φίλον ἄνδρα διωκόμενον περὶ τεῖχος
> ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ὁρῶμαι· ἐμὸν δ᾽ ὀλοφύρεται ἦτορ
> Ἕκτορος, ὅς μοι πολλὰ βοῶν ἐπὶ μηρί᾽ ἔκηεν . . .
> ἀλλ᾽ ἄγετε φράζεσθε, θεοί . . .
> ἠέ μιν ἐκ θανάτοιο σαώσομεν, ἦέ μιν ἤδη
> Πηλεϊδῃ Ἀχιλῆϊ δαμάσσομεν ἐσθλὸν ἐόντα. (22, 168-70, 174-6)

The expression of regret seems merely *obbligato*, however; here too Hector's gifts are ineffectual, and he is abandoned to his fate. Athena cosens him into standing and receiving his death with the "counterfeit ally" ploy. Thus the consensus of the gods, with the special intervention of Pallas Athena, δάμνησι Hector to Achilles δόλῳ.

The particular word δάμνημι[15] and its normal sphere of application are nicely revealing of certain Greek attitudes. Its commonest use in epic is to describe the utter laying low and humbling of an enemy in battle, often with divine assistance.[16] This is perhaps an early extension from the primary field of meaning of δάμνημι, which seems to have comprised the action of "breaking" a wild animal, particularly a horse, and rendering it submissive to one's purposes.[17] δάμνημι thus implies a polarity of relations not dissimilar to those more actively conceived by διώκω and φεύγω. δάμνημι is a word of subjugation and domination, spiritual as much as physical, and we can see the development of both aspects in the epic. Physical domination appears in the battlefield uses of δάμνημι; Homer can also employ the word to describe the shattering effects of certain emotional states.[18] Among these is ἔρος (*Iliad* 14, 316, 353), and it is this usage which Sappho picks up, in the poem to Aphrodite (fr. 1 LP, 3) and elsewhere (fr. 102 LP).[19]

The use of such terms as φεύγω, διώκω, and δάμνημι in early Greek erotic language indicates the typing of these relationships as *contests*, like those of the battlefield, with a winner and loser, high

stakes, and the wild card of a shifty and duplicitous patron goddess. In erotic and martial contexts alike the "flight and pursuit" are the concern of the human players, while the final distinction of victor and vanquished is made by a divine agent. This is almost to suggest that, in early Greek literature, relationships reveal their teleology only by divine intervention; lacking this, they are merely bi-polar processes.

The first promise of Aphrodite, that pursuer and pursued will exchange roles in Sappho's troublesome liaison, is followed by the assurance that the scorner of gifts will become the giver. Gifts as love offerings are of course common at all times; but Homeric gift-giving goes much farther than this as an index of attitudes. Indeed, it is arguable that in a pre-monetary aristocracy such as that of the *Iliad*, there are only two basic ways in which property, and all which property implies of status, can change hands: gift or theft. Naturally one does not steal from one's friends, unless one is Agamemnon; hence the range of interaction covered by δίδωμι and similar terms is likely to be very wide. Gifts are visible, substantive tokens of a relationship between two parties; this relationship may be either actual or merely hoped for, and the emotional climate surrounding the act of giving or offering will differ depending on which of these is the case. One might for convenience sake make a distinction between gifts of simple recognition or esteem, and gifts of "persuasion," that is, gifts as a form of rhetoric. The *Iliad* will present numerous examples of each, as well as some which straddle the line. Many of these gifts and acts of giving are of crucial importance in the epic: the wresting away of Achilles' "gift" from the army spoils; the request of Thetis that Zeus "give" honor to Achilles in requital for the support which she once "gave" to Zeus; the gifts offered by the Embassy, and spurned by the hero, in book 9; the armor "given" by Achilles to Patroklos, the gift which kills; the armor which Achilles receives as a "gift" from his mother (recalling the "gifts" of godlike prowess and the choice of lives presented to Achilles); Achilles' desire to "give" the body of Hector to Patroklos; and finally, the gift which heals, the ransom of Hector. All of these interactions involve forms of "giving" to the early Greek mentality. Many of them present a feature which is natural in the kind of externally oriented, prestige- and exchange-centered society portrayed by the epic: giving for us is an action which is regarded as revealing primarily the attitude of the *giver*; but in Homeric giving, it is the status or disposition of the *recipient* which

is at least as much in point, especially in "persuasive" or "rhetorical" giving.[20] The sumptuous gifts offered by Agamemnon in book 9, and their rejection by Achilles, display with special clarity the power of gifts to delineate and establish relationships in the heroic system. Thetis' and Zeus' promise of honor to Achilles at the expense of Agamemnon and the other Greeks has been kept – a promise which might almost have been phrased in the words of Aphrodite at lines 21-4 of Sappho's poem; it certainly seems a fair description of Agamemnon's plight by book 9 that he now "loves" Achilles (even as a prospective son-in-law, and poppet of that great heart which hitherto has had room for only Orestes!), "though all unwilling."[21] He who once scorned Achilles' "gifts" has now been brought himself to the position of giver. The transposition again operates by polarities. The gifts which Agamemnon offers are, like those in Sappho's poem, "rhetorical," and constitute a form of πειθώ; as such they are inevitably rejected by Achilles. πειθώ is, of course, always a ticklish business in Greek, for it entails converting a person from his own version of his self-interest to that of the persuader ("it will be more advantageous *to you* if you do as I suggest, not as you are now inclined"), with the ever-present possibility that motives of guile and manipulation are being dissembled.[22] In the case of persuasive gifts, their acceptance serves as visible emblem that one has been "captured," to recur to a range of metaphor discussed earlier; the recipient is agreeing to accept not only the gift, but a certain *relationship* with the giver. Achilles has begun by book 9 to glimpse another version of his self-interest than that afforded by his place within the system of the heroic "code," and this is part of the reason that Agamemnon's offer is not only ineffectual, but completely misses the point.[23] The gifts of book 9 essentially make a statement about Achilles' standing *within* the heroic system; the statement is that this warrior is now to be "courted."

Thus the offering of gifts, and their acceptance or rejection, were fraught with implications about the type of relationship subsisting between two parties in epic, just as the roles of giver and receiver of gifts are a basic opposition in Sappho's delineation of an erotic connection.[24] Let us pass on to Aphrodite's third promise. The goddess here uses the general term φιλήσει, with a certain effect of summation.[25] Of course, the ways in which the world of the epic is shot through with the influence of love and kindred passions require only a moment to

bring to mind. In the *Iliad* alone, our plot revolves immediately around the emotions of Achilles and Agamemnon for their prizes, and of Achilles for Patroklos, more remotely around the fatal ἔρος which sat on Helen's shoulder. It is only appropriate that the first combat in the *Iliad* is carefully arranged to take place between the two men who have been Helen's lovers. A most striking specific intersection of love and battle is the conclusion which Homer gives to this duel between Paris and Menelaos (3, 437-61). By a technique of rapid intercutting which is almost cinematic in its effect, Homer shows us first Paris and Helen "in the rank sweat of an enseamed bed," then Menelaos raging up and down the battle line. The climate created is remarkable, almost tantamount to introducing the wronged and violent husband into the adulterous chamber.[26]

Certain congruencies have now emerged between the terminology used by Sappho in describing an erotic relationship, and that which delineates certain interactions within the "heroic" or aristocratic way of life. The pattern of flight and pursuit, fundamental to Homeric battle scenes, is applied by Sappho[27] to her relationship with the cruel beloved of the Aphrodite poem; the significant dislocation should be noted by which, in an erotic context, it is the *pursued* rather than the pursuer who has the upper hand. Sappho uses the rejection of "persuasive" gifts as a visible sign in just the same way that Achilles' refusal of the gifts in *Iliad* 9 signifies his feelings about Agamemnon; the "rhetoric" of gift-giving functions identically in both cases. Achilles in book 9 has undergone a reversal of positions with Agamemnon which is analogous to the "erotic" reversal: the arch-pursuer, the swift-footed one who always brings down his prey, has become in 9 the sedentary *pursued*.[28] The use of σύμμαχος and δάμνημι in Sappho's poem further point up resemblances between early Greek psychology of the erotic and the heroic. Sappho's choice of σύμμαχος implies a whole nexus of clearly recognized similarities between "what I, Sappho, feel when 'beleaguered' by passion for a faithless friend and in need of help in the affair, and what a man stands in need of on the battlefield." δάμνημι indicates a similarity in the "stakes" invloved for a warrior in the confrontation with his foe, and for Sappho in a disastrous liaison: what each stands to lose may be expressed by this term of breaking and subjugation.

Both in Sappho's poem and in the *Iliad*, moreover, divine patronage has a particular effect on human interaction. In both cases the

special favor of heaven is a most ambiguous benefit. Achilles in *Iliad* 1 is promised a reversal in *external* position, in "prestige," between himself and Agamemnon. Partly through divine δόλος (the lying dream of book 2), this has been effected by the time of the Embassy. But Achilles can no longer be fully satisfied with the external "identity" derived from the gifts and outward trappings of aristocratic τιμή. He has reached a point in the middle, as it were, not in the "code" but not free of it either; for this his presence in his tent in the midst of the army, yet not part of it, is the visible metaphor. Achilles' partial but vacillating movement beyond the parameters of the heroic conspiracy costs him first the life of his beloved Patroklos; ultimately his own death will be the price of his inability to make the break from the heroic "code" complete by sailing homeward over the teeming Hellespont. The relationship between Sappho and the other woman of the Aphrodite poem should be close and "co-operative," as that between Achilles and Agamemnon should be. When this expectation is cheated, the other party becomes an *"enemy"* to be beaten, by subterfuge and guile if need be, with divine assistance if possible. This is to say that the ἐράστης-ἐρωμένη relationship, when frustrated or disrupted, reveals the dynamic of power upon which it is based, by undergoing the same polar transformation as a disrupted relationship between High King and vassal. Aphrodite's promises in lines 21-4 imply that Sappho should be content with just the kind of external reversal in positions which failed to satisfy Achilles in *Iliad* 9; in the words of Aphrodite, Sappho's experience is characterized in terms of a closed circle of shifting roles which can be exchanged but never really changed. A love affair thus typed as a contest and confrontation at once illustrates the familiar tendency of early Greek psychology to treat internal states and emotional events as objects somehow separate from the "self,"[29] and argues that the whole competitive, domineering, "possession by conquest" attitude in the Greek temperament has been imported into the emotional matrix of the *love affair*. Sappho's occasional notes of archness, her pride of place and disdain for rivals, are further aspects of this "agonistic" way of loving.[30]

The contention that Sappho's thought and expression were deeply colored by certain *topoi* from heroic and aristocratic poetry can be buttressed by other signs even in her sparse surviving fragments. The φαίνεταί μοι poem (fr. 31 LP), for instance, lists the symptoms from an attack of (jealous?) envy most of which can be duplicated

from descriptions of epic warriors in battle.[31] Again, it is suggestive that the poem beginning οἱ μὲν ἰππήων στρότον (fr. 16 LP) places the incomparable Anactoria in the scales over against, not garlands of flowers or a summer's day, but rather armies and cavalry and fleets, in a competition whose outcome is easy for Sappho to decide; it is not difficult to imagine that the oafs for whom chariots and hoplites were a more soul-stirring sight would have included most male Mytilenean aristocrats. The crossover between the spheres of the martial and the erotic is most blatant in this poem, and for this reason Sappho's raising of the erotic dimension to a higher level of importance than the military and "heroic" is of primary importance.[32] The use of the term κάλλιστον for the beloved, given the normative power of κάλλος for the Greeks, marks a shift of the poet to a "prescriptive" stance.[33] The transvaluation of terms by Sappho from a heroic to an erotic context also gives special point to the fragment of an epithalamion (112 LP) which ends its address to the bridegroom τετίμακ' ἔξοχά σ' Ἀφροδίτα. The notion of "special, pre-eminent" (ἔξοχος) τιμή is common enough in Homer (e.g., *Iliad* 20, 184); a hero receives a τέμενος or other perquisites because of his outstanding (ἔξοχα) achievements in battle, or a deity loves a particular hero "exceedingly" (*Iliad* 5, 61). But Sappho's poem recognizes another possible manifestation of divine favor besides success in war; success in *love*, with Aphrodite rather than Athena as patroness, confers the prayed-for τιμή. (The repetition of ἄραο in this fragment is forceful.)

The treatment of a love affair as a duel, the perception of relationships in patterns of dominance and subjugation, advantage and disadvantage, the possessive or domineering and "timocratic" attitude towards women of her acquaintance – in these respects Sappho's typology of erotic liaison is reminiscent of the structures of heroic society. But we must ask at what level this transposition from the military to the amatory is operating. Sappho was of course an aristocrat of Lesbos herself;[34] and a measure of the impact which the Homeric, "aristocratic" outlook had upon a male member of the traditional elite, during the troubled and revolutionary time of the Archaic period, can be gained from the poetry of Sappho's contemporary, Alcaeus.[35] Sappho's unquestioned familiarity with the *epos* would thus render unremarkable a simple echoing by her of Homeric language and phraseology at a less than fully deliberate level. But Sappho's reaction to the heroic tradition is not chiefly interesting for such actual

borrowing or re-working of epic language as can be detected in her poetry; nor do we have to do simply with an early sounding of the "militat omnis amans" cliche. If the Homeric poetry and the aristocratic society which so admired it constituted a sort of "Master Language" for Archaic Greece, then a transvaluation of terms from that language gains in force because of the power of the terms in their original context; such a reworking has the potential for bearing radical and even subversive implications. That Sappho's handling of reminiscences from heroic contexts was in fact conscious and deliberate may be argued from an examination of the kind of texturing exhibited in the language of the ποικιλόθρον' poem, a texturing which is partly the result of love matters being made the subject of poetry at all, and partly the result of Sappho's using the associations inherent in her words to create a tension and equipoise between heroic and erotic pursuits.

The first stanza of the poem is freighted with weighty and solemn words (λίσσομαι, ἄσαισι, ὀνίαισι, πότνια, δάμνα θῦμον). But with the trill of ἀλλὰ τυίδ' ἔλθ' which opens stanza two, we move in the direction of increasingly pleasant images (πάτρος δόμον, χρύσιον ἄρμ', κάλοι ὤκεες στρουθοί, πύκνα πτέρα δίννεντες), until by stanza 4 the goddess is smiling (μειδιαίσαισ'[36]) and playful.[37] The last stanza but one contains the promises discussed earlier; might not the καὶ γάρ with which it opens be accompanied by a frown of mock menace and ironical solemnity, suitable to these lines in which Aphrodite uses a language as appropriate to Athena as to herself? The last four lines of the poem blend with great sensitivity the grave and the light-spirited from what has gone before, χαλέπαν μερίμναν and ἰμέρρει suggesting the two poles of feeling as Sappho loses or regains distance from her immediate discomfiture. σύμμαχος , finally, is the strongest and least equivocal evocation of a martial atmosphere in the entire poem, and its placement, as we have observed, is both faultless and memorable. Yet the very skill and aptness with which Sappho has transposed it, the world not of male armies and alliances, but of Sappho's love affairs.

The οἱ μὲν ἰππήων poem shows a similar duality of tone, a transition from the "epic" to the "lyric." Anactoria's pre-eminence in beauty is naturally a heightening of her stature; but the other contestant in the ἀγών, the Lydian army, must be felt by its juxtaposition

to a lovely and delicate woman to be, not trivialized perhaps, but deflated with a gently mordant irony. Again, if the fragment on the wedding of Hector and Andromache is genuinely Sappho's (fr. 44 LP, and cf. *SA*, p. 65ff.), we can see her treating epic characters in a "romantic" way, exploiting the emotional resonances implicit in seeing the great hero and heroine "at home," as it were.[38]

This artful use of epic or heroic or martial allusion is not merely an expedient in versifying or a feature of the poetic tradition. Rather, Sappho is sensitive enough to the emotional tonalities of her language to construct poems which will play on the polarity between the world of the warrior and that of the lover, with the consistent implication that the concerns of the latter are as vital and worthwhile as those of the former (more so, perhaps, in the Anactoria poem). This involves us and involved Sappho, with the question perennial to the Greek poets: what kinds of activity are worthwhile for a human being, what kinds of activity are productive of ἀρετή and deserving of the highest social accolades as being indicative of its presence? The male answer is clear; it is found in the figure of the high-born warrior and in his way of life.[39] But there was available in the heroic poetry of the Greeks a version of female ἀρετή also. These womanly "excellences," which long remained the binding norm in Greek society, included "beauty, skill in weaving and housekeeping, chastity, and faithfulness."[40] Such qualities largely define the perimeter of what was demanded from a "good woman," a γυνὴ ἀγαθή. There is, we may notice, no mention of being a renowned poet, or the center of a warmly devoted clique of stylish, beautiful, well-connected;[41] rather sensuous young women, or the ardent and self-avowed admirer of several others of your own sex; yet Sappho was all of this. She was, simply, an anomaly, made so by her very genius for song, by her style of living, by the publicness and exposure of her feelings, and she lived this life in a Greek milieu, which is to say in a society perpetually obsessed with "proper" behavior and the "right" way for a human being to live and, we must add, with imposing those standards universally. Modern critics, whose perspective is presumably more liberal than that common in the Archaic period,[42] have yet reacted to Sappho and her poetry with a notorious emotionalism and partisanship;[43] Pindar scarcely ever gets dragged around in this way. The peculiarity and vividness of her way of life must then have been apparent to Sappho and to her aristocratic friends of both sexes; she and they must have had some realization that her

career outran in many directions the limits which customarily circumscribed female ἀρετή.

This unusual, not to say unexampled position of Sappho vis-à-vis the traditional aristocratic version of female ἀρετή accounts for the cast given to certain recurring elements in her poems, such as her relationship to the "girls" of her circle. There is a self-confidence and an assumption of the right to *set standards*[44] which one meets repeatedly in her verse. So far from being repressed by her anomalousness and the lack of any "paradigm" or "role model" for it in traditional aristocratic cultural values, Sappho substantiates in her poetry and in the "style" of her circle of admirers what we must term, with apologies for the formation, a canon of γυναγαθία which centered around the passionate erotic encounter, just as ἀνδραγαθία centered ultimately around a few moments of physical combat. Sappho could observe from the outside, as a woman and as an individual of exceptional talent, the ramifications of the "heroic" outlook on male ἀρετή in the life and poetry of such a one as Alcaeus or, in a different way, in the experience of her own brother Charaxos, who found his Helen, somewhat tarnished perhaps, but still irresistible, in the Egyptian courtesan Doricha. Sappho in her poetry gives voice forthrightly to the elements of a different "code" or standard of behavior, by their approximation to which women who came under her influence could regard themselves as γυναῖκες ἀγαθαί, in a new and special application of the term. If we accept the substitution of ἔρος for martial glory as the standard of (τὸ) κάλλιστον, we can find in Sappho's poems all the requirements of an aristocratic ἑταιρεία transformed and adapted: the external qualities of grace, beauty, elegance in attire and demeanor, aimed at the "womanful" and courageous "pursuit" of erotic liaisons, within a coterie which has a sense of its separate identity and a rule of group loyalty. It is typically Greek that Sappho as a *poet* should have provided such a group with a *raison d'être*, as she does unarguably and in the tones of one proclaiming a new and fundamental insight in the οἱ μὲν ἰππήων poem, and with a set of guidelines for the proper conduct of one's amatory "campaigns."

There is, as mentioned earlier, a certain duality of tone in those poems in which Sappho juxtaposes erotic and "heroic" standards of life, or describes the former in terms reminiscent of the latter. This duality suggests that she was strongly aware of the irony implicit in building one's life around an aggressive and militaristic "code"

rooted primevally in death and despoliation; Sappho was forced, after all, as most of us have not been, to flee her home because of the things which men take "seriously."[45] By focussing on the erotic life in her poetry about her friends, and by hymning all its events as important and significant – the "heroic" measure of suffering it may evoke,[46] the anguished appeal for "battle aid" to the patron trickster goddess responsible for the whole imbroglio in the first place, the endless pursuit and flight, the strategems, the switching of roles from victor to vanquished, but to victor again another day, the competitiveness and the bitchy rivalries[47] – by making poetry of all this, with its striking resemblances to the way heroes behave in the *Iliad*, Sappho implicitly validates the behavior of herself and her friends as worthwhile, as indicative of ἀρετή if done καλῶς , just as the activities of war were validated by Homer; and she expects for herself, what Homer never claimed, the meed of immortality as her reward and imprimatur.[48]

The emergence of the individual voice from the anonymity of traditional poetry and society is a complicated process, on which the mentality of former ways will leave its impress. The agonistic elements in Sappho's love poetry result from her deliberate "typing" of her *affaires* in heroic terms; to what degree it truly represents the action in Sappho of that regrettable and endemic Greek proclivity for treating people as possessions and emotions as "causes" to be fought over cannot be determined. But if Sappho is seen to be drawing upon the strength of the "privileged" culture pattern of her time by (mis-) speaking its language, this will suit the psychological needs of the emerging individual who is not yet able to stand without the support of *any* code, but to whom the existing social order affords only the option of a weak and powerless position, as did Greek *mores* to the Greek woman. Perhaps Sappho's different version of how a woman could live her life successfully was felt instinctively to be subversive by later generations of Greek males; this at least would help explain the low character she is given in Attic comedy, and the obsessive concentration on the erotic side of her life.[49] A great deal of the creative energy in the epic poetry of the Greeks is directed towards establishing hierarchies, towards cataloguing and the imposition of limits and boundaries; the *Iliad* and the *Works and Days* perform this function at a social level, the *Theogony* does it cosmically.[50] But the imposition of order and hierarchy creates the essential dynamic and

essential precondition for revolution, as Greek myth superabundantly illustrates. This tendency of authority to breed fractiousness, of repression to engender resistance, is seen as always disruptive by the epic tradition. But Sappho's erotic "hierarchy" perpetually undercuts itself, in the dizzying whirl of transpositions between lover and beloved, pursuer and pursued; the dynamic of revolution is explicitly recognized as an inescapable component of the system, as it never is by aristocratic manuals of power. Hesiod perhaps shows some apprehension of this revolutionary quality of ἔρος the unsettler, the enemy of the static and "established." Ἔρος in the *Theogony* is one of the primal entities of the universe, and its operation is essential for the process of progressive differentiation by propagation which gives Hesiod's cosmic history its basic structure.[51] Yet Ἔρος remains itself without offspring, remains in a sense undifferentiated and unplaced in the universal hierarchy by escaping the trap of generation. Much of Hesiod's misogyny may be attributed to his perception of woman as undifferentiated will, as the vehicle of a desire which does not recognize hierarchies or limits – in effect, as a creature actuated by ἔρος .[52] The "master" culture of the aristocratic male seeks to pin the operation of this ἔρος to the acceptable and necessary function of the production of sons, to motherhood; but Sappho's erotic liaisons with her friends are clear realizations of the power of ἔρος in a context where motherhood was irrelevant. It is Ἔρος as pure desire which can, in its unpredictability and insatiability, disrupt the most carefully planned and programmed ordering of the cosmos. This way desire has of feeding upon itself and growing stronger from its very gratification touched a deep and disquieting chord in the male Greek psyche; Plato derives from it one of his most effective arguments against that popular fifth-century image of τὸ κάλλιστον, the life of the tyrant.[53]

Sappho's commitment in her poetry is to an ἔρος which is utterly circular and repetitive (δηῦτε). Rather paradoxically, it would seem to be this very commitment which liberates her and makes possible for her the *ironic* moment, inconceivable to an Achilles, but so clearly present in the self-perception of the poet-lover Sappho presented through the eyes of Kypris. The terms of Aphrodite's promises in the ποικιλόθρον' poem are proper to the "heroic" system of human relationships which we noticed even Achilles attempting to reach beyond; but Sappho's uses of the language and categories and situ-

ations of epic poetry and the aristocratic "code" are *self-conscious*, if only because they partake of a systematic *metaphor*. The capacity for an ironical self-consciousness, with all the loss of innocence which it implies, is an essential element in the liberation of the individual from the tradition. Possibly then the force of the erotic moment for Sappho, coupled with her ability at other times to distance herself and to evaluate and describe these moments ironically, moves her beyond confinement to a victor-vanquished, possessor-possessed pattern of human relationships such as Aphrodite's promises in the ποικιλόθρον' poem would by themselves imply. This provides a curious connection with the master ironist of the Greeks, for whom likewise ἔρος served as a motive power, only freed now from any hint of circularity or repetitiveness and directing us specifically upward, above the mundane, to repose in the sublime; at least Plato admits to having loved and learned from Sappho's works.[54] The male Greek intellect harnesses "emotion to the service of reason" and of a hierarchical view of being, giving birth to the *Symposium*. From Sappho's poetry emerges a pattern of life not dedicated to quietude of the emotions, but quickened by ἔρος and irony; a pattern of life which centers, as a Greek might have put it, around ἔρωτος ἀρετή.

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Notes

Bibliographical: The following abbreviations are used: *SA* = Denys Page, *Sappho and Alcaeus* (Oxford 1970); *MR* = A. W. H. Adkins, *Merit and Responsibility* (Oxford 1970); *LP* = E. Lobel and D. Page, i.e., Page, edd., *Poetarum Lesbiorum Fragmenta*, (Oxford 1968. All references to the poems of Sappho and Alcaeus are made by the marginal numbering in LP); *GLP* = Maurice Bowra, *Greek Lyric Poetry* (Oxford 1961). The lyricists other than Sappho and Alcaeus are cited by the marginal numbering in D. Page, ed., *Poetae Melici Graeci* (Oxford 1967). Archilochus is cited by the numbering of the Diehl-Beutler Teubner edition (Leipzig 1952).

[1] On the normative force of epic see E. A. Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (New York 1971), esp. p. 61-96. On the epic as the basis for poetic training in the Archaic period see *GLP*, p. 231. For various aspects of the transition from epic to lyric poetry, G. M. Kirkwood, *Early Greek Monody* (Cornell 1970) is instructive. See also *GLP*, p. 87f., 103f., 173, 188f.;

A. Turyn, *Studia Sapphica* (= *Eos*, suppl. 6 [1929]), p. 11-29; M. Treu, *Von Homer zur Lyrik* (Munich 1955), with Kirkwood's review in *AJP* 79 (1958) 74-9; O. Weber, *Die Beziehungen zwischen Homer und den alteren griechischen Lyriken* (Bonn 1955); Harvey, "Homeric Epithets in Greek Lyric Poetry," C.Q. (n.s.) 7 (1957) 206-23.

[2] Thus when the Athenians and the Mytileneans were disputing possession of Sigeum in the Troad, Pittacus at the head of the Lesbian force met in single combat and dispatched the Athenian general Phrynon, an Olympic victor, securing Sigeum for Mytilene in fine heroic style. That the world of the hero was passing rapidly is perhaps indicated by the subsequent reversal of this "decision" at the arbitrament of Periander, who awarded the territory to Athens (cf. Hdt. v, 94; Diogenes Laertius i, 74; Strabo 599f.; and *SA*, p. 152-61). The duel of Pittacus and Phrynon seems to have been memorialized in a poem of Alcaeus (all this occurring, of course, before the rift between him and Pittacus); at least the name of Phrynon can now be read in one of Alcaeus' fragments (167 LP, 17).

[3] I should say here that the question of any *physical* consummation to Sappho's homoerotic liaisons is irrelevant to the discussion of her here. The φαίνεταί μοι poem, for instance, depicts a moment of shattering erotic intensity with no direct physical contact between Sappho and the other woman.

[4] On this aristocratic paradigm see *MR*, esp. p. 30-60; also *GLP*, p. 135ff., 240ff.; W. Sale, "Achilles and Heroic Values," *Arion* 2 (1963), p. 86-100; and A. R. Burn, *The Lyric Age of Greece* (London 1967), chs. 8, 11-12.

[5] See *SA*, p. 8; Turyn, *op. cit.*, p. 27; Del Grande, "Saffo, ode 1 Diehl e sua omericità," *Vichiana* 1 (1964) 74-6. We may add the use of γᾶ μέλαινα at l. 10 (called "conventional" by Page, *SA, ad loc.*, also p. 53) as another likely epicism (cp. *Iliad* 2, 699; 17, 416, etc.).

[6] On the prayer form of the piece see Milne's remarks in *Hermes* 71 (1936), p. 127f. (which seem to me, however, to go too far in the direction of regularizing Sappho's works). On similar types of Homeric prayer, see *SA*, p. 17.

[7] The ἀδικία is probably infidelity (almost certainly so, if ἄψ at l. 19 is correct). ἀδικήει is deliberately chosen, I think, to lend a pseudo-solemnity to Aphrodite's words, and to impart to the other woman's faithfulness the gravity and overtones of, let us say, a Pittacus' sin.

[8] It is worth noting here that, while the goddess's words apply directly to Sappho's current situation and how it shall be changed, they may also be taken as evoking the constant shifting of amatory roles, as each party finds herself alternately in the role of pursued or pursuer. As Castle says about the use of ἄσα in l. 3, "Sappho's mood is a mixture of passionate longing and the tired realization of the endless repetitiveness of the experience." ("Observations on Sappho's 'To Aphrodite,'" *TAPA* 89 [1958], p. 70; I am inclined to take issue with his "tired.") Indeed, as far as Aphrodite's words go, she significantly omits to specify herself as the agent of change, saying merely that "this change *will* come about,

this is how things will be." We say that Sappho believed the agent of these inevitable changes to be Aphrodite; it might be as accurate to say that Aphrodite (or ἔρος) was for Sappho precisely this dynamic of shifting roles in an emotionally charged liaison. See further below, p. xx.

[9] See G. E. R. Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy* (Cambridge 1966), for an important study of this habit of thought in early Greece.

[10] Page has drawn attention to the significance of the pairing φεύγει/διώξει (*SA*, p. 14f.). Koniaris, in *Philologus* 109 (1965) p. 31f., has reviewed the usage of the two verbs, including some rather tendentious remarks on their later appearance in Attic legal terminology. I must agree with the general outlines of Page's statement, against Koniaris' attempt at refutation; in particular Koniaris seems to me to have missed the full implications of οὐκ ἐθέλοισα, and the power in early Greek thought of such pairs of polar terms.

[11] So *LSJ*, s.v. διώκω. (Other terms may be used to reflect the same complex of associations, such as ἀλύσκω/δίομαι.) Homer insists repeatedly that we see the encounter of Hector and Achilles in the light of these two words and their associations (22, 157-8, 199-200). The language in the latter lines especially is strikingly condensed and insistent.

[12] That Homer's own characters see their fighting this way is made quite clear by Aeneas at *Iliad* 5, 220ff. Cp. also Tyrtaeus fr. 8, 9 (Diehl-Beutler).

[13] *Iliad* 22, 1. This brief comparison and the longer simile at 189-92 evince the interpenetration in the poet's mind of the two common spheres of reference (battle and hunting) of φεύγω and διώκω.

[14] That ὀαρίζειν here may refer also to some standard bit of sardonic folk-humor about war is suggested by the phrase πολέμου ὀαριστύς. Hector undergoes a plain reversal of self-image in the course of his soliloquy; when the idea of actively "wooing" achilles with gifts is rejected, it is because Achilles will not accept such a "suit" from Hector, but will kill him "like a woman" (cf. 22, 125).

[15] With the other forms δαμνάω (or δάμναμι; cf. *LSJ*, s.v.) and δαμάζω (not Homeric in the present system).

[16] For instance, *Iliad* 3, 429; 6, 74; 8, 344, etc. With divine assistance: 16, 103; 6, 368, etc.

[17] See P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque* (Paris 1968), and H. Frisk, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg 1960-), s.v. δάμνημι. Cp. ἱππόδαμος and, rather interestingly, δάμαρ (according to *LSJ*, s.v.).

[18] *Iliad* 6, 74 (= 17, 303); *Odyssey* 9, 454 (wine). See also *Theogony* 122 (ἔρος) and, in early lyric, Archilochus fr. 118. The Homeric examples of ἔρος (or ἵμερος) as an agent which δάμνησι are concentrated, probably significantly, in the Διὸς ἀπάτη.

[19] Ibycus fr. 287, 6-7, perhaps recalls the original use of δάμνημι and how it acquired erotic associations.

[20] We are in fact rather delicate about the use of gifts to exert *direct* influence on the feelings and decisions of others; we tend to think of such as

"bribes," a stage of moral nicety of which the heroic "code" is largely ignorant (cp. *Iliad* 23, 296ff.).

[21] This concept of a "love that is all unwilling" is understandable in the light of early Greek beliefs about the workings of the human psyche (cf. E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* [Berkeley 1951], ch. 1): ἔρος is externalized and objectified, the effect of which is to reduce the responsibility of the person in its grip for his or her actions. Helen is the type of this: see *Iliad* 3, 399ff.; *Odyssey* 4, 261f.; and Sappho fr. 16 LP, 11. (παράγαγ' had a subject once, and Κύπρις is the most likely supplement. See *SA* ad loc.)

[22] There are indeed certain similarities between the action of the verbs πείθω and δάμνημι, which are again revealing of how an early Greek perceived the overriding of his inclinations by the power or influence of another. δάμνημι usually operates by open force, but cf. *Iliad* 5, 893 (δάμνημ' ἐπέεσσι).

[23] The subject of "gifts" in the epic could obviously be taken much further; just as flight and pursuit provide one "mega-structure" for the *Iliad's* plot, so do the accepting and rejection of gifts (the ransoms in books 1 and 24, etc.). We cannot afford space for this here; though one cannot resist observing that, just as Menelaos embodies the heroic "code" at perhaps its lowest ebb, so he practices the aristocratic style of gift-giving in a particularly inane and virulent form (*Odyssey* 4, 174ff.; and cp. 15, 80ff.).

[24] Persuasive gifts and ἔρος are linked in other ways, of course, as in the custom of wooing a bride by heaping up rich gifts (e.g., *Odyssey* 16, 392). Here again, as so often, the "heroic" way of doing things results in the reduction of a person – the aristocratic δάμαρ in this case, paid for by gifts to her father – to the status of an object, a bought possession.

[25] See *SA* on l. 19 of the Aphrodite poem.

[26] Paris has never felt desire for Helen as strong as that which seizes him after his escape from Menelaos, not even the first time they lay together (3, 441ff.). Cp. C. T. Onians' remarks on χάρμη in *The Origins of European Thought* (Cambridge 1954), p. 21f. Paris describes the god-managed *circularity* of epic combat in terms *exactly* parallel to Aphrodite's promises in our poem (3, 438ff.).

[27] "Applied" here means at least that Sappho could not have exorcised from her own mind or the thoughts of her hearers the associations entrained by the usual semantic range of the φεύγω-διώκω pairing. Auditory memory in an "oral-aural" culture is likely to have been more sensitive than in our own. See Harvey (note 1, above) on the effects for which the lyricists used Homeric echoes.

[28] Achilles' characterization of himself in book 9 is in fact very interesting at several points. Such passages as that in which Achilles compares himself to a "suffering mother bird" (323ff.) show us a rather unexpected side to the great mankiller's psychology; it is almost as if Homer wishes to see here a "feminine," nurturing Achilles. Could this be in part the unconsciously developed corollary of his being "wooed" by Agamemnon?

(My attention was drawn to the importance of the simile at 9, 323, by one of my students, Ms. Nancy Laughlin.)

[29] See Dodds, *op. cit.* Also B. Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind* (New York 1961), chs. 1-3.

[30] E.g., frs. 55 LP, 133 LP, 57 LP, 144 LP.

[31] Cf. *SA*, p. 28f.

[32] As Koniaris has recently pointed out with reference to this poem: "The *sine qua non* for one's κάλλιστον is *love*.... In this interpretation it becomes clear that whatever cannot be 'loved' (in an 'erotic' sense) is excluded from the area of the (most) beautiful and so one must exclude horsemen, infantry, ships, etc.... (τὸ) κάλλιστον depends on the divinity of love... since this deity "pairs" us as 'lovers' and 'beloved'.... An ἀγών for the title of (the) most beautiful occurs between the 'beloved' Anactoria and the most splendid of armies, the Lydian army.... The shift from οἱ μέν... οἱ δέ... οἱ δέ... to ἐγώ... marks a transition... from the 'epic' to the 'lyric.'" ("On Sappho fr. 16 [*L.P.*]," *Hermes* 95 [1967], p. 259-60.) See also *GLP*, p. 103ff., 181ff., 202.

[33] See Havelock, *op. cit.*, chs. 3-7.

[34] Sappho's social standing is indicated by Charaxos' serving as οἰνοχόος in the town hall at Mytilene (*SA*, p. 131).

[35] Alcaeus' commitment to the old, aristocratic ordering of society is evident everywhere in his poetry: see, for instance, 129 LP, 17-20; 72 LP, 11-13; 6 LP, 12-14; 130 LP, 20-24. Cp. A. Andrewes, *The Greek Tyrants* (New York 1963), p. 94f.: "The accusations [against Pittacus] of low birth are a consequence of their subsequent quarrel, and their value is in the light they shed on Alcaeus' mind, on his feeling that low birth is the most deadly accusation he can make against his enemy." Of course, the allegation must have been untrue (*SA*, p. 169f.). Whatever Alcaeus' tender sentiments about "liberating the δᾶμος from its woes" (129 LP, 20), the δᾶμος was evidently less than enthusiastic about "rescue" which came from such a source as Alcaeus and his fellow exiles, and gave full support to the insufferable Pittacus (348 LP, 3). Alcaeus is not quite free enough from an ill-founded paternalism to see that what the δᾶμος *wanted* now counted more forcefully than ever before. The problem surfaces again and again in early lyric of living in increasingly unheroic circumstances with only the expectations and demands of a "heroic" system to guide one. Thus, for instance, there is the recurring theme of the painful incongruities which are becoming possible as one judges a man by "old" or by "new" standards. (See Theognis 57f., 183-92, 699f.; and Solon fr. 15 [Bergk].)

[36] Clearly Page is substantially right about the emotional ambience which μειδιαίσαισ' implies: see *SA*, p. 15f. The diminutive μαινόλᾳ likewise contributes to the "tone" of Sappho's relationship with Aphrodite.

[37] Again, Page's remarks on δηῦτε are apt (*SA*, p. 12f.) δηῦτε is evidently a favorite word of Sappho's in describing her *affaires*: with the treble usage in this poem cp. frs. 130 LP, 22 LP. Alcman (fr. 59a) already has δηῦτε in the same type of context: Ἔρως με δηῦτε Κύπριδος Ϝέκατι/γλυκὺς κατείβων

καρδίαν ἰαίνει. With Anacreon the word has practically become a mannerism (in erotic contexts, frs. 358, 376, 400, 401, 428; otherwise, fr. 356 a and b). It looks very much as if there was something traditional about using δηὖτε to express the notion "Well, here I am in love *again*"; perhaps it also served as a discreet code word to indicate immediately that the "love" in question was non-marital. See on this *GLP*, p. 283, n. 1; also Snell, *op. cit.*, p. 57f.: "...Sappho visualized her sensation *sub specia iterationis*.... Sappho's love is such that the phrase can only mean: it is my constant fate that I must love and suffer by turns; that is how she understands the law of her existence, the rhythm of her feelings." One of the most unfortunate side-effects of the loss of so much of Sappho's work is that it deprives us of the material for a thorough study of her "erotic language" – i.e., to what degree did she, like the Latin elegiac poets, for instance, have available to her a whole range of words and expressions whose normal meaning received a twist when used in erotic contexts. (There intersects here also the question of special "sub-languages" for women in a male-dominated society. On this interesting topic see G. Steiner, *After Babel* [Oxford 1975], p. 32ff.)

[38] Even the φαίνεταί μοι poem can be read partially as an ironic exaggeration of her feelings by Sappho; thus the connection between the symptoms described and those of Homeric warriors in a tight spot gains more point, and the poem again will exhibit a certain duality of tone. Irony is not, of course, synonomous with trivialization.

[39] The prevailing influence of the Homeric "code" meant that the most influential and articulate segment of Archaic Greek society, namely the male members of the leading families in each locality, were endlessly preoccupied with securing first of all their own positions and property, and secondly with acquiring whenever possible a position of superiority in dealings with all those outside the family or clique with which they were aligned. It was ultimately and primitively upon his ability to fight well, to kill well if need be, that a gentleman's claim to possess ἀρετή was generally founded (although the rigor of this connection is relaxing somewhat in the Archaic period from its virtual exclusiveness in the epic; cf. *MR*, p. 70-79). Fierce competitiveness will naturally be a pivotal element of human relationships within such a system, along with the expectation of fanatical loyalty to one's coterie from all its members, and a correspondingly bitter rage when this expectation is cheated; thus Alcaeus' rage against Pittacus (e.g., frs. 72 and 129 LP; and cp. Archilochus against a perjured friend, fr. 79a). The Theognis corpus makes it clear enough that social and political alignments were commonly laced together with the erotic connection of a pederastic or homosexual love affair. The Greek expectation of concordance between inner nobility and outward appearance will have been met by the aristocratic accoutrements of fine dress, well-bred horses, elegant table furnishings, and so forth. Examples of the trappings of "gracious living" need hardly be adduced from Homer, for whose characters *all* the elements of living are "cunningly wrought," "golden all

over," "flawless." Alcaeus' "armory poem" (357 LP) is in the same vein. It may be imagined that the young bloods of Lesbos, living in violent and tumultuous times, took a keen interest in fine weapons and armor, a circumstance which would lend additional point to Sappho 16 LP.

[40] *MR*, p. 36.

[41] Cf. Anactoria's position at Sardis (96 LP) – and perhaps Anactoria's name itself – and the status of the woman in 155 LP.

[42] It is commonly assumed that the status of women was higher and their activities much less constricted in the Lesbos of 7th century B.C. than at Athens two hundred years later. The only evidence of this which can be adduced from contemporary sources is Sappho's own poetry; and Sappho's willingness to set and follow her own course in life is not a reliable index of how easy or difficult prevailing social attitudes may have made this for her.

[43] See, for example, Mary Lefkowitz, "Critical Stereotypes and the Poetry of Sappho," *GRBS* 14 (1973). The remarks made in my text about the "style" of Sappho and her friends do not, be it emphasized, imply that the poems can be mined for absolutely reliable biographical data on Sappho and her friends. At point here is the *poetic* characterization as a *Ding an sich*.

[44] A glance at the following fragments in LP will reveal our poet passing judgments of approval or disapproval on such matters as carriage and deportment, beauty, elegance of dress, urbanity or rustication of manners, etc.: 16 (βᾶμα), 22, 39, 49, 56 (σοφία), 57, 81b, 82a, 92, 94 (which fairly drips with sensual elegance), 98a (here we have sophistication going beyond the sophisticated to the *dernier cri* of urbanity: a refined naturalness, *simplex munditiis*), 98b, 100, 101, 132.

[45] See *SA*, p. 131. It is characteristic that even Sappho's own exile (if that is the subject of 98b LP, as seems likely) is refracted through the really important problem of explaining to Kleis why there is no "embroidered headband" for her.

[46] E.g., 130 LP (with an epic "limb-loosening"; but cp. *Odyssey* 20, 57; 23, 343; *Theogony* 911; Archilochus 85). The description of love and violent death in similar terms is an interesting phenomenon in early Greek poetry; see below, note 53. τινάσσω may have some of the same implications: see, for instance, *Iliad* 16, 348.

[47] Sappho's attitude to her "rivals" have been mentioned above (see note 30). Comparisons between women are not uncommon in her poems, as for instance in 82a LP, 56 LP; there was undoubtedly competition within the circle of Sappho's friends in excelling at the "womanly accomplishments" praised in her poetry. Competition on grounds of beauty was a familiar idea on Lesbos (Alcaeus, 130 LP, 32f.; *SA*, p. 168, n. 4; *GLP*, p. 178), as it was elsewhere in the Greek world (see *LSJ*, s.v. καλλιστεύω). The fateful consequences of the beauty contest which Paris judged present, of course, yet another curious intertwining of the erotic and the martial. Merkelbach, in an interesting if overstated article ("Sappho und ihr Kreis," *Philologus* 101 [1957]), sees the emphasis on women's beauty in

Sappho's poetry as the poet's direct challenge to male artistocratic insensitivity: "...ihre Worte richten sich gleichzeitig gegen die Männer, die der Liebe so ganz unkundig sind. Sie empfinden die Schaustellung blühender kriegerischer Kraft als das Schönste, die Toren; sie haben ja kein Gefühl für die Schönheit eines jungen Mädchens; nur die Frau kennt die Liebe, und sie weiss daher besser, was das Schönste auf Erden ist." (p. 14). See also note 32 above; and fr. 96 LP, 21-3.

[48] 193 LP. By contrast, another woman, presumably a rival, will lie in eternal obscurity (55 LP).

[49] There were plays by Ameipsias, Amphis, Antiphanes, Diphilos, Ephippos, and Timokles. Cf. A. Meineke, *Fragmenta Comicorum Graecorum.*

[50] See on this Havelock, *op. cit.*, chs. 4-6; and Norman O. Brown's Introduction to his translation of the *Theogony* (Indianapolis 1974).

[51] Brown. *loc. cit.*

[52] E.g., *Theogony* 590-602; *Works and Days* 373-5, 704-5.

[53] At *Gorgias* 491e and following; cp. *Rep.* 585a, and A. E. Taylor, *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus* (Oxford 1962), p. 445-64. In the works of the lyricists, of course, ἔρος commonly wears a wild and wantonly destructive face. It was the wilfulness, unpredictability, and insatiable appetite of ἔρος even by Sappho; in 130 LP ἔρος is a γλυκύπικρον ἀμάχανον ὄρπετον. Cp. Archilochus frs. 104, 112 (ἔρως... πολλὴν κατ᾽ ἀχλὺν ὀμμάτων ἔχευεν κλέψας... φρένας; the qualifying genitive, i.e. φιλότητος ἔρως, is interesting), 118 (...μ᾽ ὁ λυσιμέλης... δάμναται πόθος); Alcman fr. 58 (μάργος δ᾽ Ἔρως οἷα παῖς παίσδει) Anacreon fr. 357 (δαμάλης Ἔρως). Examples need not be multiplied to demonstrate that the erotic experience called forth associations with violent death, wasting disease, etc. With the traits of character given to ἔρος, compare those given to women by Hesiod, for instance, or Semonides fr. 7 (Diehl-Beutler).

[54] *Phaedrus* 235b; and *Anth. Pal.* 9, 506, if genuine. Contrast Aristotle's characteristic remark, *Rhet.* 1398b.