

# SAPPHO FR. 31: ANXIETY ATTACK OR LOVE DECLARATION?

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## I. THE QUESTION OF THE 'RIVAL'

IN a recent article<sup>1</sup> the psychiatrist George Devereux reached the following conclusion about fr. 31: Sappho as a 'masculine lesbian' experiences 'a perfect, "text-book case", anxiety attack', elicited by 'a love-crisis', viz. by the presence of a *male* rival for the attention of Sappho's favourite girl. He then sums up: 'In fact, even if there existed no explicit tradition concerning Sappho's lesbianism, her reaction to her male rival would represent for the psychiatrist *prima facie* evidence of her perversion' (p. 21).

I find Devereux's treatment of fr. 31 inconclusive in that it is built upon *three* unlikely premises. Instead, I shall try to show that there is no 'rival' in the poem, and consequently there is not on Sappho's part any 'reaction to her male rival'.

Devereux took all three of his improbable assumptions from Page (*S. and A.*, pp. 19–33). In fact, the only difference between Page and Devereux is that the former thought that fr. 31 was a poem of Sappho's *jealousy* of the man, while the latter saw in it description of an *anxiety attack* suffered by Sappho as a reaction to the man's close presence to the girl. The three assumptions are as follows:

(1) That in line 5  $\tau\acute{o}$  refers to 2–4  $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\iota\acute{o}\varsigma\ \tau\acute{\epsilon}\ |\ \langle\tau\rangle$ <sup>2</sup>  $\iota\sigma\delta\acute{\alpha}\nu\epsilon\iota\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \pi\lambda\acute{\alpha}\sigma\iota\omicron\nu\ .\ .\ .\ \upsilon\pi\alpha\kappa\acute{o}\upsilon\epsilon\iota$ , and that in line 7  $\sigma'$  implies 'at you, sitting near him as you are' (Page). It is the *fact* that a man is sitting near her favourite girl, capturing her attention, which affects Sappho, provoking in her either jealousy or an anxiety attack. 'I am jealous when I see the man enjoying your favour' (Page, p. 22). 'To maintain that Sappho feels no jealousy of the man would be to ignore the certain response of human nature to a situation of the type described, and to deprive the introduction of the man, and his relation to the girl, of all significance. On this point, at least, there is little room for doubt' (p. 28). Page then concludes: 'Its [the poem's] subject is the emotion which overwhelms her [Sappho] when she sees a beloved girl enjoying the company of a man' (p. 33).

Hence Devereux: '. . . I propose to analyse the striking and quite singular manner in which Sappho (vv. 1–4) describes her reactions to her *male* rival' (pp. 19 f.). But he was not happy with Page's 'jealousy' thesis ('. . . I suspect that Page sensed that there was something odd about Sappho's "jealousy", if any', p. 19), and substituted 'an anxiety attack' for it: 'Last but not least, one need not be a clinical psychiatrist—one only needs some experience of the world

<sup>1</sup> 'The Nature of Sappho's Seizure in Fr. 31 LP as Evidence of Her Inversion', *CQ* N.S. xx (1970), 17–31.

<sup>2</sup> Because of the hiatus caused by 2  $\tau\omicron\iota$ , I accept Page's conjecture (p. 21)  $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\ |\ \tau'$ . But I prefer writing  $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\ |\ \langle\tau\rangle$ : P of 'Longinus' (*De sublimitate* 10. 2 Russell) has  $\tau\omicron\iota\zeta\acute{\alpha}\nu\epsilon\iota$ . I take  $\tau\omicron\iota\ \iota\zeta\acute{\alpha}\nu\epsilon\iota$  *apogr.* to be the fruit of some 15th- or 16th-century scholar.

For the order *A*  $\tau\epsilon\ .\ .\ .\ \kappa\alpha\iota$  *B* cf. Sappho, fr. 16. 17 f.; Alcaeus, fr. 283. 7 f. This  $\tau\epsilon$  has

no effect on the meaning of 2  $\delta\tau\tau\iota\varsigma$  whatsoever, *contra* G. Wills ('Sappho 31 and Catullus 51', *Gr., Rom. and Byz. Studies*, viii [1967], 168: ' $\delta\tau\tau\iota\varsigma$  must be taken as general, not individual'). Wills's reference (n. 3) to Denniston (*Gr. Part.*<sup>2</sup> 521–3) is misleading: in fr. 31  $\tau\epsilon$  is a conjunction ( $\tau\epsilon\ .\ .\ .\ \kappa\alpha\iota$ , 'who both sits and listens'), while the Homeric  $\tau\epsilon$  (in  $\delta\varsigma\ \tau\epsilon$ ) is an emphatic particle (cf. LSJ, s.v.  $\tau\epsilon$  B).

—to know that the masculine lesbian whom a male rival deprives of her partner will experience anxiety rather than ordinary jealousy’ (p. 23).

Here ‘some experience of the world’ amends Page’s ‘the certain response of human nature’. What is more important, notice the circular reasoning in Devereux: Sappho experiences an anxiety attack *because* she is a masculine lesbian (p. 23). And she must be a lesbian *because* she experiences such an attack: ‘The occurrence of such an attack, in the situation Sappho describes, is *prima facie* evidence of her authentic lesbianism’ (p. 31).

Now, the interpretation of fr. 31 as ‘a poem of jealousy’ was advanced for the first time by H. J. Heller (*Philol.* xi [1856], 432): ‘At potius ζηλοτυπίας affectiones Sappho describat necesse est. Quam enim ob rem aliter virum commemoraret sedentem ex adverso puellae leviterque ad eam susurrantem eique arridentem?’ (Incidentally, Heller wrongly took φωνείσας . . . καὶ γελαίσας for nominatives.) His interpretation was endorsed first by E. Kalinka,<sup>1</sup> then by three Italian scholars (G. Perrotta,<sup>2</sup> W. Ferrari,<sup>3</sup> A. Barigazzi<sup>4</sup>), finally by Page. But only at the beginning of his monograph. For at the end (p. 143) Page suddenly changed his mind: he referred the τό to the immediately preceding words (i.e. the girl’s sweet voice and ravishing laughter), and the σ’ to the girl’s charming person, interpreting the poem now as concerned with Sappho’s *love for the girl*: ‘The speech and laughter of the beloved can move her almost to swooning: “when I look at you a moment, I can no longer speak. . . .”’ Unfortunately, Devereux did not make use of Page’s second thoughts.

(2) That the aorist ἐπτόαισεν in the sentence 5 f. τό μ’ ἦ μὲν | καρδίαν ἐν στήθεσιν ἐπτόαισεν has the same aspect, and the verb itself the same negative meaning of discomfort and malaise, as the nine subsequent verbs in the present (or in the perfect-present) tense dependent on 7 ὥς γὰρ <ἐς> σ’ ἴδω. Thus Devereux sees no difference between the καρδίαν . . . ἐπτόαισεν sentence and the other clauses describing Sappho’s physiological symptoms: ‘Sappho describes ten symptoms: 1. Abnormal heartbeat: palpitations, cardiac arrhythmia, etc. 2. A psycho-physiological inhibition of speech . . .’ (etc. down to number ten, p. 19). In his turn, Page (p. 22) sees in ἐπτόαισεν ‘distress’, ‘disturbance’, ‘jealousy’, and translates the aorist in the same way as the perfect of line 10 ὑπαδεδρόμηκεν (‘that, I vow, has set my heart . . . a-flutter’: ‘a subtle flame has stolen beneath my flesh’, p. 19).<sup>5</sup>

(3) That the seated gentleman is ‘godlike’ (1 ἴσος θεοῖσιν) because he is ‘fortunate as the gods’ (Page, pp. 19 and 21): ‘How lucky that man is, to be favoured with your attention’, says Sappho in her jealous ‘emotional response to the scene’ (Page, p. 28). This was then pushed *ad absurdum* by Devereux (pp. 22 f.): Sappho as a masculine lesbian feels ‘female “phallic awe”’: ‘She may both envy and inordinately admire (“godlike”) her fortunate (“properly equipped”) male rival . . . What does this man—and indeed any man—have that Sappho does *not* have?’

Now, that ἴσος θεοῖσιν implies ‘fortunate, happy or privileged as the gods’ is a belief existing of old (it may even go back to Catullus, in view of the likely contrast between 51. 1 ille . . . *par esse deo* and 5 f. *misero* . . . *mihi*). When Welcker in 1816 objected to this interpretation, his voice was shy and ineffective (‘Der

<sup>1</sup> *Wiener Eranos* (Vienna, 1909), 158.

<sup>2</sup> *Saffo e Pindaro* (Bari, 1935), 46–9.

<sup>3</sup> *Annali della Scuola Norm. Sup. di Pisa*, ser. ii, vii (1938), 63.

<sup>4</sup> *Rendiconti dell’Istituto Lombardo* (Milan), lxxv (1942), 414.

<sup>5</sup> As Wills, p. 183, already pointed out.

Mann . . . scheint mir wie ein Gott—nicht bloß glücklich . . . , sondern auch eine stärkere Natur als ich Weib').<sup>1</sup> Since Neue's feeble advocacy for 'fortunate as the gods' in 1827 ('sed vocabula ἵσος θέουσιν altiorum quendam dignitatis et felicitatis gradum ostendunt'),<sup>2</sup> this interpretation has become the current one: among others, it was shared by Kalinka (p. 159), Turyn,<sup>3</sup> Snell,<sup>4</sup> and Page (who calls Welcker's suggestion 'strong as the gods' a 'misconception' which is 'to be avoided', but then adds: 'Common sense rejects, though it may be unable to disprove, this surprising interpretation of the cliché ἵσος θέουσιν', p. 21). On the other hand, Welcker's interpretation was shared by Wilamowitz ('Der Mann macht mir den Eindruck, Götterkraft zu haben'),<sup>5</sup> but with the unwarranted interpretation of the man as the girl's bridegroom, by W. Kroll (on Catullus 51. 1), and recently, at length, by G. Wills (pp. 171–82).

Now, these three assumptions are not likely for the following reasons:

(1) The onslaught of Sappho's symptoms must have been a *recurrent*, chronic trouble, because the subjunctive ἴδω in the clause (line 7) ὥς γὰρ <ῥς> σ' ἴδω βρόχε', ὥς με . . . denotes the repetition of this chain reaction: 'For *each time* I look at you for a moment, I am . . . moved almost to swooning.' (Cf. Kühner–Gerth, ii. 449. Bowra was right in translating [1936]: 'For whenever I look at you . . .',<sup>6</sup> as is Wills, pp. 168 f.) Now a recurrent encounter of Sappho with the favourite girl is likely enough: the latter must have belonged to Sappho's large company of young women (we have the names of at least a dozen such young ladies,<sup>7</sup> and if our girl remained anonymous, so did another beloved one, the girl of fr. 1). On the other hand, recurrent visits of Sappho to the girl exactly at the time when 'the gentleman' was sitting there (both opposite the girl and close to her), while during each visit the girl keeps talking and laughing, the man politely only listening to her talking and laughing, is much less likely.

Anyhow, most scholars do agree that the first stanza bears the freshness of a *single* happening, of a casual encounter: Sappho incidentally comes and finds the girl talking to an (apparently unimpressed) man. If so, then κῆνος . . . ὤνηρ, ὅστις ἐναντίος τέ <τ> ἰσδάνει καὶ . . . ὑπακούει means 'That man there who is *now* sitting opposite you and listening to you' (Page, p. 20, too takes this to be 'the most natural choice'), and not 'That man who *often* sits opposite you and listens to you' (the choice preferred by, e.g., D. A. Campbell).<sup>8</sup> Consequently, the clause ὥς γὰρ <ῥς> σ' ἴδω ('For *whenever* I look at you') must imply 'For each time I look *at your person* (face, figure)': because 'the sitting scene' as a whole (1–5) is not likely to be a recurrent one, while the action 'Each time I look at you' is marked as such, the latter clause cannot imply 'For each time I look *at you sitting near him there*'. Finally, in line 5 τό in the bridge clause τό μ' ἦ μὲν | καρδίαν . . . ἐπτόαισεν cannot refer to 'the sitting scene' either, because the subsequent sentence is meant to explain this bridge clause.

(2) Furthermore, σ' in the clause ὥς γὰρ <ῥς> σ' ἴδω can hardly imply as

<sup>1</sup> *Sappho von einem herrschenden Vorurtheil befreit* (Göttingen), 68 = *Kl. Schriften*, ii (Bonn, 1845), 99 n. 45.

<sup>2</sup> *Sapphonis Mytilenaeae Fragmenta* (Berlin), 29 f., quoted by Page, p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> *Studia Sapphica* (*Eus. Suppl.* 6 [1929]), 9 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Hermes*, lxxvi (1931), 72–6.

<sup>5</sup> *Sappho und Simonides* (Berlin, 1913), 56.

<sup>6</sup> *GLP* 213 = 2nd edn. (1961), 185.

<sup>7</sup> The names of Archeanassa and Pleistodice (from *P. Oxy.* 2292 [fr. 213] and 2357) may be added to those mentioned by Page, pp. 133–6.

<sup>8</sup> *Greek Lyric Poetry* (Macmillan, 1967), 271.

much as Page (p. 22) would have it imply: 'For when I look at you, sitting near him as you are and talking and laughing to him, I am overcome by emotion, etc.' Now, A. J. Beattie (*Mnemos.* ser. iv, ix [1956], 111) felt this weakness and tried to rectify it by eliminating σ' while reading ὡς γὰρ <εἰ>σίδω: 'The object of εἰσορᾶν need not be expressed; we may take it to be σφῶ, or even τόν (referring to the subject of the first sentence).' I do not see how this reading would help the case for 'the jealousy attack', for two reasons: (a) The iterative subjunctive εἰσίδω still remains, whereas the actions of the subject of the first sentence are not likely to be recurrent; and (b), both Plutarch (*Amat.* 763 a τῆς ἐρωμένης ἐπιφανείσης) and Catullus (51. 6 f. *nam simul te, | Lesbia, aspexi*) read this σ'.

But, it has been objected, if it is the girl's *voice and laughter* that had beguiled Sappho's heart, why then is she moved to swooning each time she *looks* at the girl? I think the answer is simple: the girl's voice and laughter are envisaged by Sappho only as aspects of the girl's face, or of her over-all beauty and charms. Sappho is not likely to have fallen in love with the girl without even looking at her. Likewise, a man sitting facing and close to (ἐνάντιος and πλάσιον) a girl who is talking to him is supposed to *look* at her (unless he is blind). That is why Catullus (51. 3 f. *te | spectat et audit*) and Lucian (*Amores* 46 ἀντικρὺ τοῦ φίλου καθέζεσθαι καὶ πλησίον ἡδὺ λαλοῦντος ἀκούειν; 53 οὐ γὰρ ἀπόχρη τὸ θεωρεῖν ἐρώμενον οὐδ' ἀπαντικρὺ καθημένου καὶ λαλοῦντος ἀκούειν) have added *spectat* and τὸ θεωρεῖν, respectively. Thus there is no inconsistency between 'That sweet voice and ravishing laughter of yours is, I vow, what made me fall in love with you [in the first place]' and 'For whenever I look at you'.

Moreover, the most natural meaning of the phrase ὡς γὰρ <εἰ> σ' ἴδω is 'Whenever I look you *in the face*', and can be paralleled by Sappho, fr. 23. 3-6:

ὡς γὰρ ἄν]τιον εἰσίδω σ[ε,  
φαίνεται μ' οὐδ'] Ἑρμόνα τεαύ[τα  
ἔμμεναι,] ξάνθαι δ' Ἑλέναι σ' ἑ[το[κ]ην  
οὐδὲν ἄει]κες.<sup>1</sup>

'For whenever I look you in the eyes, I think that even Hermione was not so beautiful as you are, and that it is in no way unbecoming to liken you to golden-haired Helen.' Both images are close enough: the girl of fr. 23 is more beautiful than 'the beauty itself' (cf. *Odyssey* 4. 14), while the beauty of our girl moves Sappho to fainting.

(3) The probability that in line 5 τό refers to the immediately preceding words, viz. that it is the girl's voice and laughter that had beguiled Sappho's heart, goes well with Sappho's vulnerability to some *detail* of the physical appearance of her girls. It is the lovely *gait* and the bright *sparkle* of Anactoria's face that Sappho would prefer seeing to anything else, in her Priamel on what is κάλλιστον (fr. 16. 17-19). And she would rejoice at the *excitement* of another girl upon seeing a fine gown, because this excitement made the girl beautiful and desirable (πόθος) in the same way in which the desire-exciting laughter (γελάσας ἰμέροεν) of our girl made Sappho fall in love with her: 'Desire floats about the beautiful girl; for the gown set her fluttering when she saw it, and I rejoice' (fr. 22. 11-14). Most probably the fashionable Lydian *sandals* (μάσλης, fr. 39) on the feet of another girl produced the same effect in Sappho.

(4) The stock phrase τό μοι καρδίαν ἐπτόαισεν seems to denote the beginning

<sup>1</sup> Supplements by Page, pp. 138 f.

of a *love passion* ('That is what beguiled my heart'), rather than any depressive feeling, like 'distress', 'disturbance', 'jealousy' (Page, p. 22); 'stunning' (Wills, p. 183); 'stupore e sbigottimento' (C. Gallavotti);<sup>1</sup> 'das zerreiβt der Dichterin das Herz' (Kalinka, p. 158), etc. Cf. Alcaeus, fr. 283. 3 f. κ' Ἀλένας ἐν στήθε[ε]σιν [ἐ]π[τ]ό[α]ισε | θύμουν (sc. Aphrodite or Eros); Sappho, fr. 47 Ἔρος δ' ἐτίναξέ μοι | φρένας; Apoll. Rhod. 1. 1232 f. τὴν δὲ φρένας ἐπτοίησεν | Κύπρις; Poeta ap. Parthen. *narr. amat.* 21, vv. 5-7 (*Mythogr. Gr.* ii. 1 Suppl., p. 77 Martini) Κύπρις. | ἡ γὰρ ἐπ' Αἰακίδῃ κούρη φρένας ἐπτοίησεν | Πεισιδίκη; Callim. *Dian.* 190 f. ἥς ποτε Μίνως | πτοιηθεὶς ὑπ' ἔρωτι; Eur. *I.A.* 586 (lyr.) ἔρωτι δ' αὐτὸς ἐπτοόθης.<sup>2</sup> The sequence 5 f. ἰμέροεν, τό μ' ἦ μὰν | καρδίαν ἐν στήθεσιν ἐπτοόαισεν seems to suggest the same love-yearning atmosphere of ἔρως, ἡμερος, and πόθος.<sup>3</sup>

(5) Since the ἴδω-clause denotes an *iterative* action ('Every time that I look at you'), and since this clause is linked with the ἐπτοόαισεν-clause by an explanatory γάρ, it follows that ἐπτοόαισεν must denote an action which is *still in effect* when the recurrent action of ὡς γὰρ <ἐς> σ' ἴδω starts happening. It means that the aorist ἐπτοόαισεν must be taken as *ingressive*, expressing the beginning in the past of a still lasting action (Kühner-Gerth, i. 156 f.): 'This is what set my heart fluttering [ever since I first met you]', 'This is why I fell (= am) in love with you'. ἐπτοόαισε has the same inceptive aspect in Alc. fr. 283. 3 and in Sappho fr. 22. 14: Cf. Soph. *Ajax* 693, ἔφριξ' ἔρωτι, περιχαρὴς δ' ἀνεπτάμαν.

Scholars either follow Kalinka (p. 157: 'erschüttert mir jedesmal das Herz') in taking ἐπτοόαισεν for a *gnomic* aorist or simply do not distinguish it from the subsequent series of *praesentia*. So, e.g., Gallavotti (p. 116: 'esprime azione che nel presente si esplica'), Page, D. A. Russell ('it flutters my heart in my breast. When I see you for a moment, I cannot speak . . .').<sup>4</sup> But the iterative aspect of ἐπτοόαισεν is not likely here, because recurrence of 'the sitting scene' is not likely.

(6) γάρ. The choice is between: 'Seeing you and him together *stuns* me, because [γάρ] among other symptoms I then feel fainting' and 'I *am* passionately *in love* with you, because upon each of your appearances I feel [among other symptoms] fainting.' Now, the former choice is not likely, because fainting is too strong a state to be used to prove (γάρ) such a temporary emotion as stunning (or setting one's heart a-flutter). On the contrary, the latter choice is likely enough because fainting *can* be used to prove such a lasting state as is love-sickness.

(7) The most likely meaning of the Homeric 'godlike' in the formulae ἰσόθεος φῶς (14 times); ἐπέσσυτο δαίμονι ἴσος (7 times), or only δαίμονι ἴσος (3 times) is 'strong or powerful as a god'. This 'heroic' meaning is the most likely for Sappho's 1 ἴσος θέουσιν as well (as scholars from Welcker to Wills [p. 176] have seen). Not only does the meaning 'strong as a god' go well with the rest of Homeric phraseology spread over the poem (see below, II. 2. b), but it is also supported by the following arguments.

(a) There seems to be an intended contrast between 1 f. φαίνεται μοι κῆνος . . . ὠνηρ and 16 φαίνομ' ἔμ' αὖτ' [αὖ] (as Wilamowitz [p. 57] and Bowra<sup>2</sup> [p. 188]

<sup>1</sup> *RFIC* xx (1942), 115 f.

<sup>2</sup> The playful, love-exciting fluttering of the girl in fr. 22. 14 does not seem to contradict this.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Plato, *Symp.* 197 d 7 Ἔρως . . . ἰμέρου,

πόθου πατήρ; Pind. *O.* 1. 41 δαμέντα φρένας ἰμέρωι.

<sup>4</sup> 'Longinus', *On Sublimity*, translated by D. A. Russell (Oxford, 1965), 14.

had suggested long ago). If so, then 15 *τεθνάκην*, said of Sappho herself, must be contrasted too with 1 f. *ἄσος θέοισιν* | *ἔμμεν(αι)*, said of the man. Now, the opposite of 'to die' can only be 'to survive': while Sappho herself is being brought by the girl's irresistible appearance almost to the point of dying, the man proves to be *strong* enough to survive bearing the girl's charms and spell.

(b) Furthermore, there seems to be another intended contrast: that between the *durative* aspect of the present tense *ισθάνει καὶ* . . . *ὑπακούει*, on one hand, and the *inceptive* aorist *ἐπρόαισεν*, together with the subsequent series of iterative *praesentia*, on the other. The man is strong enough to *keep* sitting, listening (and presumably looking at the girl too), while Sappho herself proves unable to stand the girl's presence for one moment, but is knocked down at the first glance at her (cf. 7 *βρόχε(α)*, 10 *αὔτικα*, and Turyn [pp. 41–3]). This contrast seems to have been envisaged by Catullus (51. 3 f. *identidem te* | *spectat et audit* against 6 f. *nam simul te*, | *Lesbia, aspexi*), and by Welcker (p. 99 n. 45) too ('Der Mann, der dir nahe sitzen und ruhig verweilend deinem süßen Gespräch und Lachen zuhören kann, scheint mir wie ein Gott . . . eine stärkere Natur als ich Weib . . .').

(c) There is quite possibly a third contrast: the man proves strong enough to bear the girl's *close presence* (cf. *ἐνάντιός τέ* | *<τ>*), 'facing you', and *πλάσιον*, 'close to you'), while Sappho is struck down at a *distant look* at the girl (*εἰσορᾶν*).

In conclusion, the man is strong enough to bear the onslaught of the girl's overwhelming charms, while Sappho proves unable to stand them for one moment without being moved to swooning. For Sappho there is one explanation only: that man *must* possess a superhuman power (*ἄσος θέοισιν* = *ισόθεος φῶς* or *δαίμονι ἴσος*).

Consequently, *τό* in line 5 refers to that tricky 'touchstone', the girl's sweet voice and irresistible laughter. It is a test *common* to the seated gentleman and to Sappho. The man apparently passes the test: he proves able to stand these charms. Sappho flatly fails in the same test. She then concludes: 'That man must possess some superhuman strength.' Thus, it is not true that 'to maintain that Sappho feels no jealousy of the man' would be 'to deprive the introduction of the man, and his relation to the girl, of all significance', as Page (p. 28) believed. There is no 'love triangle' in the poem: Sappho uses the casual presence of the man *only as a point of contrast*, to express better her own deep love for the girl. 'No human being can stand your charms: only a superhuman one could. As for me, I have been passionately in love with you ever since I first met you.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There is another misconception which must be dismissed: that in line 5 *τό* refers to the *whole* preceding statement (i.e. not only to *ὄππῃς* . . . *ισθάνει καὶ* . . . *ὑπακούει*, but also to the main clause beginning with *φαίνεται μοι*). The first to suppose so was C. Gallavotti (p. 117). But his interpretation seems to depend on the reading *φαίνεται φοι*, shared by Voss, Bekker, Ahrens, which he adopts: 'Quell'uomo . . . si sente di essere uguale a un dio, così felice e tranquillo come è; e questo veramente mi ha stupita nell'animo.' Now, to refute Gallavotti's interpretation it is sufficient to say that the reading *φοι* is far from being likely (although the author still seems to insist on it:

cf. his *Saffo e Alceo* [Collana di studi greci, x, Naples, 1947], i. 79; *RFIC* xciv [1966], 257–67): *φοι* stands only in Apollon. Dysc. *De pronomine*, p. 82. 17 Schneider, against *μοι* in Apollon., p. 59. 10; in 'Longinus' 10. 2, and in Catullus 51. 1 as well.

Both C. del Grande (*Euphrosyne*, ii [1959], 186) and G. Wills (p. 183) read *μοι* and refer *τό* to *φαίνεται μοι*: 'This makes the most probable reading of our text . . . "The fact that the man is godlike enough to sit there stuns me" (*τό* = *τὸ δ' αὐτὸν ἰσόθεον εἶναι φῶτα*)' (Wills). The following objections may be raised to their viewpoints:

(a) If one refers *τό* to *φαίνεται μοι κτλ.*, then a consequent equation will be this one

## II. LOVE FOR THE GIRL

Thus I would understand the Greek text as follows: 'Strong as the gods he seems to me, that man there who can both *keep* sitting right opposite you, and *keep* listening, so close to you, to your sweet voice and ravishing laughter. *This* it is, no other, I swear [i.e. your irresistible voice and laughter], that set my heart fluttering within my breast [ever since I first met you]. For *whenever* I look at your (face), be it for a moment only, I no longer have the power to speak . . . (and an onset of *all possible* symptoms of *love* overwhelms me almost to swooning).'

(1) From the fact that the gentleman can keep sitting facing the girl, and keep listening too, to her irresistibly charming voice and laughter, Sappho draws the *playful* conclusion that the man must possess some superhuman strength: Sappho herself cannot stand the girl's overwhelming beauty for one moment. Now, the message of the poem might be either: 'You are an overwhelmingly charming girl' (i.e. the piece is no more than a poetic device or hyperbole), or: 'I cannot help being in love with you' (i.e. the poem reflects some personal experience). The second choice seems more likely to me.

Fr. 31 was already understood as a poem of *love* by 'Longinus' (10. 1): 'the emotions involved in a love passion' (τὰ συμβαίνοντα ταῖς ἐρωτικαῖς μανίαις παθήματα). When Devereux (p. 26) now writes that 'Longinus' 'understood Sappho's reaction to belong to the domain of psychopathology' and that the word *μανίαις* 'should be taken in a strictly psychiatric sense', he can easily be refuted by 'Longinus' himself, who a little later (10. 3) calls Sappho's symptoms 'things usually occurring in the case of lovers' (πάντα μὲν τοιαῦτα γίνεται περὶ τοὺς ἐρῶντας). As for αἱ ἐρωτικαὶ μανίαι, it is a phrase common enough from Plato onwards (ἡ ἐρωτικὴ μανία *Phaedr.* 256 d 6, 265 b 5, cf. 265 a 6 and *Laws* 8, 839 a 7), meaning no more than 'cases of love passion', without any psychiatric overtone.

(2) What is more important, Devereux (p. 19) makes the following diagnosis: 'From the psychiatric point of view, she [i.e. Sappho] describes a perfect, "text-book case", anxiety attack. This repertoire of *ten* symptoms cannot characterize any other reaction . . .' But to do so, we must first be sure about two things: (a) that every symptom is correctly understood; and (b) that

(instead of that given by Wills): τὸ = τὸ φαίνεσθαι μοι κῆρον ἴσον θεοῖσιν ἔμμεν(αι). 'The fact that the man sitting there *seems to me* godlike stuns me.' Now, it is highly unlikely for Sappho to be stunned by *her own* statement, just advanced with such an emphasis. Nor is this statement so shocking as to provoke her 'stunning', 'stupire'.

(b) Wills's interpretation is aggravated by an unlikely change of the transmitted text (pp. 185, 192 and n. 35). He first changed the transmitted 5 τὸ μὴ ἔμάν ('Long.' P, slightly and convincingly emended by Lobel into τὸ μ' ἡ μάν) into τὸ δὴ κεν; then he saw himself compelled to add the missing μ' in the next line 6 καρδίαν <μ'> ἐν στήθεσιν. The reason for all this lies in Wills's desire to save Welcker's improbable interpretation: 'mir würde es gewiß (denn

der Aorist hat diesen Nachdruck) das Herz erschüttern' (cf. Wills, p. 184: '... then τὸ . . . κέν . . . ἐπρόαισεν would give Welcker's sense to the passage . . .').

Wills's 'fatal objection' to Lobel's τὸ μ' ἡ μάν is that 'ἡ μὴν always introduces its asseverative clause'. I do not think this objection is a fatal one: in Alcaeus, fr. 344. 1 οἶδ' ἡ μάν, 'I know for sure', these particles are not initial either; both here and in Sappho, fr. 31 the reason for the unusual order is the pressure of the metre. By the way, there is a sheer mistake in Denniston (*Gr. Part.*<sup>1</sup> 350 f.): 'According to Dittenberger (*l.c.*, p. 329, n. 4) ἡ μὴν occurs fifteen times in the *Parmenides*, as often as in all the remaining dialogues of Plato put together.' In fact, Dittenberger (*Hermes*, xvi [1881], 323 n. 2) speaks of οὐδὲ μὴν, not of ἡ μὴν.

Sappho is giving us true and clinically exact evidence. Now the point is that we cannot be sure about either.

As for (a), I have already mentioned (p. 20 above) that the sentence 5 f.  $\tau\acute{o}\mu' \eta\grave{\iota} \mu\grave{\alpha}\nu \mid \kappa\alpha\rho\delta\acute{\iota}\alpha\nu \acute{\epsilon}\nu \sigma\tau\acute{\eta}\theta\epsilon\sigma\omega \acute{\epsilon}\pi\rho\acute{o}\alpha\iota\sigma\epsilon\nu$  has been interpreted by Devereux as anxiety attack symptom No. 1 ('Abnormal heartbeat: palpitations, cardiac arrhythmia, etc.'). But I take the phrase to mean something quite different: 'That is what *beguiled* my heart' (cf. Alc. fr. 283. 3 f. '[Aphrodite] set fluttering the heart of Argive Helen in her breast', and I. 4 above).

As for (b), we should bear in mind that Sappho is not a clinical patient but an imaginative writer. We do not know where personal experience in Sappho ends and poetic fiction takes over. We all assume that Sappho is to be trusted to have personally felt *some* of the symptoms she describes; but we cannot be sure about *all* of them. For one thing, did she really hold a mirror in her hand during 'the attack', to give us 'clinical' evidence about Devereux's symptom No. 9, 'Extreme pallor'? Or is it not safer to take the etymological simile 14  $\chi\lambda\omega\rho\acute{o}\tau\epsilon\rho\alpha \delta\acute{\epsilon} \pi\acute{o}\iota\alpha\varsigma$  (cf.  $\chi\lambda\acute{o}\eta$ ) as being inspired by the Homeric stock symbol of fear,  $\chi\lambda\omega\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$  (*Iliad* 10. 376, 15. 4, etc.), as Turyn did ('item ex Homero delibatum est', p. 54)?

Moreover, if we find unmistakable echoes of Homeric phraseology in fr. 31 (1: cf.  $\iota\sigma\acute{o}\theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma \phi\acute{o}\varsigma$ ; 3-5: cf.  $\eta\delta\nu\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omega\tau\alpha$  *h. Hom.* 19. 37;  $\eta\delta\nu\epsilon\pi\acute{\eta}\varsigma$  *Iliad* 1. 248;  $\imath\mu\epsilon\rho\acute{o}\phi\omega\nu\omicron\varsigma$  Sappho fr. 136; 5 f.:  $\acute{\epsilon}\mu\omicron\iota \kappa\rho\alpha\delta\acute{\iota}\eta \dots \acute{\epsilon}\nu\iota \sigma\tau\acute{\eta}\theta\epsilon\sigma\omega$  *Odyssey* 4. 548 f. plus  $\tau\acute{\omega}\nu \delta\acute{\epsilon} \phi\rho\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\varsigma \acute{\epsilon}\pi\tau\acute{o}\iota\eta\theta\epsilon\nu$  22. 298; 7:  $\acute{\omega}\varsigma \delta' \imath\delta\epsilon\nu, \acute{\omega}\varsigma \mu\imath\nu \acute{\epsilon}\rho\omega\varsigma \pi\upsilon\kappa\iota\nu\acute{\alpha}\varsigma \phi\rho\acute{\epsilon}\nu\alpha\varsigma \acute{\alpha}\mu\phi\epsilon\kappa\acute{\alpha}\lambda\upsilon\phi\epsilon\nu$  *Iliad* 14. 294, etc.) then I think we cannot rule out the possibility that Sappho, fr. 31. 13-15 ( $\tau\rho\acute{o}\mu\omicron\varsigma \delta\acute{\epsilon} \mid \pi\alpha\acute{\iota}\sigma\alpha\nu \acute{\alpha}\gamma\rho\epsilon\iota, \chi\lambda\omega\rho\acute{o}\tau\epsilon\rho\alpha \delta\acute{\epsilon} \pi\acute{o}\iota\alpha\varsigma \mid \acute{\epsilon}\mu\mu\iota$ ) was influenced by *Iliad* 3. 34 f.  $\acute{\upsilon}\pi\acute{o} \tau\epsilon \tau\rho\acute{o}\mu\omicron\varsigma \acute{\epsilon}\lambda\lambda\alpha\beta\epsilon \gamma\nu\acute{\iota}\alpha \mid \dots \acute{\omega}\chi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma \tau\acute{\epsilon} \mu\imath\nu \acute{\epsilon}\imath\lambda\epsilon \pi\alpha\rho\epsilon\iota\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$ . Here again (cf. pp. 2 f. above) Page is not consistent: on p. 30 he writes: 'But when the individual symptoms are described, the style is seen to be free from the influence of, and fundamentally different from, that of the Epic'; but on p. 25 he suggests for one of such symptoms the reading 9  $\acute{\alpha}\kappa\alpha\nu \dots \gamma\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\alpha\kappa\epsilon$ , built upon the Homeric formula  $\acute{\alpha}\kappa\eta\nu \acute{\epsilon}\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\nu\tau\omicron \sigma\iota\omega\pi\eta\eta$  (cf. below, III).

However, the fact remains that *six out of eight* symptoms of Sappho have their counterpart in Homer: dumbness, blindness, sweating, trembling, pallor, and fainting (only deafness and numbness are missing).<sup>1</sup> There may be more to this. In Homer blindness and fainting seem to go together:

$\tau\acute{o}\nu \delta\acute{\epsilon} \lambda\acute{\iota}\pi\epsilon \psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}, \kappa\alpha\tau\acute{\alpha} \delta' \acute{\omicron}\phi\theta\alpha\lambda\mu\acute{\omega}\nu \kappa\acute{\epsilon}\chi\upsilon\tau' \acute{\alpha}\chi\lambda\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma$

(*Iliad* 5. 696; cf. 22. 466 f.). In Archilochus, fr. 112 D. these two symptoms are linked with the love passion.<sup>2</sup> If they now appear in Sappho separated from each other, I think we can understand why Sappho has changed the traditional pattern: she wanted to produce a *climax* by ending the series of symptoms with the fainting (15 f.  $\tau\epsilon\theta\nu\acute{\alpha}\kappa\eta\nu \delta' \acute{\omicron}\lambda\acute{\iota}\gamma\omega \pi\acute{\iota}\delta\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\eta\nu^3 \mid \phi\acute{\alpha}\iota\nu\omicron\mu' \acute{\epsilon}\mu' \alpha\upsilon\tau[αι]$ ).

In short, the possibility that Sappho, in her repertoire of twice-four-symptoms, is combining personal experience with traditional patterns cannot be excluded. If so, then true and exact clinical evidence for the psychiatric diagnosis of 'anxiety attack' is missing, quite apart from the fact that there is no motive (i.e. 'the rival') in the poem to provoke such a reaction. Here again

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Turyn, pp. 43-57; Page, p. 29 n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Archilochus, fr. 104 D., and Bowra, *GLP* 218 f. = 2nd edn., pp. 188 f.

<sup>3</sup>  $\pi\acute{\iota}\delta\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\eta\nu$  Ahrens, A. J. Beattie (*Mnemos.*

ser. 4. ix [1956], 108 f.: = Attic  $\acute{\omicron}\lambda\acute{\iota}\gamma\omicron\nu \delta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$ ), accepted by Wills, p. 192:  $\pi\acute{\iota}\delta\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\eta\nu$  'Long.' P:  $\pi\acute{\iota}\delta\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\eta\varsigma$  Hermann, accepted by Lobel, Page, Bowra, Russell, *et al.*

'Longinus' seems to have seen the truth (10. 3): 'Each one of such symptoms occurs in the case of lovers; but, as I have said (10. 1 s.f.), it is the *selection* of the most striking of them, and their *combination* into a single whole that has given singular excellence to Sappho's art.'

(3) There is another case of the onslaught of Sapphic symptoms, described by Plutarch (*Demetr.* 38. 4). The king Seleucus' son Antiochus, who in his heart was madly in love with his young stepmother Stratonice, suffered exactly the same chain reaction of symptoms each time he saw her.

Here too Devereux (p. 26) takes Plutarch's anecdotal fiction in chapter 38 for clinical evidence: 'a manifestly pathological, quasi-incestuous, erotic madness . . .'. 'The neurotic, anxiety-arousing, oedipal element in this case is so obvious as to require no further discussion.'

But why not understand Plutarch here as simply echoing Sappho, as he himself seems to suggest: 'those classical symptoms of Sappho were all present in Antiochus each time' (ἐγίνετο τὰ τῆς Σαπφούς ἐκεῖνα περὶ αὐτὸν πάντα)? Plutarch knew Sappho's poem (*De prof. virt.* 81 d), and Antiochus' symptoms of love passion upon the appearance of Stratonice (τῆς δὲ Στρατονίκης . . . φοιτώσης, *Demetr.* 38. 4) resemble very much those of Sappho upon the appearance of the beloved girl (τῆς ἐρωμένης ἐπιφανείσης, *Amat.* 763 a). Incidentally, the physician Erasistratus had diagnosed love-sickness in Antiochus long before knowing that the object of the latter's love was his step-mother (38. 3); and Plutarch's phrasing in *Amatorius* clearly shows that he understood Sappho's poem as one of love, not of jealousy.

(4) Finally, we need no 'anxiety attack' to evince *homosexual inclinations* in Sappho. If we are willing (as I certainly am) to understand fr. 31 as Sappho's declaration of love to the girl, then such inclinations are likely enough. Now, to diagnose 'love-sickness', as opposed to an 'anxiety attack', the sincerity on Sappho's part of either the statement τό μ' ἦ μὲν | καρδίαν ἐν στήθεσιν ἐπ-τόαισεν or of just one of the described symptoms is sufficient.

These inclinations can be confirmed by fr. 1. 23 f. ταχέως φιλήσει | κωὺκ ἐθέλοισα. Here Knox *obiter* had suggested the reading κωὺ σε θέλοισα<ν>,<sup>1</sup> praised by Page (p. 11). However, this conjecture cannot transform Sappho's homosexual love into a heterosexual one: it is out of the question for Sappho to have either *pursued a man* (21 διώξει) or sent *him* gifts as tokens of love (22 δῶρα . . . δώσει).

Thus, I would side with Page (p. 144) in believing that we have sufficient evidence for Sappho's homosexual *inclinations*. As for her practice as γυναι-κεράστρια (*P. Oxy.* 1800, fr. I, col. 1. 18), that is beyond our power to prove (perhaps because fr. 94 is so badly damaged, in the first place).

### III. SAPPHO'S CRIPPLED TONGUE

Devereux's second purpose was 'to delimit, on the basis of psycho-physiological considerations, the sense any emendation of ἔαγε (v. 9) must have, if it is to match the clinical precision and to fit the rest of the seizure she describes' (p. 17). The conclusion reached is 'that, during her seizure, Sappho's tongue and mouth were extremely dry and that the little saliva that remained was viscous, causing her tongue to stick against her palate. It is such a "glueing" of the tongue to the palate, rather than a paralysis of the tongue, which would

<sup>1</sup> *SIFC* xv (1939), 194 n. 3.

occur in a state of extreme anxiety' (p. 23). Accordingly, Barnesius's (and Cobet's) conjecture *πέπαγε* best matches the clinical precision of Sappho's 'anxiety attack' (p. 24).

Devereux's 'philological considerations' were not happier than his 'clinical considerations'. Generally speaking, if we dismiss both the motive for Sappho's 'anxiety attack' (i.e. 'the male rival') and the attack itself (on the grounds of inexact clinical evidence), then psychiatry cannot help us to interpret any one of the symptoms of the supposed attack either, for instance Sappho's crippled tongue.

Coming to Devereux's philological evidence for 'glueing' of Sappho's tongue to her palate (pp. 23 f.), I find it incomplete and inconclusive. Thus Plutarch does not speak of Sappho's tongue (v. 9), but of her *voice* (v. 7 f.): *τὴν τε φωνὴν ἰσχεσθαι* (*Amat.* 763 a) = *φωνῆς ἐπίσχεσις* (*Demetr.* 38. 4). In doing so he is using not Sapphic but Homeric phraseology (*θαλερὴ δέ οἱ ἔσχετο φωνή*, *Iliad* 17. 696; *Odyssey* 4. 705, 19. 472; cf. Turyn, p. 44). Theocritus (2. 110) ἀλλ' ἐπάγην δαγῦδι καλὸν χροῖα πάντοθεν ἴσα ('but all my fair body grew stiff as it were a doll's', Gow) cannot help the conjecture *πέπαγε*, because the line does not refer to the tongue but to the torpidity of the whole body (cf. Plutarch's symptoms ἀπορία καὶ θάμβος). Ovid, *Her.* 15. 111 *et lacrimae deerant oculis et verba* (f: *lingua* H F) *palato* (cf. *Amores* 2. 6. 47) is not the closest parallel. Better are: *Her.* 11. 82 *torpuerat gelido lingua retenta metu*;<sup>1</sup> *M.* 6. 306 f. *ipsa quoque interius cum duro lingua palato | congelat*; *Tr.* 3. 3. 21 *si iam deficiam subpressaue lingua palato*. Catullus 51. 9 *lingua sed torpet* does not support 'glueing of the tongue' any more than 'paralysis of the tongue', etc.

Now what Devereux does not mention is that Lucretius, in his description of fear (3. 154–7), while accurately reproducing *all* the symptoms of Sappho *except* λέπτον . . . πῦρ, has *et infringi linguam vocemque aboriri* (cf. Ferrari, pp. 137–50, esp. 142 n. 2). Thus I would think that the most likely reading of line 9 is: ἀλλὰ καὶ μὲν γλῶσσα ἔαγε (for the transmitted: ἀλλὰ κάμ 'Long.' *apogr.*: ἀλλὰ καῖν P: ἀλλὰ κατὰ Plut. *Mor.* 81 d).

Lobel's ἀλλ' ἄκαν, accepted by Page, Beattie (pp. 103 f.), Campbell, and many others, was not a happy solution: (a) it does not explain Plutarch's κατὰ. P's καῖν μὲν may rather be a corruption of καὶ μὲν than the reverse (D. A. Russell too gives preference to κάμ). (b) What is worse, this reading replaces a minor difficulty by a major one. For the usage of the Homeric adverb ἀκὴν is restricted to a few verbs: to the common formula οἱ δ' ἄρα πάντες ἀκὴν ἐγένοντο σιωπῇ (*Iliad* 3. 95 *et al.*), in the first place; then to ἀκὴν ἔσαν (*Odyssey* 2. 82, 4. 285), ἀκὴν ἔμεναι (21. 239), and ἀκὴν ἴσαν (*Iliad* 4. 429).

Page is right when objecting to καὶ μὲν . . . ἔαγε: 'Metaphorical use of κατὰ-γνυμι is hard to illustrate' (pp. 24 f.). But this is a minor difficulty in comparison with the alternative. For if we choose to read ἄκαν, then we must sacrifice not only ἔαγε (which is strongly supported by Lucretius, 'Longinus', and Plutarch), but also Barnesius's πέπαγε (which unfortunately still stands in Bowra's *text* of Sappho). Lobel's reference to Hesych. ἀκὴν ἦγες proved to be futile. Page's own conjecture ἄκαν . . . γέγακε is neither genuinely Homeric nor palaeographically convincing. Most probably Lucretius read καὶ μὲν . . . ἔαγε. According to Page, 'this only indicates that ἔαγε was already established in the text of his day'. But the change of ἀλλ' ἄκαν . . . γέγακε into ἀλλὰ καὶ μὲν . . . ἔαγε in the period down to Lucretius does not seem to be a likely corruption.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. W. Ferrari, *SIFC* xiv (1937), 143 n. 2.

Beattie's combination of the Homeric ἀκήν with the transmitted ἔαγε by reading ἄκαν . . . γλώσσ' ἀ<π>έαγε (adopted by Wills, pp. 192 f.) is not more convincing: (a) metaphorical use of ἀπάγνυμι is even harder to illustrate; (b) ἄκαν . . . ἀπέαγε seems to be neither Homeric nor Greek; and (c) γλώσσα does not mean here 'voice', 'speech', 'language' (which was already implied by line 7 φώνα<ι>σ(αι) Danielsson: φωνάς P), but clearly 'tongue'; thus, the meaning of ἀπέαγε 'break off', 'stop short' is not established either.

Under the circumstances, Milman Parry's defence of κάμ . . . γλώσσα ἔαγε (HSCP xlii [1932], 31) as one of the few cases of influence of the traditional digamma (cf., e.g., Alc. fr. 356 ἑάνασσε) seems to be the preferable reading. It has recently been advocated by both E. Heitsch (*Rh. Mus.* cv [1962], 285) and R. Hiersche (*Glotta*, xlv [1966], 1-5), especially by reference to Hesiod, *Erga* 534 οὐδ' τ' ἐπὶ νῶτα ἔαγε, and to the formula κατὰ θ' ἄρματα ἄξω (*Iliad* 8. 403 *et al.*).

Possibly, 'my tongue is broken' or 'crippled' was a colloquial phrase, such as line 14 'greener (paler) than grass' (χλωροτέρα δὲ ποίας). If κατάννυμι could be used in Greek for broken bones, broken ears of boxers (cf. ὁ ὠτοκάταξις), broken trees (cf. Hesych., s.v. μεσοκουράδες· δένδρα . . . καταγέντα), presumably it could be used for a 'broken tongue' as well. After all, if Sappho could produce such an unusual metaphor as 'If . . . your tongue were not *brewing* (or *concocting*) some evil thing to say . . .' (fr. 137. 3 f. αἰ . . . μή τί τ' εἴπην γλώσσ' ἐκύκα κακόν), one would think she could well write κάμ μὲν γλώσσα ἔαγε too.<sup>1</sup>

#### APPENDIX

##### 'A Bridegroom Like Ares' (fr. 111. 5)

(1) The fact that Sappho in fr. 31 uses the Homeric cliché ἵσος θεοῖσιν = ἰσόθεος φώς, with the most likely meaning 'strong as a god', does not imply that the phrase ἵσος Ἄρεινι in her epithalamian fr. 111. 5 must have the same meaning as in the Homeric formula βροτολογίῳ ἵσος Ἀρηϊ (*Iliad* 11. 295; 12. 130; 13. 802; 20. 46. *Odyssey* 8. 115; cf. ἔκμολεν ἵσος Ἀρηϊ, *Iliad* 11. 604), 'powerful' or 'impetuous as Ares'.

Nevertheless, this is the way that Wills takes it: 'the groom is as powerful, as full of prowess, as Ares' (p. 181 n. 26). And the same is suggested by Lobel's reading ἵσ' Ἄρεινι (for the transmitted ἵσος or ἵσος Ἄρεινι), which is accepted by the majority of scholars. Naturally in a clause like this, γάμβρος εἶσ'<sup>2</sup> ἵσ' Ἄρεινι, the word ἵσ(α) is an adverb to be taken with εἶσ'. Accordingly, the meaning is not 'a bridegroom will come, the size of Ares' (Page, p. 120), or 'a bridegroom comes like Ares' (Bowra<sup>2</sup>, p. 216), but 'a bridegroom will be coming in the way Ares used to', i.e.

σεύατ' ἐπειθ' οἶός τε πελώριος ἔρχεται Ἄρης

(*Iliad* 7. 208; cf. 13. 298). G. S. Kirk (*CQ* xiii [1963], 52) has consequently rendered Lobel's text, which he adopts, as '“will rush along” as Ares rushes into battle, emphasizing the bridegroom's impetuosity'.

Now since our bridegroom is not about to rush into any kind of battle but is solemnly approaching his new family home (cf. the refrain ὑμήναον), the epic eagerness for struggle and the impetuosity of a θοῦρος Ἄρης is out of place here.

<sup>1</sup> Heitsch's argument, p. 285 n. 9.

<sup>2</sup> εἶσ' is Lobel's convincing emendation of the transmitted εἰσ[έρχεται] or ἔρχεται.

This is confirmed by the subsequent, exegetic line: *ἄνδρος μεγάλῳ πολὺ μέζων*, 'far taller than a tall man'. This line gives us the *tertium comparationis* between the bridegroom and Ares. Moreover, the word *μέζων* suggests the following reading in the preceding line: *γάμβρος εἶς ἴσος Ἄρει*. (The lengthened *alpha* in *Ἄρει* can be explained by epic influence: cf. *Iliad* 2. 767; 7. 208; Soph. *Ajax* 614 lyr., etc.) Now we can render the line: 'A bridegroom is coming, the size of Ares' (or 'who is like Ares').

(2) Nevertheless, a new misconception arose with Kirk's ingenious but unlikely interpretation: 'The bridegroom is a big man, perhaps, but on this occasion he is much bigger than a big man—because he is fantastically ithyphallic. As he approaches the bridal chamber and his new bride his *membrum virile* is envisaged as extending far higher than his head (analogous exaggerations can be cited from vase-paintings), and it is this flattering hyperbole that is the reason for the order to raise the roof' (p. 51): *ἵψοι δὲ τὸ μέλαθρον, / ὑμήναον, / ἀέρρετε, τέκτονες ἄνδρες*. K. J. Dover (ap. Kirk) added that 'bigness in this vital respect is more important than sheer tallness of stature'.

(3) Furthermore, Hugh Lloyd-Jones (*CQ* xvii [1967], 168) has tried to support Kirk's 'quite likely' interpretation by referring to Tzetzes on Lycophron 1378 (ed. Scheer, ii. 381 f., q.v.) *θαλερὸν πόσιν*, which corresponds to *μέγαν ἄνδρα* in the version preserved in *Etym. M.*, s.v. *ἀσελαίνειν* (p. 153. 2 Gaisford). He then concluded: 'The occurrence in this particular place of *μέγας ἀνὴρ* used in just the sense which Dr. Kirk ascribes to it in Sappho seems to me to lend useful support to his suggestion.'

I am at a loss to see why *μέγας ἀνὴρ* in the supporting text must have the sense 'a fantastically ithyphallic man'. Let us accept Lloyd-Jones's assumption: 'What is important for my purpose is to note that *θαλερὸν πόσιν* and *μέγαν ἄνδρα* clearly mean the same thing.' Now, if we know that *θαλερὸς πόσις* is no more than a Homeric cliché (*θαλερὸς πόσις* in the same position in the hexameter is to be found at *Iliad* 8. 190; cf. also 6. 430, 8. 156, 3. 53, *h. Cer.* 79), meaning 'a blooming, buxom, or sturdy husband', and if it clearly means the same as *μέγας ἀνὴρ*, then the latter need not mean more than 'a strong, or vigorous husband', without any obscene overtone (by way of, e.g., *Iliad* 3. 26; 11. 414 *θαλεροὶ τ' αἰζηοί*, 'vigorous, full-grown men'). G. Wills too remarks that *μέγας ἀνὴρ* here clearly means 'lusty bridegroom' (*CQ* xx [1970], 112). If so, then how can this sense support Kirk's 'fantastically ithyphallic man', as both Lloyd-Jones and Wills think that it does?

As for the corrupt text of the two-line oracle, given by Elegeis to her father Neleus about the foundation of Miletus, line 1 in Tzetzes' version reads:

δίζεο σεῦ μάλα ἐς θαλερὸν πόσιν ἢ ἐς Ἀθήνας.

This version I would read:

δίζεό σοι μάλα δὴ θαλερὸν πόσιν ἐκτὸς Ἀθηνῶν.

The reading *ἐκτὸς* (*ἐκτοθ'* ci. Scheer) is required by Tzetzes' text (p. 383. 20) *διὸ οὐδεὶς αὐτὴν Ἀθηναίων ἡβουλήθη γῆμαι*. The other version of the same line runs: *δίζεο δίζεο δὴ μέγαν ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι* *Etym. Gen.*:<sup>1</sup> *μέγαν ἄνδρα* *ath Etym. M.* I find Wilamowitz's reading of this version convincing:

δίζεο δίζεό <σοι μάλα> δὴ μέγαν ἄνδρ' <ἀπ'> Ἀθηνῶν.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M. E. Miller, *Mélanges de litt. gr.* (Paris, 1868), 47.

<sup>2</sup> *Einleitung in die attische Tragödie* (1889), 58 n. 18.

As for the second line, it seems to me good as it stood in *Elym. Gen.*:

ὅς σ' ἐπὶ Μίλητον δὲ κατάξει πῆματα Καρσύν.

Finally, both lines of the oracle are well illustrated by the following text of Tzetzes (p. 383. 13–16): τῶι δὲ Νηλεὶ τοῦ θεοῦ εἰπόντος τὴν θυγατέρα δεῖξεν ὅπου δεῖ κτίζειν, ἀποβάντων αὐτῶν εἰς Μίλητον ἀνασυραμένην τοὺς μηροὺς εἰπεῖν· τίς θέλει μοι συνουσιᾶσαι; συνεῖς δὲ ὁ πατὴρ αὐτῆς τὸ λόγιον ἐκεῖ κατῴκησε.<sup>1</sup>

(4) In turn, Wills (*GRBS* viii [1967], 180 n. 26) adduced Aristophanes, *Pax* 1351 f. τοῦ μὲν μέγα καὶ παχύ, | τῆς δ' ἥδὲ τὸ σῦκον as 'the passage that confirms his [Kirk's] suggestion', which is 'fitting the obscene banter of marriages'. Here again I do not see how the statement 'His (τοῦ) *membrum* is long' can confirm the sentence 'He (γάμβρος) is a tall man'. I think Wills is refuting himself when adding (*CQ* xx [1970], 112) that in Aristophanes' text 'πέος could be immediately supplied'.<sup>2</sup> Anyway, Wills is wrong in thinking that this fantastically ithyphallic bridegroom (very much like a satyr from an Attic vase) can be reconciled with the Homeric formula ἴσος Ἀργεῖ ('With this interpretation, Sappho 111. 5 would keep its Homeric sense: the groom is as powerful, as full of prowess, as Ares . . .').

Finally, K. J. McKay (*CQ* xvii [1967], 189), while dismissing Kirk's interpretation, correctly pointed out that it is 'the superhuman stature which permits comparison with a god' (ἄνδρος μεγάλῳ πόλῳ μέζων being 'the equivalent of an emphatic *μείζων ἢ κατ' ἄνθρωπον*'). But he then went astray when suggesting instead: '... the choice is certainly made the happier by his [Ares'] celebrated liaison with Aphrodite, herself commonly compared with the bride in epithalamia.' Aphrodite is wholly absent from the fragment, and the fact that Sappho likens another groom to Achilles (fr. 105*b*) suggests that bride and bridegroom were likened separately (in the ritualistic complimentary wedding likening: τίωι σ', ὦ φίλε γάμβρε, κάλως εἰκάσω; fr. 115).<sup>3</sup>

(5) But the way to link Sappho 111. 5 with the Homeric tradition seems to me quite simple. The bridegroom is said to be 'far taller than a tall man', and thanks to this expegetetic line we know *why* he is 'like Ares'. Now as we happen to know the 'exact' size of Ares, *seven plethra*—

ἑπτὰ δ' ἐπέσχε πέλεθρα πεσών, ἐκόνισε δὲ χαίτας —

(*Iliad* 21. 407), we need no other *tertium comparationis* but the tall size of both. This goes well with another piece of the customary wedding *Fescennina iocatio*: the feet of another bridegroom's door-keeper are *seven fathoms* long, etc. (fr. 110*a*. 1 θυρώρῳ πόδες ἐμπορόγνυι).<sup>4</sup> 'This is the same kind of humour as that in which she [Sappho] mocks the bridegroom, simple and primitive and traditional' (Bowra<sup>2</sup>, p. 217).

<sup>1</sup> Cf. also Lycophron 1385–7:

ὅταν κόρη κασωρὶς εἰς ἐπέσιον  
χλεύην ὑλακτῆσασα κηκάσῃ γάμου  
νυμφεῖα πρὸς κηλωστὰ καρβάνων τελείν.

Both improper acts of Elegeis, this one in Asia Minor and that in Athens while singing the oracle (cf. Tzetzes, p. 381. 28 παραγενόμενος δὲ εἰς Ἀθήνας (sc. Neleus), ἤκουσε τῆς θυγατρὸς γυμνῆς τυπτοῦσης τὸ ἐπέσιον καὶ

λεγούσης), seem to have magic meaning; cf. Lobeck, *Aglaophamus*, 826 n. 1, and Crusius, in *RE* v. 2258–60 (Elegeis).

<sup>2</sup> His new suggestion, 'but where a more general heroic notion is probably understood at first—*μένος*, for instance', is disproved by the very physical epithet *παχύ*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. R. Merkelbach, *Philol.* ci (1957), 10.

<sup>4</sup> As, among others, Campbell, p. 284, has pointed out.

The bridegroom's moderately tall size (no more than this need be supposed) is the *only* reason for the members of his escort to order, in jest, the carpenters to raise high the roof of the hall that the groom is going to enter. All this is part of the traditional wedding folklore. In her epithalamian poetry Sappho is not indecent but strongly ritualistic.

One parallel: nowadays in the country of the epic *guslars*, when the bridegroom and his retinue approach the bride's house, his companions are expected to sing these *deseterci* (decasyllables):

Listen, bride's mother, our new friend:  
*Too low is thy roof for such a tall bridegroom.*  
 Raise high the roof, ye our new relatives,  
 Lest our Ranko [i.e. John Doe] breaks his panache.<sup>1</sup>

One may object that it is a long way from Sappho to the Yugoslav epic poetry. Maybe, but the way from Sappho to Homer (*Iliad* 21. 407) is shorter than it is to the Attic Comedy.

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<sup>1</sup> Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, *Srpske narodne pjesme* (The Serbian Folk Songs) i, no. 32 (Vienna, 1841 = Belgrade, Nolit, 1969, p. 20): 'Kad mladoženja ulazi u kuću djevojačku' ('On the occasion when the

bridegroom enters the bride's house'):

*Sniska strea, visok djuvegija,*  
*prijo naša, devojčka majko!*  
*Diž'te streu, novi prijatelji,*  
 da naš Ranko ne polomi perje!