

NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS

VISUALIZING POETRY: AN EARLY REPRESENTATION OF SAPPHO

While ancient images of Sappho abound in our literary record, visual representations of the poet are few. The aim of this paper is to examine one vase depicting Sappho and to shed some new light on the early reception of her figure and her poetry in the classical period. At a time when scholarship on Sappho has become “a growth industry”¹—to the extent that discussions of late sources and tattered fragments have increased considerably—it is difficult to explain the fact that little attention has been paid to ancient visual representations of Sappho. Many recent contributions attempt to reconstruct a historically plausible situational and performative context for Sappho’s poetry that would account for its role in archaic Lesbos. These studies use literary testimonia on her to ponder questions such as the age of her companions and their role in the so-called Sapphic circle. I would here refer only to the controversy between Holt Parker and André Lardinois on the function of Sappho’s circle, and the recent arguments by Lardinois about the primarily choral character of her poetry.² Parker and Lardinois, among others, attempt to take into account all sources and evidence relating to the figure of Sappho in antiquity, sources that are often very late.³ Scholars have yet, however, to consider the painted pots depicting Sappho, which date back to the late archaic and classical periods.⁴

My objective here is to examine a specific early classical image that has been unjustifiably neglected by current research on Sappho.⁵ To the best of our knowledge,

I presented the material and ideas of this paper first at Oxford and Reading in 1997. A wider investigation of all vases depicting Sappho was presented, under the title “Reading Sappho on Vases,” at the “Ancient Greek Iconography” Conference in honor of Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood (16–18 August 1999) at the University of Reading. Different versions of this paper were delivered as public lectures at Princeton University and Boston College. I am grateful to all audiences for their incisive remarks, especially Andrew Ford, Alexander Nehamas, John Oakley, and Froma Zeitlin. Gregory Nagy, Peter Parsons, and Laura Slatkin have provided precious advice on this project. I am also indebted to Dr. Cornelia Weber-Lehmann, Curator at the Kunstsammlungen, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, for providing photographs of the vase discussed here and permitting their publication. Last but far from least, I have profited from the invaluable suggestions and encouragement of Gloria Ferrari Pinney and Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood.

1. J. M. Snyder, review essay, including review of *Sappho Is Burning* by P. duBois (Chicago, 1995), *Helios* 23 (1996): 191.

2. H. N. Parker, “Sappho Schoolmistress,” *TAPA* 123 (1993): 309–51; A. Lardinois, “Subject and Circumstance in Sappho’s Poetry,” *TAPA* 124 (1994): 57–84, and “Who Sang Sappho’s Songs?” in *Reading Sappho: Contemporary Approaches*, ed. E. Greene (Berkeley, 1996), 150–72. See also E. Stehle, *Performance and Gender in Ancient Greece: Nondramatic Poetry in Its Setting* (Princeton, 1997), 263–88.

3. Lardinois, for example, believes that even information in the *Suda* can reflect cultural realities pertaining to the performance of Sappho’s songs in the archaic period. On this, see D. Yatromanolakis, “Alexandrian Sappho Revisited,” *HSCP* 99 (1999): pp. 185, n. 28, and 184–87.

4. Recently, Lardinois has written: “The relevance of these representations for our reconstruction of the ‘real’ Sappho is probably very limited” (“Keening Sappho,” in *Making Silence Speak: Women’s Voices in Greek Literature and Society*, ed. A. Lardinois and L. McClure [Princeton, 2001], 81).

5. J. M. Snyder is an exception (“Sappho in Attic Vase Painting,” in *Naked Truths: Women, Sexuality, and Gender in Classical Art and Archaeology*, ed. A. O. Koloski-Ostrow and C. L. Lyons [London and New York, 1997], 108–19). See nn. 14 and 20 below.

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four vases depicting Sappho are extant,⁶ and they constitute the only source we have for the earliest stages in the ancient reception of Sappho.⁷ However fictionalizing these images may appear, they suggest ideas that should be taken into account in our attempt to define the performative dimensions of Sappho's poetry.

In contrast to other archaic and classical lyricists, Sappho enjoyed considerable popularity in early classical vase painting. Although such popularity may seem greater because of the scarcity of evidence about other poets, it remains true that Alcman, Archilochus, and Stesichorus, to mention only a few, do not appear on vases—or, at least, their names have not been inscribed next to figures that may originally have been meant to represent them. Only Anacreon seems also to have been a popular figure for vase painters. Apart from a series of vases that are conventionally called “Anacreontic,” three vase paintings have been preserved that bear his name.⁸ Reflecting on the fact that, as far as the evidence permits us to see, painters showed little interest in depicting lyric poets such as Simonides and Pindar, while they were so fond of the figures of Sappho and Anacreon, Peter Parsons has remarked: “It is the pop singers (alive or dead) who concern the public, not the composers of cantatas.”⁹

In comparison to Anacreon, Sappho has been granted a higher poetic status in visual representations. The popularity of her image is not only an ancient phenomenon, but also a modern one. Sappho appears in illuminations of the fourteenth century, as well as in fifteenth-century art—as, for example, in a woodcut from Boccaccio's *De claris mulieribus*, where she is depicted in Renaissance costume, plucking the strings of her lute, amongst books and other musical instruments.¹⁰ The tradition continues into modern times. Mention of two cases that reflect different perceptions of Sappho's image will suffice here: first, the nineteenth-century painting *Apotheosis of Homer* by J. A. D. Ingres (1827), where Sappho is the only woman present at a ceremony in honor of Homer, among many poets and artists such as Anacreon, Apelles, Raphael, Shakespeare, and Racine; and second, a 1983 painting by A. Fassianos, where Sappho has taken off her usual ancient chiton and himation to pose on a bed half-naked.

The late archaic and classical vases inscribed with Sappho's name cover a period of seventy years, from about 510 to 440 B.C.E.; they are contemporary with the

6. All the vases depicting Sappho are discussed in my forthcoming *Sappho in the Making*. Although it is not unlikely that a few others exist, they have not so far been identified.

7. Neither these early stages nor later stages in the ancient reception of Sappho's figure have been adequately investigated.

8. See, selectively, J. Boardman and D. C. Kurtz, “Booners,” in *Greek Vases in the J. Paul Getty Museum*, vol. 3, Occasional Papers on Antiquities 2 (Malibu, 1986), 35–70; F. Frontisi-Ducroux and F. Lissarrague, “De l'ambiguïté à l'ambivalence: Un Parcours dionysiaque,” *AnnArchStorAnt* 5 (1983): 11–32 (trans. R. Lamberton in *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World*, ed. D. M. Halperin, J. J. Winkler, and F. I. Zeitlin [Princeton, 1990], 211–56); and the most comprehensive study by S. D. Price, “Anacreontic Vases Reconsidered,” *GRBS* 31 (1990): 133–75 (for further bibliography, see Price). The chronology for “Anacreontic” vases is c. 520–450 B.C.E. (suggested by Boardman, “Booners,” 65). On the basis of the name “Anakreon,” written along one arm of the *barbitos* in a fragment of a krater (Copenhagen, National Museum 13365, red-figure kalix-krater fragments, Kleophrades Painter [= ARV² 185, 32; *Para.* 340]), the revellers were identified as Anacreon and his companions. The other two red-figure vases with Anacreon's name inscribed are a cup by Olto in London (Inv. E 18 = ARV² 62, 86; *Para.* 327) and a lekythos by the Gales Painter in Syracuse (Inv. 26967 = ARV² 36, 2; *Para.* 325).

9. P. Parsons, “Simonides: Texts, Styles, Images,” in *The New Simonides: Contexts of Praise and Desire*, ed. D. Boedeker and D. Sider (Oxford and New York, 2001), 56.

10. On this woodcut, see K. Scheffold, “Sappho in Ulm,” *AK* 3 (1960): 89.

"Anacreontic" vases, and this is significant in terms of the parallel reception of the two poets in antiquity as the love poets (or pederastic poets?) par excellence.¹¹ Three of them are rather well-known images of Sappho,¹² while the fourth is not listed in reference books related to Greek portraits,¹³ and is neglected even in very recent discussions of the subject.¹⁴ Along with these four vases,¹⁵ there are several others that may represent Sappho.¹⁶ But since there is no inscription on them, we cannot be certain whether it is indeed Sappho who is depicted.

11. As I suggest in my forthcoming *Sappho in the Making*, Anacreon's erotic poetry was persistently associated with Sappho's (apart from his surviving verse, several Latin and Greek authors acknowledge that Anacreon's poetry was predominantly erotic; see Anacr. test. 20 in *Greek Lyric*, vol. 2, ed. D. A. Campbell [Cambridge, Mass., 1988]). The two poets were even made to meet during their lifetime: see the alleged poetic dialogue between Sappho and Anacreon suggested by Chamaeleon (in his treatise *On Sappho* [frag. 26 Wehrli]; cf. Anacr. *PMG* 358), and Anacreon's trips to Lesbos to visit the poetess, with whom he was in love (as described by Hermesianax *Coll. Alex.* frag. 7.47–52). Apart from these early references, the names of Sappho and Anacreon are juxtaposed—for a variety of purposes—in Plato (*Phdr.* 235b–c), Clearchus of Soli (in his *Erotica* [frag. 33 Wehrli]), who compares "the love songs and the so-called Locrian songs" with Sappho's and Anacreon's, Euphron (in *Ath.* 4.182f), who attests that Sappho and Anacreon referred to the instrument *barbitos* or *baromos* in their songs, Ovid (*Tr.* 2.363–66), Plutarch (*De mul. vir.* 243b), Aulus Gellius (*NA* 19.9.4), Pausanias (1.125.1), Maximus of Tyre (18.91–m), Themistius (*Or.* 13.170d–71a), Himerius (*Or.* 17.4), and Gregory of Corinth (*In Hermog.* ap. *Rhet. Gr.* 7.1236 Walz).

12. (1) Hydria in Goluchow (in Six's technique, Inv. 32), now in Warsaw (142333 = *ARV*² 300; *Para.* 246); (2) red-figure kalathos-psykter in Munich (2416 = *ARV*² 385 and 1649; *Para.* 367); (3) red-figure hydria in Athens (1260 = *ARV*² 1060; *Para.* 445). For further discussion, see *Sappho in the Making*, chap. 2.

13. Richter and, later, Smith do not include it (G. M. A. Richter, *The Portraits of the Greeks*, vol. 1 [London, 1965], 71; Richter, *The Portraits of the Greeks*, abridged and revised by R. R. R. Smith [Ithaca, 1984], 194–96). More recently, it is included in K. Schefold's *Die Bildnisse der antiken Dichter, Redner, und Denken* (Basel, 1997), 86.

14. For example, it is omitted by M. Williamson (*Sappho's Immortal Daughters* [Cambridge, Mass., 1995], 12). Snyder ("Sappho," n. 5 above) is aware of this vase, but her results are considerably circumscribed by the fact that she has examined only the obverse side. Cf. J. M. Snyder, *The Woman and the Lyre: Women Writers in Classical Greece and Rome* (Carbondale, Ill. 1989), 6.

15. One further vase, a bell-krater formerly in the Middleton collection and now lost (c. 420 B.C.E.), showed Sappho seated on a stool before a winged Eros who is bringing her a wreath. Noting that "the figures on the obverse look as if they had been tampered with," Beazley was skeptical about the authenticity of the inscription *talas* above Eros, since, according to him, *kalos* would be expected instead, and he considered the possibility that a restorer might have added the inscriptions (J. D. Beazley, *Greek Vases in Poland* [Oxford, 1928], p. 9, n. 2). The authenticity in this case cannot be verified or rejected unless the vase is recovered.

16. In recent archaeological contributions, three more vases have been tentatively proposed as depicting Sappho: (1) a fragment from a belly-amphora in Stuttgart, perhaps by the Andokides Painter (Schefold, *Bildnisse* [n. 13 above], 74); (2) a lekythos in Hamburg attributed to the Diosphos Painter (W. Hornbostel et al., *Kunst der Antike: Schätze aus norddeutschem Privatbesitz* [Mainz, 1977], p. 298, no. 258, *Aus Gräbern und Heiligtümern: Die Antikensammlung W. Kropatscheck* [Mainz, 1980], p. 112, no. 66); and (3) a kylix in Paris attributed to the Hesiod Painter (A. Kaufman-Samara, "Οὐκ ἀπόρριψον τὸ γυναικῶν" (Εὐρύκλ. Μῆδ. 1089): Γυναικες μουσικοὶ στὰ ἀντικά ἀγγεῖα τοῦ Σού αἰ. π.Χ.), in *Athenian Potters and Painters: The Conference Proceedings*, ed. J. H. Oakley, W. D. E. Coulson, and O. Palagia [Oxford, 1997], 286–90). The fragment from the belly-amphora is dated to about 525 B.C.E., and, according to this tentative identification, it depicts Sappho playing a kithara (Schefold). The lekythos by the Diosphos Painter, dated to about 500 B.C.E., may again show Sappho with a kithara (Hornbostel). This vase is decorated in Six's technique, a combination of incised lines on an all-black surface and added white paint for the flesh parts. Both the Diosphos Painter and the Sappho Painter—that is, possibly the painter of the earliest vase that certainly depicts Sappho—specialized in this technique. Mainly for this reason, the female singer on the vase has been identified as Sappho. Finally, it has been thought that the poet/musician who is depicted on a kylix in Paris, dated to about 470 B.C.E., may be Sappho (Kaufman-Samara). The figure is seated on a *diphros* and holds a *phorminx* in her left hand. The setting must be domestic, as the *diphros*, as well as the wreath and the mirror that are depicted behind and in front of the seated female figure, suggest. Besides the *phorminx* that the musician of the vase is holding, there is another *phorminx* on her lap, perhaps used for the tuning of the other instrument. Given the musical technicalities involved in the image, this musician must be professional. And, since she is depicted in a domestic setting, it is possible to assume that she is Sappho.

If one attempts to find a common denominator in these three tentative identifications, it is the notion that Sappho must have represented a model of the female singer/musician par excellence in late archaic Attic vase painting. Especially in those few cases where a domestic setting eliminates the possibility that a female

My subject is the image of Sappho that is preserved on an Attic kalyx-krater formerly in the Von der Heydt-Museum, Wuppertal, now in Bochum; it is attributed to the Tithonos Painter and dated to about 480 B.C.E.¹⁷ No full analysis of the vase exists with respect to the reception of Sappho's figure in antiquity, although in his recent catalogue of Greek portraits, Karl Schefold provides a brief and general report on the vase.¹⁸ The vase painting shows Sappho (her name is inscribed to the right of her head) dressed in chiton and himation, and holding a *barbitos*¹⁹ in her left hand, with a *plektron* in her right, outstretched hand (plate 1). Sappho stands with her body facing right. She turns her head backwards, towards her extended right arm. The only iconographical study focusing on Sappho that considers this vase assumes that she is shown here alone.²⁰ However, a closer investigation of the vase suggests different conclusions. If one looks at the reverse side,²¹ another female figure in similar pose makes her appearance (plate 2). This woman is not holding a *barbitos*. Her clothes cover her body thoroughly. What is the second female figure doing here? Apparently she is looking at the Sappho of the obverse.²² Yet this is not entirely true. If the viewer of the vase rotates it in an attempt to understand exactly what is happening, he or she will realize that when Sappho attempts to see the other woman, that woman

musician with a stringed instrument represents a Muse, it seems plausible to propose that she is Sappho. Drawing such a conclusion is methodologically vulnerable. We could perhaps, however, take into account the fact that for archaic Greece there is no reliable evidence for the existence of any other important woman poet apart from Sappho. Very late sources refer to mythical names such as Manto and Phantasia, whose epic poems were supposed to have inspired Homer in the making of his epics. Athenaeus in the second/third century C.E., or rather his sources, mentioned a purported seventh-century Spartan song-maker called Megalostira, who was addressed in a love song by Alcman (frag. 59 P), but it is doubtful whether we can credit any historical or biographical validity to this fictionalized reconstruction of Alcman's love life. Sappho, though, whose songs were widely disseminated as early as the second half of the sixth century B.C.E., could indeed constitute a paradigm of female musicianship in late archaic vase painting. Of course, this still remains in the sphere of hypothesis.

17. N. Kunisch, *Antike Kunst aus Wuppertaler Privatbesitz* (Wuppertal, 1971), no. 49 (not in Beazley), now in Bochum, Ruhr-Universität, Kunstsammlungen, Inv. S 508. See also *Griechische Vasen aus westfälischen Sammlungen*, ed. B. Korus (Münster, 1984), 122.

18. Schefold, *Bildnisse*, 86.

19. In two of the three other vases depicting Sappho, she holds the same instrument. The instrument is depicted time and again in the "Anacreontic" vases and vase paintings with symposiastic scenes. Its invention is attributed by some ancient sources to Anacreon (see, e.g., Ath. 4.175e), but others attribute it to Terpander, (Pind. 125 Maehler). Horace refers to *Lesbom . . . barbiton* (*Carm.* 1.1.34), which he wishes to inherit and adopt in his poetry. On the instrument and the occasions for its use, see the comprehensive study by J. M. Snyder, "The *Barbitos* in the Classical Period," *CJ* 67 (1972): 331–40. Cf. also M. Maas and J. M. Snyder, *Stringed Instruments of Ancient Greece* (New Haven, 1989), 113–38. For *barbitos* in the context of symposia on vases, see also B. Bessi, "La musica del simposio: Fonti letterarie e rappresentazioni vascolari," *AION (archeol.)*, n.s., 4 (1997): 145 and 150–51.

20. Snyder ("Sappho," 109) believes that "here [sc. on the vase] Sappho, shown alone, stands with her body facing right, performing a dance step and turning her head backwards"; Snyder reaches the following conclusion (in support of her idea that the four vases with Sappho constitute "instances of the 'muting' of a female figure as represented by male artists," 114): "The emphasis of the scene . . . seems to be on the dance step that the Sappho figure executes, rather than on musical performance *per se*" (112). Cf. also p. 114: ". . . the dance step that the Sappho figure is executing in fact forces her to assume a posture in which she could not possibly play the *barbitos*." Schefold is aware of the reverse side (*Bildnisse*, 86).

21. Sappho's outstretched hand and gaze point to this side.

22. This is a standard mode of representation in late archaic and early classical vases. The examples are numerous, especially in artists such as the Berlin Painter and Oltos. See J. D. Beazley, *The Berlin Painter*, English ed. (Mainz, 1974), for several examples (discussion in pp. 1–5; pls. 6, 8, 9, 18, 20, 21). For another interesting example, see D. C. Kurtz and J. D. Beazley, *The Berlin Painter* (Oxford, 1983), pls. 49a–c (= Zurich, Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule, 17, ARV² 202, 85). See also Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum 3725, ARV² 204, 109. For a subtle case of an Attic red-figured oinochoe that adopts this mode of representation, see G. Ferrari Pinney, "For the Heroes Are at Hand," *JHS* 104 (1984): 181–83.



PLATE 1. Sappho. Attic kalyx-krater, c. 480 B.C.E. Ruhr-Universität Bochum. Kunstsammlungen, Inv. S 508. Photo: G. Fittschen-Badura. Courtesy, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Kunstsammlungen.



PLATE 2. Female figure. Attic kalyx-krater, c. 480 B.C.E. Ruhr-Universität Bochum. Kunstsammlungen, Inv. S 508. Verso. Photo: I. Berndt. Courtesy, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Kunstsammlungen.

has her back turned toward Sappho. The same pattern occurs when the woman on the reverse side tries to see Sappho. I suggest that this reproduces an image that Sappho herself described in one of her poems (Sappho frag. 1 Voigt [V]). In this song, when the speaking subject asks Aphrodite to appear before her and help her overcome the grief and anguish caused by her unreciprocated love, we hear Aphrodite's voice coming from the past and addressing her: "Who wrongs you, Sapph(o)? For if she flees now, soon she shall pursue; if she does not accept gifts, she shall give them instead; if she does not love, soon she shall love even against her will." This subtle dramatization of the inaccessibility of the beloved in an eternal circle of fruitless pursuit²³ may also be reflected in the vase in question. And if this is so, the reading κωὺκ ἐθέλοισα (in line 24/frag. 1), clearly attested in one of the manuscript sources and adopted by Lobel-Page and Voigt, can be given even more credit.²⁴

We can trace a similar pattern of visual performability of songs in some of the other vases depicting Sappho. On the Munich kalathoid krater, ΣΑΦΟ is holding an eight-stringed *barbitos*, while ΑΑΚΑΙΟΣ seems to have just swept across the strings of a seven-stringed *barbitos* and has uttered the first melodic vowels of his song (the fingers of his left hand pluck individual strings, and five vowels [Ο Ο Ο Ο Ο] come out from his mouth). His head is shown bent down—not thrown back, as would be expected of a singer. The five omicrons represent the sound of one of the verses of his song. This image has been connected with a dialogic song between Sappho and Alcaeus that Aristotle quotes in his *Rhetoric* (1367a = Sappho frag. 137 V). Aristotle informs us that it was Alcaeus who bashfully initiated it: θέλω τί τ' εἶπην, ἀλλὰ με κωλύει / αἰδώς ("I wish to say something to you, but shame prevents me"). In response, we are told, [Sappho] admonished him to speak otherwise: "But if you desired what is honorable or good, . . . shame would not cover your eyes, but you would state your claim [?]." A similar melodic verse (Ι Ο Ο Ο) comes from the mouth of a komast on a fragmentary kalyx-krater in Copenhagen.²⁵ On this vase, dated approximately to 500 B.C.E., a banquet scene is juxtaposed with an image of four komasts, one of whom is evidently singing to the accompaniment of a *barbitos*. On a number of red-figure vases, something more than an incomprehensible sequence of letters comes from the mouth of symposiastic singers and komasts. Verses from poems by Theognis²⁶ and Praxilla²⁷ have occasionally been identified. Poetic lines not otherwise preserved in the literary record also appear in symposiastic scenes on vases.²⁸ This kind of pattern, which I would call "visual performability of poetry," appears in several Attic (mainly

23. For this aspect of Sappho I V, see the insightful discussion by A. Giacomelli, "The Justice of Aphrodite in Sappho fr. 1," *TAPA* 110 (1980): 135–42. One might perhaps think that in the Bochum vase Sappho is playing the *barbitos* and the other female figure is dancing. However, Sappho is not actually playing the *barbitos*, while the female figure of the reverse is obviously walking.

24. This reading has more recently met with reservations from G. W. Most ("Reflecting Sappho," *BICS* 40 [1995]: 32). Most's notion of "ambiguity" in Sappho's poetics revolves around specific manuscript readings of fragments (mainly 31.7 V) and does not account for contextual dimensions of her poetics.

25. Copenhagen 13365, Kleophrades Painter, *ARV*² 185, 32.

26. Athens, National Museum 1357, preserving Theognis 1365. See also H. R. Immerwahr, "Inscriptions on the Anacreon Krater in Copenhagen," *AJA* 69 (1965): 153.

27. London, British Museum 95.10–27.2 (tondo) preserving Praxilla *PMG* 754. On this vase, see E. Csapo and M. C. Miller, "The 'Kottabos-Toast' and an Inscribed Red-Figured Cup," *Hesperia* 60 (1991): 367–82.

28. Csapo and Miller ("The 'Kottabos-Toast,'" 381–82) provide a valuable list. See also E. Vermeule, "Fragments of a Symposion by Euphronios," *AK* 8 (1965): 34–39; G. S. Sifakis, "Singing Dolphin Riders," *BICS* 14 (1967): 36–37; G. Ferrari, "Menelas," *JHS* 107 (1987): 180–82.

red-figure) vases.²⁹ Interestingly, on a red-figure amphora by Euphronios, dated to about 520 B.C.E., a reclining lyre player sings MAMEKAΠOTEO, a line that may perhaps constitute a slightly corrupt version of Sappho fragment 36 (καὶ ποθήω καὶ μάομαι).³⁰ The last example possibly suggests familiarity on the part of painters with certain Sapphic songs. Such familiarity is also reflected in the Athens hydria that depicts Sappho reading from a scroll. On that book roll there are written, apart from the expression ΕΠΕΑ ΠΤΕΡΟΕΤΑ (“winged words”), the lines ΗΕΠΙ|ΩΝ | ΕΠΕ|ΩΝ | ΑΡΧ|ΟΜ|Α. Α|Τ. .|Ν.|Τ.|Ν (“with airy words I begin”). The words ΠΤΕΡΟΕΤΑ and ΕΠΕΑ, which may be meant for a title written on the back of the roll,³¹ are written vertically in the two margins of the scroll (on the left-hand and right-hand sides respectively). The lines can be considered an invention of the painter or perhaps of another contemporary. The issue here is not whether the text is by Sappho.³² The fifth-century painter, in any case, juxtaposed the inscription with the figure of Sappho. What is significant is the painters’ familiarity with songs by (or somehow connected with) Sappho.

The images that the Bochum vase offers are intriguing, even though it may be hard to reach any definite conclusions about them. I submit that to analyze this vase painting (and, more important, any image of Sappho—visual or literary), we need to approach it by contextualizing, as far as we can, its diverse facets, studying it within its possible visual rhetoric, and placing it in the sociocultural contexts of its literary poetics. Our results can have some heuristic value, especially when they can be supported by other sources. In contrast to the current methodological convention of viewing ancient literary or visual representations of Sappho as “sources,” and then using them as “evidence” for the reconstruction of a historically plausible situational and performative context for her poetry, I suggest that we need to shift our focus to the significance of contextualizing visual or literary “testimonia” about Sappho and of viewing them as images reflecting a range of cultural constructs.³³

I would draw attention here to some indications that may help us contextualize and understand the possible function of these representations. First, the woman on the obverse side appears fully wrapped in her clothes. As Gloria Ferrari Pinney has shown,

29. For poetic inscriptions on vases, see P. Hartwig, *Die griechischen Meisterschalen* (Stuttgart and Berlin, 1893), 255–58; R. Herzog, *Die Umschrift der älteren griechischen Literatur in das ionische Alphabet* (Basel, 1912), 17–21; P. Kretschmer, *Die griechischen Vasenschriften* (Gütersloh, 1894), 90–93; J. Herington, *Poetry into Drama: Early Tragedy and the Greek Poetic Tradition* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1985), 195–98; F. Lissarrague, *The Aesthetics of the Greek Banquet: Images of Wine and Ritual*, trans. A. Szegedy-Maszak (Princeton, 1990), 123–35; more recently, see Csapo and Miller’s comprehensive study (“The ‘Kottabos-Toast’”). On poetic lines in book rolls depicted on vases, see J. D. Beazley, “Hymn to Hermes,” *AJA* 52 (1948): 336–40; cf. also H. R. Immerwahr, “Book Rolls on Attic Vases,” in *Classical, Medieval and Renaissance Studies in Honor of B. L. Ullman*, ed. C. Henderson, Jr., vol. 1 (Rome, 1964), 17–48; H. R. Immerwahr, “More Book Rolls on Attic Vases,” *AK* 16 (1973): 143–47.

30. Paris, Louvre G 30, ARV² 15, 9; 1619; *Para.* 322. Cf. H. R. Immerwahr, *Attic Script: A Survey* (Oxford, 1990), 63 (no. 360).

31. E. G. Turner, *Athenian Books in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries B.C.*² (London, 1977), 14. Beazley (“Hymn to Hermes” [n. 29 above], 339) describes these vertically written inscriptions as “portions not yet unrolled.”

32. The verse has not been included in critical editions of Sappho. It was once interpreted by J. M. Edmonds as representing part of an introductory poem to the first book of an early, pre-Alexandrian edition of Sappho (“Sappho’s Book as Depicted on an Attic Vase,” *CQ* 16 [1922]: 1–14). This idiosyncratic theory has not found any defenders.

33. I propose this methodological approach in *Sappho in the Making*.

the enveloping mantle in vase paintings of the late archaic and classical periods is time and again a sign of *aidos* (conventionally translated as “modesty” or “shame”). The enveloping mantle frequently appears in scenes of courtship, where a mantle-covered young woman or boy constitutes the object of desire of other figures.³⁴ Second, on the obverse side something that may be identified as an *aulos* bag hangs from the lower arm of the *barbitos* that Sappho holds.³⁵ This, I would argue, alludes to sympotic contexts on vases, where the *aulos* is frequently shown. In addition, the *barbitos* that one of the female figures holds and the cloth hat (the *sakkos*) that both of them wear similarly appear very often in sympotic and komastic images.³⁶ Third, in this context one should mention that Sappho referred in her songs to another stringed instrument, the *paktis* (harp). It is notable that in the fifth century, harps were associated by comic poets with sensual and erotic songs.³⁷ Finally, these images evoke the iconographical scheme of pursuit that often appears in Attic vase painting.³⁸ Could this be read as an erotic pursuit? The image is all but explicit, and the archaic and early classical literary record remains silent in terms of Sappho’s eroticism. However, evidence for such an ancient perception comes from the late-fourth-century Peripatetic Chamaeleon, who, following earlier authors, as he states, interpreted Anacreon *PMG* fragment 358, in which a girl who is playing with a ball (*sphaira*) pursues another female figure, as a clear reference to Sappho’s case.³⁹ He also informs us (again, perhaps following other sources) that Sappho in fact engaged with Anacreon in a poetic dialogue after she heard his poem alleging her homoeroticism (*PMG* Adesp. frag. 953 = Ath. 13.599cd):

κεῖνον, ὃ χρυσόθρονε Μοῦσ’, ἔνισπες
 ὕμνον, ἐκ τᾶς καλλιγύναικος ἐσθλᾶς
 Τήϊος χώρας ὃν ᾄειδε τερπνῶς
 πρέσβυς ἀγατός.

This short song, addressed to Anacreon by Sappho, emphatically refers to the beautiful women of the land of Teos, Anacreon’s birthplace, and seems to be an invention⁴⁰ of contemporaries of Chamaeleon or earlier comic poets. Can the elements

34. G. Ferrari, “Figures of Speech: The Picture of *Aidos*,” *Métis* 5 (1990): 185–200.

35. On this kind of *aulos* bag, see Price (“Anacreontic Vases” [n. 8 above], 144–45): “Sometimes empty flute-cases appear in the background, implying that the instrument has been removed and is in use.” Price refers to Munich 2647: “scantly-clad male . . . on a red figure cup from Vulci by Douris,” p. 135, n. 7. Cf. Boardman and Kurtz, “Booners,” p. 56, figs. 17 and 18. See also Naples RC 163 (= ARV² 198, 18; *Para.* 342), where an Eros holds a lyre in one hand, and an *aulos* case in the other.

36. The *sakkos* is worn by both women and men in these images; see, e.g., red-figure pelike, Rome, Conservatori 176 (= ARV² 283, 4; *Para.* 355).

37. Eupolis frag. 148 K–A, Plato Com. frag. 71.14 K–A. Harps are most often shown in the hands of women in Attic vase paintings. According to Menaechmus (c. 300 B.C.E.), Sappho was the inventor of the *paktis* or *pektis* (in Ath. 14.635b: Μέναιχμος δ’ ἐν τοῖς περὶ τεχνιτῶν τὴν πεκτίδα, ἣν τὴν αὐτὴν εἶναι τῇ μαγὰδι, Σαπφῷ φησὶν εὐρεῖν). On harps in literature and art of the classical period, see further Maas and Snyder, *Stringed Instruments* (n. 19 above), 147–55, 181–84 (however, Maas and Snyder write that “there is no first inventor reported in the literature, as there is for many instruments [though a woman, Sappho, was proposed in Hellenistic times as the first player],” 154).

38. On various aspects of this scheme, see the classic study by Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, “A Series of Erotic Pursuits: Images and Meanings,” in “Reading” *Greek Culture: Texts and Images, Rituals and Myths* (Oxford, 1991), 58–98. Scheffold (*Bildnisse*, 86) simply assumes that this is an erotic pursuit, without offering supporting evidence.

39. Chamaeleon frag. 26 Wehrli (in his treatise *On Sappho*).

40. Ath. 13.599d: ὅτι δὲ οὐκ ἔστι Σαπφούς τοῦτο τὸ ἔσμα παντὶ που δῆλον.

adduced above reveal an underexplored facet of the earliest reception of Sappho's poetry in the Athenian male-oriented society of the fifth century—that is, at the time when our vase was produced? The Bochum vase certainly gives us access to the very first perception about Sappho in association with, and in pursuit of, female companions.

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ETYMOLOGICAL WORDPLAY AND POETIC SUCCESSION IN LUCRETIUS

ignoratur enim quae sit natura animai,
nata sit an contra nascentibus insinuetur,
et simul intereat nobiscum morte dirempta
an tenebras Orci visat vastasque lacunas
an pecudes alias divinitus insinuet se,
Ennius ut noster cecinit qui primus amoeno
detulit ex Helicone perenni fronde coronam,
per gentis Italas hominum quae clara clueret.

(Lucr. 1.112–19)

For they do not understand the nature of the soul, whether it is born or smuggled into us at birth; and whether it perishes with us, destroyed by death, or goes to the shades of Orcus and its huge chasms, or worms its way into other animals by divine agency, as our own Ennius sang, who first brought down from pleasant Helicon a garland of everlasting leaves, to bring him bright renown amongst the peoples of Italy.

Critics have observed that these lines—in which Lucretius simultaneously acknowledges a poetic debt to Ennius and distances himself from the earlier poet's eschatological beliefs—contain a pun: the reference in line 118 to the poet's "garland of everlasting leaves" suggests an etymological link between Ennius' name and the adjective *perennis*.¹ But the possibility that the passage contains a further, implicit reference to another of Lucretius' poetic models has not (to my knowledge) been previously observed. Ennius' *corona*—the mark of his poetic distinction—is both "everlasting" (*perenni fronde*) and destined to bring him "bright fame" (*quae clara clueret*). The two phrases taken together suggest the name of Empedocles, literally "eternally renowned."²

I would like to dedicate this paper to the memory of Don Fowler, *cuius ego ingressa vestigia rationes persequor*. I am also indebted to Gordon Campbell, Robert Maltby, Damien Nelis, Jim O'Hara, David Scourfield, David Sedley, and CP's anonymous readers for comments on earlier drafts.

1. P. Friedländer, "Pattern of Sound and Atomic Theory in Lucretius," *AJP* 62 (1941): 16–34, at 20; J. M. Snyder, *Puns and Poetry in Lucretius' "De Rerum Natura"* (Amsterdam, 1980), 31, 107. Cf. Denis Feeney ("Mea tempora: Patterning of Time in the *Metamorphoses*," in *Ovidian Transformations: Essays on Ovid's "Metamorphoses" and Its Reception*, ed. P. R. Hardie, A. Barchiesi, and S. Hinds [Cambridge, 1999], 13–30), who suggests (at n. 17) that the pun may go back to Ennius himself.

2. I.e., ἔμπεδος ("steadfast," "lasting") + κλέος ("fame," "glory"). Puns on the name-element -κλης are common: cf., for example, the Homeric Cleopatra, wife of Meleager in Phoenix's exemplary tale in *Iliad* 9, the elements of whose name reverse those of Patroclus, her counterpart in the main narrative. Note also that Lucretius himself glosses the closely related element -κλειτος by *clarus* in 1.638–39, *Heraclitus . . . clarus ob obscuram linguam*.