

ACROTELEUTIUM'S SAPPHIC INFATUATION (MILES 1216–83)¹

Sappho has notoriously been many things to many audiences since antiquity but Athenians may be the only ones who found her funny. Something about the archaic poet appealed to their sense of humour. The comic poets Amipsias, Amphis, Antiphanes, Diphilus, Ephippus, and Timocles all wrote a *Sappho*. We also know of two *Phaons* and five (or possibly six) *Leucadias*, including one by Menander which was later adapted by Turpilios.² Unfortunately, little beyond the title of most of these plays survives. What exactly did 'the Athenian comic mud-slingers and scandal-mongers who did so much to spoil her good name' see that was so funny in Sappho?³ We actually have one illuminating but overlooked allusion at *Miles* 1216–83, the scene where the *meretrix* Acroteleutium pretends to be madly in love with the soldier Pyrgopolynices.⁴ Her bravura performance, identified as 'Sapphic' at line 1247, draws on such stock details of the Sappho legend as her suicidal passion and Phaon's pride. It also directly spoofs *φαίνεται μοι* (fr. 31 L-P and Campbell). This passage is not only our most extensive evidence for how Sappho appeared on the comic stage; it is also an example much earlier than Catullus of

¹ A version of this paper was delivered at the Classical Association of Canada annual meeting in Quebec City, 18 May 2004. My thanks to the audience for their suggestions, and to Maryline Parca, David Sansone, and Danuta Shanzer for their comments on earlier drafts.

² Plato Comicus' *Phaon* and Menander's *Leucadia* are discussed below. Antiphanes' *Phaon* may have treated the starving Pythagorean mentioned at Alexis 223.15 K-A (a suggestion by Kock, cited PCG 2.437, cf. P. Magno, 'La *Leucadia* di Turpilio e Ovidio, *Heroides* XV, Attraverso i loro Modelli Greci', *Sileno* 5–6 [1979–80], 81–92 at 87). Antiphanes' *Leucadius* perhaps concerned Sappho's Phaon (who is also mentioned at Cratinus 370 K A). We know of *Leucadias* by Diphilus, Amphis, and Alexis but there is no evidence to connect these with Sappho (on the last see W. G. Arnott, *Alexis: The Fragments* [Cambridge, 1996], 394–5). On Sappho's comic reception, see U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Sappho und Simonides* [Berlin, 1913], 23 n. 2, 34–6; F. Stoessl, 'Phaon', in W. Kroll (ed.), *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, Halbbd. 38 (Stuttgart and Weimar, 1938), cols 1790–5 at 1790–3; Magno 87–90; H. N. Parker, 'Sappho schoolmistress', *TAPA* 123 (1993), 309–51 at 309–10 n. 2; M. Williamson, *Sappho's Immortal Daughters* (Cambridge, MA, 1995), 7, 15–16, 176; P. E. Knox, *Ovid Heroides* (Cambridge, 1995), 278–9; J. L. Sanchis Llopis, 'La comedia mitológica de Platón el Cómico', *Helmantica* 48 (1997), 323–39 at 333; and A. Pitts, 'Prostitute, muse, lesbian: the biographical tradition of Sappho in Greek and Roman literature' (Ph.D. Diss., University of Wisconsin–Madison, 2002), 109–39. K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge, MA, 1978), 174 has a succinct and informative survey.

³ D. M. Robinson, *Sappho and Her Influence* (New York, 1963), 37.

⁴ This passage is not mentioned in S. Costanza, *Risonanze dell'ode di Saffo Fainetai moi kēnos da Pindaro a Catullo e Orazio* (Messina and Florence, 1950) or in Robinson's (n. 3) at 125 or Williamson's (n. 2) at 22 discussions of Sappho's Roman reception. Neither E. Lobel and D. Page, *Poetarum Lesbiorum Fragmenta* (Oxford, 1963²) nor E.-M. Voigt, *Sappho et Alcaeus: Fragmenta* (Amsterdam, 1971) cite it, nor does it appear in discussions of *Heroides* 15, which is generally thought to draw on comedy (H. Jacobson, *Ovid's Heroides* [Princeton, 1974], 281; Magno [n. 2], 90–1; F. Verducci, *Ovid's Toyshop of the Heart* [Princeton, 1985], 136–7; Williamson [n. 2], 27; Knox [n. 2], 278). It has also been neglected by commentators on Plautus (even C. Knapp, 'References to literature in Plautus and Terence,' *AJP* 40.3 [1919], 231–61 at 252 misses the literary allusion).

how Greek lyric could be interpreted in Latin. This article analyses the dramatic functions of the allusion and explicates the Plautine passage as a reading of one of Sappho's most famous poems.

At 1246–7 the slave Palaestrio spells out Pyrgopolynices' role for him so that he will not spoil the scene by throwing himself at Acroteleutium's feet. He reminds the soldier that he is a privileged man:

nam nulli mortali scio obtigisse hoc, nisi duobus,
tibi et Phaoni Lesbio, tam mulier se ut amaret. (1246–7)

The *mulier* can only be Sappho.⁵ The figure Palaestrio actually names, however, is Phaon, the old ferryman who carried a disguised Aphrodite without charge and was rewarded with youth and beauty in the form of an ointment.⁶ Phaon accordingly became proverbial for his looks. Lucian, for example, scoffs at ugly people who like to hear that they have the beauty 'of Nireus or Phaon' and Aelian describes him as 'handsomest of men' (κάλλιστον... ἀνθρώπων), while artists depict him as an attractive youth with attributes of Apollo.⁷ But Phaon let his looks go to his head, scorning the women who fell in love with him (one of them, at least), and thus became a byword for arrogance. Menander calls him ὑπέροκμος, while a Lucian character longs to outdo him in destroying the women he 'disdains' (εἰ δὲ ὑπερορώνην) and a Libanius scholion glosses 'a Phaon in looks and disposition' as something said ἐπὶ τῶν ἑρασμίων καὶ ὑπερφάνων.⁸ At least one Old Comic poet saw the humour in this story. The 47 surviving lines of Plato Comicus' *Phaon*, performed around

⁵ A reference to Sappho is identified here by J. L. Ussing, *T. Maccii Plauti Comoediae* 4.1 (Copenhagen, 1882), 299 ad 1240; A. O. F. Lorenz, *Ausgewählte Komödien des T. Maccius Plautus*, 3: *Miles Gloriosus* (Berlin, 1886²), 206 ad 1247; Wilamowitz (n. 2), 33 n. 2; P. Nixon, *Plautus* 3 (Cambridge, MA, 1957), 258 n. 1; J. Uppenkamp and W. Vornefeld, *T. Maccius Plautus Miles Gloriosus* 2 (Muenster, 1929), 52 ad 995; M. A. Hammond, M. Mack, and W. Moskalew, *T. Macci Plauti Miles Gloriosus* (Cambridge, MA, 1963), 190 ad 1247; O. Köhler, *Ausgewählte Komödien des T. Maccius Plautus mit deutschem Kommentar von Brix Niemeyer: Miles Gloriosus* (Leipzig, 1964⁴), 138 ad 1247; and L. Schaaf, *Der Miles Gloriosus des Plautus und sein griechisches Original* (Munich, 1977), 322. R. Y. Tyrrell, *The Miles Gloriosus of T. Maccius Plautus* (London, 1889³) and E. Cocchia, *M. Acci Plauti Miles Gloriosus* (Turin, 1893) print *mulieres ut amarent* (but Cocchia still mentions Sappho in his note); A. Ernout, *Plaute* 4 (Paris, 1936) prints the corrupt MSS text (*tam † uiuere ut amaret †*). See Voigt (n. 4), 158–60 for ancient references to Sappho's love for Phaon. All Plautus citations are from the 1896 text of F. Leo (with corrections of the numbering misprints in 1218–30).

⁶ The Sappho–Phaon story, preserved in Ael. *VH* 12.18, Varro (cited Serv. *ad Aen.* 3.279), and Palaiph. 48 Festa, probably goes back to comedy. See H. Rüdiger, *Sappho: Ihr Ruf und Ruhm bei der Nachwelt* (Leipzig, 1933), 5; Stoessl (n. 2), col. 1790; W. G. Arnott *Menander* 2 (Cambridge, MA 1996), 230 n. a; H. Dörrie, *P. Ovidius Naso: Der Brief der Sappho an Phaon* (Munich, 1975), 14–18 (cited in F. Casolari, 'Platons Phaon als Beispiel einer Mythenparodie zwischen Alter und Mittlerer Komödie', in S. Gödde and T. Heinze [edd.], *Skenika: Beiträge zum antiken Theater und seiner Rezeption* [Darmstadt, 2000], 91–102, at 93 n. 9).

⁷ Luc. *pro imag.* 2.5–9 Harmon, Ael. *VH* 12.18 Herscher. Phaon is usually depicted as a handsome, half-naked youth, often with a laurel wreath (*LIMC* VII.1 Phaon 2, 3, 5–8, 10–12), a lyre (2, 5, 7, 10–12), and in one instance (9) an 'Apollo hairstyle' (G. Berger-Doer, 'Phaon', in *LIMC* VII.2 [Zurich and Munich, 1994], 366, cf. M. Cristofani, 'Faone, la testa di Orfeo e l'immaginario femminile', *Prospettiva* 42 [1985], 2–12 at 2). Apollo himself appears on several of the vases (2, 3, 5(?)), perhaps underscoring the mythological connection between the two (on this see G. Nagy, 'Phaethon, Sappho's Phaon, and the White Rock of Leukas', *HSCP* 77 [1973], 137–77 at 172–3, and Jacobson [n. 4] at 290 and n. 46).

⁸ Men. *Leuc.* 258.2 K T = v. 12 Arnott, Luc. *Nav.* 43, Schol. Berol. in Lib. *Ep.* 257 (= Sud. Φ 89 = Phot. s.v. Φ άων 634.24ff., Voigt [n. 4], 159). See also Lobel Page (n. 4) at 109.

391 B.C., include a scene at Phaon's door in which a speaker who self-identifies as Kourotophros (Aphrodite?) reels off, for the benefit of some libidinous and possibly drunk women, a list of the *proteleia* needed to see Phaon: flat-cake, fine-meal cake, honeyed thrushes, hare pies.⁹ A few are obscene *double entendres* (πλακοῦς ἐνὸρχης 'a well-hung bit of cake,' μύρτων πινακίσκος χειρὶ παρατετιμμένων 'a platter of myrtle berries plucked by hand').¹⁰ And there are other deities the women need to propitiate: a drachma for *Lordōn* ('thrust forward'), three obols for *Kybdasos* ('bent over'), and something for the *hērōs Kelēs* ('mount').¹¹ Food, sex, and the popularity of deities who require their worshippers to throw great parties are favourite topics in Old Comedy. There is also some play with gender reversal. The *kōmos* demanding to see the popular idol, only to be blocked by a greedy pimp-like figure, is made up of women. The 'hetaira' of course is Phaon.¹²

Artotrogus tries to flatter Pyrgopolynices by comparing him to Achilles, a man of valour and beauty who was already bragging about marrying any *Ἀχαιῖς* he liked in Homer (*Il.* 9.395–7) and declaring himself a heart-throb in Euripides (μυρίαί κόραι/ θηρῶσι λέκτρον τοῦμόν *IA* 959–60).¹³ But women never actually beat a path to Achilles' door (in these passages he speaks of potential wives, not lovers), and there are hints in the opening scene of a model the soldier would be less eager to embrace. Artotrogus describes his supposed admirers:

molestae sunt: orant, ambiunt, exobsecrant
videre ut liceat, ad sese arcessi iubent,
ut tuo non liceat dare operam negotio.

(69 71)

Phaon's women also came to 'see' him (εἰ γὰρ Φάωνα δεῖσθ' ἰδεῖν, *Plato Com.* 188.5 K-A) in groups (γυναικες, plural, 188.1), and often enough for the person who answers the door to have a well-rehearsed spiel. They want sex, moreover, not marriage. Without the proper offerings, they are bluntly told, ἔξεστιν ὑμῖν διὰ κενῆς βιωτῆαν (188.21). The vase painters depict similar interactions between Phaon and his admirers. They regularly surround him with expensively—and often scantily—dressed women, many of them bearing gifts like laurel wreaths or gold chains.¹⁴

⁹ On the date of the play, see P. Geissler, *Chronologie der altattischen Komödie* (Berlin, 1925), 72 3. T. B. L. Webster, *Studies in Later Greek Comedy* (Manchester, 1953), 19, R. M. Rosen, 'Plato Comicus and the evolution of Greek comedy', in G. W. Dobrov (ed.), *Beyond Aristophanes: Transition and Diversity in Greek Comedy* (Atlanta, 1995), 119 37 at 132, Casolari (n. 6), 92 7 and Pitts (n. 2), 147 all follow Meineke (cited PCG VII.509) in identifying the speaker as Aphrodite. Wilamowitz (n. 2), 35 thought the dirty jokes better suit a servant.

¹⁰ Translations are from Rosen (n. 9), 133. The next line ('divinities don't like the smell of burning off hair' tr. Rosen) spells out the reference in *μυρτων* (on this see J. Henderson, *The Maculate Muse: Obscene Language in Attic Comedy* [Oxford, 1991²], 134 5).

¹¹ On the obscene names, see Wilamowitz (n. 2), 35 n. 1; Rosen (n. 9), 133; Sanchis Llopis (n. 2), 334 5 n. 42; and Henderson (n. 10).

¹² Webster (n. 9), 19 and Casolari (n. 6), 98. J. N. Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes: The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens* (New York, 1998), 118 suggests the monetary offerings satirize a prostitute's price range (for different positions).

¹³ Schaaf (n. 5), 144, 408 n. 149 also traces the 'beauty' motif to Achilles. Noting the repeated pairing of 'great deeds and good looks', J. A. Hanson, 'The glorious military', in T. A. Dorey and D. R. Dudley (edd.), *Roman Drama* (New York, 1965), 51 85 at 59 cites Scipio Barbatus' epitaph *forma uirtutei parisuma fuit*, but there is no need to look beyond the explicit model of Achilles.

¹⁴ *LIMC* VII.1 Phaon 2 12. Women may have done more than gaze longingly. Sanchis Llopis (n. 2), 337 and Casolari (n. 6), 98, 101 follow Kaibel in reading the 'cookbook' fragment (*Phaon* fr. 189 K A, a list of aphrodisiacs) as a sign that Phaon's admirers have exhausted him.

A woman on a late-fifth-century vase places her hand on his chest as she leans over, in an attempt to embrace him.¹⁵ This woman is not bringing a gift. In contrast, a woman he welcomes on another vase (his right arm is around her shoulders) holds a prominently displayed gold chain.¹⁶ Since Erōtes are shown bringing the same gifts, it is not difficult to guess their purpose. Plautus may be less direct than Plato or the vase painters, but the majority of Pyrgopolynices' admirers are also out for sex. Two of them supposedly sigh *ne illae sunt fortunatae quae cum isto cubant* (65), while Palaestrio and Milphidippa negotiate what is basically a stud fee (*nisi huic uerri adferatur merces, / non hic suo seminio quemquam porclenam imperiturus* 1059–60) to gratify a lovesick woman's very physical urges (*quae huius cupiens corporist* 997). Despite some initial talk of marriage—the line Acroteleutium will take—this scene is about negotiating an outrageously high *pretium* for a service with a monetary value, a service described unusually explicitly at 1076 (*meri bellatores gignuntur, quas hic praegnatis fecit*).¹⁷ The original arrangement is for Acroteleutium to come to the soldier's house (*dum huc transbitat* 997, *illam huc adducam* 1084), as do the women in the *Phaon* fragment. Even Milphidippa pretends to feel his charm. Her later confession, *non edepol tu illum magis amas, quam ego amem* (1263), contributes nothing to the duping scheme but it does develop the idea that the soldier shares Phaon's irresistible attraction. *Pulcher*, after all, is his *cognomentum* (1038) and his grandmother is Venus (*nepos sum Veneris* 1265). The latter is usually taken as a reference to Aeneas but Venus 'loved' Phaon too (cf. *Venus me amat* 985) and Phaon had more reason to feel burdened by her favour (cf. *patiar, quando ita Venus uolt* 1227).¹⁸

How or even whether Sappho figured in Plato's *Phaon* is uncertain. If the *Miles* is any guide, she may have outdone his other admirers in demanding not just sex but

¹⁵ LIMC VII.1 Phaon 3. His pose is more common for women, while beardlessness—as well as the inscription *Phaōn kalos* and the leering Pan—make him 'an erotically appealing figure' (Williamson [n. 2], 9–10).

¹⁶ LIMC VII.1 Phaon 7.

¹⁷ *dabitur quantum ipsus preti poscet. talentum Philippi . . . auri* 1061, *contra auro alii hanc uendere potuit operam* 1075. Cf. the absurd *ἀναλώματα* demanded in *Phaon* fr. 188 K A. The Sappho of *Heroides* 15 was not the first woman to treat Phaon as a sex object (Jacobson (n. 4) at 293–4 remarks on the objectifying language).

¹⁸ *Nepos Veneris* has been thought to refer to a sex addict (Ussing [n. 5], 299 *ad* 1256 'ridi cule, si quidem uulgo "nepos uenerius" dicebatur homo nequam Veneris causa omnia profundens', cf. Cocchia (n. 5), 162 *ad* 1257); to Demetrius Poliorcetes' supposed descent from Poseidon and Aphrodite (cf. *Mil.* 15, K. Gaiser, 'Eine neu erschlossene Menander Komödie und ihre literaturgeschichtliche Stellung', *Poetica* 1 [1967], 436–61 at 450 and n. 20); to Aeneas' descent from Venus (J. A. Hanson, 'Plautus as a source book for Roman religion', *TAPA* 90 [1959], 48–101 at 52 n. 9); or to the introduction of Venus Erycina to Rome in 248 B.C. (E. W. Leach, 'The soldier and society: Plautus' *Miles Gloriosus* as popular drama', *RSC* 27 [1979], 185–209 at 204 n. 34). I am most persuaded by Schaaf's (n. 5) at 322 argument that it is an erotic rather than a genealogical claim, capping a series of references to Venus. Cf. Lorenz (n. 5), 208–9 *ad* 1265. The soldier's models are his 'brother' Achilles (62) and Alexander (who set a precedent for claiming descent from a god, O. Ribbeck, *Alazon: Ein Beitrag zur antiken Ethologie und zur Kenntniss der griechisch-römischen Komödie* [Leipzig, 1882], 33–4), not Aeneas, whose 'love hero' credentials at this date are dubious. Webster (n. 9), 174 suggests 'there may be some reflection of Demetrios Poliorketes' love affairs, and the play is certainly a satire on the kind of soldier to whom he was the beau ideal' (cf. P. Grimal, 'Le *Miles Gloriosus* et la vieillesse de Philémon', *REL* 46 [1968], 129–44 at 130–1; A. Arcellasi, 'La "composition" du "*Miles Gloriosus*"', *REL* 7 [1993], 44–54, at 46; and S. Lape, *Reproducing Athens: Menander's Comedy, Democratic Culture, and the Hellenistic City* [Princeton, 2004], 62–3 and n. 89), but I see the *Miles* more as a satire on the kind of soldier for whom *Alexander* was the 'beau ideal' (for an Athenian audience, Demetrius might well have offered a prime example).

marriage. Milphidippa, then, would be playing the 'other women' while Acroteleutium reserves the star role for herself. Her threat to break down the door (*exfringam* 1250) probably derives from a comic treatment of the Phaon legend. There is no obvious reason for Plautus to retain a five line parody of a motif he never uses (that is, the frustrated lover who tries to break into a hetaira's house, as at Ter. *Eun.* 771–816 and *Ad.* 88–91, cf. Men. *Kol.* 122–5 Sandbach [= E227–30 Arnott]), but it fits the gender-reversed *kōmos* of the *Phaon* fragment. There is another odd gender reversal that makes sense as an allusion to Phaon. Palaestrio insists that the soldier play hard to get. This is usually the woman's role and it hardly seems necessary here, since the plan only requires that he fall for the bait and give up Philocomasium. Acroteleutium is going to be 'in love' with him whether he plays *fastidiosus* or not. Plautus has integrated vanity about women into the soldier's general *alazōneia* so thoroughly that it is easy to take it for a conventional trait, but this is not the case.¹⁹ Lamachus does not consider himself a ladykiller, nor do the soldiers in the *Eunuchus*, *Truculentus*, *Curculio*, *Bacchides*, *Perikeiromene*, *Misoumenos*, or *Sikyonioi*. Bias in the *Kolax* has allegedly had a string of hetairai but he is also outrageously rich and, like most comic soldiers, he expects to pay, not to be paid.²⁰ There are no stories about Achilles or Alexander rebuffing lovesick housewives. The only model for this behaviour is Phaon and the only reason why the soldier must play hard-to-get is that Phaon played hard-to-get. Nor do comic soldiers generally go about with curled hair and smelling of perfume (*cincinnatum*, /*moechum unguentatum* 923–4, *caesariatus* 768). They are more likely to be sunburnt and battle scarred, with good reason to expect appearance to count against them.²¹ Pyrgopolynices' much derided *caesaries* is probably intended to recall a prominent feature of Alexander iconography (cf. *Alexandri praestare praedicat formae suam* 777) but it also helps to costume him as Phaon.²²

¹⁹ First noted by F. Schmidt, 'Untersuchungen über den Miles Gloriosus des Plautus', *Jahrb. für class. Phil.*, Suppl. Bd. IX (1877), 323–401 at 392. Cf. P. E. Legrand, *Daos: Tableau de la comédie grecque pendant la période dite nouvelle* (Lyon and Paris, 1910), 124 and Schaaaf (n. 5), 144 (see also 408 n. 148 for further references). Pyrgopolynices' example looms large enough for G. E. Duckworth, *The Nature of Roman Comedy: A Study in Popular Entertainment* (Norman, OK, 1994²), 264 and Ribbeck (n. 18), 36 to take vanity about women as a stock braggart trait.

²⁰ *Χρυσίδα, Κορώνη, Αντίκυραν, Τσχάδα, / καὶ Νανάριον ἔσχηκας*, fr. 4 Sandbach and Arnott. W. Hofmann, *Der Bramarbas in der antiken Komödie* (Berlin, 1973), 126 cites Bias as an example of vanity about women, but these are hetairai—paid women, not women who fell under his spell. His lavish lifestyle (33–54 Sandbach = B32–53 Arnott) and the pimp's gloating ('three minas a day from the stranger' 129–30 Sandbach = E234–5 Arnott) suggests that money is no object to him. This conquest list is probably no more trustworthy than any other but it should be noted that even Pyrgopolynices has some success with the local *meretrices*. There is just something crooked about their kisses (*Mil.* 93–4).

²¹ A Menander fragment expresses the conventional opinion: *κοιμῆς στρατιώτης οὐδ' ἐὰν πλάττοι θεὸς/οὐθεὶς γένοιτ' ἂν* (777 K A). Cf. Ter. *Eu.* 482–3, 1079–80, *Hec.* 85–7, *Men. Mis.* 90–1 Arnott.

²² Phaon is usually depicted with long, flowing locks (e.g. *LIMC* VII.1 Phaon 2, 3, 6, 7, and 9). In his catalogue of masks, Pollux mentions a 'floppy-haired youth' (IV.147, E. Csapo's and W. J. Slater's, *The Context of Ancient Drama* [Ann Arbor, MI, 2001], 401 translation of ἐπίσειστος), who is also a soldier and an *alazōn*, and who has dark skin and hair (Ribbeck [n. 18], 34 n. 5, cf. Tyrrell [n. 5], xix–xx). We cannot assume that Pollux' fourth century list describes the contents of Plautus' costume trunk, but it may give us an idea. The soldier's hair, mentioned several times, was somehow extraordinary. What seems to irritate his neighbours most is the care he lavishes on it: it is 'curled' (*cincinnatus*) and perhaps perfumed (if *unguentatus* includes his hair, as Hofmann [n. 20], 92 suggests). Could the longish hair on a standard soldier's mask have been styled differently for this play? A Pompeian wall painting

The Phaon comic tradition may also explain a small puzzle in the *Miles*. The soldier is called a *moechus* many times and eventually punished for adultery, rather than for bragging or lying or even for stealing Philocomasium.²³ He indirectly confesses to being a *moechus* when he delivers the moral of the play: *iure factum iudico; / si sic aliis moechis fiat, minus hic moechorum siet* (1435–6). His *alazōneia* may make him ridiculous, but being a *moechus*, we are repeatedly told, is the truly reprehensible offence. The problem is that he has not actually 'screwed someone else's wife', as Periplectomenus claims (1402). In fact, there is no evidence he has ever succeeded in seducing anyone. Women hate him, men hate him (1392); even the professionals hate him (*meretrices, labiis dum ductant eum, / maiorem partem uideas ualgis sauiis* 93–4). A failed Don Juan hardly seems a menace, and yet we are expected to cheer his punishment. Part of the reason is the broader meaning of the Greek word *moechus*. Whereas *adulterium* refers to a specific offence, *μοιχός* can describe a type—the sort of man who spends his time trying to seduce respectable women, regardless of his success or failure in any particular instance. It covers appearance, speech, attitude and general behaviour, and this is why Plautus prefers it to the less colourful Latin *adulterium* (which appears only twice in the play).²⁴ The soldier is a *moechus* because he curls his hair, brags about his sex appeal, agrees to sleep with his neighbour's wife, and lusts after every woman he sees. In forcing him to reform and making an example of him for 'other *moechi*', Periplectomenus is therefore doing the community a service. The other reason his punishment seems so fitting has to do with Phaon's story. According to Aelian, Phaon was caught and killed 'in the act of adultery' (*μοιχεύων*).²⁵ Did Plato's play or another comedy about Phaon end with an outraged husband—or several—exacting vengeance? The final scene of the *Miles* certainly evokes an older kind of comedy.²⁶ Perhaps it is only poetic justice that the penalty for playing 'Phaon' should be to meet with Phaon's end.

and the Terence miniatures give soldiers some kind of hat (E. de Saint Denis, 'Un grotesque de la comédie latine: le soudard', *Les Etudes Classiques* 32 [1964], 130–46 at 131). If Plautine soldiers wore the *petasus* normally (cf. *Amph.* 145, 443, *Pseud.* 735, Hofmann, 92 n. 1, following Wollner), Pyrgopolynices' bare head would stand out. He would also stand out if he was smooth shaven, which *moechus* may imply (cf. *Men. Sik.* 210 and 264, where a shaved man is described as *μοιχώδης*). A testimonium from Menander's *Thrasyleon* suggests a long beard typified both the old man and the 'foolish soldier' (Julian. *Mis.* 349=Test. iii K A; Ribbeck [n. 18], 35 n. 11).

²³ *magnus moechus mulierum* (775), *moechum unguentatum* (924), *hunc moechum militem* (1131), *ut adoriatur moechum* (1390), *gestit moecheo hoc abdomen adimere* (1398). Cf. *plenus periuri atque adulteri* (90). We are pointedly reminded that Acroteleutium is to play an *uxor* (O. Zwielerlein, *Zur Kritik und Exegese des Plautus II: Miles gloriosus* [Stuttgart, 1991], 211–13). See also Hanson (n. 13), 71. This is also an atypical role. It is usually the soldiers' young rivals who are the *moechi*. For example, Moschion in the *Perikeiromene* is called a *μοιχός* three times (357, 370, 389), while his namesake in the *Sikyonioi* is said to look like one (210), in contrast to the 'manly' looking soldier (215). Another soldier describes his citified rival as a *moechum malacum, cincinnatum* (*Truc.* 609/10, cf. *Mil.* 923–4). See Davidson (n. 12), 164–5 on the stereotype of the good looking *μοιχός*, and Lape (n. 18), 223–5 on tell tale signs in the *Sikyonioi* Moschion.

²⁴ S. Treggiari, *Roman Marriage: Iusti Coniuges From the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpian* (Oxford, 1991), 263 cites Quintilian's definition, *adulterium (est) cum aliena uxore domi coire* (*Inst.* 7.3.10) but notes that 'comedy, satire and colloquial writing used the convenient and less portentous Greek words *moechus/a* for adulterers'.

²⁵ *τά γε μὴν τελευταία ἀπεσφάγη μοιχεύων ἄλους* (Ael. *VH* 12.18).

²⁶ I believe the final scene comes from the *Alazōn*. E. Lefèvre, 'Plautus Studien IV. Die Umformung des Ἀλαζών zu der Doppel Komödie des "Miles gloriosus"', *Hermes* 112 (1984), 30–53 at 41–2 argues that it cannot because (i) there is no need to dismiss Philocomasium if he is going to conduct the affair the neighbour's house; (ii) the 'wife'

'Sappho', fittingly, is the instrument of his undoing. The infatuation scene at 1216–83 draws on two sources: the legend of Sappho's love for Phaon and Sappho fragment 31. Scripted like an improvisation, this whole scene builds up to the moment when Acroteleutium finally catches a glimpse of the soldier and falls into a dramatic faint. For this, she blames her eyes:

Acr. Tene me obsecro. Mil. Quor? Acr. Ne cadam. Milph. Quid ita? Acr. Quia stare nequeo, ita animus per oculos meos <meus> defit. Milph. Militem pol tu aspexisti. Acr. Ita. (1260 2)

Acroteleutium is imitating Sappho's famous panic attack, with a few modifications for the stage. Sappho described unstageable symptoms: loss of vision (ὀππάτεσαι δ' οὐδ' ἐν ὄρημμ' 11 Campbell), pallor (χλωροτέρα δὲ ποίας/ἔμμι 14–15) and a near-death feeling (τεθνάκην δ' ὀλίγω 'πιδεύης 15). Fainting conveys the overall effect visually, while the odd phrase *per oculos* ('because of my eyes, I'm losing consciousness') serves to mark the Sapphic intertext. Fainting is common enough in New Comedy but characters usually blame what they see or hear—not their ears or eyes.²⁷ The eyes are prominent in fragment 31, however, because Sappho is drawing on the language of epic, where loss of vision can be simultaneous with (and a euphemism for) death.²⁸ In the reductive manner of comedy, Plautus turns a symptom into a cause: after all the joking about 'seeing better with her nose' Acroteleutium's eyesight proves excellent—better than she can handle. But malfunctioning eyes are not her only Sapphic symptom. Milphidippa describes what would happen if her mistress saw the soldier face to face:

Milph. uerbum edepol facere non potis, si accesserit prope ad te.
dum te obtuetur, interim linguam oculi praeciderunt.
Pyrg. leuandum morbum mulieri uideo. Milph. ut tremit atque extimuit,
postquam te aspexit. (1270 3)

made all the advances and lied about her marital status, so he is not really guilty; (iii) Cario does not conform to conventions for comic cooks and has no central plot function; and (iv) the scene has five speaking parts. But the five words that one *lorarius* speaks hardly constitute a part, and the scene only requires the soldier, an aggrieved 'husband', and someone to explain that Philocomasium is not coming back. Since both Periplectomenus and Cario are off stage before Sceledrus appears, a few lines by the soldier would easily free one of them for the part. The 'husband' needed a slave or two for the beating but not necessarily a cook (given their notorious gossiping, cooks were poor choices for a confidential scam). As for (ii), Pyrgopolynices is a *moechus* regardless of who initiated the affair (he attempts this defence at 1403 5, to no avail). And as for (i), I do not see how the soldier could start a second affair without breaking off the first (keeping two women in adjacent houses— with a connecting passage—is no solution). The inconsistency about whose house will be used results from combining a 'Phaon' plot line (the soldier-as-gigolo) with an adultery sting.

²⁷ For example, Antiphila in the *Heauton* exclaims *uideon Cliniam an non?* (405 text of Kauer and Lindsay) right after a fainting prompt (*retine me* 403). Pardalisca and Bromia both exclaim at the 'marvels' they saw inside (*tanta ... mira ... /intus uidi*, *Cas.* 625 6, *tanta mira in aedibus sunt facta*, *Amph.* 1057) before they faint, or at least pretend to (*ne cadam ... tene me*, *Cas.* 634, *animo malest, aquam uelim*, *Amph.* 1058). It is the bad news (*credidi aegre tibi id, ubi audisses, fore*, *Trin.* 1086) that makes Charmides dizzy (*tene me* 1091). S. A. Frangoulidis, 'The entrapment of Pyrgopolynices in Plautus' *Miles Gloriosus*', *PP* 53.1 (1998), 40–3 identifies verbal and other links with Philocomasium's faint at 1330.

²⁸ E.g. τὸν δὲ κατ' ὀφθαλμῶν ἐρεβεννὴ νύξ ἐκάλυψεν *Il.* 5.659 (W. Ferrari, 'Una Reminiscenza di Saffo in Lucrezio', *SIFC* n.s. 14 [1937], 139 50 at 140, 144, developing A. Turyn's argument that Sappho borrows epic signs of fear, cf. J. Svenbro, *Phrasikleia: An Anthropology of Reading in Ancient Greece*, tr. J. Lloyd [Ithaca, NY, 1988], 152); κατὰ δ' ὀφθαλμῶν κέχυτ' ἀγλὺς (*Il.* 5.696, cited in J. Svenbro, 'La tragédie de l'amour. Modèle de la guerre et théorie de l'amour dans la poésie de Sappho,' *QS* 19 [1984], 57 79 at 68–9).

For a Latin adaptation of a Greek comic parody, the echoes of the original poem are surprisingly clear: being near the beloved (*si accesserit prope ad te*, ὅττις ἐναντίος τοι/ἰσθάνει καὶ πλάσιον); seeing the beloved (*dum te obtuetur, postquam te aspexit*, cf. Cat. 51.7 *aspexisti, ὡς γὰρ ἔς σ' ἴδω*); loss of speech (*uerbum . . . facere non potis, φῶναι/σ' οὐδ' ἔν' ἔτ' εἴκει*); 'tongue failure' (*linguam oculi praeciderunt* picking up *obstupida* in 1254, ἄκαν μὲν γλῶσσα †ἔαγε† λέπτον); and trembling in fear (*tremiit atque extimuit, τρόμος δὲ/παῖσαν ἄγρει*). The heavy emphasis on 'seeing' (*tu aspexisti, non uideo, uideres* 1261, *ut quaeque aspexit* 1264, *obtuetur* 1271) serves the practical purpose of providing stage directions for something that is largely internal in Sappho; it also links this scene to the play's larger theme of distorted vision.²⁹ Continuing the motif of 'blaming the eyes', *linguam oculi praeciderunt* compresses two symptoms in Sappho into one and offers support for the 'broken tongue' reading (*ἔαγε* after *γλῶσσα*), along with Lucr. 3.156 (*infringi*).³⁰ Plautus—via the poet of the *Alazōn*—turns the unusual expression 'my tongue shattered' (sc. like a weapon in battle) into the common one 'to cut out the tongue' but retains the original cause (seeing the beloved) by making *oculi* the subject.³¹ The on-stage narrator solves the problem of dramatizing a loss of voice (despite being *obstupida* in line 1254, Acroteleutium manages to describe her sensations) and arguably preserves the sense of a fragmented self commentators since antiquity have seen in Sappho 31.³² This is one aspect of the poem that translates well to the comic stage, where characters often show an awareness of themselves both as gazing subjects and as objects of another's gaze.³³

²⁹ J. C. Dumont, 'Le *Miles Gloriosus* et le Théâtre dans le Théâtre', *Helmantica* 44 (1993), 133–46 at 138–9 finds about 100 occurrences of the verb *uidere*, most of them in the Sceledrus plot, which he reads as a reduction of theatre to its 'essence visuelle'—making someone 'un see' what they have seen (*ut quod uiderit ne uiderit*). R. K. Ehman, 'Glaucumam ob Oculos Obicimus: forbidden sight in *Miles Gloriosus*', *JCS* 22 (1997), 75–85 maps the visual language on to a mythic pattern of crime followed by loss of sight (e.g. Actaeon). Since Acroteleutium's reaction has nothing to do with love at first sight, this passage indirectly supports the reading of Sappho 31 in G. Lanata, 'Sappho's amatory language', trans. W. Robins, in E. Greene (ed.), *Reading Sappho: Contemporary Approaches* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1996), 23.

³⁰ The Lucretian parallel was first suggested by O. Jahn in his edition of *Περὶ ὕψους* (Ferrari [n. 28], 139). For a brief bibliography on *ἔαγε*, see D. O'Higgins, 'Sappho's splintered tongue: silence in Sappho 31 and Catullus 51', *AJP* 111.2 (1990), 156–67 at 159 n. 11. If tongue failure is critical for an oral poet (*ibid.*, 159–60), it is equally awkward for an actor impersonating one!

³¹ *Abscido* is more common with *linguam* (Pl. *Amph.* 557, *Serv. In Aen.* 3.51, *In Buc.* 6.74, *Mart.* 2.82, *Sen. Exc. Contr.* 10.4.16, *Suet. Cal.* 28, *Val. Max. Mem.* 3.3.4, *Justin. Dig.* 21.1.8) but *praecido* is attested (Pl. *Aul.* 189, *Hyg. Fab.* 257.12, *Sen. Contr.* 10.4.6).

³² 'Is it not wonderful how she summons at the same time, soul, body, hearing, tongue, sight, skin, all as though they had wandered off apart from herself' ([Longinus], *On the Sublime*, trans. Fife, rev. Russel). On Sappho's 'body in pieces', see P. DuBois, *Sappho is Burning* (Chicago, 1995), 71–2, who sees it as the backdrop against which the subjective 'I' of the poem is constituted. See also E. Greene, 'Re figuring the feminine voice: Catullus translating Sappho,' *Arethusa* 32.1 (1999), 1–18 at 7–8.

³³ Plautus anticipates the author of *On the Sublime* in splitting his 'Sappho' into two speaking parts but he also naturalizes the sense of dislocation in fr. 31—the sense of looking at oneself from the outside. Actors, particularly of the self-conscious Plautine sort, always have to consider how they look to others. Applying a conceptualization of the 'gaze' from feminist film theory, E. Stehle, 'Sappho's gaze: fantasies of a goddess and young man', *differences* 2.1 (1990), 88–125 at 107, reads fr. 31 as breaking down the division between viewer and viewed: 'the narrator's gaze has shifted from the other woman to herself. With her new focus she observes herself both from within and from without. The audience too must shift from the simple position of "looking" at another to the ambiguous position of both sharing the narrator's experience and watching her.' This is essentially the experience offered to Pyrgopolynices.

Acroteleutium's faint and the stage directions written into the dialogue point to Sappho in a fairly direct way. Less obvious may be the playwright's efforts to recreate the situation of the poem so that Acroteleutium can have her Sapphic seizure. The opening banter about Milphidippa's good fortune in gaining an audience with the soldier is not standard comic fare. Lovers are usually impatient to hear what the beloved has to say but Acroteleutium never even asks about the content of the conversation. The two women have a kind of 'phatic' dialogue about the experience of speaking with the soldier:

Acr. obsecro, tute ipsum conuenisti?
 ... Milph. cum ipso pol sum locuta,
 placide, ipsi dum libitum est mihi, otiose, meo arbitratu [ut uolui]. (1219–20)

The point, of course, is not to repeat the what Pyrgopolynices just said earlier but to flatter him and convince him that his neighbour loves him desperately, and so the women improvise on the theme of difficulty of access and the privilege of gaining an audience. Milphidippa even hints that her own 'desire' was gratified (*dum libitum est, meo arbitratu*), a subtlety Palaestrio takes pains to explain (*quam laeta est, quia ted adiit* 1222), giving Acroteleutium a cue to express envy (*O, fortunata mulier es* 1223) and thus to carry her point (*ut amari uideor*, the soldier concludes at 1223).³⁴ The motif of envy recurs (*ego amem, si per te liceat* 1263). Here it sets up the Sapphic allusion by casting Milphidippa as the *fortunata mulier* who talks to the beloved while Acroteleutium plays the impassioned onlooker. The playwright takes some trouble to maintain this arrangement. The meeting, after all, was arranged precisely so that Acroteleutium could speak with the soldier. This is why 'fear torments her' that he will not find her attractive and she plans to fling herself at his feet if he refuses to marry her (*genua amplectar/atque obsecro* 1239–40). Everything leads up to a face-to-face conversation but instead she sends Milphidippa (*adi obsecro et congregere* 1266), who offers by way of explanation a paraphrase of Sappho 31. The triangle would have been obvious in the Greek play, which was probably limited to three actors—just the 'wife', her maid, and the soldier.³⁵ The whole scene is

Acroteleutium presents herself as an object for sexual fantasy by performing her 'passion'; at the same time the soldier is given access to her subjective experience through the pantomime-like device of a narrator (who knows her 'feelings' because they are following a script). Cf. A. Carson, *Eros the Bittersweet: An Essay* (Princeton, 1986), 13 and ead. "'Just for the thrill': sycophantizing Aristotle's *Poetics*", *Arion* 1.1 (1990), 142–54 at 149 (Carson writes about the 'theatricality' of Sappho 31), and Y. Prins, 'Sappho's afterlife in translation', in E. Greene (ed.), *Re-reading Sappho: Reception and Transmission* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1996), 36–67, at 39–41 on the 'highly specularized subject' of the poem and the breakdown of a clear distinction between subject and object.

³⁴ They already used this bit at 1009–11 (Milph. *utinam.../... conueniundi mihi potestas euenat*; Pal. *erit, et tibi exoptatum optinget*). The *Miles* parody does not take Sappho 31 as a poem about jealousy of a successful rival (a reading W. D. Furley, "'Fearless, bloodless... like the gods": Sappho 31 and the rhetoric of "godlike"', *CQ* 50.1 [2000], 7–15 convincingly refutes). See also Carson (n. 33, 1986), 13–15. 'Sappho' envies 'that person' simply for having the conversation. 'That person' is clearly attracted to the beloved (*ego amem*) but has not acted on these feelings.

³⁵ I am not convinced by Lefèvre's argument ([n. 26], 39–40) that the maid is unnecessary and the 'wife' need only have shown herself or spoken a few words in the soldier's hearing. Palaestrio has the smallest part in this scene (94 words out of 621 or 15 per cent) and is the likeliest addition. We know that Plautus often enhanced the clever slave's role (E. Fraenkel, *Elementi Plautini in Plauto* [Florence, 1960], 223–41) and nearly half his part is the single speech at 1242–7 (the Phaon gloss and other metadramatic language here seem suspiciously Plautine). Most of Palaestrio's comments simply echo the soldier's (*Pyrg. audin...? Pal. audio*. 1222, *Pyrg. sed quid ego uideo? Pal. quid uides?* 1281), or repeat earlier flattery

contrived so that Acroteleutium can play her virtuoso Sappho while Milphidippa (and Palaestrio) do their best to support her performance.³⁶

There may be other Sapphic material in this scene. The remarks about 'smelling' the soldier play with the notion of a lover's hypersensitivity to the presence of the beloved. Palaestrio and Pyrgopolynices make Roman divination jokes out of this material but Acroteleutium is quite explicit that she perceives the soldier through natural, not supernatural, means. She is working a different vein here, preparing for her 'faint' with an early sign of physical overstimulation:

Acr. ... non est intus quem ego uolo. Milph. qui scis? Acr. scio pol ego, olfacio;
nam odore nasum sentiat, si intus sit. Pal. hariolatur.

Pyrg. quia me amat, propterea Venus fecit eam ut diuinaret.

Acr. nescio ubi hic prope adest quem expeto uidere: olet profecto.

Pyrg. naso pol iam haec quidem plus uidet quam oculis. Pal. caeca amore est.

(1255–9)

This is all ridiculous. She has never been near enough to know his 'smell' and no one ever heard of a prophetic nose. But Sappho often uses olfactory imagery in erotic contexts, as for example in fragment 94, where floral perfume evokes the presence of the beloved. Campbell credits her with being 'the earliest writer to mention myrrh, cassia and frankincense'.³⁷ Acroteleutium's hyper-aroused nose would both mock this sensibility and flatter Pyrgopolynices with the suggestion that he has—on top of everything else—an agreeable *odor*.³⁸ A Roman audience did not need Sappho to connect an attractive scent with sex appeal (the *Casina*, for example, develops an extended equation between the two) or to appreciate the physical comedy here (just as she reaches the door, set to attack, she stops suddenly and

(Pyrg. *ut amari uideor*. Pal. *dignu's*. 1223, *tu inclitu's apud mulieres* 1227, *omnes ... mulieres te amant* 1264), or state the obvious (*quam laeta est quia ted adiit* 1222, *amore perditast tuo misera* 1253). His *tace, ne audiat* 1254 is an amusing comment on the soldier's acting but not quite consistent with the convention observed up to this point that eavesdroppers are not overheard. The women do not use Palaestrio at all and the soldier's remarks before Milphidippa approaches, including some of Palaestrio's material, could easily be asides (1281–3, for example, would make a reasonable monologue). Milphidippa, on the other hand, is vital. She speaks 190 words (31 per cent of the scene), versus Acroteleutium's 206 (33 per cent) and Pyrgopolynices' 131 (21 per cent), and she is needed for the Sapphic triangle. Acroteleutium also needs a confidante for the eavesdropping portion of the scene and a maid of some sort is probably as essential to a convincing 'lady' Greek or Roman—as the proper hairstyle and dress (cf. 794–5).

³⁶ The blocking that makes the triangle in Sappho 31 possible has been explained in other ways. For example, close inspection might give the game away either because Philocomasium was playing the infatuated neighbour herself (Gaiser [n. 18], 448) or because a prostitute is still a prostitute, even in matron's dress (F. Desbordes, 'L'Illusion théâtrale dans le *Miles gloriosus*', *Vita Latina* 129 [1993], 6–16 at 11). But Gaiser's reconstruction is unconvincing and the role is not such a stretch. Acroteleutium is not being asked to play Lucretia but an adulterous wife—a *meretrix* in *matrona's* clothing. She keeps her distance because Palaestrio tells her to: *ubi ille exierit intus, istinc te procul/ita uolo adsimulare* 1169–70 (Schaaf [n. 5], 315). Schaaf (319) takes this as part of the scheme to lure the soldier into the neighbour's house, but she does not draw him any closer (Palaestrio holds him back) and he does not actually need to enter until 1387. Palaestrio is simply trying to ensure that her lines carry conviction. As Desbordes points out, the *Miles* exploits (and mocks) the presumption that remarks 'not intended' for the listener are trustworthy.

³⁷ D. A. Campbell, *Greek Lyric Poetry* (Basingstoke and London, 1967), 276 n. 30.

³⁸ She may also be hinting that he is divine (Lorenz [n. 5], 207 ad 1256). On scent and divine epiphany, see E. Lohmeyer, 'Vom göttlichen Wohlgeruch', *Sitz. der Heid. Akad. der Wiss., Phil. hist. Klasse*, Abh. 9 (1919), 3–52 at 3–14.

sniffs the air), but it is an odd symptom of love and conceivably a Sapphic touch.³⁹ Phaon's sex appeal, after all, came from a perfume. The prayer to Venus (1228–30) may also be a nod to Sappho. Although there are no obvious allusions to her best preserved prayer, fragment 1 (the closest parallels could appear in any request to a deity: *eandemque et oro et quaeso*/λίσσομαί σε, *quod cupiam ne gravetur*/κῶττι μοι μάλιστα θέλω γένεσθαι), and there is nothing of Sappho's complex relationship with Aphrodite, the prayer might still be a Sapphic gesture. New Comic characters rarely ask Aphrodite for help in their love affairs but Sappho appeals to her more than to any other deity.⁴⁰

The absurdity of praising the soldier for being aloof, discriminating, and attractive to women is funny in itself, but the play also makes a running joke of his miscasting as 'Phaon'. Whereas Phaon was irresistible, Pyrgopolynices is an 'object of ridicule, everywhere he goes' (92). Whereas Phaon turned up his nose at women who adored him, the soldier wants everyone—his girlfriend, the neighbour's wife, the neighbour's wife's maid, the girlfriend's non-existent twin sister, and the sailor who brought the non-existent twin to town. Some of these he has not even seen, as Palaestrio remarks in disgust (*priusne quam illam oculis tuis* <*uideas*> 1005). The soldier is a model of naïve consumption of spectacle, a man who 'loves' every woman he sees (or, in theatrical terms, who believes every performance) and expects others to do the same (1391–2). He is also a poor performer. As Dumont points out, Artotrogus has to create his role for him and feed him his lines (for example, *Pyrg. quid illuc quod dico? Art. ehem, scio iam quid uis dicere* 36).⁴¹

The *Miles* is quite explicit about what constitutes good acting. In the on-stage discussions of casting, costuming, and props, and in the rehearsals and scripting sessions, characters place so much emphasis on convincing an audience that the play has been said to equate the art of deception with the art of theatre itself: 'le grand art de la tromperie est aussi, en effet, l'art du théâtre'.⁴² 'Deception' requires careful preparation, cleverness, and team work. By these standards, Pyrgopolynices is a terrible actor. He eschews supporting roles (*hic astabo tantisper cum hac forma et factis frustra?* 1021, cf. 1022, 1030) and he is not a quick student. *Nullumst hoc stolidius saxum* (1024), remarks Palaestrio in disgust, after having to remind him that he 'usually' negotiates love affairs step by step (*pedetemptim*), as he *already knows* (*tu hoc scis* 1023). He needs to be reminded of his lines (*facito fastidi plenum, / quasi non lubeat; me inclamato, quia sic te uolgo uolgem* 1034–5), his blocking (*patere atque asta* 1022, *adibon? minime* 1242), how his character behaves (*sine ultro ueniat; quaeritet, desideret, expectet/sine: perdere istam gloriam uis, quam*

³⁹ See C. Connors, 'Scents and sensibility in Plautus' *Casina*, *CQ* 47.1 (1997), 305–9 on scent imagery in the *Casina*.

⁴⁰ On Sappho's 'special association with Aphrodite' see Nagy (n. 7), 175, and also Williamson (n. 2), 165 and Lanata (n. 29), 14–15. Acroteleutium is taking her cue from a remark she is not supposed to hear (*ita Venus uolt* 1227, Desbordes [n. 36], 13). Plautine characters give Venus thanks (*Cas.* 841–2), reproach her (*Mos.* 161–5), swear by her (*Cur.* 196, 208–9), make grudging offerings (*Cur.* 125–7, *Poen.* 452–4), and attend her temple for a festival (*Poen.* 264), but only Palaestra prays directly for help and she is not seeking it in a love affair (*Rud.* 694–701, echoed by Trachalio 702–5).

⁴¹ Dumont (n. 29), 134. On the soldier as an 'actor' see Desbordes (n. 36), 15, and also G. E. Duckworth, 'The structure of the *Miles Gloriosus*', *CP* 30.3 (1935), 228–46 at 236, Leach (n. 18), 203 and Lefèvre (n. 26), 39. Desbordes (13–14) sees him struggling to play a *miles gloriosus* but I would modify this slightly: he is a *miles gloriosus*—and a brilliant one—struggling to play a *moechus*.

⁴² Desbordes (n. 36), 6–7. Characters 'make believe in order to make [others] believe' ('faire semblant pour faire croire') in a highly theatrical form.

habes? 1244–5), that Milphidippa is *not* his leading lady (*hanc quidem/nil tu amassis* 1006–7), and even *what* role he is supposed to be playing (*Phaoni Lesbio* 1247, a metadramatic reference which passes right over his head). While the ‘good’ actors toil over their performance, the soldier believes he has an innate gift. In the Milphidippa scene he overacts (the culmination is *postriduo natus sum . . . quam Iuppiter ex Ope natust* 1081); in the Acroteleutium scene he underacts, falling out of character and missing his major cues. For example, the women give him a character sketch to jog his memory (*illas spernit segregat ab se omnis* 1232, *fastidiosust* 1233) and the perfect opening for a Phaon line: *uiuere sine illo scio me non posse* (1241). To this he replies, *prohibendam mortem mulieri uideo* (1242)! In dismay, Palaestrio identifies his part for him (‘You’re Phaon’) and feeds him another appropriate prompt: *amore perditast tuo misera* (1253)—the handsome youth, after all, drove Sappho to suicide. His answer? *Mutuom fit* (1253). At this point his director tells him to stop talking altogether (*tace, ne audiat* 1254), advice he unfortunately ignores, as he goes on to answer *uos uolo* with *et nos te* (1267) and cheerfully offers to cure what ails the lovesick woman (*leuandum morbum mulieri uideo* 1272).⁴³ His worst ‘Phaon’ line, however, is probably his response to *ut tremat atque extimuit, / postquam te aspexit* (1272–3), language Sappho drew from the battlefield to describe an overwhelming erotic experience. Pyrgopolynices puts this back where it belongs: *uiri quoque armati idem istuc faciunt* (1273).

The art of theater is, of course, more than deception, despite the internal actors’ claims. The play as a whole is not trying to dupe us but to make us laugh and to this end the soldier and Sceledrus are its most valuable players. Pyrgopolynices is, after all, *deridiculo . . . omnibus* (and the same actor could easily play both roles, since there is no overlap and they involve a similar kind of comedy). But at no point is the play self-conscious enough to admit that the best performer is the one whose performance fails by all internal criteria.⁴⁴ Plautus only defines ‘good’ acting for us in order to make Pyrgopolynices’ ‘bad’ acting seem funnier. The point is to make sure we get the joke: on one side is the hack who forgets his lines and improvises the very last thing he is supposed to say; on the other, the professional who gives a *tour de force* performance without direction or prompting.

If the Acroteleutium scene ridicules the soldier’s supposed incompetence, it also showcases the brilliance of the *meretrix*. Palaestrio lays out the basic plot and *personae* of the deception scheme but leaves the details to the women. We are led to expect the sort of scene he describes to the soldier (*lamentari / ait illam, miseram cruciari et lacrimantem se adflictare, / quia tis egeat, quia te careat* 1031–3). His first *meretrix* scheme, after all, used a stock scenario involving twins, a secret passageway, a compromising embrace, false accusation, mistaken identity, and an indignant heroine (who happens, atypically, to be guilty). From the second *meretrix* he requests only a convincing *uxor* and a conventional show of passion (*simulet . . . deperire hunc militem* 796). For other Plautine wives—the few who do not hate their husbands—love means grieving over separation and remaining loyal, even against their better interests.⁴⁵ Love for

⁴³ He deserves credit for speaking the right language, even if he says the wrong thing. On love as a disease see J. J. Winkler, *The Constraints of Desire* (New York and London, 1990), 82–4; on Sappho’s innovative treatment of this *topos* in fr. 31, see Lanata (n. 29), 24 (but other emotions, such as grief, may also be in play: Williamson [n. 2], 157).

⁴⁴ A point made by N. Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, 1957), 165 (cited Leach [n. 18], 193 n. 20).

⁴⁵ Grieving over separation (*Amph.* 512–14, 529, 637–41, *St.* 6, 20); remaining loyal (*Amph.* 640), even against their better interests (*St.* 129–44).

meretrices is similar, at least in times of trouble.⁴⁶ It is therefore not surprising that Palaestrio assumes *deperire* is straightforward and concentrates instead on how to manipulate the soldier's vanity and greed, the basis of his own interactions. He emphasizes the ring (797, 912, 1017) and the fee (1059–61, 1075) and offers a few tips on flattery (*conlaudato formam et faciem et uirtutis commemorato* 1027, *prae illius forma quasi spernas tuam/... et simul/ formam, amoenitatem illius, faciem, pulchritudinem/conlaudato* 1170–3).

He need not have bothered. Faking love was a prostitute's business (cf. Menander's Thais, μηδενὸς ἑρῶσαν, προσποιουμένην δ' αἰεί 163 K-A) and Acroteleutium was writing her own script before Periplectomenus was half finished (883–4). She puts her hetaira's *paideia* to use in choosing a role that dovetails perfectly with the soldier's delusional fantasy, both gratifying and mocking it at the same time. Since many hetairai did recite poetry, Acroteleutium's literary parody draws on recognizable professional skills, at least for a Greek audience (Plautus, however, plays up the jokes about women's natural guile and downplays the allusion). Acroteleutium is ready enough to use insecurity about her own looks as an excuse to praise the soldier's but, since she has not actually seen him at this point, she drops a quick compliment (*iste metus me macerat.../ne.../... eius elegantia meam extemplo speciem spernat* 1233–5) and turns the line to a different purpose:

metuo, ne praedicatio tua nunc meam formam exsuperet (1237)
 si pol me nolet ducere uxorem, genua amplectar
 atque obsecrabo; alio modo, si non quibo impetrare,
 consciscam letum: uiuere sine illo scio me non posse. (1239 41)

Milphidippa laid the groundwork for this threat (*sit necne sit, spes in te uno est* 1051, *nisi tu illi fers suppetias, iam illa animum despondebit* 1053). It flatters the soldier's image as *fastidiosus* but is not exactly what Palaestrio instructed. Acroteleutium was supposed to dwell on his beauty and charm and convince him that he has a more attractive option than Philocomasium. Killing herself was not part of the script and it seems a little overdone, particularly since his 'fee' has already been negotiated. It also falls outside the comic parameters of Palaestrio's scheme: women do not threaten suicide in New Comedy and they do not worry about rejection because of their looks.⁴⁷ *Meretrices* like Philematium and Phronesium may fuss over their appearance but they show no lack of confidence in their charms, while poor Selenium only neglects her appearance after she believes she has been abandoned (*Cist.* 55, 113–15).

⁴⁶ Grieving over separation (*As.* 515, 593 5, *Cist.* 53–61, *Cur.* 165, 204 5, *Per.* 179, *Ps.* 44, *An.* 268 70); remaining loyal (*As.* 535, *Cist.* 87 8, *Cur.* 57, *Mer.* 535 40, *Mos.* 204 5, 245, *Poen.* 362 3, *Hau.* 392 7, *Eu.* 96 7), forsaking wealth (*As.* 527 35, *Cist.* 83 5, *Mos.* 227–8, 303, *Hau.* 285 301); ignoring prudent advice/orders (*As.* 541 2, *Cist.* 78 88, *Cur.* 173 4, *Mos.* 186–246). *Meretrices* who return their lovers' affection respond with endearments (*Cist.* 247, *Cur.* 203, *Mos.* 167, 249, *Ps.* 52, *St.* 742, *Eu.* 95) and complaisance (*Mos.* 205, 296 7, *Per.* 766, 841, *St.* 742, *Hau.* 396 7). Those who fake love use endearments (*Men.* 182, *Mil.* 1330, *Rud.* 436, *Truc.* 353, 421, 687, and arguably *Eu.* 95), flattery (the lover is *probus*, *Men.* 203, *facetus* and *ferox*, *Mil.* 1322 3, charming when angry, *Truc.* 273), and a pretence of special preference (*Men.* 192, *Truc.* 186, 193, and arguably *Eu.* 96 7). Apart from the flattery, Acroteleutium's technique stands alone.

⁴⁷ Suicide is a young man's threat, made for example by Thrasonides (*Mis.* 710 11, 721 2 Arnott), Polemon (*Perik.* 505) and Alcesimarchus (*Cist.* 639 44). The only exception is a reciprocal offer from a young *meretrix* in the *Asinaria* (*mihi certum est facere in me omnia eadem quae tu in te facis*, 613) but this hardly sounds the depths of despair.

The reason for Acroteleutium's dramatic threat is of course that this is exactly what happened to Sappho, as Palaestrio points out once he catches the allusion. The earliest reference to this story is the beginning of Menander's *Leucadia*, where a temple servant tells a despondent young woman about Sappho's legendary leap from the famous rock at Leucas:

οὐ δὲ λέγεται πρώτη Σαπφώ
τὸν ὑπέρκομπον θηρῶσα Φάων
οἰστρῶντι πόθῳ ρίψαι πέτρας
ἀπὸ τηλεφανοῦς (Leuc. 11–14 Arnott)

The scholarly consensus is that Menander used this legend as a counterpoint for a story about ordinary people with a happier ending.⁴⁸ Sappho was a useful example of a woman who took the initiative in love but did not commit the horrible crimes of a Phaedra, Stheneboia, or Clytemnestra. This brief version of her tale is very sympathetic but oddly phrased.⁴⁹ The words οἰστράω/-έω, ὑπέρκομπος, and τηλεφανής appear nowhere else in Menander, while πόθος and θηράω are rare.⁵⁰ Ὑπέρκομπος is particularly surprising because there is a good comic synonym: ἀλαζών. The metre, anapaestic dimeter, is also unusual for Menander. The servant is adopting the language of tragedy here. She is not, however, alluding to any known tragedy and the context is serious enough to rule out parody (the girl is distraught at finding herself in such a harsh, lonely place). The purpose of the tragic diction seems to be to make Sappho a figure of pathos. Had plays like the *Alazōn* made it difficult to treat her seriously? The soldier's clumsy rescue offer at 1242 (*prohibendam mortem*) makes a joke of even the suicide threat and Acroteleutium's name may be another bit of humour at Sappho's expense. Ἀκροτελεύτιον is a poetic term referring to the end of a line, as for example at Thucydides 2.17, Πυθικοῦ μαντείου ἀκροτελεύτιον τοιόνδε (the beginning of the line was also an ἄκρον, so τελεύτιον is not redundant). 'Line-end' figuratively describes Acroteleutium's function in the second duping scheme (cf. D. Berg's translation 'Climax').⁵¹ It may also be a punning allusion to Sappho. Since an ἄκρον was a 'height,' like a mountain peak or headland, and τελευτή often meant death 'Acroteleutium' could also mean 'death from a height,' referring to Sappho's leap.⁵² Sappho's famous suicide is surely the reason Acroteleutium moves so quickly from *metus* (sc. of not pleasing him) to *letum* and places such an emphasis on the soldier's scorn. By *Heroides* 15 there was a tradition that Sappho was unattractive (33–5) and no longer young (85–6)

⁴⁸ Wilamowitz (n. 2), 26; T. Zielinski, 'Sappho und der leukadische Sprung', *Klio* 23 (1929) 30, 1–19 at 18; A. Koerte, *Menandri quae supersunt* 2, rev. A. Thierfelder (Leipzig, 1953), 96; Robinson (n. 3), 41; Magno (n. 2), 87; Arnott (n. 6), 224–5 (*contra* L. Rychlewska, *Turpili Comici Fragmenta* [Leipzig, 1971], 30 and Pitts (n. 2) at 160–1 follow Ribbeck in conjecturing that Phaon himself appeared). The fragments of Turpilus' *Leucadia* do not allude to Sappho. The plot apparently centred on 'Dorcium', a fisherman in love with her, and a young man who refused her advances.

⁴⁹ On Phaedra parallels here, see Zwierlein (n. 23), 216–17 n. 448 and Pitts (n. 2), 162–8.

⁵⁰ ὑπέρκομπος is an Aeschylean word (*Pers.* 827, 831, *Sept.* 391, 404); τηλεφανής appears in Homer (*Od.* 24.83) and Pindar (fr. 114.7 Bowra). Elsewhere Menander uses forms of πόθος seven times and θηράω three times (one of which, *Epitr.* 324, appears in a paratragic context).

⁵¹ D. Berg and D. Parker, *Plautus and Terence: Five Comedies* (Indianapolis and Cambridge, 1999).

⁵² LSJ s.v. ἄκρον I.1 2, τελευτή I.4. I am grateful to Maryline Parca for pointing out the possible pun on Acroteleutium's name. Hammond et al. (n. 5), 74 suggest "ultimate tops" as a courtesan and girlfriend but this is a stretch from 'highest' and 'end'.

when she loved Phaon.⁵³ Acroteleutium deprecates her own looks and threatens to kill herself because this is what Sappho—Phaon's Sappho—would do.

The Sappho parody probably originated in the *Alazōn*.⁵⁴ Although Plautus was a cultured reader of Greek literature who might, conceivably, have known the poems of Sappho at first hand, few in his Roman audience would have been familiar with them. Sappho's dialect was hard enough for native Greek speakers and it seems unlikely that Plautus would introduce material parodying the excesses of a lyric poet for an audience he does not expect to recognize 'Phaon' without the hint *Lesbius*.⁵⁵ As written, the scene requires no knowledge of Sappho's poetry and is entertaining in its own right (the parody, after all, has gone unnoticed until now). In Athens, on the other hand, there was a long tradition of putting Sappho on the comic stage and presumably of parodying her poetry. Diphilus, for example, made Archilochus and Hipponax her lovers, forcing two plain-speaking poets of blame to court the epitome of aristocratic refinement.⁵⁶ Being a poet was probably relevant to her comic *persona* in this play but we cannot be certain. Someone in another comedy mentions learning her ἐρωτικά (Epikr. 4 K-A) and a fragment from Antiphanes' *Sappho* depicts her as a riddle-posing wit with an interest in letter-writing (194 K-A).⁵⁷ Unfortunately, it is not clear whether these plays made fun of Sappho herself and it is difficult to relate them to her poetry.

As the longest surviving illustration of Sappho's representation in comedy, the *Miles* preserves an important piece of Greek literary history and provides valuable evidence that her poetry directly influenced her comic *persona*. The debilitating effects of gazing at the beloved, particularly the loss of voice, clearly derive from fragment 31. As we might expect, poking fun at Sappho was not about reflecting a refined 'Sapphic' sensibility but about spoofing a famous poem. The *Miles* parody offers a fascinating ancient reading of this poem. Like the author of *On the Sublime*, the *Alazōn* playwright saw in it a description of love's madness which borrowed conventional male symptoms of *erōs*.⁵⁸ The novelty was not that the love was

⁵³ For literary references to Sappho's 'ugliness', see Wilamowitz (n. 2), 21; Robinson (n. 3), 34–5; Jacobson (n. 4), 282 n. 26; Magno (n. 2), 85 and n. 12; Knox (n. 2), 286 *ad* 31–40; Pitts (n. 2), 177–9.

⁵⁴ There is disagreement about the date of the *Alazōn*. Grimal (n. 18), 138 dates it to 280 B.C. and Hofmann (n. 20), 104 5 to 281 B.C., but both acknowledge that it might be earlier. Hammond et al. (n. 5), 24 put it simply between 336 and 250. It is quite possible that this allusion to Sappho 31 pre-dates Theocritus 2.106 10.

⁵⁵ Plautus expects his audience to appreciate parody of Roman tragedy and tragic diction (T. Frank, 'Two notes on Plautus', *AJP* 53.3 [1932], 243 51 at 243 8; W. B. Sedgwick, 'Parody in Plautus', *CQ* 21 [1927], 88–9) in much the same way that Aristophanes' audience enjoyed parodies of Euripides (J.-P. Cèbe, 'Le niveau culturel du public plautinien', *REL* 38 [1960], 101–6 at 105 6, and id., *La caricature et la parodie dans le monde romain antique des origines à Juvénal* [Paris, 1966], 112). He also expects them to get references to Greek mythology (Knapp [n. 4]; W. R. Chalmers, 'Plautus and his audience', in T. A. Dorey and D. R. Dudley [edd.], *Roman Drama* [New York, 1965], 21 50 at 42 3), Greek loan-words (Chalmers, 39 41; R. Maltby, 'The distribution of Greek loan-words in Plautus', *Pap. Leeds Int. Lat. Sem.* 8 [1995], 31–69) and famous historical figures and events (Chalmers, 43 4), but none of this demands the level of fluency needed to understand Sappho.

⁵⁶ Cf. Pitts (n. 2), 110.

⁵⁷ On the 'riddle fragment' see Williamson (n. 2), 15 16; Prins (n. 33), 47–8; R. P. Martin, 'Just like a woman: enigmas of the lyric voice', in A. Lardinois and L. McClure (edd.), *Making Silence Speak* (Princeton, 2001), 55–74 at 73–4; P. A. Rosenmeyer, *Ancient Epistolary Fictions* (Cambridge, 2001), 96 7; Pitts (n. 2), 116 23; L. O'Higgins, *Women and Humor in Classical Greece* (Cambridge, 2003), 123 5.

⁵⁸ *On the Sublime* 10.3, πάντα μὲν τοιαῦτα γίνεται περὶ τοὺς ἐρῶντας.

between women but that the desiring subject was a woman with a particular gift of expression. Absent is any sign of the reciprocal, non-hierarchical love some readers have admired in her poems.⁵⁹ As 'Sappho', Acroteleutium pursues, pleads, threatens suicide and violence, and chafes at delay—all to gain what? Not that the soldier love her in return but that he 'not begrudge' what she desires (*quod cupiam ne grauetur*, she prays at 1230).⁶⁰ There is no assumption that he loves her or anyone else (*si amavit umquam* 1251), just a conventional request that a beautiful beloved yield to an ardent lover. Like the author of *On the Sublime*, the *Alazōn* poet had difficulty identifying with the speaker of poem 31. In a sense there is no real subject here. Acroteleutium is a performer, devoid of any feelings other than her *uoluptas* in perpetrating a deception. We are not invited to share her emotional experience; to the contrary, we are repeatedly reminded that it is all pretence. For the playwright, *φαίνεται μοι* served as a guide to the visible manifestations of female passion, a catalogue of phrases and gestures, like a rhetorical treatise, to be applied as needed to create an effective spectacle. His parody implies a reading that does not individualize or identify with the speaker and therefore sees not a frightening demonstration of Aphrodite's power but a highly controlled manipulation of *topoi*. This parody must also put to rest the notion that the poem was widely received as a wedding song in antiquity; like Catullus, the *Alazōn* playwright saw nothing wrong with using it to initiate an extramarital affair.⁶¹

Recognizing allusions to the Sappho and Phaon of comedy and to fragment 31 substantially changes our understanding of this scene. In casting Pyrgopolynices as the mythological epitome of beauty and sex appeal, Acroteleutium is playing a sophisticated literary joke on a very unliterary dupe. The scene draws on a long comic tradition of eroticizing Sappho and depicting her as a hetaira, a tradition sufficiently familiar for Sappho's comic persona, even her language, to be borrowed without explanation by a hetaira impersonating an adulterous wife.⁶² Both genre conventions and Greek cultural expectations may have made 'Sappho' an appropriate role for a hetaira, though we should not overstate the degree to which comedy assimilated the famous poet to the figure of the hetaira. Acroteleutium's Sappho is not a woman of 'insatiable heterosexual promiscuity' but an example of passionate love carried to extremes—a discreditable and immodest love perhaps, but a sincere one.⁶³ Acroteleutium chooses the role precisely because Sappho offered a credible model of female infatuation, perhaps the most credible model available on the comic stage.

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⁵⁹ Dover (n. 2), 177 writes of the 'obliteration of the usual distinction between a dominant and a subordinate partner' in fr. 1. Cf. E. Greene, 'Sappho, Foucault, and women's erotics,' *Arethusa* 29.1 (1996), 1–14 at 5. See Pitts (n. 2), 99 n. 196 for further references. *Contra* Williamson (n. 2), 163 sees merely 'the familiar asymmetrical model of male homosexuality' and DuBois (n. 32), 9 argues against 'écriture féminine' readings of Sappho generally.

⁶⁰ This passage may suggest that *Her.* 15.96 (*non ut ames oro, me sed amare sinas*) derives from comedy.

⁶¹ The 'wedding hymn' reading goes back to Wilamowitz (n. 2), 58. For further references see Furley (n. 34), 7 n. 4.

⁶² Pitts (n. 2), 85–139, esp. 109ff.

⁶³ Quotation from G. W. Most, 'Reflecting Sappho', in E. Greene (n. 33), 11–35 at 14.