If Not, Winter

Fragments of Sappho

Anne Carson
ALSO BY ANNE CARSON

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Glass, Irony and God
Eros the Bittersweet: An Essay
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IF NOT, WINTER
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FRAGMENTS OF SAPPHO

TRANSLATED

BY

ANNE CARSON

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WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO

DOROTA DUTSCH
Sappho was a musician. Her poetry is *lyric*, that is, composed to be sung to the lyre. She addresses her lyre in one of her poems (fr. 118) and frequently mentions music, songs and singing. Ancient vase painters depict her with her instrument. Later writers ascribe to her three musical inventions: that of the *plectron*, an instrument for picking the lyre (*Suda*); that of the *pektis*, a particular kind of lyre (*Athenaios Deipnosophistai* 14.635b); and the mixolydian mode, an emotional mode also used by tragic poets, who learned it from Sappho (*Aristoxenos* cited by *Plutarch On Music* 16.113c). All Sappho’s music is lost.

Sappho was also a poet. There is a fifth-century *hydria* in the National Museum of Athens that depicts Sappho, identified by name, reading from a papyrus. This is an ideal image; whether or not she herself was literate is unknown. But it seems likely that the words to her songs were written down during or soon after her lifetime and existed on papyrus rolls by the end of the fifth century B.C. On a papyrus roll the text is written in columns, without word division, punctuation or lineation. To read such a text is hard even when it comes to us in its entirety and most papyri don’t. Of the nine books of lyrics that Sappho is said to have composed, one poem has survived complete. All the rest are fragments.

Sappho lived in the city of Mytilene on the island of Lesbos from about 630 B.C. It is not known when she died. Her exile to Sicily sometime between 604 and 595 B.C. is mentioned in an ancient inscription (the Parian Marble) but no reason for it is given. Biographical sources mention a mother, a father, a daughter, a husband and three brothers of Sappho. She appears to have devoted her life to composing songs; scholars in Alexandria collected them in nine books, of which the first book alone had 1320 lines. Most of this is lost. Her face was engraved on the coinage of Mytilene (see G. M. A. Richter, *Portraits of the Greeks*, I.70–72) and Hellenistic poets called her “the tenth Muse” or “the mortal Muse” (see *Palatine Anthology* 9.506 and 7.14). The general tenor of ancient opinion on her work is summarized by a remark of *Strabo*: 

---

**INTRODUCTION**

**ON SAPPHO**

Sappho was a musician. Her poetry is *lyric*, that is, composed to be sung to the lyre. She addresses her lyre in one of her poems (fr. 118) and frequently mentions music, songs and singing. Ancient vase painters depict her with her instrument. Later writers ascribe to her three musical inventions: that of the *plectron*, an instrument for picking the lyre (*Suda*); that of the *pektis*, a particular kind of lyre (*Athenaios Deipnosophistai* 14.635b); and the mixolydian mode, an emotional mode also used by tragic poets, who learned it from Sappho (*Aristoxenos* cited by *Plutarch On Music* 16.113c). All Sappho’s music is lost.

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---
Sappho [is] an amazing thing. For we know in all of recorded history not one woman who can even come close to rivaling her in the grace of her poetry.

(13.2.3)

Controversies about her personal ethics and way of life have taken up a lot of people’s time throughout the history of Sapphic scholarship. It seems that she knew and loved women as deeply as she did music. Can we leave the matter there? As Gertrude Stein says:

She ought to be a very happy woman. Now we are able to recognize a photograph. We are able to get what we want.

—“Marry Nettie,” Gertrude Stein Writings 1903–1932 (New York, 1999), 461

ON THE TEXT

Breaks are always, and fatally, reinscribed in an old cloth that must continually, interminably be undone.

—J. Derrida, Positions (Chicago, 1981), 24

In general the text of this translation is based on Sappho et Alcaeus: Fragmenta, edited by Eva-Maria Voigt (Amsterdam, 1971). I include all the fragments printed by Voigt of which at least one word is legible; on occasion I have assumed variants or conjectures from her apparatus into my translation and these are discussed below (see Notes). In translating I tried to put down all that can be read of each poem in the plainest language I could find, using where possible the same order of words and thoughts as Sappho did. I like to think that, the more I stand out of the way, the more Sappho shows through. This is an amiable fantasy (transparency of self) within which most translators labor. If light appears

not ruining the eyes (as Sappho says)
but strengthening, nourishing and watering

—Aelius Aristides Orations 18.4

we undo a bit of the cloth.
ON MARKS AND LACKS

Sappho’s fragments are of two kinds: those preserved on papyrus and those derived from citation in ancient authors. When translating texts read from papyri, I have used a single square bracket to give an impression of missing matter, so that [ ] indicates destroyed papyrus or the presence of letters not quite legible somewhere in the line. It is not the case that every gap or illegibility is specifically indicated: this would render the page a blizzard of marks and inhibit reading. Brackets are an aesthetic gesture toward the papyrological event rather than an accurate record of it. I have not used brackets in translating passages, phrases or words whose existence depends on citation by ancient authors, since these are intentionally incomplete. I emphasize the distinction between brackets and no brackets because it will affect your reading experience, if you allow it. Brackets are exciting. Even though you are approaching Sappho in translation, that is no reason you should miss the drama of trying to read a papyrus torn in half or riddled with holes or smaller than a postage stamp—brackets imply a free space of imaginal adventure.

A duller load of silence surrounds the bits of Sappho cited by ancient scholiasts, grammarians, metricians, etc., who want a dab of poetry to decorate some proposition of their own and so adduce exempla without context. For instance, the second-century-a.d. grammarian Apollonios Dyskolos, who composed a treatise On Conjunctions in which he wished to make a point about the spelling of the interrogative particle in different dialects of ancient Greek, cites from Sappho this verse:

Do I still long for my virginity?

—Apollonios Dyskolos On Conjunctions 490 = Sappho fr. 107 Voigt

Whose virginity? It would be nice to know whether this question comes from a wedding song (and so likely an impersonation of the voice of the bride) or not (and so possibly a personal remark of Sappho’s). Apollonios Dyskolos is not interested in such matters. Or consider the third-century-b.c. philosopher Chrysippos whose treatise On Negatives includes this negation from Sappho:

Not one girl I think who looks on the light of the sun will ever have wisdom like this.

—Chrysippos On Negatives 13 = Sappho fr. 56 Voigt
Wisdom like what? And who is this girl? And why is Sappho praising her? Chrysippus is not concerned with anything except Sappho's sequence of negative adverbs. There is also the second-century-A.D. lexicographer Pollux whose lexicon includes the following entry:

A word *beudos* found in Sappho is the same as the word *kimberikon* which means a short transparent dress.

—Pollux 7.49 = Sappho fr. 177 Voigt

Who would not like to know more about this garment? But the curiosity of Pollux is strictly lexical. In translating such stranded verse I have sometimes manipulated its spacing on the page, to restore a hint of musicality or suggest syntactic motion. For example the sentence cited by Chrysippus becomes:

not one girl I think
who looks on the light of the sun
will ever
have wisdom
like this

This is a license undertaken in deference to a principle that Walter Benjamin calls "the intention toward language" of the original. He says

The task of the translator consists in finding that intended effect upon the language into which he is translating which produces in it the echo of the original. . . . Unlike a work of literature, translation does not find itself in the center of the language forest but on the outside; it calls into it without entering, aiming at that single spot where the echo is able to give, in its own language, the reverberation of the work in the alien one.

—W. Benjamin, “Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers,” originally a preface to Benjamin’s translation of Baudelaire (Heidelberg, 1923), 77

I am never quite sure how to hear Sappho's echo but, now and again, reading these old citations, there is a tingle.

So far we have looked at examples of citation without context. Still more haunting are instances of context without citation. Some wonderful night of Sappho's life, not to say the prayer that it evoked, survives only as an allusion of the fourth-century-A.D. orator Libanius:
So if nothing prevented the Lesbian Sappho from praying that her night be made twice as long, let it be permitted me too to pray for something like this.

—Libanius *Orations* 12.99 = Sappho fr. 197 Voigt

Some song of Sappho's that Solon heard sung by a boy is mentioned in an anecdote of Stobaios but Stobaios omits to tell us what song it was:

Solon of Athens heard his nephew sing a song of Sappho's over the wine and since he liked the song so much he asked the boy to teach it to him. When someone asked why he said, *So that I may learn it then die.*

—Stobaios *Florilegium* 3.29.58

Some shrewd thinking of Sappho's about death is paraphrased by Aristotle:

Sappho says that to die is evil: so the gods judge. For they do not die.

—Aristotle *Rhetoric* 1398b = Sappho fr. 201 Voigt

As acts of deterrence these stories carry their own kind of thrill—at the inside edge where her words go missing, a sort of antipoem that condenses everything you ever wanted her to write—but they cannot be called texts of Sappho's and so they are not included in this translation.
IF NOT, WINTER
Ποικίλοφρον ἄθανάτ' Αφρόδιτα,
παίζες Δήμος δολιόπλοκε, λίζομαι εσ',
μη μ' ἁρείς μην' ὄνειροι δάμνα,
πότυμα, θόμαν;

ἀλλὰ τυίδ' ἐλθ', αἳ ποτα κάτερωτα
tὰς ἔμας αὐλίας ἀνίων τήλοι
ἐκλαμε, πάτροις δὲ δόμον λίποισα
χρόσιον ἥλιες;

ἧρμ' ὑπαξέιται κάλοι δὲ ε' ἄγοι
ὡκεποι στρούθιοι περὶ γὰς μελαίνας
πῦκνα δίνοντες πτέρ' ἀπ' ὁράνοι αἰθε-ρος, διὰ μέσσω.

ἄψα δ' ἐξίκολτοι· εὔ δ', ὦ μάκαρα,
μειδιαίας τ' ἄθανάτωι προσώπῳ
ἡμέρ' ὅτι δὴ ἔστε πέπονθα κάττι
δὴμοτε καλημμι.

καίντι μοι μάλιστα θέλω γένεσθαι
μαινόλαι Θόμως· τίνα δὴμοτε πείθω
μέγαν γες εἰς γὰν φιλότατα; τίς ε', ὦ
Ψάβπρ', ἐδίκησι.
Deathless Aphrodite of the spangled mind,
child of Zeus, who twists lures, I beg you
do not break with hard pains,
    O lady, my heart

but come here if ever before
you caught my voice far off
and listening left your father’s
golden house and came,
yoking your car. And fine birds brought you,
quick sparrows over the black earth
whipping their wings down the sky
    through midair—

they arrived. But you, O blessed one,
smiled in your deathless face
and asked what (now again) I have suffered and why
    (now again) I am calling out

and what I want to happen most of all
in my crazy heart. Whom should I persuade (now again)
to lead you back into her love? Who, O
    Sappho, is wronging you?
καὶ γὰρ αἱ ἑφέγει, ταχέως διώξει,
αἱ δὲ δῶρα μὴ δέκετ, ἀλλὰ δώσει,
αἱ δὲ μὴ φίλει, ταχέως φιλήσει
κωκ ἑθέλοισα.

ἐλθε μοι καὶ νῦν, χαλέπαν δὲ λύσον
ἐκ μερίμναν, ὅσσα δὲ μοι τέλεσαι
θόμος ἰμέρρει, τέλεσον, εἰ δ’ αὕτα
cύμμαχος ἔσσο.
For if she flees, soon she will pursue.
If she refuses gifts, rather will she give them.
If she does not love, soon she will love
   even unwilling.

Come to me now: loose me from hard
care and all my heart longs
to accomplish, accomplish. You
   be my ally.
ανθείς κατιουχό
δευτερομενοχρέωσις. Ο ναός
ἀγνω διπ[α]ι χάρις μέν ἄλος
cαλ[α], βη[μοι δ’ ἐν] θυμίαμε—
νοι [λι]βασιλικά.

ἐν δ’ ὕδωρ ψύχον, οὐ κελάδει δ’ ὤδων
μαλίνων, βρόδοις δὲ παῖς ὁ χῶρος
ἐκκλαστ’, αἰθουσομένων δὲ φύλλων
κώμα καταξιων.

ἐν δὲ λείμων ιππόβοτος τάθαλε
τωτ...(.οίνων άνθείς, αἱ <δ’> ἄηται
μέλλιχα τν[έος]ειν δε;

ἐνθὰ δὴ ε’ι συν[η] ἐλοίς Κύπρι
χαυκίαςιν ἐν κυλίν[ες]ειν ἄβρως
<ομμεμει>μενον θαλίαςιν νέκταρ
οἶνοχόσις.
here to me from Krete to this holy temple
where is your graceful grove
of apple trees and altars smoking
   with frankincense.

And in it cold water makes a clear sound through
apple branches and with roses the whole place
is shadowed and down from radiant-shaking leaves
   sleep comes dropping.

And in it a horse meadow has come into bloom
with spring flowers and breezes
like honey are blowing
   [         ]

In this place you Kypris taking up
in gold cups delicately
nectar mingled with festivities:
   pour.
δῶσην
καλύτων μέντ' ἐπὶ
καλῶν κἀξιῶν, κέ[ν]
λοις, λύπης τέμι
μὲ ὀνείδος
καὶ καλῶν, ἐπὶ[τῶ]
κ' ἄν, ἄξιον, τὸ γὰρ []
μὸν σώκοντω μ[ν]
διάκηται,
μὴδὲ[ν], αζε,
χις, ευνήμ[ι]
ης κακότατος[ς]
μὲν
ἐν ἄτεραις με[λ]
ης φρένας, εὖ[ν]
ιτοις μακα[λ]

ξ[α]
yet of the glorious
of the beautiful and good, you
of pain [me
blame
swollen
you take your fill. For [my thinking
not thus
is arranged
nor
all night long] I am aware
of evildoing
other
minds
blessed ones
θε θόμον
μι πάμπαν
δύναμαν,

ας κεν ἡ μοι
ἐπαντάλμην
ἔλον πρώσωπον.

ἡ χροίθεις,

ὁ λος
I can absolutely heart to shine in answer face having been stained
Κύπριο καὶ] Νησίδες, ἀβλάβη]ν μοι
tὸν κασίγνητν δ[ό]τε τῳδ' ἵκεσθαι[i
κῶςσα F]οι θύμωκ]ν κε θέλη γένεσθαι
πάντα τε]λέσθην,

ὅσσα δ' πρός' ἁμβροτε πάντα λύσαι
καὶ φίλοις[ι] Φοῖν χάραξιν γένεσθαι

....... ἔχροισι, γένοιτο δ' ἁμμι

....... μ[η]δ' εἰς:

τὰν κασιγνήταν δὲ θέλοι πόησθαι
[τίμας, [ον]ιαν δὲ λύγχαν
[ποτις π[ά]ροιθ' ἀχεύων
]να
][εικαῖων] τὸ κέγχρω
]πεπη[. . .]αι πολίται
]λῶς [. . .]ηκε δ' αυτ' οὐ
]χω[ ]
]να[ ] [εο[ .].]
[. . .].ν' ζῷ [δ]ὲ Κύπροι [. . .]να
]θεμε[. . .]α κάκαν [ ]
].
O Kypris and Nereids, undamaged I pray you grant my brother to arrive here.
And all that in his heart he wants to be, make it be.

And all the wrong he did before, loose it.
Make him a joy to his friends, a pain to his enemies and let there exist for us not one single further sorrow.

May he willingly give his sister her portion of honor, but sad pain grieving for the past
6

ως δα. [

κακυκ[

ατυμ[

καχ,[

.] [

Θα[

Στείχ[

ως ιδω[

τάς ét. [ 

ποτνια. [ 

χουσοπ[

καπποι[

.αυμ[

κάρα. [ 

]. [ 

14
so we may see [lady of gold arms [doom

Go [so we may see [lady of gold arms [doom
Δωριχας [. . . .].

κην κέλετ, ου γαρ [ κας
κανην ἀγερχάηι
μεν' οι ον νεοιςι
αν ψ[ι]λ [. . . .].
μα. [
Doricha’s gives orders, for not top pride like young men beloved
$\Lambda\pi\theta_i \cdot \zeta_\omega \cdot [n \cdot \phi, [\chi\mu\phi, [\nu, \phi]]$
At this for you
Ἀρκαλειοτάς ἐν
παν οὐκεχήν
ἐρ ἐόρτον
μαν ὡς ἡ τελείων ὂνέμα
. ἀς ἀ . ὰ ἅ σαι [ ὰ]
. ος δῆ [ ν.]
invites all not feast for Hera as long as
]...[
]ζθε.[
] [ ]
]γοημ[
] αεθ[ 
]].ηεο[
] [ ]
]..εις.[
]}.φ[
12

] }

[thought

[ barefoot

[ ]

[ ]
15A AND 15B

15A AND 15B

blessed

to loose all the wrongs he did before

by luck of the harbor

Kypris, and may she find you very bitter
and not go boasting—that Doricha—
how he came a second time
to love’s desire.
Οἶ μὲν ἵππην ἔτρωτον, οἱ δὲ πέσδων, οἱ δὲ νάων φαίς ἐπὶ γὰν μέλαν λαζάν
ἐμμεναὶ κάλλιστον, ἐγὼ δὲ κην ὁτι—
τώ τις ἑράται?

πάγγυ δ’ εὑμαρεῖς εὐνετον πόησαι
πλαντὶ τὸι ὅτ’, ἀ γάρ πόλυ περικεθοῖς
κάλλος [ἀνθ]φώπων Ἐλένα [τὸ]ν ἄνδρα
τὸν [ ἄρ]ίστον

καλλ[ίστοις] ἔβας ς Τροιάν πλεο[ῖσα
κωθὶς πα[ί]δος οὐδὲ φίλων το[κ]ήνων
πάμπαν] ἐμνάςθη, ἀλλὰ παράγαγ’ αὕταν

καπτον γάρ [ ]
]..κούψωςτι [ ]οη.[.γ
]με νῦν Ἀνακτο[ῖας ὅ]γέμναινικ
ς’ οὐ] παρεοίσας,
Some men say an army of horse and some men say an army on foot
and some men say an army of ships is the most beautiful thing
on the black earth. But I say it is
what you love.

Easy to make this understood by all.
For she who overcame everyone
in beauty (Helen)
left her fine husband

behind and went sailing to Troy.
Not for her children nor her dear parents
had she a thought, no—
]led her astray

]for
]lightly
]reminded me now of Anaktoria
who is gone.
τάλε καθε βολλοίμαν ἔφατον τε βάμα
καμάρυχμα λάμπρον ἵδην προεύπω
ἡ τὰ Λύδων Ἀρματα καν ὀπλοις
πεσομάλαχεθας.

] μεν οὐ δύνατον γένεθαι
] ν ἀνθρωπ[. ( . ) π]εδέχην δ᾽ ἀραθαι

προς[  

ωςδ[  

...],[  

].[.]ω[.][  

τ᾽ ἐξ ἀδοκη[τω.  

28
I would rather see her lovely step 
and the motion of light on her face 
than chariots of Lydians or ranks 
of footsoldiers in arms.

] not possible to happen
] to pray for a share
[
[
[
[
[
toward[
[
[
out of the unexpected.
Πλάσιον δὴ μή
Πότνι ἡ Ηραὶ καὶ χάρι
τὰν ἀφάταν Ἁτρείδαι καὶ λη-

τοι βασίλεις.

ἐκτελέσαντες μή
πρῶτα μὲν περὶ,
τυίδο ἀπορμάθει
tες

οὐκ ἐδύναντο

πρὶν εἰ καὶ Δί', ἀν
tαι Θυώνας ἵμη
tον δὲ καὶ
κατα τὸ παλ.

ἀγνα καὶ καὶ
πιαρθεν
ἀμφιτ.

[ ]

[ , ]

[ , ]

[ , ]

[?], ἀπίστευσθαί.

30
Close to me now as I pray,
lady Hera, may your gracious form appear,
to which the sons of Atreus prayed,
            glorious kings.

They won very many prizes
first at Troy then on the sea
and set out for here but
            could not complete the road

until they called on you and Zeus of suppliants
and Thyone’s lovely child.
Now be gentle and help me too
            as of old[

Holy and beautiful
maiden
around[
    ]
]
]
]
to be
]
]
]
]
]
]
]to arrive.
<Π·άν κεδι
<ἐν νέπην
γλῶσσα μυθολογία
κανδρι .
μεκδον"
Pan
to tell[
tongue[
        to tell tales[

and for a man
greater[}
] μενοικαν
] Θ’ ἐν θύοικαν
] ξοικαν ξελκαν
]
] ιε η δε βαίκαν
] ιν γαρ ἰδμενν
] ιν ξργων
]
] δ’ ὑπίζζων [ κάπικαδ
] τοδ’ εἶπην
waiting in sacrifices having good but going for we know of works after and toward says this
ἐπὶ, ἔχμῳ
ἐς, γάνος δὲ καὶ...

τόθας εὖν ἔσται
λέξεις κρῆτησαι
γλας μελαῖνας

ἐλοις ναῦται

μεγάλαις ἀνταίς

κάπτε ἁέρσω

_SelectedIndexChanged, πλέοι.[

δε τὰ φόρτι εἰὼ.[

νατιμ' ἔπει κ.[

]

ὅσοντι πόλλ..[

καίδεκα[

εὶ

]

ἰν ἔργα

χέρσω [.

], α

]

刿][.
Gladness and

with good luck

to gain the harbor

of black earth

sailors

in big blasts of wind

upon dry land

sail

the freight

when

many

works

dry land
επαβολής

λανθ’ ολοφυν [. . .]ε.

τρομέρους π.[. .]άλλα

χρόχ γήρας ἡδή

ν ἀμφιβάλει

ς πέταται διώκων

τας ἀγαύας

εα, λάβοια

ἀεισον ἄμμι

τὰν ἱόκολπον

δύων μάλιστα

ας π(λ)άναται
[pity
trembling]
flesh by now old age
covers
flies in pursuit

noble
taking
sing to us
the one with violets in her lap
mostly
goes astray
βλα.[
εργον, . άλα,. [ 
ν ύθος δοκιμ[ 
ηςθαι 
ν αυάδην χ,.[ 
δ]ε μή, χείμων[ 
], οικονομος[.
]δε 
].ε,[...],[...κέλομαι ι[, 
... γυλα, [...λανθι λάβοιςα,.α,.[ 
Pα]κτιν, ἀς ας δε δηντε πόθος τ,.[ 
ἀμφιπόταται 
τὰν κάλαν· ἀ γὰρ κατάγωγις αὕτα[ 
ἐπτόσις ἰδοιςειν, ἐγω δε χαίρω, 
και γὰρ αὕτα δη πρ[τ]ε ἐμεμψ[ 
Κυπρογένησα 

ὡς ἀφομι[ 
τουτό τω[ 
β[όλλομι[ 

40
of Gongyla, Abanthis, taking up your lyre as (now again) longing floats around you, you beauty. For her dress when you saw it stirred you. And I rejoice. In fact she herself once blamed me Kyprogeneia because I prayed this word: I want
σωτὸς ἡλίας

αὐτίκον εἰς ὅρας

'Ερμιόνας τεαυτά

ξένθαι δ' Ἐλέναι εἰς ἑικὴν

καὶ

καὶ θνάταις, τόδε δ' ἵζ[θ]ι, τὰί εἰς

παίζαν κέ με τὰν μερίμναν

λαῖς ἀντιδ[.].[,] ἰθ[θ]οῖς δὲ

ταῖς ὅ[θ]οις

ταῖν

παν[νεχίς]δην

] [ ]
of desire

for when I look at you

such a Hermione

and to yellowhaired Helen I liken you

among mortal women, know this

from every care

you could release me

dewy riverbanks

to last all night long
24А

| νανάγαν |
| --- |--- |
| λεμνάσεσθ' ἂν |
| καὶ γὰρ ἠμέλες ἐν νεότατι |
| ταῦτ' ὑπόθμμεν· |

πόλλα [μὲν γὰρ καὶ κάλα |
| . . . η[μεν, πολι[ |
| μμ[.].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].}.]
you will remember
for we in our youth
did these things

yes many and beautiful things

we live
the opposite
daring
24ο

]. ἔδαφος[
]χικάτε[
]ἀνέλογον[
]
]. [  ], αι
λεπτοφώνη
]. ἡχο[,
24D

] in a thin voice
]
25

γυμε [!]  
προλιπ [!]  
νωες [!]  
β]βροαζ [!]  
γ]γλαθαν γ]ες [!]  
η]πμεθαξ [!]  
γ]υνθαλα [!]
25

] quit
] luxurious woman
] ]
]
}
θαμέων

ὁμμικας γὰρ

εἰ δὲ θέω, κηνοί μὲ μάλιστα πάντων

ζώνται

] ἀλεμάτι]

]. γονωμ[ ]

]. μή οὐ πρ[ ]

]αι

]. σε, θέλω[ ]

]. τὸ πάθη[ ]

]. αν, ἔγω δ' ἐμ' λοῦται

τοῦτο σῦνοιχ

].[. τοι[. .].[,]

]. ναμ[ ]

].[. [. [. [}
frequently
for those
I treat well are the ones who most of all
harm me
crazy
you, I want
to suffer
in myself I am
aware of this

καὶ περιβάλλονταί ἑαυτῶν οὐκ ἔχει πάντως.

καὶ γὰρ δὴ εὕρετο τοῦτοι
καὶ μέλπας ἄγι ταύτα
ζάλεξει, κάμμ' ἀπὸ τωδεὶς
ἀδρα χάρισσαν.

καὶ εἴχουμεν γὰρ ἐς γάμονε ἐν δὲ
καὶ εὖ τοῦτ', ἀλλ' ὅτι τάχιστα
παρο[θ]ένοις ἄπ[π]εμπε, θέου
ἐν ἔχοιεν

ὁδὸς μέλγαυν εἰς Ὄλυμπον
ἀνορμὶ παῖσί.
yes you a child once
come sing these things
talk to us, give us your grace

for we go to a wedding; and surely you know this, but as soon as possible send the girls away, may gods have

road to great Olympos
for men
29A

],ιων[ ]μετριακε[ β]ξθω δου [. ]γν[ ]

29B

] ]ανταμε[ ],ι ποτνια[ ]αψατ[ ]ον
29A

] ]
[ deep sound
] ]

29B

] ]
[ lady
] ]
29C

|πεπλ[|
|], [.]οφμοις[.,]τξ[|
|], [...],[.]ω|

|].,α[...][,]αποι[|
|],ω[...],τ[|
|],γνω[...],[....],[|

|], [,].λμ[ ],[.],[|
|],ντε Γόργοι [,],[|
|],δε[ ],[.,][,][|
|],μ,[|

56
29c

]robes
 ]necklaces
 ]

] [for Gorgo
]

]
29Η

] [

],οις[ ,].
Γ]όριννοι
],αυταν
]

]ζ' ἐοιςαν
]λοιςα
],[
29H

for Gyrinno
πάρθηκα δὲ
πανυψιδοί[ς]ιὶ
καὶ ἄειδοις[ι]ν φιλοτάτα καὶ νόμο—
φας Ἰοκόλπῳ.

αλλ' ἐγέρθης, ἥθος
esteiche ois ὑμάλικας
ηπερ οὐκον ἄ λειψῳν
ὑπὸν τῇδωμὲν.
night[ 

girls
all night long
might sing of the love between you and the bride
with violets in her lap

wake! and go call
the young men so that
no more than the bird with piercing voice
shall we sleep
Φαίνεται μοι κήνος ἰςως θέοις εἴμεν ὄνηρ, ὅτις ἐνάντιας τοι ἱεράνει καὶ πλάς τον ἄδυ ψωνει—

καὶ γελαίας ἰμέρονεν, τὸ μ’ ἡ μὰν
καρδίαν ἐν ἐκτῆσει ἐπτόωσεν’

ὡς γὰρ ἦς ἐδὸ βρόχῃ ὡς με φώνη—

καὶ ὁ ὀνδὲν ἦτ’ εἴκει,

ἀλλὰ καὶ μὲν γλώσσα ἐλαγε, λέπτον
δ’ αὐτικα χῶρι ποΘ ὑπαθαθόμαχεν,

ὀππάτεσσι δ’ ὀνδέν ὀρημ’ ἐπιβρό—

μείς δ’ ἄκουσι,

ἐκαθε μ’ ἱδρως κακχέται, τρόμος δὲ
παῖσαν ἄγοει, χλωροτέρα δὲ πιοῖς

ἐμμι, τεθλάκην δ’ ἅλλων ἱδέλυς

ψαμνομ’ ἐμ’ αὐτ[α].

ἀλλὰ πὰν τόλματον, ἐπεὶ καὶ πένητα
He seems to me equal to gods that man
whoever he is who opposite you
sits and listens close
to your sweet speaking

and lovely laughing—oh it
puts the heart in my chest on wings
for when I look at you, even a moment, no speaking
is left in me

no: tongue breaks and thin
fire is racing under skin
and in eyes no sight and drumming
fills ears

and cold sweat holds me and shaking
grips me all, greener than grass
I am and dead—or almost
    I seem to me.

But all is to be dared, because even a person of poverty
αἱ μὲ τιμίαν ἐπόησαν ἔργα
tὰ ἐφὰ δοίσα

32
who honored me
by giving their works
αὖθ ἐγώ, χρυσοστέφαν᾽ Άφροδιτα,
τόνδε τὸν πάλον λαχοίην
if only I, O goldcrowned Aphrodite,
could win this lot
ἀστερεύει μὲν ἀμφὶ κάλαν σελάνναν
ἄψ ἀπυκρύπτοις φάεννον ἔδοκεν
ὅπποτα πλῆθοισα μάλιστα λάμπη
gὰν

ἀγγερία
stars around the beautiful moon
hide back their luminous form
whenever all full she shines
on the earth

silvery
35

η είναι Κύπρος η Πάφος η Πάνοψος
you either Kypros or Paphos or Panormos
καὶ ποθῆς καὶ μάνασιν
I long and seek after
κατ' ἐμον ὑτάλυμμον

tὸν δ' ἐπιπλάζοντ' ἀνεμοι ψέροιεν
καὶ μελέδωναι
in my dripping (pain)
the blamer may winds and terrors
carry him off
38

ꙮπταὶς ἁμμὲς
you burn me
πόδας δὲ
ποίκιλος μάσλης ἐκάλυπτε, Λῦδιον κάλον ἔργον
the feet
by spangled straps covered
beautiful Lydian work
ζω δ' ἔγνω λεύκας επιδώμων αἴγος

καπιλείψω τοί
but I to you of a white goat

and I will pour wine over
ταὶς κάλαις ὑμῖν <τὸ> νόημα τῶν
οὐ διάκειται
for you beautiful ones my thought
is not changeable
ταῖα ψύχος μὲν ἔγεντο θύμος
πάρο δ' ἰεῖς τὰ πτέρα
their heart grew cold
they let their wings down
|αι·
|
|λετα·
|[[κ]]αλος
]. ἀκαλα κλόνει
] κάματος φρένα
]§ κατιςδάνε[ι]
] ἄλλ' ἄγιτ', ὃ φίλαι,
], ἁγχι γὰρ ἀμέρα.
beautiful he
stirs up still things
exhaustion the mind
settles down
but come O beloveds
for day is near
Κυπροφ., [ας]
κάρυξ ήλθε θε[λη,.]θεις
"Ιδαος ταδεα...φ[.].ις τάχυς ἀγγελος

tάς τ’ ἄλλας Ἡσίας [...], δε, αν κλέος ἀφθιτον
"Εκτωρ καὶ ουνέταιροι ἁγοις ἠλικώπιδα
Θήβας εξ ἱέρας Πλακίας τ’ ἄπ’ ἱκνων ἀβραν Ἀνδρομάχαν ἐνι ναῦσιν ἐπ’ ἄλμυρον πόντον πόλλα δ’ ἡλιγματα χρύσια κάμματα πορφύρα[α] καταύτιμα, ποίηλ’ ἀθύρματα,
ἀργύρω τ’ ἀνάριθμα ὑποτήριαι, καλέσαις.
ὡς ἐτ’ ὀτραλέως δ’ ἀνόρουσε πάτηρ φίλος,
φάμα δ’ ἔθεσε κατὰ πτόλειν εὐρύχορον φίλος,
αὐτικ’ Ἡλίασι κατίνασι] ὑπ’ ἐντρόχοις
ἀγον αἰμιόνοις, ἐπ[έ]βαινε δὲ παῖς ὄχλος
gυναίκων τ’ άμα παρθενίκαι[ν] τ. [...], εφύρων,
χώρις δ’ αὐ’ Περάμοιο θυγ[α]τρε[ς]
"ιπποι[οις] δ’ ἀνδρες ὑπαγον ὑπ’ ἀρματα
π[.].]ες ἦθελοι, μεγάλω[ς]τι δι[
δ[.].]ἀνίοχοι φ[.].[....].[]
π[.’]ζα. ο[]
Kypros
herald came
Idaos swift messenger
]
and of the rest of Asia imperishable fame.
Hektor and his men are bringing a glancing girl
from holy Thebe and from onflowing Plakia—
delicate Andromache on ships over the salt
sea. And many gold bracelets and purple
perfumed clothes, painted toys,
and silver cups innumerable and ivory.
So he spoke. And at once the dear father rose up.
And news went through the wide town to friends.
Then sons of Ilos led mules beneath
fine-running carts and up climbed a whole crowd
of women and maidens with tapering ankles,
but separately the daughters of Priam
And young men led horses under chariots
in great style
charioteers
]
ι]κελοι θεο[ς
] ἄγνοιν ἁολ[λε

ιδρματι[ι
ινον ες "Ἰλιο[ν

ιαλὸς δ’ ἄδυμ[λ]έλης]
ιτ’ ὀνεμίγνυτο

ικι ψ[ό]ψ[ο]ς κροτάλ[ων]
ιως δ’ ἄρα πάρ[θενοι

ιάειδον μέλος ἄγν[λ]ον, "ικα]νε δ’ ες φ[θ][ερα

ιάχω θεσπεσία γελ[ι

ιπάνται δ’ ἦς κατ’ ὄδοι[ις
ιφράτηρες] ψίκαλι τ’ ὄ[ι]. . .,ουδεθ[. .].,εαι[. .].,[

ιμύρα κα[ί] κασια λίβιανός τ’ ὀνεμείγνυτο
ιγύναιες δ’ ἐξέλυσον δ’ σεὶ προγενέστεραι[ι

ιπάντες δ’ ἄνδρες ἐπιήρατον ἰαχον ὁρθον

ιπύνον’ ὀνκαλέοντες, ’Ἐκάβολον εὐλύραν

ι嗪ην δ’ "Εκτορα κ Ἀνδρομάχαν θεοκτικέλοι[ις.

90
set out for Ilios
and sweetflowing flute and kithara were mingled
with the clip of castanets and piercingly then the maidens
sang a holy song and straight up the air went
amazing sound
and everywhere in the roads was
bowls and cups
myrrh and cassia and frankincense were mingled.
And all the elder women shouted aloud
and all the men cried out a lovely song
calling on Paon farshooting god of the lyre,
and they were singing a hymn for Hektor and Andromache
like to gods.


44Αα

[κανορες ..

Φοιβω χρυσοκόμαι τον ἐπικτέ Κόω ..

μύγες (α) Κρόνιδαι μεγαλωνύμως.

Ἄρτεμις δὲ θέων] μέγαν ὄρχον ἀπόμοσε

κεφάλαν· ἃ ἀπὸμοσος ἔξοχον

[, ὥν ὀρέων κορύφως ἔπι

]δε νεῖςον ἢμαν χάριν·

ἐνεύρεθε θέων μακάρων πάτηρ·

ἐλαφρόβωλον ἀγροτέραν θεοί

[, εἰν ἐπωνύμιον μέγα·

]ερος οὐδάμα πάλιναται:

][]. . .. μαφόβε[ ..]έω·

44Αβ

ἐμμ[  
κατ ..[  
ο .. [  
ω .. [  

Μοισαν ἀγλα[  

πόει καὶ Χαρίτων [  

βραδύνοις ἐπεβ[  

ὄργας μὴ 'πιλάθε[  

θυάτοιειν' πεδ'.χ[  

]δαλίω[  

92
for goldhaired Phoibos whom Koos’ daughter bore after she mingled with Kronos’ highnamed son. But Artemis swore the great oath of the gods: By your head! forever virgin shall I be untamed on solitary mountains Come, nod yes to this for my sake! So she spoke. Then the father of blessed gods nodded yes. Virgin deershooter wild one the gods call her as her name. Eros comes nowhere near her

of the Muses makes and of the Graces with slender for mortals: there is a share
Ας θέλεις υμνες.
45

as long as you want
ἐγώ δ’ ἐπὶ μολθάκαν
τύλαν ἕως πολέω μέλεα· κἂν μὲν τετύλαγκας ἄσπόλεα
and I on a soft pillow
will lay down my limbs
"Εφος δ’ ἔτιναξέ μοι

ψρένας, ὦς ἄνεμος κατ’ ὄρος δρύσιν ἐμπέτων
Eros shook my mind like a mountain wind falling on oak trees
ήλθες ἐγὼ δὲ εἰ δὲ ἐμαιόμαν,
οὖν δὲ ἔφυξες ἐμαν ψφένα καιομέναν πόθων.
you came and I was crazy for you
and you cooled my mind that burned with longing
'Ηράμαν μὲν ἔγω γέθεν, Ὑλῷ, πάλαι ποτὰ

εμίχρα μοι πάις ἐμμεν ἐφαίνεο ἡχαρος
I loved you, Atthis, once long ago

a little child you seemed to me and graceless
ο μέν γὰρ κάλος ὀς οὖσον ἵδην πέλεται <κάλος>,
ο δὲ κάραθος αὐτικα καὶ κάλος ἐγκεται.
For the man who is beautiful is beautiful to see but the good man will at once also beautiful be.
οὐκ ὤηδ᾽ ὅτι θέω· δύο μοι τὰ νοηματα
I don't know what to do
two states of mind in me
ψαύην δ’ οὖ δοκίμωμ’ ὁράνω δυσπαχέα
I would not think to touch the sky with two arms
Βροδοπάχες ἄγναι Χάριτες, δεῦτε Δίος νόραι
pure Graces with arms like roses

come here daughters of Zeus
έλθοντ' ἐξ ὁράνω πορφυρίαν περθέμενον χλάμυν
having come from heaven wrapped in a purple cloak
καθότανοις δὲ καίση καὶ οὐδὲ ποτα μναμοσύνα ζήθεν ἔζεκε τοῦ δὲ ποι ὑπερφοντο οὐ γάρ πεδέχης βρόδων τῶν ἐκ Πειρίας, ἀλλ' ἀφάνης καὶ 'Αίδα δόμωι φοιτάζης πεθ ἀμαύρων νεκών ἐκπεποταμένα.
Dead you will lie and never memory of you
will there be nor desire into the aftertime—for you do not
share in the roses
of Pieria, but invisible too in Hades’ house
you will go your way among dim shapes. Having been breathed out.
οὐδὲ ἵνα δοκίμωμι προειδοίαςν ψάως ἄλλω
ἐξεσθηθεὶς φορίαν πάρθενον εἰς οὐδένα πω χρόνον
tεσσάταιν
not one girl I think
  who looks on the light of the sun
  will ever
  have wisdom
  like this
τίς δ’ ἀγροίωτις θέλγει νόον
ἀγροίωτιν ἐπεμένα ετόλαν
οὐκ ἐπισταμένα τὰ βράχει ἥλκην ἐπὶ τῶν σφύρων;
what country girl seduces your wits
wearing a country dress
not knowing how to pull the cloth to her ankles?
δίδαξένην

χυ θε[...]ο([...]αλλ[...]ο...]ὑταν

χο[...]ατι[...]εισα

μένα ταν[...]ώ]ν[...]ε ο

ν θεται ετ[...]μα[...]πρόκοψιν

πων κάλα δώρα παιδες

πειλάοιδουν λιγόραν χελύνναν

πάντα χρόνα γήρας ἡδη

λείκασι τ' ἐγένο[...]ι[...]τρί[...]χες ἐκ μελαίναν

λαι, γόνα δ'[...]ο[...]ψέροισι

ης θε[...]ια[...]νεβροίσιν

ἀ[...]λλά [...]εν[...]ποιήνην;

ο[...]ο[...]δονατον γένεσθαι

βροδόπαχουν Λο[...]ων

ἔς]χατα γάς ψέροισι[...

[...]ον ώμος ἐμαρψε[...

[...]ταν ἀκοίτιν

[...]μέναν νομίζε[...

[...]αις ὀπάσῳ

ἐγὼ δὲ φίλημα ἄβροσώναν[,] 

tοῦτο καὶ μοι
tὸ λάμπρον ἔρως ἀσελίω καὶ τὸ κάλλον λειλογχε.
But I love delicacy and this to me—
the brilliance and beauty of the sun—desire has allotted.
59

Ἐπι

[,][,]γό[,]

φίλει,[

καὶν[
loves

new
τύχοισα

θέλων να σας γνωρίσων

τέλεσαν νόημα

έτων κάλημι

πετέ μουν αίσχα

δὲ τόπην θελήσας

ἐμοί μάχεσθαι

χλιδάνας τίθεις

καὶ δ’ εὖ γὰρ οἰδοθα

έτει τα[.].λε...
having encountered
wants
accomplish the plan
I call out
to the heart at once
all that you wish to win
to fight for me
by the wanton one persuaded
but yes you know well
61

ἐγένετο [ν]

οὐ γὰρ ἄς
they became [ for not
Επτάξατε,
δάψινας ὅτα
πάν δὲ ἀδιόν
ἡ κῆνον ἐλο
καὶ ταῖα μὲν ἄ[
ὀδοίπορος ἄν[. . . .] [. .]
μῦγις δὲ ποτ' εἰςάιον· ἐκλ[
ψῦχα δὲ ἄγαπάτας[
τέκνα δὲ νῦν ἐμ[
ἴκεςθ' ἄγανα
ἐφθατε· κάλαν[
τὰ τ' ἐμματα κα[
You cowered
laurel tree
but everything sweeter
than that
and for them
traveler
But I scarcely ever listened
soul beloved
and such now
to arrive kindly
You got there first: beautiful
and the clothes
"Ονοιρε μελαναίας
ψιλόταις, ὅτα τ' ὑπνοις[

γλύκως θελος, ἡ δεῖν ὄνιας μή
ζὰ χώρις έχην τὰν δυναμὶ

ἔλπις δὲ μ' έχει μὴ πεδέχην
μηδὲν μακάρων ἐλ[

οὐ γάρ κ' ἔσον οὐτω[. ὑ.
ἀθύρματα κα.,[

γένοιτο δὲ μοι[
τοίς πάντα[.]
dream of black
you come roaming and when sleep
sweet god, terribly from pain
to hold the strength separate
but I expect not to share
nothing of the blessed ones
for I would not be like this
toys
but may it happen to me
all
64A

[λαγ[ ]

]νι[ ]

αλίκες[ ]

ραιδων[ ]

δηνον[ ]

Θεν[ ]

Θεων[ ]

αρισχο[ ]

α μοι[ ]

Τετ[ ]

64B

[α[ ]

αίγα[ ]

δο[ ]

]
64A AND B

] 
] 
] 
] 
] goat 
]for comrades 
] 
]of children 
] 
] 
] 
] to gods 
] ugly 
] 
]Muse 
]
.....]...α[  
.....]ρομε[  
.....]ελας[  
.φοτήννεμε[  
Ψάφοι, σεφί[  
Κύρωι β[α]ς[ί]λ[  
καίτοι μέγα δ[.  
ὁ]ζ[οις ψάθων [  
πάντα χλέος [  

καί σ' ἐνν 'Αχέροντ  
.....],γ[π[  

134
to Sappho, you
in Kypros queen
and yet greatly
to all on whom the blazing
everywhere glory

and you in Acheron’s
67A

...]ων μα [καὶ τοῦτ ἔπικε [δ]ἀίμων ὀλοφ [οὖν μὲν ἐφίλης [νῦν δὲ ἔννεκα [τὸ δ' αὕτων οὐ [οὐδὲν πολὺ [\. [ιὸδ' ['

67B

\. οὐδὲ [\. ταῦτα [, [\. λαείμ [\. πλήον [\. ἀμφ [\. ἀμφ [\. θεο [\. ἔρως [\
and this
ruinous god
I swear did not love
but now because
and the reason neither
nothing much

nor
these
more
around
desire
68A

\[ \text{γάρ με ἄπυ τὰς ἔ.} \]
\[ \text{βίμως δὲ ἔγεν το} \]
\[ \text{Ἰψαν θεοίς} \]
\[ \text{αὐξὴν ἀλλήρᾳ} \]
\[ \text{'Ανδρομέδαν[.]. αξ[} \]
\[ \text{αρ[. . .]. α μάκαφρα} \]
\[ \text{ἐσόν δὲ τρόπον α[. . .]. ὕψη[} \]
\[ \text{χόρον οὐ κατισχε[} \]
\[ \text{κα[. . .]. Τυνδαρίδας} \]
\[ \text{ας[. . .]. κα[. . .]. χαριέντ' ἄ[} \]
\[ \text{κ' ἄδολον [μ]ηχέτι οὐν[} \]
\[ \text{Μεγάρα[. . .]. α[. . .]. α[} \]

68B

\[ . . . ψ[} \]
\[ . . . ἁθόρα[} \]
\[ μοι χάλε[} \]
\[ δεκύ[} \]
\[ . ὀπάλην ὅλ[} \]
\[ ε[}
68A

]for me away from
]yet turned out to be
]her like gods
]sinful
]Andromeda
]blessed one
]way
]did not restrain excess
]Tyndarids
]gracious
]innocent no longer
]Megara

68B

]playing
]for me harsh

139
69

ἐ . . ἵππαμί
ἀ δάλτορι
ἐτ' αὐ
69

] sinful ]
καὶ λ. [ 
ναμ [ 
γ ὡ εἰμ᾽ ε [ 
φρομέν [ 
λικ ὑπα [ 
. . [ ] βα [ 
ς γὰρ ἔπαι [ 
μὲν κ ἀπηθὺς [ 
ἀρμονίας δ [ 
ἀθην χόρον, ἢκ [ 
δὲ λίγη [ 
ἀτὸν γφι [ 
πάντες [ 
επι [ ] [ 

I will go for

of Harmonia
dance
clearsounding
to all
μισείς Μίκα

ελα[. ἡλ]άς ε' ἔγω[ύ]κ

ἐξω

γ ψιλότ[ατή] ἠλεο Πενθυλήαγ[ν]

δα κα[χό]τροπ', ἀμμα[ν]

μέλ[ος] τι γλύκερον [.]

α μελλιχόφων[ος]

δει, λύγυρτι δ' ἡ[η]

δρος[ό]ες[α]
you Mika
but I will not allow you
you chose the love of Penthelids
evilturning
some sweet song
in honey voice
piercing breezes
wet with dew
73A

\[\gamma \beta \ldots \lambda \gamma\]

\[\alpha\]

\[\lambda \nu \' \Lambda \rho \rho \omega \delta \xi \tau \alpha\]

\[\delta \dot{\upsilon} \lambda \omega \gamma \nu \sigma \iota \delta \varepsilon \rho\]

\[\beta \alpha \lambda \lambda \omega \iota\]

\[\alpha \iota \varsigma \varepsilon \chi \omicron \iota \sigma \alpha\]

\[\dot{\epsilon} \nu \alpha \theta \alpha \varsigma \varsigma\]

\[\dot{\alpha} \lambda \lambda \lambda \iota \iota \iota\]

\[\alpha \varsigma \varepsilon \epsilon \rho \varsigma \alpha \varsigma\]

146
Aphrodite's sweetworded desires
began with a soft, sweet
caress, a gentle
caress that held her
longingly. But even
such dews
would Soon fade.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>74A</th>
<th>74B</th>
<th>74C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>λον ἐκα</td>
<td>ἀ</td>
<td>ἄ [</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>λαπόλ</td>
<td>ποθο</td>
<td>ἀς ἰδρω</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>μ</td>
<td>ὁβα</td>
<td>ὑξαδ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>βροδο</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>λονθ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>φαμ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

148
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>74A</th>
<th>74B</th>
<th>74C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>]</td>
<td>]</td>
<td>]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goatherd</td>
<td>longing</td>
<td>sweat</td>
</tr>
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<td>]</td>
<td>]</td>
<td>]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>roses</td>
<td>]</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
λαγ πωι
τελέσεις κι
ή λέλακ
ε θέλων
είχην
η έφαξε
αλίκη
I want to hold said
Λ. οναυ[  
ην οὔδε[  
ης ίμερ[  
αι δ' ἄμα[  
ανθος[  
ν]μερον[  
]στερπ[  


nor desire but all at once blossom desire took delight
τοτες τονα
λοκα
δε αντα
λοκα
τονα
τονα
80

]}
]}
]}
]all
]but different
]hair
]
κατέθεσε.
χίταλη
ευτυχῶς δὲ τεφάνοις, ὧν Δίικα, παραθέας ἢράτοις φόβαιςιν
ὁρμαὶς ἀνήτως εὐλογοῦσιν ἀπάλαις χέρειν·
εὐάνθεα γὰρ πέλεται καὶ Χάριτες μάκαιρα
μᾶλλον προτερημα, ἀς τεφανώτοις δὲ ἀπωθέφονται.
But you, O Dika, bind your hair with lovely crowns,
tying stems of anise together in your soft hands.
For the blessed Graces prefer to look on one who wears flowers
and turn away from those without a crown.
Εὐμορφοτέρα Μναειδίκα τὰς ἀπάλας Γυρίνως

καίτ' ἐξ

μηδέν

νῦν δ' ἂν

μὴ βόλλει

εὐμορφοτέρα

158
Mnasidika more finely shaped than soft Gyrinno

and if
nothing
but now
don’t
more finely shaped
83

λ' αὖθι μει
νώμεθ' ὁ
δὴντ' ἐπιτ[]
ἐντηδεμ[]
α γὰρ ἐκά[

].],.],.
83

]  
]right here
]  
](now again)
]  
]for
]
[., αις[}, υπ[}
|ων κ[., .].τινα]|
[τονόνε[., .].ος[]
[άβροις επιχ[.].ημ[]
[αιν' Άρτεμι]
[ναβλ[}
reproach
delicate
Artemis
85A

]..
}.λβον
].ακούην
].αύταγ

85B

].πάμενι
].τ' ὁκτ' ὁ πέλη
].ακαν φί
prosperous like an old man to listen
λ. ακάλα.
λ. ξιμόχω λαλ.
λ. Κυθέρη εύχομαι
ην ἔχοισι θύμοιν
κλάδοι μ' ἄρας αἱ ποια κάτερωτα
λ. προλίποις κηλ.
λ. πεδ' ἐμαν ἴώ
λ. το χαλέπαι.
quiet
with an aegis
Kytherea I pray
holding the heart
hear my prayer if ever at other times
forsaking
toward my
harsh
87A

\[\alpha\mu\mu\nu\]
\[\upsilon\alpha\,\nu\]
\[\pi\omicron\varsigma\alpha\iota\]
\[\kappa\lambda\epsilon\nu\phi\theta\sigma\delta\omicron\nu\]
\[\pi\lambda\omicron\kappa\mu\]
\[\varsigma\delta\,\phi\mu\alpha\]
\[\alpha\nu\theta\rho\omicron\omicron\pi\]
\[\upsilon\mu\alpha\nu\iota\nu\]
\[\tau\epsilon\kappa\alpha\iota\pi\]

87B

\[\mu\epsilon\rho\iota\mu\nu\alpha\nu\]
\[\gamma\eta\nu\,\]
\[\alpha\iota\kappa\iota\nu\]
\[\alpha\i\,\]

87C

\[\delta\omega\,\]
\[\tau\omicron\lambda\mu\]

168
87A

] ] ] ]
]rumor
]hair
]at the same time
]man
] ]

87B

]anxiety
]ground
]
]

87C

] ]
]daring
87E

\[ \varepsilon_1, [ \]
\[ \beta ] \chi \zeta \iota \gamma, [ \]
\[ \gamma \alpha \delta, [ \]
\[ , \omega, [ \]

87F

\[ \varepsilon_2 \eta, [ \]
\[ \varepsilon \omega \varsigma \alpha, [ \]
\[ \nu \zeta \omicron \iota, [ \]
\[ , \delta \eta \kappa, [ \]
\[ \varepsilon \iota \pi \iota, [ \]
\[ \varphi \lambda, [ \]
\[ \varepsilon \zeta \zeta \alpha, [ \]
\[ , [ ], [ \]
87E

]}
]queen
]
]

87F

]}
]
]to you
]
horse
]
]
]

173
88A

'], [ ]

'], νπρο...[ ]

'], νως πρός πότε[ ]

'], ατόν χάλατ[ ]

'], θέλοις· οὐδε[ ]

'], ασκοις· ὀλίγα[ ]

'], ένα φέρεσθαι[ ]

88B

'], ψιχ τις...[ ]

'], δ' ἄδιον εἰςορ[ ]

'], τοῦ[ ]

'], οἴδαθα καῦτα· ]

'], κ[ ] λέ]λαθ ἄλλονιά[ ]

'], ζε[ ] αν· τιραδ[ ]

'], ή[ ] ή[ ή τις εἶποι ]

'], ἀ[ ] σαν· ἐγώ τε γαρ[ ]

'], ψιλη[ ] μ' ἄς κεν ἐνν υ[ ]

'], καλ. [ ] χι μελήςην· ]

'], ἢττ[ ] φιλα ψαίμ· ἔχορο γέ[νεορθαι ]

'], χα[ ] ἐνα[λ· λεις· ἄτ[ ]

'], δ' ὀνίαρ[ο]ς[ ]

174
88A

in front

toward

loosen

you would be willing

slight

to be carried

88B

someone

me

more sweetly

and you yourself know

forgot

you

someone would say

and yes I shall love

as long as there is in me

will be a care

I say I have been a strong lover

painful

175
πίπρος ὑμὶ[  
[,]τὰ ὅδε[  
[,]α τὸδε δ᾽ ἵζ[θ()] 

[,]ὁτὲι ἐ" ἑ [.  
[,]ἀ φυλήςω[  
[,]τω τι λοι[  

[,]κοιν γάρ [.  
[,]κοιν βελέων  
[,][,]
bitter
]
and know this

whatever you
I shall love
]

for
of weapons
]
άκαροτέρας ουδάμα πω Εἰρανα, σέθεν τύχοιςαν
never more damaging O Eirana have I encountered you
[ 
| πε[ 
| κο[ . . . . . . . ]πεθ| 
| πέπλον[ . . ]πυρ| 
| και κλε[ . . ]ω| 
| κροκοεντα| 
| πέπλον πορφυ[ . . . . . , ]δεξ| 
| χλαναι περ[| 
| ιτέψανοι περ[| 
| καλ[ , ιοςχμι| 
| ψψι| 
| πορψ[υφ| 
| τατα| 
| π[|
robe
and
colored with saffron
purple robe
cloaks
crowns
beautiful
purple
rugs
his...ἦγ

ω

μοις

χλίαν ἔχω

παρθένων
I have of girls
τεθνάκην δ’ ἀδόλως θέλω·
ά με ψιθυρόμενα κατελίμπανεν

πόλλα καὶ τόδ’ ἐειπέ [μου·
ὠμ’ ως δεῖνα πεπ[όνθ]αμεν,
Ψάφη', ἣ μάν σ’ ἀέκοις’ ἀπυλιμπάνω.

τὰν δ’ ἔγω τάδ’ ἀμειβόμαν·
χαίροις’ ἔρχεο κάμεθεν
μέμναις’, οἵθα γὰρ ὡς <φε> τεθήμομεν·

αἱ δὲ μὴ, ἀλλὰ σ’ ἔγω θέλω
ὁμνασαι [. . .]. [. . .], εἰς ἀ[φ[ ]]
καὶ κάλ’ ἐπάχομεν·

πόλλοις γάρ ἐτεφάν|οις ἵνα
καὶ βρ[όδων . . .]κίων τ’ ὑμοί
κα. [. . ] πάρ ἐμοὶ περεθήκα·

καὶ πόλλας ὑπαχθύμιδας
πλέκταις ἀμφ’ ἅπάλαι δέραι
ἀνθέων ᾣ[ ] πεποφεύκας.
I simply want to be dead.
Weeping she left me

with many tears and said this:
Oh how badly things have turned out for us.
Sappho, I swear, against my will I leave you.

And I answered her:
Rejoice, go and
remember me. For you know how we cherished you.

But if not, I want
to remind you

]and beautiful times we had.

For many crowns of violets
and roses

]at my side you put on

and many woven garlands
made of flowers
around your soft throat.
καὶ π…..[], μύρων
βρενθεῖων,[]γυ[…..]ν
ἐξαλειψάω καὶ [βας]ηληῖω
καὶ ετρώμν[αν ἐ]πὶ μολθάκαν
ἀπάλαν παρ[]γονον
ἐξῆς πόθο[ν]ν, νίδων
κωῦτε τις[ οὐ]τε τι
ἱον οὐδ[ ι[ ]
ἐπλετ ὁπ[οθε]ν ἀμ[με]ς ἀπέκκομεν,
oὐκ ἄλης[ ], γος
[ψφός]
is0iβαἱ
And with sweet oil
costly
you anointed yourself

and on a soft bed
delicate
you would let loose your longing

and neither any[ ]nor any
holy place nor
was there from which we were absent

no grove[ ]no dance
]no sound
[
οὐί

ὁρισμένη[

dηματ[.]
Γόγγυλα[.

η τι εὖμ' ἐθε[.
παιζει μάλιστα[.
μας γ' εἰσηλθ' ἐπ[.

εἶπον' ὡς δέσποτ', ἐπ[.]
oδι μὰ γὰρ μάκαρον [ oδιδεῖν ἄδομ' ἐπαρθ' ἀγα[.

κατάλληλην δ' ἱμερός τις ἔχει μὲ καὶ λωτίνοις ὠδοςόντας ὡς
c[h]θαὶς ἵδην Ἀχαθ[.

].δεκαίδ[.
].γένετοι[ μήτε[.}
not

] ]
Gongyla

surely a sign
for children mostly
came in [

I said, O master
I swear no
I take no pleasure

but a kind of yearning has hold of me—to die
and to look upon the dewy lotus banks
of Acheron

] ]

]
πόλλακι τυίδε ίων ἔχοισα

ὡς […], ὠμον, […] χ […]

ζε θεασίσθην ἁρπ:-

γνωτα, εἰς δὲ μάλιστ᾽ ἔχαρε μόλπαι:

νῦν δὲ Λύδσιζιν ἐμπρέπεται γυναι-

κεσιν ὡς ποτ’ ἀελώ

δύντος ἀ βροδοδάκτυλος ἡλάννα

πάντα περφέχοις ἀστρα: φάος δ’ ἐπι-

σχει θάλασσαν ἐπ’ ἀλμύραν

τις καὶ πολυανθέμοις ἀρούραις·

ἀ δ’ ἑέρσα κάλα κέχυται, τεθά-

λαίς! δὲ βρόδα κάπαλ’ ἀν-

θρυσκα καὶ μελίωτος ἀνθεμώδης·

πόλλα δὲ ζαροῖταις ἀγάννας ἐπι-

μνάσθεις ἀπὸτιοθείς Ἀτύθιδος ἰμέρω

λέπταν ποι φρένα κ[.][.]. βροηται·
Sardis
often turning her thoughts here

you like a goddess
and in your song most of all she rejoiced.

But now she is conspicuous among Lydian women
as sometimes at sunset
the rosyfingered moon
surpasses all the stars. And her light
stretches over salt sea
equally and flowerdeep fields.

And the beautiful dew is poured out
and roses bloom and frail
chervil and flowering sweetclover.

But she goes back and forth remembering
gentle Atthis and in longing
she bites her tender mind
κήθι δ' ἔλθην ἅμμ[..] κα τόδ' οὖ

νομια[.].]υστονυμ[.].] πόλυς

γαροε[.].]αλον[.].]το μέσσον.

ε]μαρ[ες μ]έν οὖ α. μι θέασί μόρ-

φαν ἐπ[ρατ]ον ἐξίω-

θαὶ εὐ[.].]φος ἔχῃθο[.].]νίδην

[ ]το[.].]οτι-

μαλ[.].]ερός

καὶ δ[.].]ος 'Αφροδίτα

καμ[ ] νέκταρ ἔχει ἀπὸ

χροσίας [ ]γαν

...(.].]αποφρ[ ]χέρςι Πείθω

[ ]θ[.].]ηςενη

[ ]ακάς

[ ]....αι

[ ]ες τὸ Γεραίστιον

[ ]γ ψίλας

[ ]ςτον οὐδένοι

[ ]ερόν ιξο[μ]

192
But to go there
much
talks[

Not easy for us
to equal goddesses in lovely form
]

]desire
and[ ]Aphrodite

]nectar poured from
gold
]with hands Persuasion

]into the Geraistion
]beloveds
]of none

]into desire I shall come
...]. θος· ἂ γὰρ μ᾽ ἐγέννατ

εἰς ἑπί ἄλλικας μέγιστα

κλόσμον αὐτὶ τὸς ἕχη φόβαςει

τορφῇ πολεμῶν κατελιξαμένα

ἐμμεναι μᾶλα τοῦτο. []

ἄλλα ἡμοῦ τερατάς ἐχη

tαὐς κόμαςει δάιδος προφ[

c]τεράνοις ἐπαρτίδικας

ἀνθέων ἐριθαλέων· []

μὴ τράναν δ᾽ ἄρτικς ἒκ]

τοικίαν ἀπὸ Σαρδίων

...], αὐνίας πόλ(ε)ις [ ]
for my mother

in her youth it was a great ornament if someone had hair bound with purple—

a very great ornament indeed
But for the one who has hair yellower than a pinetorch

crowns of blooming flowers
and just lately a headbinder

spangled from Sardis

cities
98B

εἰς δὲ ἔγω Κλέι ποικίλαν [ 
οὐκ ἔχω — πόθεν ἔξεσται; — [ 
μιτράνκαν; ἄλλα τόι Μυτιληνᾶαω [ 
] [ 
παί ἀ. εἰσὶν ἔχουν πο.[ 
αἴκε. ἦ ποικλακαὶ ..(...) [ 

tαῦτα τὰς Κλεανακτίδας [ 
φύγας. ἰσοπολίσεχει 
μνάματι. ἵδε γὰρ αἴνα διέρρευς[ν
but for you Kleis I have no
spangled—where would I get it?—
headbinder: yet the Mytilinear[}

] [
]to hold
]spangled

these things of the Kleanaktidai
exile
memories terribly leaked away
άμψι δ' ἀβροις' ↔ λαχίοις' ὑ ἐπύκασεν
and with delicate woven cloths covered her up well
χερούμακτρα δὲ καγόνων
πορφύρα καταυταμενά-
tατιμάζεις ἐπεμψ ἀπὸ Φωκᾶς
dῶρα τίμια καγόνων
handcloths
purple
she sent from Phokaia
valuable gifts
Γλύκη μέτερ, ού τοι δύναμαι κρέκην τὸν ἰστὼν
πόθω δόμεις παιδὸς βραδίναν δὶ Ἀφροδίτην
sweet mother I cannot work the loom
I am broken with longing for a boy by slender Aphrodite
ἐν τὸ γὰρ ἐννέατε ἡ προβῆ
ατε τὰν εὔποδα νῦμφαν [
τα παιδα Κρονίδα τὰν ἱόκολπον [
ς ὁργαν θεμένα τὰν ἱόκολπος α[\]
. ἀγναὶ Χάριτες Πιέριδα[ς τε] Μοῖ[σει]
. [ὁποτ' ἀοιδικ φρέν[. . .]αν [\]
καίοιξα λιγύραν [ἀοί]δαν
γάμβρον, ἁκάροι γὰρ ἔμαλιν[
]ε χαβαχίκ]ν θεμένα λύρα [\]
. . η χρυσοπέδιλ[ος] Λύως [\]
[yes tell
the bride with beautiful feet
child of Kronos with violets in her lap
setting aside anger the one with violets in her lap
pure Graces and Pierian Muses
whenever songs, the mind
listening to a clear song
bridegroom
her hair placing the lyre
Dawn with gold sandals
103Αα

] εμικρ[.
]θην τάν εψ[
]οις πολλα[.
] πρίγ γα[.

]οι πόλλαις[.
] τών εφω[ν
] ωδαμελ[.
] χει[.
] Γόργη

103Αβ

eίς Κυρ[.
] — — — [.
 — — — τ[.
 — — — ωγ[.
 —
103AA

]small
]
]many
]
]man
]
]their
]
]
]Gorgo

103Ab

to Kypris
]
]
]
]
103B

\[\rhoην θαλάμω τωδες\]
\[\rhoς εὐποδα νύμφαν ἄβι\]
\[ννυνδι\]
\[ν μοι\]
\[ας γς\]
103B

] of the chamber
] bride with beautiful feet
] now
] for me
]
103Ca

|προοιμ| 
|φερηγ| 
|.ιδεθελ| 
|Αοιςάναςςα| 
|δήποτ' ονα| 
|νασαμέν| 
|.εν ἑπηρατι| 
|.ν| 

103Cb

|α,| 
|ἐκλυον ε| 
|φανν. δες δ| 
|παλαθενηκας| 
|.μ| 
|.}|
103Ca

] ]
] ]
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104A

"Εσπερε πάντα φέρης ὅσα φαίνολις ἐκπέδας Αὔος, φέρης διν, φέρης αἶγα, φέρης ἀπο μάτερι παιδα.

104B

ἀστέρων πάντων ὁ κάλλιστος
Evening

you gather back

all that dazzling dawn has put asunder:

you gather a lamb

gather a kid

gather a child to its mother

of all stars the most beautiful
105A

οἰον τὸ γλυκύμαλον ἐρεύθεται ἀχρω ἐπὶ υἱόνδωι, ἀχρω ἐπὶ ἀχροτάτωι, λελάθοντο δὲ μαλοδρόπης· οὐ μᾶν ἐκλελάθοντι, ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἐδύναντι ἐπίκεςθαι

105B

οὐαν τὰν ῥάκινθον ἐν ὥρει ποίμενες ἄνδρες πόςςι καταστείβοις, χάμαι δὲ τε πόρφυρον ἄνθος
as the sweetapple reddens on a high branch
    high on the highest branch and the applepickers forgot—
no, not forgot: were unable to reach

like the hyacinth in the mountains that shepherd men
with their feet trample down and on the ground the purple
flower
πέροοχος, ὡς ὅτι ἄοιδος ὁ Λέξβιος ἀλλοδάποις
outstanding as the Lesbian singer compared to those elsewhere
107

ἡ ἡτὶ παρθενίας ἐπιβάλλομαι;
do I still yearn for my virginity?
108

ὁ κάλα, ὁ χαρίζεται κόρα
O beautiful O graceful one
δώσομεν, ἢς! πάτηρ
we shall give, says father
110

Θυρώρωι πόδες ἐπτορόγυιοι,
tὰ δὲ σάμβαλα πεμπεβόεια,
pίζωνη η ὅ ἐξεπόνηςαν
the doorkeeper's feet are seven armlengths long

five oxhides for his sandals

ten shoemakers worked on them
"Ιψοι δὴ τὸ μέλαθρον,
υμήναον'
ἀέρρητε, τέκτονες ἀνδρεῖς·
υμήναον.
γάμβρος (εἰς)έρχεται ἵππος "Ἀρείη,
<υμήναον>·
ἀνδρος μεγάλω πόλει μέσδων.
<υμήναον>.
up with the roof!

Hymenaios—
lift it, carpenters!

Hymenaios—
the bridegroom is coming in
equal to Ares,

Hymenaios—
much bigger than a big man!

Hymenaios!
"Ολβει γάμβρος, σοὶ μὲν δὴ γάμος ὡς ἄραο
ἐκτελέστη, ἔχης δὲ πάρθενον, ἂν ἄραο.
σοὶ χάριν μὲν εἴδος, ὄππατα ὅ...> 
μέλλης, ἐρος δὲ ἐπὶ ἴμερτῳ κέχυται προκόπωι
<.........> τετίμαχ' ἔξοχα κ' Ἀφροδίτα
blest bridegroom, your marriage just as you prayed
has been accomplished
and you have the bride for whom you prayed
gracious your form and your eyes
as honey: desire is poured upon your lovely face
    Aphrodite has honored you exceedingly
οὐ γὰρ
ἀτέρα νῦν πάντες, ὃ γάμβησ, τεκύτα
for no other girl

O bridegroom

such as this one now
παρθενία, παρθενία, ποί με λίποις ἀπειρίχης;
οὐκέτι ἦξω πρὸς σέ, οὐκέτι ἦξω
114

virginity

where are you gone leaving me behind?

no longer will I come to you

no longer will I come
Τίως ε’, ὃ φίλε γάμβρε, κάλως ἐκάσδω;
ορπακι βραδίνωι κε μάλις τ’ ἐκάσδω
to what

O beloved bridegroom

may I compare you?

to a slender sapling

most of all

do I compare you
χαίρε, νύμφα, χαίρε, τίμε γάμβρα, πόλλα
farewell

bride

farewell

much-honored bridegroom
117

χαίροις ἀ νύμφα, χαιρέτω δ' ὁ γάμβρος

117Α

ζοάνων προθύρων

117Β

"Εκπερ' ὑμήνασον

ὅ τὸν Ἀδώνιον
may you fare well
bride
and let the bridegroom fare well

of polished doors

evening, sing Hymenaios
O the song of Adonis
ἀγι δὴ χέλω δία μοι λέγε
ψωνάζονα δὲ γίνεω
yes! radiant lyre speak to me
become a voice
αἰμιτύβιον ετάλαξον
cloth dripping
ἀλλὰ τις οὐκ ἔμμι παλιγκότων ὀργαν, ἀλλ’ ἁβάχην τὰν ψηφὲν ἔχω
but I am not someone who likes to wound
rather I have a quiet mind
άλλ' ἐων φίλος ἄμμιν λέχος ἄφνυσο νεώτερον'
οὐ γὰρ τλάσομι ἐγὼ ζών τ' ὡκὴν ἐξάα γερανέρα
but if you love us
    choose a younger bed
for I cannot bear
    to live with you when I am the older one
ἀνθέ αμέργοιςαν ποιδ' ἄγαν ἀπάλαν
gathering flowers so very delicate a girl
ἀρτίως μὲν ἄ χρυσοπέδιλος Αὔως
just now goldsanded Dawn
αὕτα δὲ εἰς Καλλιόπα
and you yourself Kalliope
αυτόφρα ἐς τεφαναπλόκην
I used to weave crowns
δαύοις (') ἀπάλας ἔτακας ἐν ἑσθεσίν
may you sleep on the breast of your delicate friend
Δεύτερο δημότε Μοίσιος Χρύσιον λύποισαι
127

here (once again)

Muses

leaving the gold
Δεύτε νυν ἀβραή Ἀρίτης καλλίκομοι τε Μωίσει
here now
tender Graces
and Muses with beautiful hair
129A

ἐμεθεν δ᾽ ἔχης θα λάθαν

129B

η τιν ἄλλον ἀνθρώπων ἐμεθεν φίλης θα
but me you have forgotten

or you love some man more than me
Ερος δημότε ο λυσιμέλης δόνει,
γλυκύπικον ἀμάχανον ὀρφετον
Eros the melter of limbs (now again) stirs me—sweetbitter unmanageable creature who steals in
Ἀθινῆς, καὶ δὲ ἔμεθην μὲν ἀπήχθητο
δορυφόρῳ, ἐπὶ δὲ Ἀνδρομέδαν πότηριν.
At this, to you it has become hateful
to think of me and you fly to Andromeda
"Εστι μοι κάλα πάις χουσίοιςιν ἀνθέμοισιν ἐμφέρην ἔχοιςα μόρφεν Κλέις < > ἀγαπάτα, ἀντί τάς ἐγωθὲ Λυδίαν παῖςαν οὐδ' ἔρανναν
I have a beautiful child who is like golden flowers
in form, darling Kleis
in exchange for whom I would not
all Lydia or lovely
"Εχει μὲν Ἀνδρομέδα κάλαν ἀμοίβαν

Ψάψοι, τί τὰν πολύολβον Ἀφροδίταν...;
Andromeda has a fine exchange

Sappho, why?

Aphrodite giver of blessings
Ζά < χέλεξάμαν ὁναο Κυπρογενη
I conversed with you in a dream

Kyprogeneia
Τί μὲ Πανδίονις, ὃ Εἰράνα, χελίδων.....
why does Pandion’s daughter

O Eirana

the swallow
messenger of spring

nightingale with a voice of longing
Θέλω τί τι εἴπην, ἄλλα με κωλύει
αἴδως...

[καὶ δὲ ἡχες ἔσθην ἡμέραν ἡ κάλων
καὶ μὴ τί τι εἴπην γλῶσσας ἐκώσα κάνον,
αἴδως κέν οὖν ὡς ἡχεν ὀπλατῇ,
οὐκ ἔλεγες περὶ τῶν δυνάμων]
I want to say something but shame prevents me

yet if you had a desire for good or beautiful things and your tongue were not concocting some evil to say, shame would not hold down your eyes but rather you would speak about what is just
αθήνα κάντα φίλος
καὶ τὰν ἐπὶ ὀςεοις ὀμπέτασον χάριν
stand to face me beloved
and open out the grace of your eyes
Κατανάσκει, Κωθέρη, αβρος Ἀδωνις· τί κε θείμεν; καττύπτεσθε, κόραι, καὶ κατερεῖκεσθε χίτωνας
delicate Adonis is dying

Kythereia

what should we do?

strike yourselves

maidens

and tear your garments
κη δ' ἀμβροσίας μὲν
κράτηρ ἐκέχρατ'
"Ερμαίς δ' ἐλὼν ὀλπίν θέοις ἐοινοχόης.
κηνοὶ δ' ἀρα πάντες
καρχάς' ἦχου
κάλεισον ἀράσαντο δὲ πάμπαν ἐκλα γάμβρω.
but there a bowl of ambrosia
   had been mixed
   and Hermes taking the jug poured wine for
   the gods
and then they all
   held cups
   and poured libation and prayed every
good thing for the bridegroom
Λάτω καὶ Νιόβα μάλα μὲν φίλαι ἦσαν ἔταιροι
Leto and Niobe were beloved friends
χρύσειοι ἐφέβινθοι ἐπὶ ἀιόνων ἐψύχοντο
and gold chickpeas were growing on the banks
μάλα δὴ κεκορημένοις

Γόργως
to those who have quite had their fill of Gorgo
μὴ κίνη χέραδος
do not move stones
μήτε μοι μέλι μήτε μέλισσα
neither for me honey nor the honey bee
μνάζεσθαι τινα φανερι και ἐτερον ἀμμέων
someone will remember us

I say

even in another time
ὁ πλοῦτος ἄνευ ἀρέτας οὐκ ἀξίνης πάροικος
ἀ δὲ ἁμφοτέρων κρᾶσις εὐδαιμονίας ἔχει τὸ ἄκρον
wealth without virtue is no harmless neighbor
but a mixture of both attains the height of happiness
149

"ότα πάνω χος ἄς φι κατάγει"
when all night long

it pulls them down
150

ού γὰρ θέμις ἐν μοισοπόλων <δόμων> ἑθηνον ἐμεθὸν <........> οὗ κ' ἄμμι πρέποι τάδε
for it is not right in a house of the Muses
that there be lament
this would not become us
151

ὁφθάλμων δὲ μέλαις νύκτος ἀφρος
and on the eyes

black sleep of night
παντοδάπαις μεμεχμένα χροίασίν
mingled with all kinds of colors
πάρθενον ἀδύφωνον
153

girl sweetvoiced
Πλήρης μὲν ἐφαίνετι ᾧ σελάννικα,
αἱ δ’ ὡς περὶ βώμον ἐκτάθησαν
full appeared the moon
and when they around the altar took their places
πόλλα μοι τάν Πωλονάκτίδα παίδα χαίρην
a very long farewell to the child of Polyanaktides
πόλυ πάντιδος ἀδυμελεστέρα
χρύσω χρυσοτέρα
far more sweetsounding than a lyre

golder than gold
157

πότνια Λύως
lady Dawn
εκδυναμένας ἐν ετήσειν ὄργας
μαψυλάχαν γλώσσαν πεφύλαχθαι
with anger spreading in the chest
to guard against a vainly barking tongue
159

ζύ τε κάμος θεράπων Ἐρως
both you and my servant Eros
160

tάδε νῦν ἐταίραις

tαίς ἐμαίς τέρπνα κάλως ἀείως
these things now for my companions

I shall sing beautifully
τανδεφυλάξστε έννε[ , ιοι γάμβριοι [, . . . .]οι πολίων βασίλης
guard her bridegrooms kings of cities
τίοιςιν ὁφθάλμοιςι(ν);
162

with what eyes?
163

tὸ μέλημα τῶνον
my darling one
164

tὸν Ἐφών παῖδα κάλει
she summons her son
φαίνεται Φοι κήνος
that man seems to himself
φαίνεται δή ποτε Λήδαν ὑπεκίνθηνον

(...) Ὕψιν εὕρην πεπυκάδμενον
they say Leda once found a hyacinth-colored egg hidden
οίω πόλυ λευκότερου
whiter by far than an egg
ω τόν "Λδωνιν"
168

O for Adonis
168A

Γέλλως παιδοφιλωτέρα
168A

who loves children more than Gello
168Β

Δέδυξε μὲν ἄ ζελάννα
καὶ Πληξίδες· μὲσαι δὲ
νῦκτες, παρὰ δὲ ἔρχετ' ὠρα,
ἔνω δὲ μόνα κατεῦδω.
168B

Moon has set
and Pleiades: middle
night, the hour goes by,
alone I lie.
168C

ποικίλλεται μὲν

γαία πολυστέφανος
spangled is
the earth with her crowns
ἀγαποῖς

ἀθορήματα

Ἄγα

ἀκακός

ἄλησείδωρος
I would lead

wedding gifts

Aiga

non-evil

paingiver
173

ἀμαμάξυδ(-ος, -ες)

174

[ἀμάρχα]

175

αῦα

176

βάρβιτος. βάρωμος. βάρμος.

177

βεῦδος
a vine that grows up trees

channel

dawn

lyre lyre lyre

transparent dress
γρύτα

'Εκτώρ

ζάβατον

ιοίην

κατώρης / κατάρης
makeup bag

holder

crossable

I might go

downrushing
κίνδυνος

μελίψωνος

μήδεία

Μοιζάων

μυθόπλοιος
danger

honeyvoiced

Medeia

of the Muses

mythweaver
189

νίτρον

190

πολυίδριδι

191

ζέληνινά

192

χρυσάτραγαλοι φίλαι
soda

manyskilled

celery

gold anklebone cups
NOTES

1.1 “of the spangled mind”: two different readings of the first word of Sappho’s first fragment have descended to us from antiquity: poikiloθron’ (printed by Lobel, Page, Campbell and Voigt) and poikilophron (printed here). The word is a compound adjective, used as an epithet of Aphrodite to identify either her “chair” (thron-) or her “mind” (phron-) as poikilos: “many-colored, spotted, dappled, variegated, intricate, embroidered, inlaid, highly wrought, complicated, changeful, diverse, abstruse, ambiguous, subtle.” Now certainly the annals of ancient furniture include some fancy chairs, especially when gods sit on them; and initial mention of her throne provides an elegant point of departure for the downrush of Aphrodite’s next motion. On the other hand, it is Aphrodite’s agile mind that seems to be at play in the rest of the poem and, since compounds of thron- are common enough in Greek poetry to make this word predictable, perhaps Sappho relied on our ear to supply the chair while she went on to spangle the mind.

Other examples of the adjective poikilos or its compounds occur in Sappho frs. 39.2, 44.9, 98a11, 98b1, 98b6; cf. also Alkaios fr. 345.2 (of a bird’s throat) and fr. 69.7 (of a man with a mind like a fox).

1.15, 16, 18 “(now again)”: the parentheses are not Sappho’s but I want to mark her use of the temporal adverb déute. It is probably no accident that, in a poem about the cyclical patterns of erotic experience, this adverb of repetition is given three times. (Also repeated are the adjective that characterizes Aphrodite’s relation to time—“deathless,” occurring twice; Aphrodite’s questions to Sappho, refracted four ways; and Aphrodite’s final erotic rule, given three formulations.)

The adverb is a compound of two words, dé and autē, contracted for euphonic reasons into déute. Dé is a particle signifying vividly that some event is taking place in the present moment; it strikes a note of powerful alert emotion (sometimes with a tinge of irony or skepticism), like English “Well now!” Autē is an adverb that peers past the present moment to a series of repeated actions stretching behind; it intercepts the new and binds it into history, as if to say “Not for the first time!” Sappho’s “(now again)” does more than mark repetition as a theme of her poem, it
instantiates the difference between mortal and immortal perspectives on this painful feature of erotic life: Sappho is stuck in the pain of the “now,” Aphrodite calmly surveys a larger pattern of “agains.”

For other instances of the adverb deute in Sappho see frs. 22.11; 83.4; 127; 130.1.

1.18–24 Sappho’s reverie goes transparent at the center when she shifts midverse to direct speech of Aphrodite. There is an eerie casualness to the immortal voice simply present within Sappho’s own, which some translators modify with quotation marks or italics. This poem is cast in the form of a hymn or prayer, how straightforwardly is hard to say. Hymnic features include the opening catalogue of divine epithets, central reverie concerned with former epiphanies of the god, repetition of a plea at the beginning and the end (“come here...come to me”). For other literary examples of prayers see Homer Iliad 5.116ff; 10.284ff; 16.233ff; Pindar Isthmians 6.42ff; Sophokles Oedipus the King 163ff; Aristophanes Thesmophoriazousai 1156ff.

2.1 “here”: adverb of place that means “hither, to this place” with verbs of motion or “here, in this place” with verbs of rest, often used as an interjection “Come on! Here now!” when followed by an imperative verb. Notice that the imperative verb evoked by this adverb, for which the whole poem with its slow weight of onomatopoeically accumulating clauses seems to be waiting, does not arrive until the very last word: “pour” (16). Arrival is the issue, for it sanctifies waiting: attente de Dieu. The poem is a hymn of the type called “kletic,” that is, a calling hymn, an invocation to god to come from where she is to where we are. Such a hymn typically names both of these places, setting its invocation in between so as to measure the difference—a difference exploded as soon as the hymn achieves its aim. Inherent in the rationale of a kletic hymn, then, is an emptiness or distance that it is the function of the hymn to mark by an act of attention. Sappho suspends attention between adverb at the beginning and verb at the end: the effect is uncanny—as if creation could be seen waiting for an event that is already perpetually here. There is no clear boundary between far and near; there is no climactic moment of god’s arrival. Sappho renders a set of conditions that at the beginning depend on Aphrodite’s absence but by the end include her presence—impossible drop that saturates the world. “God can only be present in creation under the form of absence,” says Simone Weil, in Gravity and Grace, translated by Arthur Wills (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1997), 162.
2.8 “sleep”: *kôma* is a noun used in the Hippokratic texts of the lethargic state called “coma” yet not originally a medical term. This is the profound, weird, sexual sleep that enwraps Zeus after love with Hera (Homer *Iliad* 14.359); this is the punishing, unbreathing stupor imposed for a year on any god who breaks an oath (Hesiod *Theogony* 798); this is the trance of attention induced by listening to music of the lyre (Pindar *Pythians* 1.12); this is the deep religious stillness described by Gregory of Nazianzus in a Christian poem from the fourth century A.D. that appears to be modeled on Sappho’s, for Gregory imagines himself awaiting his god in a garden:

> Breezes whispered . . .
> lavishing beautiful sleep [*kôma*] from the tops of the trees
> on my heart so very weary.

Otherworldliness is intensified in Sappho’s poem by the synaesthetic quality of her *kôma*—dropping from leaves set in motion by a shiver of light over the tree: Sappho’s adjective *aithussomenon* (“radiant-shaking,” 7) blends visual and tactile perceptions with a sound of rushing emptiness.

2.14 “gold cups”: not mortal tableware, nor is nectar a beverage normally enjoyed by any but gods (along with ambrosia, e.g., *Odyssey* 5.92–4).

3.11 “all night long”: if this reading (Diehl’s 1923 conjecture) is correct, Sappho may be pursuing her own night thoughts (Diehl thinks these thoughts concern her brother: cf. frs. 5, 7, 15) or else participating in a nocturnal ritual. Allnight rites (*pannuchides*) were a feature of ancient Greek worship and turn up in literature, for example, Euripides describes a chorus invoking Athena:

> On the windy mountain ridge
> shrill voices of girls
> echo to the beat all night
> of feet dancing.
> —*Heraklaidai* 777–8.

See also Sappho frs. 23.13, 30.3, 149; and H. W. Parke, *Festivals of the Athenians* (London, 1977), 49.
Secular reasons for insomnia may also be part of the Sapphic tradition, according to the fourth-century A.D. orator Libanius:

So if nothing prevented the Lesbian Sappho from praying that her night be made twice as long, let it be permitted me too to pray for something like this.

—Libanius Orations 12.99 = Sappho fr. 197 Voigt

Libanius doesn’t say why Sappho made this prayer but it brings to mind a passage of Homer’s Odyssey, where Athene “slows down the night” for the newly reunited Odysseus and Penelope by stalling the horses of Dawn on the edge of Ocean (23.242–6; cf. also the battle of Amorites and Israelites in Joshua 10.13).

4.9 “having been stained”: depending on how the first letter of this word is restored it may mean also “having been touched on the surface, caressed” or “having been tainted, defiled.”

5.2 “brother”: ancient sources name three brothers of Sappho, of whom the eldest, Charaxos, made himself notorious by his pursuit of a courtesan (Rhodopis) not mentioned in this poem but see below frs. 7 and 15.

7.1 “Doricha”: ancient sources suggest this is one name of a courtesan favored by Sappho’s brother Charaxos. Herodotos relates:

Rhodopis arrived in Egypt . . . to ply her trade but was redeemed at a high price by a man from Mytilene—Charaxos, brother of the poet Sappho. . . . And when Charaxos returned to Mytilene after liberating Rhodopis Sappho rebuked him severely in a poem.

(2.134ff)

Strabo adds:

The woman whom Herodotos calls Rhodopis is named Doricha by Sappho.

(17.1.33)

So too Athenaios:

Naukratis attracted celebrity prostitutes, like Doricha, who was the beloved of Sappho’s brother Charaxos and whom Sappho attacked in verse on the
grounds that she got a lot of money out of Charaxos... But Herodotos calls her Rhodopis.

(13.596b–d)

And an epigrammatist of the Hellenistic period wrote this poem about her:

Doricha, your bones fell asleep long ago
and your hair and the perfume-breathing cloth
in which you once wrapped graceful Charaxos,
close by his flesh, when you drank the dawn.
But the singing white pages of Sappho’s love songs live on
and will live on.
Blessed is your name which Naukratis is to guard
so long as a Nile boat sails the salt sea.
—Posidippos xvii The Greek Anthology Gow-Page

Rhodopis (“face like a rose”) could be a professional name that Sappho scruples to use.

8.3 “Atthis”: Sappho’s relationship with Atthis was controversial, according to the ancient lexicographer:

Sappho had three companions and friends, Atthis, Telesippa, Megara. Through her relations with them she got a reputation for shameful love.

—Suda s.v. Sappho

Maximus of Tyre reads the matter philosophically:

The eros of the Lesbian woman—what else could it be than the Sokratic art of love? For they seem to me to have practiced love each after their own fashion, she the love of women and he the love of men. They both said they loved many and were captured by all things beautiful. What Alkibiades and Charmides and Phaidros were to Sokrates, Gyrinna and Atthis and Anaktoria were to the Lesbian woman. And what the rival artists Prodykos and Gorgias and Thrasymachos and Protagoras were to Sokrates, Gorgo and Andromeda were to Sappho. Sometimes she rebukes them, sometimes she interrogates them and she makes use of irony just like Sokrates.

—Orations 18.9

See also Sappho frr. 49, 96, 131.
16.1–4 “some men say... some men say... some men say... but I say”: Sappho begins with a rhetorical device called a priamel, whose function is to focus attention and to praise. The priamel’s typical structure is a list of three items followed by a fourth that is different and better. Sappho’s list marshals three stately masculine opinions, then curves into dissent. Her dissent will solidify as Helen in the next stanza.


16.12–16 Because of the corruption of these central verses it is impossible to say who led Helen astray (could be Aphrodite, Eros, or some principle of delusion like Ate) or how Sappho managed the transition from Helen to Anaktoria “who is gone.” It is a restless and strangely baited poem that seems to gather its logic into itself rather than pay it out. Rather like Helen. Beauty comes out of unexpectedness, and stares at us, “as though we were the ones who’d made a mistake,” as Yannis Ritsos says in a poem “Expected and Unexpected” in *Ritsos in Parentheses*, translated by E. Keeley (Princeton, 1979), 160–1.

17.2 Hera, sister and wife of Zeus, was worshipped on Lesbos at a sanctuary in or near Mytilene. The poet Alkaios, Sappho’s contemporary and fellow-Lesbian, also mentions this shrine and its trinitarian worship of Zeus, Hera and Dionysos (=Thyone’s child): see Alkaios fr. 129. According to a Homeric scholiast (on *Iliad* 9.129) the shrine of Hera was the site of an annual beauty contest for Lesbian women, to which Alkaios refers in fr. 130. There is also an anonymous epigram in the *Palatine Anthology* that praises this site:

Come to the radiant precinct of bullfaced Hera,
Lesbian women, make your delicate feet turn.
There set up beautiful dancing and your leader will be
Sappho with a gold lyre in her hands.
Lucky ones in the glad dance: surely you will think
you hear Kalliope’s own sweet singing.

—*Palatine Anthology* 9.189
18.1 “Pan”: capitalized, the first word of this fragment is Pan the god of goats, wild space, pipes and the silence of noon. Uncapitalized it is pan, which can be a noun (“everything”) or an adjective (“every, all”) or an adverb (“altogether, wholly”). Capitalization is an editorial decision: codices before the ninth century were generally written entirely in majuscule script.

21.6 “old age”: Sappho treats this theme also in fr. 58 below. Commentators differ on whether to understand the speaker’s chagrin as erotic, or as a professional worry on the part of a chorus leader no longer able to whirl about with the choirs of girls (as Alkman complains in his fr. 26), or as a mythic topos elaborated for its own sake.

21.13 “with violets in her lap”: I do not know what this adjective means exactly. It is composed of the word ion, “violet” (which can also mean “purple” or “dark” or “like violets”) and the word kolpos, “bosom, lap, womb; fold formed by a loose garment; any hollow.” In Sappho it is an epithet of brides and of a goddess: see frr. 30.5, 103.3 and 103.4.

22.10 The name Gongyla is missing its first two letters at the beginning of this verse but appears in full in fr. 95.4 and also shows up in a second-century-A.D. papyrus commentary on Sappho that identifies Gongyla as “yoke-mate” (synzyx) of a woman named Gorgo (see fr. 213, 213a and 214a Voigt). No one knows what a yoke-mate is precisely. Yoking is a common figure for marriage; there is a cognate verb (syndyazein) that means “to unite in wedlock” and a cognate noun that means “wife” when used of females but simply “comrade” when applied to males. There is also an abstract noun (syzygia) used by Euripides of a collaboration between Muses and Graces in choral song (Heraclés Mad 673). Gongyla of Kolophon is named by the Suda as a pupil of Sappho along with Anagora of Miletos and Eunika of Salamis.

22.11 “(now again)”: See above fr. 1 and below fr. 130.

31.9 “tongue breaks”: the transmitted text contains a hiatus (conjunction of two open vowels) between “tongue” (glōssa) and “breaks” (eage) that contravenes the rules of Greek metrics and convinces most editors to mark the verse as corrupt. On
the other hand, the hiatus creates a ragged sound that may be meant to suggest breakdown.


31.17 The poem has been preserved for us by the ancient literary critic Longinus (On the Sublime 10.1–3), who quotes four complete Sapphic stanzas, then the first verse of what looks like a fifth stanza, then breaks off, no one knows why. Sappho’s account of the symptoms of desire attains a unity of music and sense in vv. 1–16, framed by verbs of seeming (“he seems to me,” “I seem to me”), so if the seventeenth verse is authentic it must represent an entirely new thought. It is worth noting that Catullus’ translation of the poem into Latin includes, at just this point, an entirely new thought.

Longinus’ admiration for Sappho’s poem is keen. He finds in it an example of a certain mode of sublimity, which is able to select the most extreme sensations of an event and combine these together “as if into one body,” as he says (On the Sublime 10.1). He elaborates:

Are you not amazed at how she researches all at once the soul the body the ears the tongue the eyes the skin all as if they had departed from her and belong to someone else? And contradictorily in one instant she chills, she burns, is crazy and sensible, for she is in terror or almost dead. So that no single passion is apparent in her but a confluence of passions. And her selection (as I said) of the most important elements and her combination of these into a whole achieves excellence.

—On the Sublime 10.3

Sappho’s body falls apart, Longinus’ body comes together: drastic contract of the sublime.

34.5 “silvery”: the adjective is not part of the text of this poem as quoted (vv. 1–4) by the grammarian Eustathios in his commentary on *Iliad* 8.555, but has been added because the Roman emperor Julian refers to the poem in a letter to the sophist Hekebolios:
Sappho . . . says the moon is silver and so hides the other stars from view.

—Julian Epistles 387a

On Julian cf. frs. 48, 163 and note to fr. 140 below.

These two bits of text are cited as Sappho’s by the Etymologicum Genuinum in a discussion of words for pain: “And the Aeolic writers call pain a dripping . . . because it drips and flows.” For “dripping” Sappho has the noun stalygmon, cognate with the verb stazei (“drips”) used by Aeschylus in a passage of Agamemnon where the chorus is describing its own nocturnal anxiety:

And it drips in sleep before my heart
the grief-remembering pain.

(179–80)

We might compare this physiology of pain with the sensations noted by Hamm in Beckett’s Endgame:

There’s something dripping in my head.
(Pause.)
A heart in my head.

There’s something dripping in my head, ever since the fontanelles.
(Stifled hilarity of Nagg.)
Splash, splash, always on the same spot.


Translation of this fragment raises the problem of pronouns in Sappho. Her Greek text actually says “us” not “me.” Slippage between singular and plural in pronouns of the first person is not uncommon in ancient poetry; the traditional explanation is that much of this poetry was choral in origin, that is, performed by a chorus of voices who collectively impersonate the voice that speaks in the poem. A glance at Sappho’s fragments 5, 21, 24a, 94, 96, 147, 150, all of which employ a first-person-plural pronoun where the modern ear expects singular, will show the extent of the phenomenon. I translate “us” as “us” in all those other examples. But the fragile heat of fr. 38 seems to me to evaporate entirely without a bit of intervention.
On the other hand, I may be reading this sentence all wrong. Erotic fire has a history, not only in Sappho (see fr. 48) but also in later lyric poets (e.g., Anakreon fr. 413 PMG and Pindar Pythians 4. 219). The verb I have rendered as “burn” can also be translated “bake, roast, broil, boil” and so suggest a concrete figure for the “cooking” of passion that is to be found in Hellenistic literature, e.g., in an epigram of Meleager who pictures Eros as “cook of the soul” (Palatine Anthology 12.92.7–8; cf. also Theokritos Idylls 7.55 and Kallimachos Epigrams 43.5). If burning means cooking and “you” is Eros, this becomes a very different poem—a cry to the god who plays with fire from the community of souls subjected to its heat.


44 In narrating a story from the Trojan War saga Sappho chooses an episode not included in the Iliad—the homecoming of Hektor with his bride Andromache. She adopts a version of Homer’s (dactylic) meter as well as certain epic features of diction, spelling, scansion and syntax, mingling these with real details from the Lesbos of her own time like myrrh, cassia, frankincense and castanets. Some editors have thought this song about a wedding was composed to be sung at a wedding.


44Aa and 44Ab Originally Lobel thought these fragments from a papyrus written in the second or third century A.D. should be assigned to Alkaios; other editors detect Sappho.

46 This fragment is cited by Herodian in his treatise On Anomalous Words because it contains a perk word for “cushion.”

47 This fragment has been reconstructed by Lobel from a paraphrase in Maximus of Tyre, who compares Sappho to Sokrates as an eroticist (Orations 18.9).
48 The Roman emperor Julian cites this sentence in a letter that begins:

You came yes you did—thanks to your letter you arrived even though you were absent.

—Epistles 240 b–c

Julian’s letter is addressed to lamblichos, chief exponent of the Syrian school of neoplatonism, and is regarded as apocryphal because lamblichos will have died when Julian was a child. More interesting is the problem of erotic temperature raised by emendations to the text of the main verb in the second line, which appears as ephylaxas (“you guarded, kept safe”) in the codices—a reading that is unmetrical and therefore emended either to ephlexas (“you inflamed”: Wesseling) or epsyxas (“you cooled”: Thomas).

49 The first verse is cited by Hephaistion in his Handbook on meters (7.7) as an example of dactylic pentameter, the second verse by Plutarch in his treatise On Love (751d) as an example of a remark to a girl too young for marriage. A third citation by the grammarian Terentianus Maurus suggests the two verses go together.

50 Galen commends this sentiment in his Exhortation to Learning (8.16):

So since we know the ripeness of youth is like spring flowers and brings brief pleasure, admire Sappho for saying . . .

51 Chrysippos cites this sentence in his treatise On Negatives (23). Bruno Snell’s by now notorious discovery of The Discovery of the Mind in this Sapphic fragment is still worth considering for its irritant value. The Discovery of the Mind, translated by T. G. Rosenmeyer (Cambridge, Mass., 1953).

52 Herodian’s citation of this sentence in his treatise On Anomalous Words ends with some letters no longer legible that may be something like “with my two arms.”

53 The Graces (Charites in Greek, derived from charis: “grace”) are three in number, embodiments of beauty or charm, companions of the Muses and attendants of Aphrodite.
Pollux cites this phrase in his *Onomastikon* (10.124) for its use of a new word for “cloak” (*chlamys*) and also reports that Sappho is talking here about Eros.

The roses of Pieria*: Pieria is a mountainous region in northern Greece which was believed to be the birthplace of the Muses; the works of the Muses—music, dance, poetry, learning, culture—are symbolized by their roses. Plutarch tells us this poem was addressed to a woman wealthy but *amousos* (“without the Muses,” indifferent to their works). But the works of the Muses are also the substance of memory. Sappho’s poem threatens the woman with an obliteration which it then enacts by not naming her.

Sappho’s word *kan* is a contraction of *kai* + *en* for metrical purpose (to save a beat of time) but its effect is also conceptual—to syncopate some woman’s posthumous nonentity upon her present life without roses.

Dead . . . Having been breathed out*: a participle in the aorist tense (*katthanoisa*) begins the poem and a participle in the perfect tense (*ekpepotamena*) ends it. The aorist tense expresses past action as a point of fact; the perfect tense renders past action whose effect continues into the future; so does Sappho’s poem softly exhale some woman from the point of death into an infinitely featureless eternity. Cognate with words for wings, flying, fluttering and breath, the participle *ekpepotamena*, with its spatter of plosives and final open vowel, sounds like the escape of a soul into nothingness.

Chrysippos cites these lines (as prose) in his treatise *On Negatives* (13). The word translated “wisdom” (*sophia*) may connote “skill” or “learning” of any kind—possibly poetic skill.

Amid a collection of sartorial anecdotes Athenaios cites the first and third lines of this fragment, informing us that Sappho is making fun of Andromeda as Plato does of “men who do not know how to throw their cloak over their shoulder from left to right nor how to put words together in proper harmony for praising gods and men” (*Theaetetus* 175e; *Deipnosophistai* 21b–c). The second verse of the fragment comes from Maximus of Tyre (*Orations* 18.9), who compares Sappho’s comment on Andromeda with Sokrates’ satire of the sophists’ fashion sense.
(schēma) and habit of reclining (kataklisis). For Andromeda see fr. 68a and note on fr. 8 above.

58.25 “delicacy” (abrosynē): could also be translated “fineness,” “luxuriance,” “daintiness” or “refined sensuality.” In the late sixth century B.C. the word came to designate a certain kind of luxurious “eastern” lifestyle cultivated by an aristocratic elite that wished to distinguish itself this way. In other poems Sappho uses the cognate adjective or adverb to describe Adonis (fr. 140), the Graces (fr. 128), Andromache (fr. 44.7), linen (fr. 100), a woman (25.4), the action of pouring nectar (2.14). See L. Kurke, “The Politics of αβροσίνη in Archaic Greece,” Classical Antiquity 11 (1992), 90–121.

58.25–6: These words may also be construed to mean:

But I love delicacy [ ] this
and desire for the sun has won me brilliance and beauty.

The question remains, What is the relevance of either “desire for the sun” or “beauty of the sun” here? It has been suggested that the poem refers to the myth of Tithonos, a young man so desirable that the goddess of Dawn (Auos or Eos) fell in love with him and rapt him away to the ends of the earth. She then asked Zeus to give him immortal life but forgot to request immortal youth, so Tithonos aged forever.


68a.5 and 68a.12 For Andromeda and Megara see note on fr. 8 above.

81 Parts of three verses at the beginning are transmitted on papyrus; the rest is cited by Athenaios in a discussion of the use of garlands (Deipnosophistai 15.674e).

82a and 82b In his metrical Handbook of the second century a.d. Hephaistion cites the phrase “Mnasidika more finely shaped than soft Gyrinno” as an example of acatalectic tetrameter (=82a). About a thousand years later this same phrase
turned up on a papyrus along with the beginnings of four other verses (82b). For Gyrinno (if she is the same person as Gyrinna) see note on fr. 8 above.

91 Some editors think these words cited by Hephaistion in his metrical Handbook (11.5) are actually the first verse of fr. 60 above.

Eirana is either a woman’s name or the word for “peace.” If it is “peace” Sappho is presumably talking about erotic warfare (note fr. 60 contains the verb “to fight”).

94.1 “to be dead” or “to have died”: the poem’s first word is a perfect active infinitive denoting a past action (death) that slides into the present (as death wish). Sliding from past to present, from present to past, is Sappho’s method in this poem and she seems to offer it (the sliding screen of memory) as a consolation to the woman who weeps while going. Because the beginning of the poem is lost, as the metrical scheme indicates, it remains unclear whether it is Sappho or the weeping woman who wishes for death.


95.7 In between “mostly” and “came in” are traces of letters that might be reconstructed to form the name of Hermes, who traditionally guided souls to the land of the dead.

95.11–13 “yearning . . .”: Sappho associates desire with death in fr. 31.15–16 and fr. 94.1 above; cf. also Anakreon’s erotic complaint “may I die as I can find no other loosening from these pains” (fr. 411 PMG); Alkman’s description of desire as a “more melting than sleep or death” (fr. 3.61–2 PMG); Oedipus’ “longing to look upon the hearth of my father underground” (Sophokles Oedipus at Colonus 1725–7).

96.1 “Sardis”: capital city of the rich kingdom of Lydia in Asia Minor, Sardis was a commercial center and said to be the place where coinage was invented.
96.3 “you”: compare this triangular reverie of moonlit women with that of Emily Dickinson’s letter to Susan Gilbert, October 9, 1851:

I wept a tear here, Susie, on purpose for you—because this “sweet silver moon” smiles in on me and Vinnie, and then it goes so far before it gets to you—and then you never told me if there was any moon in Baltimore—and how do I know Susie—that you see her sweet face at all? She looks like a fairy tonight, sailing around the sky in a little silver gondola with stars for gondoliers. I asked her to let me ride a little while ago—and told her I would get out when she got as far as Baltimore, but she only smiled to herself and went sailing on.

I think she was quite ungenerous—but I have learned the lesson and shant ever ask her again. To day it rained at home—sometimes it rained so hard that I fancied you could hear it’s patter—patter, patter, as it fell upon the leaves—and the fancy pleased me so, that I sat and listened to it—and watched it earnestly. Did you hear it Susie—or was it only fancy? Bye and bye the sun came out—just in time to bid us goodnight, and as I told you sometime, the moon is shining now.

It is such an evening Susie, as you and I would walk and have such pleasant musings, if you were only here—perhaps we would have a “Reverie” after the form of “Ik Marvel”, indeed I do not know why it wouldn’t be just as charming as of that lonely Bachelor, smoking his cigar—and it would be far more profitable as “Marvel” only marvelled, and you and I would try to make a little destiny to have for our own.

—Letters of Emily Dickinson 1.143–4

More explicitly than Sappho, Emily Dickinson evokes the dripping fecundity of daylight as foil for the mind’s voyaging at night. Almost comically, she personifies the moon as chief navigator of the liquid thoughts that women like to share in the dark, in writing. And perhaps Ik Marvel (a popular author of the day, who dwelt upon his own inner life in bestselling “Reveries”) is a sort of Homeric prototype out of whose clichés she may startle a bit of destiny for herself.

96.7 “rosyfingered”: an adjective used habitually by Homer to designate the red look of Dawn. I think Sappho means to be startling, but I don’t know how startling, when she moves the epithet to a nocturnal sky. Also startling is the fecundity of sea, field and memory which appears to flow from this uncanny moon and fill the
nightworld of the poem—swung from a thread of “as sometimes” in verse 7. Homer too liked to extend a simile this way, creating a parallel surface of such tangibility it rivals the main story for a minute. Homer is more concerned than Sappho to keep the borders of the two surfaces intact; epic arguably differs from lyric precisely in the way it manages such rivalry.

98a.3 “ornament” or “good order” (kosmos = English “cosmos”): a word that implies all sorts of order, from the arrangement of planets in the sky at night to the style with which an individual wears her hat. In the language of politics, kosmos means the constitution or good government of a city. In the language of cosmology, kosmos means the entire, perfect, ordered universe. According to one ancient cosmology, cosmos was first assembled out of chaos, when Zeus threw a veil over the head of the goddess of the underworld, Chthoniē, and married her. So Pherekydes tells us, and he goes on to describe the veil, on which were embroidered earth, ocean and the houses of ocean—that is to say, the contours of the civilized world. Once veiled by her bridegroom, the dark and formless chthonic goddess was transformed and renamed Gē, goddess of the visible world, decorous and productive wife of Zeus (Pherekydes frs. 50–4 Diels). Pherekydes and Sappho are both drawing upon a vestiary code that regulates female decency in the ancient world. The head is its focus. Headgear is crucial to female honor, an index of sexual purity and civilized status. No decent woman should be seen in public without her headdress; only prostitutes and maenads run about unveiled. When Sappho regrets she cannot cover her daughter’s head properly she is recording a personal chaos that extends from the boundaries of the body to the edge of civility—the edge where it all leaks away.

See also fr. 81b (above) where Sappho says the Graces despise a woman whose head is without a crown. We might note in passing that the most common Greek word for what veils a female head is krēdemnon, whose symbolic force can be read from its threefold usage. Properly signifying a woman’s “headbinder,” krēdemnon is also used to mean “battlements of a city” and “stopper of a bottle.” It is plain what these three have in common. A corked bottle, a fortified city, a veiled woman are vessels sealed against dirt and loss. To put the lid on certifies purity.

98b.1 “Kleis”: given as the name of Sappho’s daughter in ancient sources.

Fragments 98a and 98b represent the top and bottom, respectively, of the same papyrus column. The first three lines of 98b stand at the foot of the column with a
horizontal stroke appended to each in the left margin, which Voigt takes to signify that they were omitted from their proper place above.

98b.7 “the Kleanaktidai”: the name of the ruling family of the city of Mytilene during Sappho’s lifetime. Testimonia suggest that Sappho was exiled from Lesbos to Sicily around 600 B.C., presumably because she fell out of favor with this faction. The poem may be a lament from exile. Sappho regrets something “terribly leaked away” in the final verse, and the loss is figured in earlier verses as absence of a spangled headbinder for Kleis. This item of apparel is evidently unavailable in Sicily although, in the good old days in Mytilene, Sappho’s mother used to talk about proper techniques for binding the hair and would have seen to it that Kleis got what a girl needs. Exile frustrates such needs, dislocates the style of life that depends on them. In this poem style is a deep need.

101.1 “handcloths”: this obscure term (sometimes translated “napkin”) is a compound of the word for “hand” and the word for “cloth” but Athenaios insists that Sappho means it as “an adornment for the head,” citing the historian Hekataios who reports that women wore this item on their heads (Deipnosophistai 9.410e).

102.2 “slender”: not an attribute of Aphrodite generally in literature or art, so some editors emend the text and transfer the adjective to the boy.

104a Cited by the literary critic Demetrios, who comments: “Here the charm of the expression lies in its repetition of ‘gather’” (On Style 141). Catullus imitates these verses in a poem that is a wedding song (see his poem 62, especially vv. 20–37); maybe Sappho’s poem is nuptial too—telling of the pathos of the bride one fine evening when the repetitions of childhood end. I read somewhere once that ancient marriage rites may have included a burning of the axle of the chariot that brought the bride to her bridegroom’s house—no going back.

105a.1 “as”: the poem begins in a simile which has no comparandum and a relative clause which never reaches completion in a main verb. It may be an epithalamium; Himerios refers to these verses in a discussion of wedding songs (“Sappho likens a girl to an apple” Orations 9.16) and George Eliot mentions them in connection with Mrs. Cadwallader’s marriage plans for Celia and Sir James (“for he was not one of those gentlemen who languish after the unattainable Sappho’s
apple laughing from the topmost bough”: *Middlemarch*, chapter 6). If there is a
bride here she remains inaccessible; it is her inaccessibility that is present, gram-
matically and erotically. Desiring hands close upon empty air in the final infinitive.

105a.1–2 “high ... high ... highest”: I have stretched out the line to imitate a
trajectory of reaching that is present in the sound of the Greek (*akro...akron...akrotato*) and in the rhythm (dactyls slow to spondees) as the apple begins to look
farther and farther away.

105a.2–3 “forgot—no, not forgot”: self-correction emphasizes desire’s infinite
deferral. Self-correction is also apparent in the Greek prosody of the poem, which
includes seven instances of correction or elision, metrical tactics designed to
restrain a unit of sound from reaching beyond its own position in the rhythm. (Elision is the cutting away of a vowel at the end of a word when it is contiguous with
a vowel at the start of the next word. Correction is the shortening of a long vowel
or diphthong, from two beats to one, before a following vowel). Three of these
instances affect the ardent preposition *epi* which can express location or motion:
“on, upon, to, toward, aiming at, reaching after.” The final infinitive is a com-
 pound of this preposition: *epikesthai*.

105b Comparison with an epithalamium of Catullus (62.39–47) has suggested to
some editors that this fragment intends an image of defloration.

106 Cited by Demetrios On Style (146); other ancient commentators tell us that the
expression “compared to the Lesbian singer” became proverbial.

107 Cited by Apollonios Dyskolos in a treatise On Conjunctions (490).

117b Hymenaios is god of weddings. Ancient commentaries speak of Sappho as
having composed either eight or nine books of poems, of which one book consisted
entirely of epithalamia. Fr. 27, 30, 44, 110–117b, 141 may be from that book. It is
unclear whether Sappho’s epithalamia were intended for presentation at actual
weddings or as a literary indulgence of the nuptial mood. There is no evidence how
these songs might have been performed, in public or in private, by Sappho herself
or a choir.
Stobaeus cites this fragment and tells us that it refers to the relative ages of marriage partners (4.22). Here is an example of the intractability of pronouns discussed in fr. 38 above. Sappho’s text has “you” in the singular and “us” in the plural. If this seems inapt, change “us” to “me.”


Cited by Hephaistion in his metrical *Handbook* as an example of a measure called “prosodiac.”

Cited by the scholiast on Aristophanes *Thesmophoriazousai* (401) who tells us “weaving garlands was done by young people and those in love.”

Cited by the *Etymologicum Genuinum* for its use of an unusual word for “sleep.” The word translated “friend” is *hetaira*, on which see note to fr. 142 below.

130.1 “(now again)”: see above frs. 1 and 22.

130.2 “unmanageable”: a word made from the root *machan-* (cf. English “machine”) and cognate with words for “contrivance, device, instrument, means, technique.” Eros is a creature against whom no technology avails.

Voigt prints frs. 130 and 131 together as one poem. Most editors separate them. Our source for all four lines is Hephaistion, who cites them without a break (and without any author’s name) as examples of the same meter (*Handbook* 7.7).

Cited by Hephaistion in his metrical *Handbook* as an example of four kinds of trochaic dimeter—procatalectic, acatalectic, hypercatalectic and brachycatalectic—combined into an *asynartete* or “unconnected” meter (15.18).


Sappho’s name is in the vocative case. To apostrophize oneself this way is very unusual: I cannot find another example of it in Greek lyric poetry. Possibly the
apostrophe is meant to be contained within the speech of someone else, as in fr. 1 where Aphrodite addresses Sappho by name.

134 Cited by Hephaistion in his metrical *Handbook* as an example of acatalectic ionic trimeter (12.4).

Kyprogeneia is an epithet of Aphrodite meaning “born on Kypros.”

135 Cited by Hephaistion in his metrical *Handbook* as an example of the fact that “whole songs were written in ionic meter by Alkman and Sappho” (12.2).

Pandion was a king of Athens who had two daughters, Prokne and Philomela, one of whom was the wife of Tereus, while the other was raped by Tereus, who cut out her tongue so she could not tell. Silenced, she wove a cloth to reveal her sad story, which her sister read and, to punish Tereus, killed their only child (Itys). Both girls were turned into birds, one into a swallow and one into a nightingale, according to Ovid whose version does not make clear which is which (*Metamorphoses* 6.412–674). There are other ancient versions of this myth, including one where the killing of Itys is inadvertent: cf. Homer *Odyssey* 19.518–29 and Sappho fr. 136 below and note.

136 A Sophoklean scholiast cites this verse, reminding us that Sophokles has the expression “messenger of Zeus” of the nightingale because it signals the coming of spring (*Elektra* 149). Sophokles also calls the nightingale “bewildered by grief” and Homer has Penelope compare herself to this sorrowful bird of spring (*Odyssey* 19.518–29). Aristotle describes the nightingale as having no tip on its tongue (*Historia animalium* 616b8): cf. note on fr. 135 above.

137 Aristotle cites these verses in a discussion of shame (*Rhetoric* 1367a). He appears to think they represent an interchange between Sappho and the poet Alkaios. Some editors take this to mean that Alkaios is being quoted in the first two verses; others read the poem as Sappho’s response to some poem of Alkaios that she didn’t like. The meter of the verses is Alkaic, of which there is no other example in Sappho.

The word translated “shame” in the first and fifth lines of the fragment is much more interesting in Greek: *aidōs* (also rendered “reverence, respect, shamefastness, awe, sense of honor”) is a sort of voltage of decorum that radiates from
the boundaries of people and makes them instantly sensitive to one another's status and mood. Proverbially it is a phenomenon of vision and the opposite of *hybris*:

*Aidōs* lives upon the eyelids of sensitive people, *hybris* upon those of the insensitive. An intelligent person knows this.

—Stobaios 4.230

*Aidōs* can also connote the mutual shyness felt by lover and beloved in an erotic encounter, which soon becomes an enclosure shutting out the world:

Aphrodite . . .
cast upon their sweet bed the shamefastness of eros,
fitting together and mingling in marriage
the god and the girl.

—Pindar *Pythians* 9.9–13

138 Athenaios tells us that Sappho addressed these words “to a man who is extravagantly admired for his physique and regarded as beautiful” (*Deipnosophistai* 13.564d).

140.1 “delicate”: this word also means “soft, luxurious, expensive, dainty, refined” and carries connotations of aristocracy, sensuality and the East. On the social and political implications of the adjective and its cognate noun *abrosynē*, see above fr. 58 and note.

140.2 Kythereia is a name of Aphrodite.

For Adonis see also fr. 168 and Appendix (below) on Phaon. The myth of Adonis tells how Aphrodite fell in love with a beautiful mortal youth. One day while they are out hunting together Adonis is gored in the thigh by a wild bull and dies. Aphrodite mourns him. In some versions Aphrodite lays the dying Adonis in a bed of lettuces (anthropologically provocative since lettuces were said to cause impotence: see Marcel Detienne, *The Gardens of Adonis*, translated by J. Lloyd (New York, 1972)). The Hellenistic poet Dioskourides calls Sappho a “fellow mourner” with Aphrodite in her grief over Adonis (*Palatine Anthology* 7.407)—presumably referring to fr. 140, which seems to be a dialogue between worshippers and Aphrodite, and is the
earliest evidence we have of an Adonis cult. This cult traveled from Syria to Asia Minor to Athens, where it was celebrated in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. in a festival called the Adonia. Historians have reconstructed the Athenian Adonia largely from vase paintings: women planted seeds of lettuce, fennel, wheat or barley in pots. Once the seeds had sprouted the pots were carried up to the roofs of houses where the sprouts shriveled in the sun and the women lamented. Then the pots were thrown into the sea. Dancing to flutes and tambourines took place. The Adonia was also celebrated at Alexandria in the third and second centuries B.C., according to Theokritos, who describes Queen Arsinoe’s version: images of Aphrodite and Adonis reclining together on a banquet couch surrounded by fruit were venerated while a singer told Adonis’ story. Then the image of Adonis was thrown into the sea with much lamenting (Theokritos *Idyll* 15). There is historical evidence of fervent celebration of this rite as late as the fourth century A.D.: when Julian made a tour of the Near East shortly after his elevation to emperor in 362 A.D., his entry into Antioch was seriously offset by wild ululations of grief from streets and houses. He had coincided with the Adonia, whose observance persisted in the largely Christian city as one of its many festivals (Ammianus Marcellinus 22.9.15).


141 Athenaios cites these lines to support his claim that both Sappho and Alkaios call Hermes the wine pourer of the gods (*Deipnosophistai* 10.425d; cf. Alkaios fr. 447).

142 “friends” (*hetairai*): cited by Athenaios (*Deipnosophistai* 13.471d) in a discussion of the word *hetaira*, which began to be used in the sixth century B.C. as the term for “courtesan” or “mistress” (distinct from *p orne*, “whore”) within the elite sexual commodity trade of the male symposium. In Sappho’s language, however, *hetaira* appears to connote a close female companion or intimate friend in a relationship that may be sexual but is not commoditized (cf. frs. 126 and 160).

On these terms and values see J. N. Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes: The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens* (London, 1997); K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge, Mass., 1989); L. Kurke, *Coins, Bodies, Games and Gold* (Princeton, 1999); C. Reinsberg, *Ehe, Hetärentum und Knabenliebe im antiken*

143 Cited by Athenaios in a discussion of chickpeas (*Deipnosophistai* 2.54f).

144.2 This phrase is preserved for us by the grammarian Herodian in his treatise *On the Declension of Nouns* because he is interested in the way Gorgo’s name is declined. For other information about Gorgo see above fr. 29c and notes to frs. 8, 22 and 155.

145 By “stones” Sappho means a heap of small stones or gravel, according to the scholiast who cites this phrase, and she may be quoting a proverb. Gravel seems to have had a lively proverbial life, e.g., Alkaios fr. 344LP:

I know for sure if a man moves gravel—tricky stone to work with—he gets a sore head.

146 In a rhetorical treatise *On Figures of Speech* (25) the first-century-b.c. grammarian Tryphon preserves this phrase as an example of a proverb; its proverbial sense is interpreted by the second-century-a.d. lexicographer Diogenian: “used of those unwilling to take the good with the bad” (*Proverbs* 6.58). Since bees and honey are frequently associated with Aphrodite in ancient cult and religious symbolism, the proverb may also imply a renunciation of things aphrodisiac.

Other translations occur to me, e.g.:

- mellowsmelling honey
- yellowstinging bee
- honey, Honey?
- no not me

147.1 It may be of interest that this verse contains an emendation by the sixteenth-century classical scholar Isaac Casaubon, perhaps the model for George Eliot’s character of the same surname, whom she calls “a Bat of erudition” (*Middlemarch*, chapter 21). The real Casaubon was one of the two great Huguenots who dominated classical scholarship in Europe at the close of the sixteenth century; the other one was Joseph Scaliger to whom is ascribed the remark, regarding
Casaubon’s edition of Persius, “The sauce is better than the fish.” Casaubon was born in Geneva of refugee parents and had to learn his Greek while hiding in a cave in the French mountains (with bats?). He died in exile in England. Casaubon’s emendation of *mnasasthai* to *mnasesthai* in fr. 147 (“did remember” to “will remember”) is generally accepted, if dull, and makes me think of George Eliot’s final assertion in the novel:

Every limit is a beginning as well as an ending.


148 Cited by a scholiast to explain Pindar’s gnomic saying:

Wealth ornamented with virtues brings the right occasion for all sorts of things.

—*Olympians* 2.96–7

150 Maximus of Tyre provides some domestic insight on this fragment, amid his comparison of Sappho and Sokrates:

Sokrates blazed up at Xanthippe for lamenting when he was dying, as did Sappho at her daughter.

—*Orations* 18.9

155 Cited by Maximus of Tyre in his comparison of Sappho and Sokrates to show how

sometimes she rebukes them [Gorgo and Andromeda], sometimes she interrogates them and sometimes she uses irony just like Sokrates when he says: *Farewell to you, Ion!*

—*Orations* 18.9, referring to the opening words of Plato’s *Ion*

156 Demetrios (*On Style* 161) quotes these phrases in a discussion of hyperbole, pointing out that “every hyperbole involves the impossible” and comparing phrases from Aristophanes like “healthier than a pumpkin” and “balder than a clear sky.”
He congratulates Sappho on her talent for using the impossible gracefully, not frigidly. No such approval is given by Gregory of Corinth (On Hermogenes):

Erotic phrases like these from Anakreon and Sappho flatter the ear shamefully: whiter than milk, smoother than water, more songlike than lyres, prouder than a mare, more delicate than roses, softer than a robe, more expensive than gold!

Plutarch cites this advice of Sappho’s in his essay On Restraining Anger:

When people are drinking the one who is silent is a pain and a burden to his comrades but amidst anger nothing is more dignified than quiet, so Sappho tells us.

—Moralia 456e

This phrase, followed by the words “as Sappho says,” is found in a letter attributed to the emperor Julian (but probably not genuine) and addressed to a certain Eugenios the philosopher (Epistles 386c). Julian (or his interpolator) seems to have liked Sappho; see also frs. 34 and 48 above.

Cited by the grammarian Apollonios Dyskolos in a treatise On Pronouns (106a) and believed by some to be a more correct reading of fr. 31.1 (in place of “that man seems to me”).

Cited by Athenaios (Deipnosophistai 2.57d) in order to comment on the spelling of the word for “egg.” This egg may be the one from which Kastor, Pollux, Helen and Klytemnestra were born, although swan’s eggs are whitish not blue.

Cited by Marius Plotius Sacerdos in his Art of Grammar (3.3) as an example of the metrical shape called an adonius (or catalectic dactylic dimeter, i.e., a dactyl followed by a sponde: - · · - · - ), which was invented by Sappho and typically forms the fourth verse of a Sapphic stanza.

According to Zenobios in his Proverbs (3.3) Gello was the name of a girl who died untimely young “and her ghost haunts little children (so the Lesbians say) and they ascribe young deaths to her.”
168B Cited by Hephaistion in his metrical *Handbook* (11.5) as two tetrameter verses without authorial ascription; cited by Apostolius and his son Arsenius, compilers of proverbs in the fifteenth century, as Sappho’s; not included among Sappho’s fragments by most modern editors.

168C Cited without authorial ascription by Demetrios *On Style* (164) as an example of gracefulness of language produced by use of beautiful names; not regarded as Sapphic by most modern editors except Wilamowitz *Sappho und Simonides* (Berlin, 1913), 46.

169 From here to the end Voigt’s edition prints glosses, i.e., single words cited as Sappho’s without context by various ancient authorities.

172 “paingiver” or perhaps “whose gift is pain”: a Sapphic epithet of Eros, according to Maximus of Tyre (*Orations* 18.9). He cites this word along with *glukupikron* (“sweetbitter”: see above fr. 130 cf. frr. 8 and 188) in a comparison between Sappho and Plato’s Diotima, whose view is that Eros “flourishes in abundance but dies away when he is in want” (*Symposium* 203b).

173 The grammarian George Choiroboskos (*On Theodosios* 1.331) cites this otherwise unknown word: *amamaxys*.

174 The lexicographer Orion cites this otherwise unknown word: *amara*.

175 Cited by Apollonios Dyskolos in a treatise *On Adverbs* (596) as an example of a metaplasm, i.e., an inflected form derived from a nonexistent nominative singular.

176 Cited by Athenaios (*Deipnosophistai* 4.182f) free-associating on different spellings of the word for “lyre.”

180 “holder”: or capitalized, *Holder*, i.e., Hektor.

188 “mythweaver”: a word ascribed to Sappho by Maximus of Tyre who says:

> Sokrates calls Eros “sophist,” Sappho calls him “mythweaver.”

—*Orations* 18.9
Mythweaver might also be rendered “teller of tales” or “creator of fictions” or “poetic inventor.” Why does Eros weave myths? Perhaps because desire acts in lovers as a lure for the whole life of the imagination—without which neither love nor philosophy could nourish itself very long. According to Maximus of Tyre, one may say of Sappho no less than of Sokrates that a knowledge of erotic things is the chief pursuit of life. Sokrates claims something like this more than once in Plato’s dialogues (e.g., Symposium 177d; Theages 128b); Sappho’s argument is implicit. See also frs. 8 and 172 above.
**WHO’S WHO**

**Abanthis:** woman about whom nothing is known

**Acheron:** river of Hades

**Adonis:** young man loved by Aphrodite whose cult was popular with women and had something to do with lettuce

**Aelian:** (Claudius Aelianus) writer of miscellanies 170–235 A.D.
   Hercher, ed., *Varia Historia*

**Aelius Aristides:** rhetorician of the second century A.D.
   Keil, ed., *Orationes*

**Aiga:** promontory of Asia Minor

**Alkaios:** lyric poet who lived on the island of Lesbos in the seventh century B.C.
   Voigt, ed., *Sappho et Alcaeus Fragmenta*

**Anakreon:** lyric poet of Teos 575–490 B.C.
   Page, ed., *Poetae Melici Graeci*

**Anaktoria:** possibly a companion of Sappho, see fr. 16 and fr. 8 note

**Andromache:** wife of Hektor at Troy

**Andromeda:** possibly a companion of Sappho, see fr. 68a and fr. 8 note

**Antiphanes:** comic poet of the fourth century B.C.
   Kock, ed., *Comicorum Atticorum Fragmenta*, vol. 2
Aphrodite: goddess of love, sex and desire

Apollonios Dyskolos: grammarian of the second century A.D. who is said to have been given the name Dyskolos (“hard to digest”) because of the toughness of his subject matter

Schneider-Uhlig, eds., Grammatici Graeci, vol. 2

Archeanassa: member of the Archeanactid family of Lesbos

Archilochos: iambic and elegiac poet who lived on the islands of Paros and Thasos in the seventh century B.C.

West, ed., Iambi et Elegi Graeci

Aristophanes: comic poet of the fifth century B.C.

Aristotle: philosopher 384–322 B.C.

Artemis: goddess of animals, hunting, wild places and female freedom

Athenaios: writer of a miscellany of literary and other anecdotes called Deipnosophistai

Kaibel, ed.

Atthis: possibly a companion of Sappho, see fr. 8 and note

Atreus: father of Agamemnon and Menelaos

Catullus: lyric poet in Rome 84–54 B.C.

Chrysippos: Stoic philosopher 280–207 B.C.

don Arnim, ed., Stoicorum veterum fragmenta

Comes Natalis: mythographer of the sixteenth century A.D.

Francofen, ed., Mythologia

Demetrios: literary critic who lived in the first century B.C. or A.D.

Rhys Roberts, ed., De Elocutione


Dika: possibly a companion of Sappho, see fr. 81

Diogenian: lexicographer and paroemiographer of the second century A.D.
Leutsch-Schneidewin, eds., *Paroemiographi Graeci*, vol. 1

Dionysios of Halikarnassos: historian and grammarian of the first century B.C.
Usener-Radermacher, eds., *Opuscula*

Doricha: possibly a girlfriend of Sappho's brother, see frs. 7, 15 and notes

Eirana: possibly a companion of Sappho, see frs. 91 and 135

Eros: god of everything erotic

*Etymologicum Genuinum*: etymological dictionary compiled about 870 A.D. under Photios

Euboulos: comic poet of the early fourth century B.C.
Kock, ed., *Comicorum Atticorum Fragmenta*, vol. 2

Euripides: Athenian tragic poet 485–406 B.C.

Eustathios: Christian grammarian of the twelfth century A.D. who wrote commentaries on Homer

Galen: writer on medicine, philosophy and grammar who (possibly) lived in the second century A.D.
Marquardt, ed., *Galeni Scripta Minora*
Hilgard, ed., *Grammatici Graeci*, vol. 4

Gello: name of a girl who died untimely young; her ghost haunts little children
Georgios Choiroboskos: ninth-century A.D. grammarian, deacon and ecclesiastical archivist of Constantinople
   Hilgard, ed., *Scholia in Theodosii Canones*

Geraistion: temple of Poseidon at Geraistos in Euboia

Gongyla: possibly a companion of Sappho, see fr. 22 with note and fr. 95

Gorgo: possibly a companion of Sappho, see frs. 8, 22, 29c, 144, 155 and notes


Graces: goddesses who confer grace, beauty, charm, brightness

Gregory of Corinth: grammarian of the twelfth century A.D.
   Walz, ed., *Rhetorici Graeci*, vol. 7

Gyrinno or Gyrinna: possibly a companion of Sappho, see fr. 82a and fr. 8 note

Hades: realm of the dead

Hekebolios: a sophist who taught rhetoric to Julian at Constantinople and changed his religion three times to keep up with imperial whim

Hektor: prince of Troy and husband of Andromache

Helen: wife of Menelaos and lover of Paris of Troy

Hera: wife of Zeus

Herodian: grammarian of the late second century A.D. and son of Apollonios Dyskolos
   Lentz, ed., *Grammatici Graeci*, vol. 3

Herodotos: historian of the fifth century B.C.
Hermione: daughter of Helen and Menelaos

Himerios: rhetorician of the fourth century A.D.  
Colonna, ed., Orationes

Hymenaios: god of weddings

Idaios: herald of Troy

IIios: Greek name for Troy

Ilos: father of Priam, king of Troy

Julian: nephew of Constantine the Great and Roman emperor 361–363 A.D., notorious for his attempt to restore the pagan gods to primacy and for his long letters  
Bidez-Cumont, eds., Epistolae

Kallimachos: poet, scholar, royal librarian of the great library at Alexandria under Ptolemy Philadelphos, lived 305–240 B.C. and is said by the Suda to have written eight hundred volumes of prose and verse

Kalliope: first of the nine Muses, whose name means “beautiful-voiced”

Kleanakdtidai: one of the ruling clans of the city of Mytilene in Sappho’s lifetime

Kleis: alleged name of Sappho’s mother and also of her daughter

Koos: father of Leto

Krete: Crete

Kronos: father of Zeus

Kypris: name of Aphrodite as one worshipped on the island of Kypros (Cyprus)

Kyprogeneia: epithet of Aphrodite (“Kypros-born”)
Kypros: Cyprus

Kythereia: name of Aphrodite as one associated with the city of Kythera in Krete

Leto: mother of Apollo and Artemis

Libanius: rhetorician, 314–393 A.D.
Förster, ed., *Orationes*

Longinus: literary critic of the first century A.D. whose authorship of *On the Sublime* is now disputed
Roberts, ed., *De Sublimitate*


Lydia: kingdom of western Asia Minor legendary for luxury

Marius Plotius Sacerdos: metrician and grammarian of the third century A.D.
Keil, ed., *Grammatici Latini*, vol. 6

Marsyas (the younger): historian of (probably) the first century A.D.

Maximus of Tyre: rhetorician and itinerant lecturer of the second century A.D.
Hobein, ed., *Rationes*

Medeia: princess of Kolchis and wife of Jason

Megara: possibly a companion of Sappho, see fr. 68a and fr. 8 note

Menander: comic poet 342–293 B.C.
Kock, ed., *Comicorum Atticorum Fragmenta*, vol. 3

Mika: possibly a companion of Sappho, see fr. 71

Mnasadika: see fr. 82
Muses: goddesses of music, song, dance, poetry and erudition who were numbered at nine but Sappho is sometimes called the tenth (e.g., *Palatine Anthology* 7.14 and 9.506)

Mytilene: chief city of the island of Lesbos and home of Sappho

Nereids: nymphs of the sea, all fifty of them supposedly daughters of Nereus

Niobe: Theban woman killed by Artemis and Apollo after she boasted to Leto of the number of her children

Olympos: mountain where dwell the Olympian gods

Orion: lexicographer of the fifth century A.D.

Sturz, ed.

Palaiphatos: mythographer of the fourth century B.C.

Festa, ed., *Mythographi Graeci*, vol. 3

Palatine Anthology: collection of epigrams by various Greek poets compiled about 980 A.D. from earlier collections

Gow-Page, ed., *The Greek Anthology*

Pan: god of flocks and herds and outdoor amusements usually depicted as a man with goat’s feet, horns and shaggy hair

Pandion: king of Athens and father of Prokne and Philomela; the former was the wife of Tereus; the latter was raped by Tereus, who cut out her tongue so she could not tell

Panormos: city of (possibly) Sicily

Paon: epithet of Apollo

Paphos: city of Kypros near which Aphrodite originally emerged from the sea
**Parian Marble**: marble column inscribed with important events of Greek history to 263 B.C. and from which certain information about the lives of ancient poets has been derived.

**Pentheleids**: one of the clans struggling for power in Mytilene in the seventh century B.C. and who claimed descent from Penthilos, son of Orestes.

**Pherekydes**: pre-Socratic philosopher of the sixth century B.C.  

**Phoibos**: adjective meaning “pure bright radiant beaming,” used as epithet of Apollo.

**Phokaia**: city of western Asia Minor.

**Photios**: lexicographer and patriarch of Constantinople in the ninth century A.D.  
Reitzenstein, ed., *Lexicon*.

**Pieria**: region of northern Greece where the Muses live.

**Plakia**: river near the city of Thebe.

**Pleiades**: group of seven stars.

**Pliny (the elder)**: Roman encyclopaedist 23–79 A.D.

**Pollux**: lexicographer and rhetorician of the second century A.D.  
Bethe, ed.

**Polyanaktides**: son of Polyanax and member of the Polyanaktid family of Lesbos.

**Posidippos**: Greek poet of the third century B.C.  
Gow-Page, ed., *The Greek Anthology*.

**Priam**: king of Troy.
**Sapphic stanza:** stanzaic form invented by Sappho that is composed of three hendecasyllabic (eleven-syllable) verses followed by one adonean (five-syllable) verse.

**Seneca:** Roman philosopher and poet 4 B.C.–65 A.D.

**Stobaios:** anthologist of the early fifth century A.D.
   Wachsmuth-Hense, eds.

**Strabo:** geographer of the first century A.D.
   Kramer, ed.

**Suda:** lexicon compiled in Byzantium in the tenth century A.D.
   Adler, ed.

**Terentianus Maurus:** grammarian and metrician of the late second century A.D.
   Keil, ed., *Grammatici Latini*, vol. 6

**Thebe:** city of Asia Minor where Andromache lived before she married Hektor

**Thyone:** mortal woman also known as Semele who bore Dionysos to Zeus

**Tryphon:** grammarian of the first century B.C.
   Spengel, ed., *Rhetores Graeci*, vol. 3

**Tyndarids:** descendants of Tyndareus, king of Sparta, who fathered Helen, Klytemnestra, Kastor, Pollux

**Zeus:** king of gods and father of (among others) Aphrodite
APPENDIX: SOME EXEMPLARY TESTIMONIA

The fourth-century-B.C. comic poet Antiphanes produced a comedy called Sappho in which Sappho appears as a character and poses this riddle with its answer:

There is a female creature who hides in her womb unborn children, and although the infants are voiceless they cry out across the waves of the sea and over the whole earth to whomever they wish and people who are not present and even deaf people can hear them. The female creature is a letter and the infants she carries are the letters of the alphabet: although voiceless they can speak to those far away, to whomever they wish whereas if someone happens to be standing right next to the reader he will not hear.

—Comicorum Atticorum Fragmenta fr. 196 Kock


Three poems of the Palatine Anthology are ascribed to Sappho (probably wrongly):

Children, although I am voiceless I answer anyone who asks since I have a tireless voice set at my feet: to Aithopia daughter of Leto I was dedicated by Arista daughter of Hermokleides son of Saunaiadas. She is your handmaid, queen of women. Rejoice in her and be gracious to our famous family.

—6.269
Of Timas here is the dust, dead before marriage,
    received in Persephone's darkblue chamber
and when she died all her friends with newsharpened knife
    took the lovely hair from their heads.

On the tomb of Pelagon his father Meniskos put
    basket and oar, memories of sad life.

Data on the mysterious Phaon:

Phaon had no life except his boat and his sea. His sea was a strait. No one complained, since he was in fact a moderate man and accepted money only from the rich. There was amazement among the Lesbians about his way of life. The goddess (they mean Aphrodite) wanted to thank this man so she put on the appearance of an old woman and asked Phaon about crossing the strait. He at once carried her across and asked nothing in return. What did the goddess do then? She transformed him (they say) from an old man—repaid him with youth and beauty. This is the Phaon whom Sappho loved and celebrated in lyric song.

—Palaiphatos On Incredible Things 211a

The temple of Apollo at Leukas [is the site of] the leap believed to put an end to desire: "where Sappho first of all" (so Menander says) "pursuing proud Phaon was so stung by love that she threw herself from the far-seen cliff. . . ." So it was the custom among the Leukadians at the annual festival of Apollo that some criminal be thrown from the cliff, with all kinds of wings and birds fastened to him to break his fall and many people in small boats waiting below in a circle to save him and take him off beyond the borders.

—Strabo Geography 10.2.9; see also Menander fr. 258 Koerte

Phaon the most beautiful of men was hid by Aphrodite amid lettuces.

—Aelian Historical Miscellanies 12.18
Kallimachos says Aphrodite hid Adonis in a bed of lettuces.... Euboulos in The Impotent Men says: “. . . for it was amid vegetables, so the story goes, that the Kyprian laid out dead Adonis.” Kratinos says that when Aphrodite fell in love with Phaon she hid him among “beautiful lettuces.” Marsyas says it was green barley.

—Athenaios Deipnosophistai 2.69e–d

Sappho has left a written record that dead Adonis was laid out among lettuces by Aphrodite.

—Comes Natalis Mythology 5.16

Strange lore about the plant called ἕρυγε (“sea holly”): its root takes the shape of the male or the female sex organ. It is rarely found but if men happen upon the male shape they become desirable; on this account Phaon of Lesbos was desired by Sappho.

—Pliny Natural History 22.20

Many people say Sappho fell in love with Phaon—not Sappho the poet but [some other] Lesbian woman—and when she didn’t get him she threw herself off the cliff of Leukas.

—Photios Lexicon

•

A second-century-A.D. papyrus furnishes a putative list of first words of poems by Alkaios, Anakreon or Sappho:

here to me island
two loves me
we stand prayer
O you who welcomed
holy much-
queen of heaven
Eros was entertained
here blessed ones
who of desire
already profit
hail you of Kyllene
the big sea
let us sacrifice to Aphrodite
to Danaos
holy mother
Kyprian
let Aphrodite set free
let her awake
varied voice
keep away the wind
sweet
hail hail
I saw
I entreat
new
O child
come
O

The *Palatine Anthology* includes two epitaphs for Sappho:

> On Sappho you lie, Aeolian earth, who amid the immortal Muses sings as a mortal Muse, whom Kypris and Eros reared together, with whom Persuasion wove an everliving Pierian crown, for Greece a delight, for you a glory. O Fates who twist triple thread on your spindle, how is it you did not spin out an utterly deathless day for the one who devised deathless gifts of the Muses?
> —Antipater of Sidon *Palatine Anthology* 7.14

As you bypass the Aeolian tomb, stranger, do not say I am dead,
I the songmaker of Mytilene.
For hands of men made this and such human works vanish into quick oblivion.
But if you rate me by the grace of the Muses, from each of whom
I put a flower beside my own nine,
you will realize I escaped the shadowland of Hades nor will there be
a sunlit day that lacks the name of lyric Sappho.

—Tullius Laurea *Palatine Anthology* 7.17

Last word from Seneca:

Didymus the grammarian wrote four thousand books: I would feel sorry for
him if he had merely *read* so much verbiage. His books investigate questions
like the birthplace of Homer, the real mother of Aeneas, if Anakreon was more
of a lecher than a drunk, whether Sappho was a whore, etc. etc. etc. And
people complain that life is short!

—*Epistles* 88.37