SAPPHO FR. 16. 6–7 L–P

πάγχυ δ' εὔμαρες σύνετον πόησαι | πάντι τοῦτο, sang Sappho (Fr. 16. 5–6 L–P);[1] but, to judge from the controversies which have marked the scholarly discussion of her poem in the sixty-five years since its first publication, her confidence was at least premature. Some problems can indeed be considered to have been settled, either through new finds or through gradual consensus: thus the man of line 7 is Menelaus, not Paris, and few today would see in the poem merely an affirmation of exclusively feminine as opposed to masculine values. But to the twin questions of the function first of the story of Helen in the poem, and especially second of the words with which Helen is introduced – ἀ γὰρ πόλυ περσκέθοισα | κάλλος ἀνθρώπων Ἐλένα (6–7) – no satisfactory answer has yet been found. The strictures of Fränkel[2] and of Page[3] on this passage are well known; yet even where their judgements have not been simply taken over, the explanations that have been offered for these two distinct but closely connected problems fail to convince. The following positions may be distinguished:

A. Two groups in effect ignore the question of Helen's own beauty.

1. It has been suggested that the story of Helen is important simply because it is drawn from *myth* (whether for illustrative[4] or for transfigurative[5] purposes). Yet it is on the contrary remarkable just how minor a role myth plays in Sappho's non-epithalamic poetry[6] – to find in her use of myth an analogy to Pindar's[7] is quite implausible. But more importantly, this proposal makes it difficult even adequately to pose the question of why specifically *Helen* is chosen by Sappho instead of other mythic figures: Zeus, for instance, who, under Aphrodite's influence, forgets the beauty of Hera and yearns instead for mortal mistresses,[8] would seem to offer at least as persuasive a mythic example for the proposition that τὸ κάλλιστον is κῆν' ὄττω τις ἔραται.[9]

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[1] I quote throughout from the text of E. Lobel and D. Page, *Poetarum Lesbiorum Fragmenta* (Oxford, 1955), omitting all papyrological signs. For the passages in question, the more recent critical editions (D. L. Page, *Lyrica Graeca Selecta* [Oxford, 1968], p. 101, E. M. Voigt, *Sappho et Alcaeus* [Amsterdam, 1971], pp. 42 f.) offer no significant variation.

[2] H. Fränkel, *Wege und Formen frühgriechischen Denkens* (Munich, 1955), 92: 'ein umständlich lehrhafter Übergang'.

[3] D. Page, *Sappho and Alcaeus* (Oxford, 1955), 53: 'The sequence of thought might have been clearer. The preceding stanza had asked the question, 'What is τὸ κάλλιστον, the most beautiful thing on earth?' Helen is to prove the truth of this: τὸ κάλλιστον, for her, was 'the one whom she loved' – her paramour, for whose sake she deserted home and family. It seems then inelegant to begin this parable, the point of which is that Helen found τὸ κάλλιστον in her lover, by stating that she herself surpassed all mortals in this very quality.'

[4] C. M. Bowra, *Greek Lyric Poetry from Alcman to Simonides* (Oxford, 1961[2]), 226; Page, op. cit. (n. 3), 56, 129.

[5] H. Jurenka, 'Neue Lieder der Sappho und des Alkaios (Oxyrh. Pap. x, S. 20 ff.)', *Wiener Studien* 36 (1914), 207; R. Merkelbach, 'Sappho und ihr Kreis', *Philologus* 101 (1957), 14–15.

[6] Bowra, op. cit. (n. 4), 226; H. Eisenberger, 'Ein Beitrag zur Interpretation von Sapphos Fragment 16 LP', *Philologus* 103 (1959), 135; Page, op. cit. (n. 3), 129–30.

[7] Jurenka, op. cit. (n. 5), 207.

[8] Hom. *H. Aphr.* 36–44. That there is an affinity between these two texts is stressed by G. Bona, 'Elena, la più bella di tutti i mortali (Nota a Saffo, fr. 16 Voigt e a *hom. hy. ad Aphr.* 33–44)', in E. Livrea and G. A. Privitera, ed., *Studi in onore di Anthos Ardizzoni* (Rome, 1978), 79 ff.; but it cannot explain the choice of Helen.

[9] If mortal examples are preferred, one might think of Odysseus, who rejected Circe and Calypso, goddesses though they were, in favour of his mortal spouse Penelope, or of Penelope

2. The relevance of Helen has also been seen in an ambiguity of application to both Sappho (who also thinks that τὸ κάλλιστον is what she loves) *and* Anactoria (who is also beautiful and has also abandoned those with whom she should have stayed).[10] But aside from depriving the poem of any semblance of coherent thought, such a notion also impermissibly imports into the simple fact of Anactoria's (perhaps only temporary) absence a whole novel of abandonment, passionate jealousy, and bitter reproach for which this text offers not the slightest support.[11]

B. Other interpreters have tried to explain the emphasis on Helen's extraordinary beauty.

1. Some have interpreted that degree of beauty instrumentally, in terms of the number of objects it made available to Helen: either the much wider range of possible lovers than would have been interested in a less beautiful woman (lending her choice of Paris additional weight), or the much wider range of things already attained that she leaves behind in favour of Paris (as though Helen's κάλλος had brought her *inter alia* her dear parents).[12] But Sappho's thesis has nothing whatsoever to do with the purely quantitative question of the sheer number of other possible objects that are rejected by the lover, but only with the preference, motivated by love, for one.

2. Others have argued that Sappho is criticizing Helen here, exposing her κάλλος as merely external prettiness and setting it in sharp contrast to the true κάλλιστον, which would have an essentially moral component.[13] But it seems, to put it mildly, an odd way to go about it for Sappho to introduce Helen as the woman who surpassed all human beings with respect to κάλλος, if she meant thereby to indicate that Helen was not in fact genuinely καλά at all; and nothing in the poem permits so sharp a differentiation between the κάλλιστον of line 3 and the κάλλος of line 7.[14]

3. Finally, the stress has sometimes been taken away from Helen and put instead upon Aphrodite's influence as the link between Helen and Sappho, and upon Helen's beauty as the testimony to her status as the goddess's favourite.[15] Yet not only is there no necessary link between personal beauty on the one hand and intimacy with and subjection to Aphrodite on the other[16] (Sappho herself is an obvious counter-

herself, who waited twenty years for her beloved husband to return: though Homer himself would not have regarded Odysseus and Penelope as bound primarily by erotic ties (cf. M. I. Finley, *The World of Odysseus*[3] [New York, 1978], 126 ff.), there is no reason that Sappho could not have interpreted their relation in this way.

[10] C. Carey, 'Sappho Fr. 96 LP', *CQ* N.S. 28 (1978), 368–9; C. W. Macleod, 'Two Comparisons in Sappho', *ZPE* 15 (1974), 217–19; R. Bagg, 'Love, Ceremony and Daydream in Sappho's Lyrics', *Arion* 3 (1964), 69, and Merkelbach, op. cit. (n. 5), 14–16 find a parallel to Anactoria alone.

[11] cf. the criticisms of Eisenberger, op. cit. (n. 6), 130–5, and H. Saake, *Zur Kunst Sapphos* (Munich–Paderborn–Vienna, 1971), 138 f. What reason do we have to think that Anactoria was to be gone for more than a few days when this poem was composed?

[12] D. A. Campbell, *Greek Lyric Poetry* (New York, 1967), 270; E. Degani and G. Burzacchini, *Lirici Greci* (Florence, 1977), 134–5; Jurenka, op. cit. (n. 5), 203 f.; G. M. Kirkwood, *Early Greek Monody* (Ithaca–London, 1974), 108; G. L. Koniaris, 'On Sappho, Fr. 16 (L.P.)', *Hermes* 95 (1967), 263–7; implied also in U. von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, 'Lesbische Lyrik', *Neue Jahrbücher* 33 (1914), 226–7) = *Kleine Schriften* (Berlin, 1971²), 1. 386–7.

[13] J. G. Howie, 'Sappho Fr. 16 (LP): Self-consolation and Encomium', *Arca* 2 (1976), 214, 216, 222; Koniaris, op. cit. (n. 12), 264; C. Theander, 'Studia Sapphica', *Eranos* 32 (1934), 70; G. Wills, 'The Sapphic "Umwertung aller Werte"', *AJP* 88 (1967), 440–1.

[14] cf. the criticisms of Page, op. cit. (n. 3), 56 n. 2.

[15] Bona, op. cit. (n. 8), 79 ff.; B. Gentili, 'La veneranda Saffo', *QUCC* 4 (1967), 184; W. Schadewaldt, *Sappho* (Potsdam, 1950), 127 f.; E. M. Stern, 'Sappho Fr. 16 L.P.: Zur strukturellen Einheit ihrer Lyrik', *Mnemosyne* 23 (1970), 355.

[16] cf. the criticisms of Burzacchini apud Degani–Burzacchini, op. cit. (n. 12), 135. The fact that beauty is a δῶρον 'Αφροδίτης for Homer (*Il.* 3. 54 f.) and elsewhere for Sappho (112 L–P)

example):[17] moreover, Aphrodite is introduced only as an explanation for Helen's actions at the very end of her story,[18] and it seems artificial to require that Aphrodite be introduced so decisively at this stage of the poem.

It is not surprising that some scholars have allowed themselves to be persuaded by these interpretative difficulties into either abandoning the attempt to find a continuity of thought in the poem,[19] or seeking to produce such a continuity by impugning the text.[20] Yet there is a way out of this aporia, and it may be found in a passage of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in which, in the course of an analysis of the eleventh topic of demonstrative enthymemes, he provides us not only with a summary of one text of Sappho's (Fr. 201 L–P) but also as it were with the only ancient interpretation of this one. The passage is important enough in this context to warrant quotation in full:[21]

ἄλλος [scil. τόπος] ἐκ κρίσεως περὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἢ ὁμοίου ἢ ἐναντίου, μάλιστα μὲν εἰ πάντες καὶ αἰεί, εἰ δὲ μή, ἀλλ' οἵ γε πλεῖστοι, ἢ σοφοὶ ἢ πάντες ἢ οἱ πλεῖστοι, ἢ ἀγαθοί. ἢ εἰ αὐτοὶ οἱ κρίνοντες, ἢ οὓς ἀποδέχονται οἱ κρίνοντες, ἢ οἷς μὴ οἷόν τε ἐναντίον κρίνειν, οἷον τοῖς κυρίοις, ἢ οἷς μὴ καλὸν ἐναντία κρίνειν, οἷον θεοῖς ἢ πατρὶ ἢ διδασκάλοις, ὥσπερ ὃ εἰς Μειξιδημίδην εἶπεν Αὐτοκλῆς, εἰ ταῖς μὲν σεμναῖς θεαῖς καλῶς εἶχεν ἐν Ἀρείῳ πάγῳ δοῦναι τὰ δίκαια, Μειξιδημίδῃ δ' οὔ. ἢ ὥσπερ Σαπφώ, ὅτι τὸ ἀποθνήσκειν κακόν· οἱ θεοὶ γὰρ οὕτω κεκρίκασιν· ἀπέθνησκον γὰρ ἄν. ἢ ὥσπερ Ἀρίστιππος πρὸς Πλάτωνα ἐπαγγελτικώτερόν τι εἰπόντα, ὡς ᾤετο· "ἀλλὰ μὴν ὅ γ' ἑταῖρος ἡμῶν" ἔφη "οὐδὲν τοιοῦτον", λέγων τὸν Σωκράτην. καὶ Ἀγησίπολις ἐν Δελφοῖς ἐπηρώτα τὸν θεόν, πρότερον κεχρημένος Ὀλυμπίασιν, εἰ αὐτῷ τὰ αὐτὰ δοκεῖ ἅπερ τῷ πατρί, ὡς αἰσχρὸν ὂν τἀναντία εἰπεῖν. καὶ περὶ τῆς Ἑλένης ὡς Ἰσοκράτης ἔγραψεν ὅτι σπουδαία, εἴπερ Θησεὺς ἔκρινεν, καὶ περὶ Ἀλεξάνδρου, ὃν αἱ θεαὶ προέκριναν, καὶ περὶ Εὐαγόρου, ὅτι σπουδαῖος, ὥσπερ Ἰσοκράτης φησίν· Κόνων γοῦν δυστυχήσας, πάντας τοὺς ἄλλους παραλιπών, ὡς Εὐαγόραν ἦλθεν. (Aristot. *Rhet.* 2. 23. 12 = 1398b19–1399a6)

In each case, a proposition is asserted or implied concerning the positive or negative value to be attributed to something or someone.[22] Support for this valuation is derived from the κρίσις of some figure whose authority is acceptable to all parties. It is important to note that Aristotle is concerned here not with logical, but with rhetorical argumentation: the instance cited has the status neither of a particular (in an inductive argument) nor of an illustration (to render more easily intelligible an abstract claim), but rather of an *authority* to whom any appeal immediately settles the issue because of non-rational factors: faith or respect, sanctity or prestige. Moreover, the κρίσις involved is by no means an explicit judgement which has been formulated

does not mean that, in this poem, Helen's beauty must serve only as a reference to Aphrodite: that beauty can function as a standard in its own right (cf. 23.5 L–P).

[17] cf. Max. Tyr. *Decl.* 18. 7.

[18] Yet it is not enough to say 'Aphrodites Hilfe scheint nur gleichsam als Erklärung noch angehängt zu sein' (W. Barner, *Neuere Alkaios-Papyri aus Oxyrhynchos* [Hildesheim, 1967], 220). The significance of the reference to Aphrodite is discussed below, p. 16.

[19] e.g. Bagg. op cit. (n. 10), 69; Bona, op. cit. (n. 8), 83; S. des Bourrie Thorsen, 'The Interpretation of Sappho's Fragment 16 L.-P.', *Symb. Osl.* 53 (1978), 16; H. Saake, *Sappho-Studien* (Munich-Paderborn-Vienna, 1972), 71.

[20] Koniaris, op. cit. (n. 12), 263 n. 2; Theander, op. cit. (n. 13), 65. The fact that the state of preservation of the papyrus is unsatisfactory should provide no incentive for doubting the authenticity of the readings it offers.

[21] I quote from the text of R. Kassel, *Aristotelis Ars Rhetorica* (Berlin, 1976). M. Treu, *Sappho* (Munich, 1976⁵), 156 refers to this passage in Aristotle while discussing Fr. 16 but fails to draw the consequences.

[22] The only apparent exception, the example of Agesipolis, is in fact none, for the question Agesipolis posed the oracles concerned the positive or negative value to be attributed to an action: χρηστηριαζόμενος ἐπηρώτα τὸν θεὸν εἰ ὁσίως ἂν ἔχοι αὐτῷ μὴ δεχομένῳ τὰς σπονδὰς τῶν Ἀργείων, ὅτι οὐχ ὁπότε καθήκοι ὁ χρόνος, ἀλλ' ὁπότε ἐμβάλλειν μέλλοιεν Λακεδαιμόνιοι, τότε ὑπέφερον τοὺς μῆνας. ὁ δὲ θεὸς ἐπεσήμαινεν αὐτῷ ὅσιον εἶναι μὴ δεχομένῳ σπονδὰς ἀδίκως ὑποφερομένας (Xen. *Hell.* 4. 7. 2).

verbally by the authority in question;[23] rather, it is inferred on the basis of the actions of that authority, and then imputed to him as though it represented his consciously deliberated motivation. Whether in fact the authority had considered his actions in these terms – whether indeed he had even had a real possibility of acting in some other way but had chosen instead to act in this one: these are questions which, for the purpose of this τόπος, cannot be posed, for the actions themselves are considered as though they were autonomous, and it is more on the basis of them alone than on that of whatever was going on in the agent's mind that the κρίσις is inferred. The argument attributed to Sappho is a good example: she claims that death is an evil, and 'proves' it by reference to the gods' κρίσις implied by the fact that they have never died. To us it may seem a little peculiar to claim that the gods' immortality represents a κρίσις on their part that death is evil, for it is hard to imagine them deciding every so often (or even at all) to remain alive; but that is because for us the possibility of a morally responsible action is predicated upon our ability to attribute to the agent the freedom to have acted otherwise. For Sappho's argument, on the other hand, the prestige and the immortality of the gods suffice.

The application of this passage to Fr. 16 is evident. Sappho begins with the assertion that κῆν' ὅττω τις ἔραται is τὸ κάλλιστον and is hence superior to all other conceivable καλά, including those she names: a host of cavalry, of infantry, of ships.[24] She then 'proves' this claim by appeal to the authority of Helen, who abandoned (καλλίποισα, 9, cf. παραλιπών Rhet. 1399a5) husband, child, and parents – all καλά invested with a certain emotional value[25] – and instead sailed to Troy (ἔβα 's Τροίαν πλέοισα 9, cf. ἦλθεν Rhet. 1399a6). Finally she applies this claim to her present situation, asserting that she would rather (βολλοίμαν...ἤ 17–19) see Anactoria than Lydian chariots. In each part of the poem, a judgement of superiority is expressed: in terms of grammar in the first strophe (the superlative degree), in terms of action in the next ones (Helen), in terms of desire in the fifth (Sappho).[26] Just as Helen privileged Paris, the object of her love, above Menelaus and all other values associated with him, so too Sappho privileges Anactoria, whom she loves, above all other values. And the story of Helen plays a decisive, indeed an indispensable role in the poem: it 'proves' the claim of the first strophe and justifies the wish of the fifth by appeal

[23] Agesipolis again provides only an apparent exception: for the utterance of an oracle is not an instance of ordinary language (which may be related truthfully to reality, but need not be), but is instead a token of what inevitably will take place in reality or already has. ὁ ἄναξ, οὗ τὸ μαντεῖόν ἐστι τὸ ἐν Δελφοῖς, οὔτε λέγει οὔτε κρύπτει ἀλλὰ σημαίνει (Heraclitus 93 D–K). Consequently the oracle's judgement of value is not so much a verbal act nor even the verbal expression of the cognitive act of acknowledging the reality of the value in question: rather, the judgement of the oracle *is* the reality of that value. In this privileged instance alone coincided for the Greeks language and being. This is expressed mythologically in Apollo's receiving his oracles from Zeus as the fundamental principle of reality (Hom. *H. Ap.* 132, *H. Herm.* 471–2, Aesch. Fr. 86N, Schol. Soph. *O.C.* 793).

[24] It is probably the fact that Sappho has cast this first strophe in the form of a priamel that has delayed for so long recognition of the poem's structure: for it has meant that the interpreters have tended to concentrate so exclusively on the first strophe that the transition to the second could not be properly thematized. This is especially clear in the case of H. Fränkel, op. cit. (n. 2), 92.

[25] This is clear not only from φίλων in line 10 (which is hardly likely to mean merely 'her own' parents in this context: whose else's could possibly be meant?), but also from κωὔδε...πάμπαν ...ἐμνάσθη and the reference to Aphrodite's activity in lines 10 f., which only make sense if Helen had indeed loved husband, child and parents before she left them and if she could only be seduced from them by divine intervention. cf. *Il.* 3. 139 f., 173 f.; *Od.* 4. 259–64. See also n. 32.

[26] For the structure of the poem, cf. especially Privitera, op. cit. (n. 14), 182–7.

to an authority who, according to Sappho, voted not only with her heart but also with her feet.[27]

There can thus be no question of even an implicit identification of Anactoria with Helen (A. 2 above), nor of the slightest criticism of Helen (B. 2): the structure of argument precludes the one, the appeal to authority the other. But we have not yet answered the question of why Helen's beauty is stressed when she is introduced.

Here too, Aristotle provides assistance. For in the whole first half of his analysis of this τόπος, he classifies different authorities who may legitimately be called upon as witnesses; and by so doing he suggests just how crucial is the choice of a *legitimate* figure of authority. Precisely because of the non-rational nature of this τόπος, the action to which appeal is made must have been performed by a figure invested with such overwhelming authority that no opponent would dare disagree. It is this legitimation which Sappho seeks to accomplish by introducing Helen as ἀ πόλυ περσκέθοισα κάλλος ἀνθρώπων: as the καλλίστη of all mortals, Helen is uniquely competent to judge what is the κάλλιστον of all objects.[28] Rhadamanthys' actions have the greatest authority for determining what is τὸ δικαιότατον; Achilles', for τὸ ἀνδρειότατον; and Helen's, for τὸ κάλλιστον. We sense here the notion of ὅμοιον ὁμοίῳ, which we can certainly presume to have been a common model of thought in ordinary Greek life but which had to wait another century for its philosophical systematization in Parmenides and Empedocles.[29]

This may at first seem rather paradoxical, for Helen might be thought a hardly suitable authority to invoke: beautiful she certainly was, but consider all the trouble her beauty got her into: can she really be considered one of the ἀγαθοί of whom Aristotle speaks (*Rhet.* 1398b22)?[30] We might answer that the consequences of that beauty are of no relevance to its competence in this issue; but instead note how carefully Sappho has on the one hand emphasized what enhances Helen's authority, and on the other suppressed what might damage it. On the one hand: Helen's extraordinary beauty is referred to on her first appearance in the *Iliad* (3.156-60), and is of course presupposed by the whole Trojan cycle, especially by such episodes as the catalogue of her suitors (Hes. Fr. 196-204M-W), Paris' choice in the *Cypria* (the most beautiful mortal after the most beautiful goddess), and Menelaus' sparing her life at the sight of her naked breasts in the *Ilias Parva*. Yet, remarkably, nowhere in Homer or in the fragments of the Epic Cycle we possess is she ever described with such blunt

[27] For examples of similar appeals to an authority's κρίσις in Homer, cf. *Il.* 1.260-73, 9.524-600; they are readily distinguishable from simple mythical exempla such as the story of Niobe, *Il.* 24.602-17 (where it is not the personal authority of Niobe that is rhetorically effective, but the extremity of her suffering). I hope to examine such passages more systematically in a future study of strategies of moral argument in archaic Greek thought.

[28] So already U. Schmid, *Die Priamel der Werte im Griechischen von Homer bis Paulus* (Wiesbaden, 1964), 55.

[29] cf. especially C. W. Müller, *Gleiches zu Gleichem: Ein Prinzip frühgriechischen Denkens* (Wiesbaden, 1965). Examples occur already in Homer (*Od.* 17.217-18), then are frequent in both literary texts (e.g. Theognis 31-8, and cf. the basic tenet of archaic Greek morality, τὸν φιλέοντα μὲν φιλεῖν, τὸν δ' ἐχθρὸν ἐχθαίρειν, Archilochus 23.14-15 West and passim) and philosophical ones (e.g. Plato *Lys.* 214A-D; *Gorg.* 510B; *Symp.* 180C-185C, 195B; *Laws* 6. 773B).

[30] The conceptual and historical distance that separates Aristotle from Sappho must not be minimized, despite his usefulness for interpreting her poem: what for Sappho is still undifferentiated, Aristotle tries to rationalize and systematize. Thus there is a certain peculiarity in limiting Helen to the category of the ἀγαθοί; yet in Aristotle's scheme, all the other pigeonholes are even more inappropriate. Here, as often in the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle's examples must be read to a certain extent against the grain of his own categorization of them.

straightforwardness as καλλίστη or as ἡ πολὺ ὑπερσχοῦσα κάλλος ἀνθρώπων:[31] as far as we can tell, Sappho seems to have been the first to draw the consequence from the epic narrative and to make this claim for Helen so explicitly. And she does so in such a way as to put Helen's κάλλος beyond all possible question: not only with the adverb πόλυ, but also by writing ἀνθρώπων (instead of γυναίκων) and thereby enlarging the sphere of reference beyond women alone to all human beings. On the other hand: Sappho suppresses as far as possible any negative associations we might have with Helen:[32] she does not name Paris, nor give even the slightest hint at the disastrous consequences which Helen's choice was to have for Greece and Asia alike — consequences which are emphasized in lurid detail by Alcaeus (Frr. 42, 283 L-P).[33] Moreover, she follows closely Homer's own apologetic portrayal of Helen as someone who cannot be held morally responsible for her flight to Troy, who acted entirely under Aphrodite's compulsion (Il. 3. 164, 383–420).[34] In so doing, Sappho offers a genuinely Homeric re-interpretation of the myth of Helen by arguing that, if Helen was indeed as beautiful as we are told she was, and if she may be exculpated of any moral blame, then she is an authority fully competent to decide at least this issue. We may suspect that Sappho's language did not allow her to distinguish systematically between the ethical and aesthetic aspects of καλός (cf. Fr. 50 L-P):[35] here she is saying that if Helen was really καλά, she could not have been κακά.

[31] It was Lessing, in chapters 20 and 21 of Laokoon, who first emphasized how effectively Homer communicates a sense of Helen's beauty, not by describing it, but by indicating the Trojans' reaction to it (Werke 6: Kunsttheoretische und Kunsthistorische Schriften [Darmstadt, 1974], 129–41). The closest Homer comes to providing a direct antecedent for Sappho's phrase is Il. 9. 140=282: αἴ κε μετ' Ἀργείην Ἑλένην κάλλισται ἔωσιν. But that is not very close at all (cf. Il. 9. 130).

[32] Some, e.g. Kirkwood (op. cit. [n. 11], 108), have seen in παράγαγ' (11) an implicit condemnation of Helen's action. This is not quite accurate. In archaic Greek lyric (the word does not occur in Homer or Hesiod), παράγω describes the way a non-rational force interferes with one's purposively calculating intellect, irresistibly diverting (παρά-ἄγω) one from the intended goal to others: Archil. 124b. 4 West (γαστήρ), Theogn. 386 (πενίη), 404 (δαίμων πρόφρων), Pind. P. 11. 25 (ἔννυχοι κοῖται), N. 7.23 (σοφία). Such an overpowering of the rational capabilities is often attributed to erotic divinities (Il. 14. 217, Hes. Theog. 121–2), and is dramatized in the encounter between Helen and Aphrodite (especially Il. 3. 420) – hence Paris must be rejected as a supplement for line 13. Characteristically, the Greeks were particularly alive to the dangers of such a surrender on the part of reason, and indeed in all these usages of παράγω the diversion is condemned. But that condemnation is performed not by the verb παράγω itself, but instead by prepositional phrases indicating the results (Arch., Theogn.) or by the context (Pind.): the verb itself simply designates the condition of possibility of one's doing something other than what one intended, and here means 'overpowered'. cf. C. Calame, 'Sappho immorale?', QUCC 28 (1978), 211–14.

[33] Alcaeus' poem makes most sense in this context if it is thought of as a scandalized reaction to Sappho's poem or to similar sentiments: Alcaeus, who knew what war was, could not skip so glibly over these bloody consequences, and must have felt, in Pindar's words, γλυκὺ δὲ πόλεμος ἀπείροισιν, ἐμπείρων δέ τις | ταρβεῖ προσιόντα νιν καρδίᾳ περισσῶς (Fr. 110 Snell).

[34] cf. R. Kannicht, Euripides' Helena (Heidelberg, 1969), 1. 22, and 'Helen and the Discovery of the Erotic in Homer' (text of a lecture). On the relationship between this poem and Il. 3, cf. also J. A. Davison, From Archilochus to Pindar (London, 1968), 236.

[35] Despite the unsatisfactory transmission of this fragment, it is certain that two kinds of καλός are described, one which is purely optical and another which contains an essential ethical component; yet the same word is used for both. Schadewaldt's paraphrase for τὸ κάλλιστον in Fr. 16 (op. cit. [n. 15], 125: 'das Höchste, Beste, Wirklichste auf Erden. Auch das, was wir als den "höchsten Wert" bezeichnen, von dem alles andere in der Welt seinen Wert empfängt, ist dabei, wenn nicht mitgedacht, so doch mitgemeint: das "Ideal", so wie es auch in unserem Volksmund heißt, daß dieses und jenes jemandes Ideal ist') is a bit over-enthusiastic, but is closer to the truth than Stern's attempt (op. cit. [n. 15], 350 f.) to limit the word to the purely aesthetic (Sappho is not likely to have meant that Helen left for Troy because Paris was

Yet we may be less inclined to deem Sappho's choice of Helen 'strange and naive',[36] or to exclaim, 'Sie hatte gut begründen und beweisen! Das letzte Wort hat schließlich doch der einfache Ausdruck des Gefühls, hinter dem die Überzeugung eines Daseins steht',[37] when we recall that Plato takes care to conclude his own investigation of the relation between ἔρως and τὸ κάλλιστον with praise for the (here of course spiritualized) beauty of Socrates (*Symp.* 215B–222B).[38]

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handsomer than Menelaus or Helen's child and parents), In Fr. 132L–P, Sappho is careful to stress the purely aesthetic side of what is otherwise an exactly parallel situation: yet here too it is unlikely she meant to imply that her daughter was not also morally καλά.

[36] Kirkwood, op. cit. (n. 12), 108. He goes on to say that Sappho's choice is also 'effective'.

[37] Schadewaldt, op. cit. (n. 15), p. 131.