

SAPPHO, FRAGMENT NINETY-FOUR

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- τεθνάκην δ' ἀδόλως θέλω·
 2 ἄ με ψισδομένα κατελίμπανεν,
 πόλλα καὶ τόδ' ἔειπ[έ μοι]·
 ὦϊμ' ὥς δεῖνα πεπ[όνθ]αμεν,
 5 Ψάφφ', ἥ μάν σ' ἀέκοισ' ἀπυλίμπάνω·
 τὰν δ' ἔγω τὰδ' ἀμειβόμεν·
 χαίροις' ἔρχεο κἄμμεθεν
 8 μέμναις, οἶσθα γὰρ ὥς σε πεδήπομεν·
 αἰ δὲ μή, ἀλλὰ σ' ἔγω θέλω
 ὀμναισαι [. . . (.)] . [. . . (.)] . . . αι
 11 ὅσ[σα μόλθακα] καὶ κάλ' ἐπάσχομεν·
 πῶ[λλοις γὰρ στεφάν]οις ἴων
 καὶ βρ[όδων πλο]κίων τ' ὕμοι
 14 καὶ [] πὰρ ἔμοι περεθήκαο
 καὶ πῶ[λλαις ὑπα]θύμιδας
 πλέκ[ταις ἀμφ' ἀ]πάλαι δέραι
 17 ἀνθέων ἑ[βαλες] πεποσημμέναις
 καὶ π[όλλωι λιπά]ρωι μύρωι
 βρενθείωι . [] ρ υ[. . .]ν
 20 ἐξαλείψας κα[ὶ βα]σ[ι]λῆϊ
 καὶ στρώμν[αν ἐ]πὶ μολθάκαν
 ἀπάλαν πα . [] . . . ων
 23 ἐξίης ποθο[]νίδων
 κωῦτε τις [λόφος οὔ]τ' ε[στι] τι
 ἱρον οὐδ' ὕ[δατος ῥόα]
 26 ἔπλετ' ὀππ[οθεν ἄ]μμες ἀπέσκομεν
 οὐκ ἄλσος . [] . ρος
]ψόφος
 29 [] . . . οιδιαι

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- 1a ["Ατθιδ' οὔποτ' ἄρ ὀψ[ομαι], Edmonds.
 9 αἰ δὲ μή, ἀλλὰ θέαν θέλω, Schubart.
 10 [σὺ δὲ] λ[ά]θεται, Wilamowitz.
 11/12 Diehl. 13 Wilamowitz. 15 Athen, 15.674c-d.
 17 ἑ[βαλες], Theander, ἐ[ράτῳ], Schubart.
 18 Wilamowitz, Diehl, *et al.* 24 χόρος, Blass, γάμος, Bowra.
 25 ἱρον οὐδ' ὕ[μέναιος εἶς], Theander.

TRANSLATION

Really, I want to die; weeping she left me.

She said many things, and this: "Alas, what terrible things we have gone through; Sappho, truly I leave you against my will."

And I made her these replies: "Farewell: go, and remember me, for you know how we cared for you.

But if you do not, I wish to remind you . . . what tender and beautiful things we went through.

For many wreaths of violets and of woven roses too, and . . . you put around yourself at my side,

and many woven necklaces made of flowers cast about your soft neck,

and with much rich and royal perfume elegantly you anointed . . .

and upon a soft bed . . . you satisfied desire of tender young girls,

and there was no sacred hill, nor temple, nor stream of water
whence we were absent,

no grove . . . the rattle (of castanets)"

THE SAPPHIC CORPUS has been considerably enlarged in the last century, and the most important additions to it are the long fragment on the Florentine ostrakon (fr. 2) and the two long fragments on the Berlin parchment. This parchment of about the sixth century A.D., first published by Schubart in 1902,¹ contains large fragments of two poems, frs. 94 and 96, and a smaller, less intelligible part of a third, fr. 95. It is to the first of these, fr. 94, that this paper is devoted.

Fr. 94 is identical in metre (glyconic, glyconic, glyconic with inserted dactyl) with fr. 101, which, according to Athenaeus, belonged to the fifth book of Sappho's poems. The metre of frs. 95 and 96 is similar (cretic plus glyconic, glyconic, glyconic plus bacchiac), and has led to the supposition that Sappho's fifth book contained various stanzas based on the glyconic.

The only textual controversy of much importance centres on line 23, where the similarity of *ἐξίης πόθον* to Homer's phrase *ἐξ ἔπος εἶην*, "to put

¹W. Schubart, "Neue Bruchstücke der Sappho und des Alkaios," *SB Berl I* (1902) 195-206.

aside desire (having satisfied it)," seems to provide a clear reference to homosexual acts—the only such reference in our fragments. The appealing restoration *νεα]νίδων*—offered originally by Lobel but since renounced by Lobel and Page—strengthens a suggestion which, even without it, is amply strong, since Sappho uses *ἄπαλος* elsewhere in six passages and in five of these it describes girls in erotic contexts. The suggestion has offended some, and alternative restorations have been found.² It must be said, however, that none of the alternatives is as convincing as the offensive reading, and that the offensive reading is itself not entirely convincing. The matter must be left unresolved.

The text which I have given contains some restorations which, while far from certain paleographically, cannot be far wrong in sense (for example, Diehl's *λιπάρως* in line 18 and Edmonds's *λόφος* in line 24, neither of which occurs elsewhere in the fragments of Sappho). My translation is intended only to show what I think the poem says grammatically.

Both the subject and the method of the poem are highly characteristic of Sappho. The subject of separation, absence, distance, is found in fr. 1, 5, 16, 31, and 96 certainly, and quite possibly in several others, including fr. 95 (the third poem in the Berlin parchment). The method is narration

²C. Theander, "Studia Sapphica II," *Eranos* 34 (1936) 59–62; C. M. Bowra, *Greek Lyric Poetry* (Oxford 1962) 191, n. 2; J. M. Edmonds, *Lyra Graeca I* (London 1922) 242. Theander notes that (1) the use of *ἐπὶ* with the accusative in Sappho involves an allusion either to many places or to a general or customary place; (2) *ἔρος* is the word for sexual desire; *πόθος* usually means desire for someone or something absent (though he seems not to have noticed the erotic use at fr. 22.11); (3) *ἄπαλος* is used by Sappho of people, not of things—so a personal name must be restored; (4) since the girl is going away, she may have come from somewhere in the first place: she may in fact be the girl who has gone to Lydia in fr. 96. Hence his reading:

Καὶ στρώμν[αν ἐ]πὶ μολθάκαν
ἀπάλαν π[ά]ρα Μ[α]λ[ι]όνων
ἐξίης πόθο[ν ἄδυ νε]ανίδων.

which he translates: *et stragulis super mollibus (incubans) tenerarum ex Maeonibus expelles desiderium suaviter virginum*. The proposed sense is: "When you first arrived you missed your girlfriends and could not sleep; but now you have got over that—so why are you leaving?" He compares Xen. *An.* 3.1.3. The obvious weaknesses of this restoration are that the ambiguity still remains (is the allusion sexual or non-sexual?), and that Sappho elsewhere does not say *Μαιόνων*, but *Λύδων*. Edmonds reads:

ἀπάλαν παρ[ὸ] πα[ρ] ὀνόγων
ἐξίης πόθο[ν ἄβρον] Ἰανίδων

"(You) had from the hands of gentle serving maids all that a delicate living Ionian could desire."

Bowra, echoing one of Theander's points, says, "... though the Homeric phrases indicate satiety after the appetites have been indulged, *πόθος* indicates desire for someone absent, and the notion is that even this is set aside." But he also seems not to have noticed the use of *πόθος* at fr. 22.11.

of a conversation supposed to have taken place in the past between Sappho and another person, as in ode 1, fr. 62 (probably), 95 (probably), and 134. The imagery overall is strikingly similar to that of fr. 2 and 96.

Yet although this is one of the longest and most typical of the Sapphic fragments, criticism has been disappointingly limited to biographical interpretations despite the fact that we do not know and never have known anything at all about Sappho's life. This poem, in fact, in which not only the central event but also the trappings have been presumed to be factual, has served as a mainstay of the biographical approach, and little else.

Wilamowitz regarded Sappho's long speech to the departing girl as a window into the daily life of the *thiasos*, and scholars have followed him in this and have amused themselves by connecting the event with one or another of the names which Suidas has left us.³ Bowra based his thoroughgoing biographical interpretation primarily on this poem and fr. 31. "Sappho looks back," he says of this poem, "on times which they have passed together, and enumerates activities which must have been the common round of their lives."⁴ Here we encounter his central argument: "The simplicity of her manner has some of the qualities of the conversation which she claims to record, and it is hard not to believe that some such conversation took place, and that its substance was not entirely different from this record of it."⁵ And again: "Her words are so unadorned that we take them literally."⁶

It is not our purpose here to argue against the biographical interpretation of Sappho's poems. It is enough for the moment to point out that the view that any piece or body of literature is a record of facts tends to rob that piece of literature of artistic meaning, by minimizing, or even disparaging, the role of the imagination in it. Fr. 94 exemplifies such treatment. Thanks to the straitjacket of the biographical interpretation, it has received next to no literary interpretation, no analysis of imagery and structure, no careful evaluation as a poem. It is this deficiency which, with appropriate misgivings, we hope to begin to fill with this paper.

Edmonds's *exempli gratia* restoration of line 1a (see the apparatus) may well be correct, in that it mentions both Sappho (or the speaker) and the departing girl in a single line. This unit is then doubled into two lines, which define their different attitudes: Sappho wishes to die;⁷ the girl left

³U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Sappho und Simonides* (Berlin 1913) 48-52. Cf. G. Perotta, *Saffo e Pindaro* (Bari 1935) 34: "... c'introduce nel chiuso mondo della poetessa, sicchè noi possiamo dire d'avere agli occhi la vita quotidiana del tiaso."

⁴Bowra, *op. cit.* (above, n. 2) 100.

⁵*Ibid.* 192.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷Schubart, *op. cit.* (above, n. 1), supposed that line 1 was spoken by the departing girl,

her, weeping.⁸ This unit of two lines is in turn tripled into six lines which preserve the strict parallelism: one strophe, rather than one line, is devoted to each of them, and these strophes are parallel, the first line of each introducing a speech which fills the remaining two lines. Thus the first section consists of three pairs of parallel statements increasing in length by a simple progression. The fourth stanza begins Sappho's account of her recollections, and introduces a new structural section. Until this point the two persons have been treated with exact equality and parallelism; then Sappho's side of it begins to outrun the other girl's. Before considering this structural shift we should point out how stanzas one to four are woven together by the repetition and development of key verbs placed prominently at the ends of lines.

Κατελίμπανεν at the end of stanza one expresses Sappho's point of view, and calls forth as an echo in the girl's voice the ἀπυλιμπάνω at the end of stanza two, while between them, at the end of line 4, the phrase δείνα πεπόνθαμεν acts as a sad knot tying them together. Sappho's own stanza ends with πεδήπομεν, a pathetic answer to the verbs which have ended the first two stanzas. The word μέμναισ' at the beginning of that line is answered by θυμναισαι at the beginning of line 10, and finally, in the prominent position at the end of that stanza, occurs the key phrase κάλ' ἐπάσχομεν.

The phrases δείνα πεπόνθαμεν and κάλ' ἐπάσχομεν represent the two personalities, sum up the two speeches, and fix the emotional tension which the poem will try to resolve. (In the girl's speech the most prominent position is given to ἀπυλιμπάνω. In Sappho's speech κάλ' ἐπάσχομεν has taken over the end of the stanza.) This structure of responding pairs of verbs interwoven in two or three significant positions acts as counterpoint to the other structure that we have observed, and effects a transition. The plaiting of semantic signs with metrical positions is smooth and subtle, and distracts attention from the fact that the fourth stanza unbalances the parallel structure which has obtained in stanzas one to three.

Stanzas five to ten contain Sappho's recollections, explaining the phrase

a supposition denied by all later scholars except A. W. Gomme ("Interpretations of Some Poems of Sappho and Alcaeus," *JHS* 77 [1957] 255-266). While Gomme's argument (that if the subject had changed in line 2 a particle would have indicated this) is a strong one, the structural symmetry of this part of the poem and Sappho's habit of beginning poems in the dramatic present seem equally weighty counter-arguments.

⁸Both Page (*Sappho and Alcaeus* [Oxford 1955] 76) and Bowra (*op. cit.* [above, n. 2] 191) take πόλλα in line 3 with ψισδομένα rather than with ξειπε. The fact that each strophe is end-stopped makes this unlikely. The damage which it does to the sense makes it practically impossible. Each girl has a speech, yet Sappho's is ten times as long. Thus she says that the girl said many things (πόλλα), of which she will repeat only one (τόδ'), but that she will give her own reply in full (τάδ').

κάλ' ἐπάσχομεν. To complete the structural pattern established at the start, an equally long reply by the girl would be needed, to justify her own reasons for saying δέϊνα πεπόνθαμεν. Of course it is very unlikely that this happened. It would require a poem longer than any we know of in Aeolic lyric, and would be a most un-Sapphic subservience to structural simplicity. It is more likely that we have lost only one stanza at the end, and that the structural units evolve, at the same time regularly and dynamically, as follows: the first expression of the situation takes only one line, 1a (this is, of course, conjectural); this is doubled in lines 2 and 3; the new unit then is tripled into the parallel stanzas two and three, which finally are quadrupled, the pair of responding stanzas being followed by the unit of stanzas four to eleven. The discreteness of this last, largest, unit may be seen by the fact that each stanza in it, unlike the earlier ones, deals with one class of images (wreaths, necklaces, perfumes, sacred places), and that each begins with a *καί* which has replaced the significant end-verb as the binding element.

Thus we are presented with four pictures—each expressing the situation in greater detail than did the last—in units which expand with mathematical regularity. The parallelism which was broken by the extension of Sappho's speech into the fourth strophe is seen, at the end, not to have been the structural key: that balance was deliberately created and as deliberately destroyed. The extension of her speech—unprepared, and indeed prepared *against*—shows her private world surging up to outrun the bounds of form and balance. Yet the unbalancing proceeds to establish a new, more comprehensive, form and balance.

This artifice, consisting of highly controlled shifts where at first form seems to have been overcome by passion but then passion reveals itself in a new and greater form, is one of the things that impart to Sappho's best poems their almost electric vitality. The impression of static yet vibrant eternity conveyed by fr. 2, for example, arises from its perfect, even pictorial, joining of form and content—Sappho, impatient in her longing, rises in the first line to gaze across the poem at Aphrodite, who, being the desired rather than the desirer, arrives, more stately and slow, only at the end; they are forever separated—and yet joined—by the intervening grove. It is a *tour de force*, and equally so is the dynamic evolution of fr. 94, where the two aspects—form and content—start in a kernel of unity (stanza one), then gracefully diverge in a long, slow arc, which is in the end seen as a greater unity.

Turning now to the content of the poem, we will discover that the arc established by the expanding structural units is in fact one and the same as the path of its emotional development, and that the two are followed precisely by an expanding and receding view of time, that is, by the dramatic sequence of events.

The questions that scholars have been most concerned with are: how does Sappho feel toward the girl? what is the relation between the long passage of recollection and the rest of the poem? why does she choose the indirect method of narrating the conversation in the past tense? Two views have predominated in answer to these questions: "On sent," says Reinach, "l'on devine que la poétesse a dû éprouver une déception et que sous cette tendre évocation, se cache un reproche."⁹ Wilamowitz develops this further¹⁰: Sappho regards the girl's departure as a sign of unfaithfulness, and chides her for leaving after she has received so many favours. Through this particular event the general grief of Sappho's life is suggested: it is her fate to love and always to be left by those she has loved. Here Wilamowitz quotes fr. 26: ὅττινας γὰρ εὖ θέω, κῆνοί με μάλιστα πάντων σίνονται. Why, then, the apparently unnecessary device of portraying the event in the past? "C'est une manière ingénieuse," says Reinach, "d'évoquer le souvenir de leur liaison passée."¹¹ Again Wilamowitz is more elaborate: the poem was written to be read to the girls who had stayed on after their friend's departure from the school, so that they would hesitate to take such a step themselves.

This is, of course, the familiar biographical interpretation, based on Wilamowitz's unquestioning belief in Sappho's school. One is forced to say that the almost total lack of evidence for the existence of the school makes this interpretation little better than a random guess.

Schadewaldt's view—shared by Bowra and to some extent by Page—is that it is not bitterness, but sorrow of separation (*Trennungsschmerz*) that permeates the poem.¹² Sappho's essential emotion is love, but this leads to *Trennungsschmerz*, so she finds solace in memory. The poem's need for three levels of time results from the dilemma posed by the two emotions: at the time of parting, Sappho, masterful in the presence of the beloved, consoled the girl with the treasure of memories she would take with her, but later, overcome by the grief of separation, she finds solace herself in the same memories, *and* in the memory of how she had consoled the beloved girl. Schadewaldt rejects the idea that bitterness or reproach is involved, and denies the relevancy of fr. 26, noting that the gender of κῆνοι makes it inappropriate. (He might with good effect have replied to Wilamowitz's citation by quoting fr. 41: ταῖς κάλεισιν ὕμμι νόημα τῶμον/οὐ διάμειπτον.)

Though this seems a fairly satisfying outline of the drama of the poem,

⁹T. Reinach, "Nouveaux Fragments de Sappho," *REG* 15 (1902) 65.

¹⁰*Op. cit.* (above, n. 3) 48–52.

¹¹Reinach, *op. cit.* (above, n. 9) 64.

¹²W. Schadewaldt, "Zu Sappho," *Hermes* 71 (1936) 366, *Sappho* (Potsdam 1950) 115–119. Cf. the simpler view of Zuntz: *Amorem enim totum carmen spirat* (G. Zuntz, "De Sapphus Carminibus E4, E5, E6," *Mnemosyne* 3. 7 [1938] 88).

it is at best an outline. It does not account for the increasing energy of the flow of words and images, and it interprets the poem with what is still a biographical emphasis, appreciating it primarily as a revelation of Sappho's personality. We will attempt to show that the poem works in a deeper and more satisfying way when it is considered not primarily as a self-revelation, but primarily as a work of art, that is, a work in which formal matters, i.e., the relations of theme to structure, are uppermost.

The poem uses three levels of time: the dramatic present, when Sappho wishes to die; the time of the departure, which she remembers *in* the dramatic present; and the early life, which she remembers remembering at the time of the departure. It is striking that this is the exact reverse of the ordinary narrative order, which would be, "Once we lived happily together; then she left me; now I want to die." In that order, each time-level would establish the emotion of one section. As it stands, the emotions of all three times are involved in the moment of speaking. The poem moves from present fact, to direct recollection, to indirect recollection, plunging ever deeper into the past. Furthermore, the three sections into which the time-levels divide the poem are the same as the three structural sections observed above. It can be assumed that their relationship is significant.

The present, which requires only one line (possibly two, if we possessed line 1a), is mentioned only to be rejected: "Really I want to die." The wish to die, as often in Sappho, is a metaphor for the rejection of present time, and memory, that tomb where the present lies when it has died, may serve as a surrogate for physical death. In fr. 31 also it is the pain of the present moment that leads Sappho to say she is almost dying: death is an escape from that present, a rejection of it. The only other fragments in which death is treated in extant contexts—fr. 55 and 147—speak of it in the same breath with memory. Death, or memory, is an internal world which in some cases is preferred to the external one we call the present. In fr. 94 the wish to die is fulfilled by the mind's turning inward to dwell in the past.

But is that past a strictly remembered one? Or is death a realm of imagination also? Bowra characteristically takes it as an unvarnished record of facts. "That this life," he says, referring to lines 12-29, "was entirely satisfying and happy seems clear enough."¹³ I find this view difficult to maintain. In all but one, or possibly two, of the poems of Sappho which we have in decent condition she seems to resolve the difficulties of life—from which the poems generally begin—by affirming that art and imagination are creators of stronger, healing, realities.¹⁴

¹³Bowra, *op. cit.* (above, n. 2) 191.

¹⁴For example: the pain of a lover's rejection, in ode 1, is eased by a poetic vision of Aphrodite; the pain of lovers' separation, in fr. 96, is healed when the vehicle of the

Furthermore, it is well known that she does not explain her meanings but acts them out. The very fact that Sappho's description in fr. 94 is of a life that seems unrealistically happy should, I think, show us that it is either a partial or a total fiction—the healing imagination entering to soothe the pain of life. Has the girl not said of their past, *δεῖνα πεπόνθαμεν*? It is a symbolic view of their past that Sappho presents, one which bears the same relation to real life that the symbolic rite in fr. 2 bears to real rites. In the immediately succeeding fragment, 95, Sappho wishes to die and see the dewy lotus-bearing banks of Acheron. And that is what she does here also: she wishes to die, then turns inward to walk among imagined flowers on an imagined river-bank in another world. Death is co-extensive with a poetic region where imagination reigns and can supply what is lacking in life. The imagery of the three sections will bear this out.

Present life is portrayed with no images whatever; there is only the stark wish to die. Turning inward, Sappho dwells for a while in the direct past, which is suggested by the pain of the present. These seven lines are in a static and formal balance, like a treaty. They are also abstract, containing no concrete image-words except *ψισδομένα*, "weeping." The fourth strophe, which breaks open the orderly formalism of these lines and effects the transition to a more remote reality, ushers in at the same time a wholly different mood and a new use of language. Stark and harsh in the present, formal and drab with weeping in the direct past, the language now becomes free and ornamental. Images of beautiful objects and acts abound in what has been up to now an imageless poem.

The balanced, almost oppressive, orderliness of the first three strophes, and their lack of images, may be taken to show the mind's lack of freedom in them. The unbalancing fourth strophe is the striving against the bonds: as the poem, in this strophe, breaks loose from static form, so it breaks free from the grip of the world. When the mind has broken these limits it strains no more: the third reality is maintained for the remaining six strophes. That world is where Sappho wanted to be. The feeling, as the energy of the phrases increases and they become more rapid, is not grief, but triumphant agitation. It is the insistence that this is the greater reality.

What is the nature of this reality? How is it portrayed?

First, flower-images appear in a longer series than anywhere else in Sappho; then perfumes, couches, desire, possibly a wedding, possibly a

great simile, veering naturally and convincingly over into the plane of the tenor, joins the sundered lovers, as by magic, under a unifying and nourishing moon; in fr. 16 the tedium of a world of armies, and ships, and people who care for such things is relieved by a choral device, the priamel, which leads easily from these very objects to the remembered grace of an absent girl-friend. The list could go on. I except fr. 44 and, reluctantly, fr. 31, the inclusion of which would require a longer defence than is appropriate here.

stream of water, a sacred grove, the sound of castanets. Both ritual and convivial interpretations have been offered.

In support of the former are the references to *ἱερον* (a sacred object, as in Homer, or a temple, as usually after Homer), *ἄλσος, ψόφος* (elsewhere only at fr. 44.25), and, of course, the flowers. In the words of Schubart, "Dass der Blumenschmuck, die Salben, u.s.w., den Göttern zugebracht waren, kann man nicht bezweifeln, wenn man den Zusammenhang beachtet, in den diese Schilderung eingefügt ist."¹⁵ (See his reading of line 9 in the apparatus.) Yet (as in fr. 2) no rite as such is mentioned. What we have instead are two persons, presumably in love, who are placed in an environment of sacred objects, shrines, anointings, music, and a couch or bed. If any rite is suggested, it is the wedding rite. And this, of course, is a poetic, or symbolic, suggestion, not a statement of a past event.

Jurenka, on the other hand, felt that these stanzas described a symposium.¹⁶ In support of this contention is the word *μύρον* (used by Alcaeus in connection with drinking parties), the references to flowers and couches, and the fact that *ψόφος* at fr. 44.25 is used not of the wedding *rite* but of the wedding *celebration*. Yet, again, there are no revellers; there is no wine; there is no hint of any specific festal occasion. As in the rite of fr. 2, the objects are in their places, but the activity is not named, and the scene is generalized in a tantalizing and ambiguous way. As so often in Greek literature, the ritual and the convivial spirit are suggested simultaneously. But the suggestions cannot be interpreted as descriptions of specific past events. There is an emptiness and a remoteness from the world which they suggest that must be accounted for.

There are two other fragments of Sappho in which similar imagery is presented in a similar atmosphere of emptiness. In fr. 96 the immensely still world of the flowers nourished by the wandering moon holds only Sappho, her unspeaking and unseen companion, and the dreamed wanderer in a far-off land. In fr. 2 the grove equipped with sacred objects holds only Sappho and the dreamed or imagined goddess.¹⁷ So, too, in this fragment the scene of halls, temples, and woodland groves, with garlands, perfumes, and music in abundance, is created only for Sappho and her remembered companion. There is a symposium, but no guests; a round of

¹⁵Schubart, *op. cit.* (above, n. 1) 203.

¹⁶H. Jurenka, "Die neuen Bruchstücke der Sappho und des Alkaios," *ZöstG* 4 (1902) 294. Page, *op. cit.* (above, n. 8) 79, argues that the *στρώμα* is strictly a bed for sleeping; but the word is not used elsewhere in Aeolic.

¹⁷Athenaeus's words, which are sometimes offered as a seventeenth line for fr. 2, are neither in the right metre (or indeed in any metre) nor the right dialect; furthermore, the four words which have gender are not of the right gender. I take them to be Athenaeus's transition back from Sappho's grove to his own banquet in male company, and to convey absolutely no information about Sappho's poem, which may very well be complete in sixteen lines.

cult activities, but no other worshippers, and no rite. It is a ghost city where Sappho and her friend may wander, as through a "forest of symbols" that suggest the condition of their hearts. Their wish is like Achilles' wish that he and Patroclus alone might raze the crown of Troy, wandering through the empty streets in a triumph of private happiness. It is a child's wish, typically homosexual, for a world where he (or she) and a best friend might do whatever they wish, disturbed by no one at all.

Or, again, the supposed events can be seen as an entire symbolic lifetime, based on suggestions of courtship and marriage. The preparation for a wedding is shadowed forth in the weaving of garlands, the ceremony in the anointing, its consummation in the bed. A long married life of outdoor walks and visits to woodland shrines follows, where there is music everywhere, but no musicians. If it is a memory, it is a memory of an imagining.

This imagined life, which is the central experience related in Sappho's poetry, is based on the ritualized connection of two persons, through the benign power of Aphrodite. It is a great metaphor in which life itself (or at least that life which is devoted to the admiration of the beautiful) is the tenor, the wedding rite (or a generalized and symbolic version of it) the vehicle. Virtually all of the major fragments of Sappho take on greater meaning if we learn to look at them as aspects of this metaphor (as, I believe, she herself did).

But to call the traces of this imagined life, which can be found in all of Sappho's poems, merely a daydream arising from homosexual unhappiness¹⁸ is not to do it justice. For these are poems, not daydreams, and there is a difference. The life she makes claims for, the life in which the individual devoted to the love of beauty is wedded to it through an inner rite, exists palpably in the poems, and through them other people—the readers, ourselves—may enter into it, and undergo its transformations.

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¹⁸As, in effect, does Robert Bagg, in "Love, Ceremony and Daydream in Sappho's Lyrics," *Arion* 3.4 (1964) 44-82.