

SAPPHO, FRAGMENT TWO¹

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1a ρανοθεν κατιου[

δεῦρυ † μεκρητας . π[]. ναῦον
 ἄγνον ὄππ[αι τοι] χάριεν μὲν ἄλσος
 μαλί[αν], βῶμοι δὲ τεθυμιάμε-
 4 νοι [λι]βανώτῳ·

ἐν δὲ ὕδωρ ψύχρον κελάδει δι' ὕσδων
 μαλίνων, βρόδοισι δὲ παῖς ὁ χῶρος
 ἐσκίαστ', αἰθυσσομένων δὲ φύλλων
 8 κῶμα κατὰγρει·

ἐν δὲ λείμων ἱππόβοτος τέθαλε
 τφτ . . . ι ρρινοῖς ἄνθῃσιν, αἰ δ' ἄηται
 μέλλιχα πνέουσιν[

12 []

ἐνθα δὴ σὺ στέμ(ματ') ἔλοισα Κύπρι
 χρυσίαισιν ἐγ κυλίκεσσιν ἄβρωσ
 ὄμ(με)μείχμενον θαλίαισι νέκταρ

16 οἶνοχόαισον

† τούτοισι τοῖς ἐταίροις ἑμοῖς γε καὶ σοῖς.

1a ὁρράνοθεν κατίοι[σα, Norsa κα]ράνοθεν κατίοι[σα, Turyn.

1 δεῦρὺ μ' ἐκ κρήτας ἐπ[ι τόνδ]ε ναῦον, Page.

δεῦρ' ὕμ' ἐς ῥήτας π[α]ρ [ι . ὕ . τ .]ε ναῦον, Schubart.

δεῦρὺ με κρήτας πρ[οκαλητ'] ἔναυλον, Gallavotti.

δεῦρὺ {ὕ}μ', ε<ι> κρητῆς π[οτ' ἔσαντο] ναῦ{γ}ον, Theiler, von der Mühl.

δεῦρὺ με κρήτας πρ[ολίποισ]α ναῦον, Theander.

8 κατὰγρει, Bergk.

11/12 μέλλιχα πνέοισι, <φόβαι δ' ἀπ'> ὀρρά/νω κατίοι[σαι, Gallavotti.

17 τοῖς ἐταίροις τοῖσδεσ' ἑμοῖς τε καὶ σοῖς, Edmonds.

¹The text I have given is substantially that of Lobel and Page, with an apparatus containing such variant readings or restorations as are pertinent to this article. For κατὰγρει in line 8 see Risch, *MusHelv* 19 (1962) 197-201.

TRANSLATION

Come, for my sake, from Crete to this holy temple, where is your lovely grove of apple trees, and altars are smoking with frankincense;

therein cold water sings through the apple branches, and all the place is shadowed over with roses, and from quivering leaves a magic sleep takes hold;

therein a meadow with pasture for horses blooms with . . . flowers, and breezes breathe sweetly . . .

there taking the garlands, Cypris, pour in golden cups, luxuriously, nectar mixed with good cheer.

(for these my friends and yours.)

THE QUESTION OF COMPLETENESS

There are several reasons to suppose that line 1a does not belong to the same poem as fr. 2: it is followed by a longer blank space (five or six characters) than those which the scribe has used for strophe-ends, and accordingly may be the end of a poem;² *κατιου* is not Aeolic (and *πνέουσιν* in line 11 does not reproduce the error); its most likely restoration is Norsa's *ὀρράνοθεν* *κατιου[σα]*, which cannot stand at the end of a sapphic stanza.³ Yet we are told that on other than paleographical grounds an earlier stanza is desirable, perhaps even necessary; in which case we would have to make do with line 1a.

First, the question whether Aphrodite must be mentioned at the beginning.⁴ Only twice can we be sure we have the beginnings of poems with invocations (Ode 1 and fr. 103.8)—hardly adequate for the formation of a rule; the invoking word *δεῦρον* may be enough—and indeed Sappho may have had special reasons for withholding the name of the invoked deity: is it coincidence that Anacreon, that most sapphic of 6th century lyrist, did just this, and in a poem that is clearly an imitation of Sappho (fr. 12 Page), beginning with the invoking word, but withholding the name of the god until the eleventh, and final, line? No firm conclusion is possible.

A frequent argument (based on Milne) runs: the poems of Sappho's first book followed the pattern: Theme—Transition—Variation—Transi-

²As Page points out (*Sappho and Alcaeus* [Oxford 1955] 35, n. 2), the inference is uncertain, since no other strophe ends so near the right edge of the ostrakon.

³Medea Norsa, "Versi di Saffo in un Ostrakon del. Sec. II a.C.," *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa*, ser. 2, vol. 6 (1937) 8–15. This was the original publication of the fragment.

⁴See Page, *op. cit.* (above, n. 2) 39–40.

tion—Recapitulation, which, for the prayers (and omitting the “transitions,” which often are hardly in evidence) appears as: Invocation—Example of Past (as in fr. 1) or Mythological (fr. 17) Epiphany—Restatement of Invocation.⁵ But, again, some qualifications must be made. This form is certain or nearly certain only for Ode 1, frs. 5 and 17—but these are all prayers, and are they not simply the standard Greek form for a prayer, already fully developed in Homer, and not a peculiarly Aeolic lyric form at all?⁶ And was Milne in fact formulating a *rule* when he said, “Five is generally the limit to number of stanzas in these odes”⁷ (meaning the odes of book 1)? Obviously he knew that Ode 1 is seven stanzas long and that only one poem (fr. 17) is certain to have had five.

If we accept a more relaxed version of Milne’s argument, we find that fr. 2 can do very well with the four stanzas which it now has: the invocation serving as “Theme”, description of the grove, “Variation,” and repeated invocation, “Recapitulation.” If, however, we are strict about the rules (though we know only a fraction of the game), requiring, as Milne does, a verbal echo of the beginning at the end, then we must assume that our four stanzas are only the Recapitulation, and that Theme, Transition, Variation, and second Transition all occurred in one action-packed stanza ending with line 1a.⁸ But Sappho seems to have experimented with a variety of original short-poem structures;⁹ we should hesitate to bind her with rules that are not only unsubstantiable but are also belied by the gracefulness of her poems.

Let us turn our attention to the end of the fragment, where a fifth stanza may just as well have occurred as at the beginning. Line 17 does not occur on the ostrakon, but follows the last strophe as quoted by Athenaeus. It is not Aeolic; it is not verse, but prose; the four words in it which have gender are all in the wrong gender. Yet it is a common view that this line leads into a new section of the poem: a feast which is to follow the sacrifice.¹⁰ The poem on the ostrakon, however, mentions no

⁵A. J. Milne, “The Final Stanza of *φαίμεναι μοι*,” *Hermes* 71 (1936) 126–128.

⁶See, e.g., F. Schwenn, *Gebet und Opfer* (Heidelberg 1927); G. Zuntz, “Zum Hymnus des Kleantes,” *RhM* 94 (1951) 331–341.

⁷Milne, *op. cit.* (above, n. 5) 128.

⁸For an *exempli gratia* restoration of a first stanza ending with line 1a see W. Theiler and P. von der Mühl, “Das Sapphagedicht auf der Scherbe,” *MusHelv* 3 (1946) 22. It certainly does what can be done to make an interesting poem dull.

⁹See, for example, McEvilley, “Sappho, Fragment Ninety-Four,” *Phoenix* 25 (1971) 4–6.

¹⁰Norsa (*op. cit.* [above, n. 3]), Bowra (*Greek Lyric Poetry* [Oxford 1961] 198), Schade-waldt (*Sappho* [Potsdam 1950] 78–84), Setti (“Il frammento saffico dell’ ostrakon fiorentino,” *StItal.* 19 [1942] 140), and Page (*op. cit.* [above, n. 2] 43) all advocate some version of this interpretation.

banqueters, no mortal presence at all except Sappho herself (or the lyric "I"). Clearly the banquet theory relies unduly on the most corrupt and uncertain line in the text—if indeed it can be said to be in the text at all.

There *is* a banquet close at hand, however—Athenaeus', at which the deipnosophists frequently improvise extensions to quoted passages to bring them into playful reference to their company. In such a continuation at 13. 563e, for example, Myrtilus adopts the style and imitates the diction of the quoted author (Athenaeus uses the term *ἐτραῖποι* in line 17) and brings the sense of the quotation to bear on the company in which he sits. Perhaps, then, as West suggests,¹¹ Athenaeus is paraphrasing Sappho. Perhaps; but at 13. 555b, for example, the continuation is definitely not a paraphrase of the quoted author (Apollonius Rhodius), and it would surely be suspected of being one if we did not have the quoted text to compare. So no firm conclusion seems possible; but if Athenaeus can take responsibility for line 17 it is wisest to let him have it. When included in the poem, it exerts a far stronger influence than its extremely questionable status can justify.

Let us turn our attention briefly to arguments for completeness of the poem—and especially to Gallavotti's description of the syntactical structure.¹² Each of the first three stanzas is made up of three enjambed clauses, each of which (after the first, invoking, clause) adds one item to the catalogue of features of the grove—altars, cold water, rose-shade, glimmering leaves; from these pieces the grove is constructed before our eyes. When it is complete, in the fourth strophe, Aphrodite appears within it; and the poem runs smoothly to its end in one long clause. Superimposed on this clause-structure is the pattern of initial words in the strophes: with *δεῦρον* we begin, with *ἐν δ'* continue, with *ἐν δ'* continue again, and with *ἐνθα* conclude, as the flower opens finally with the mention of the goddess.

Now, this is no confused and unbalanced thing (as Milne's rule would leave it), with only a part of its growth; it is a maturely developed and finely patterned organism. It is doubtful indeed whether another strophe could avoid ruining this structure, which is clearly intentional. Any interpretation which does not take cognizance of such syntactical artistry is, perforce, weakened.¹³ If we turn now to the poem's content we

¹¹M. L. West, "Burning Sappho," *Maia* 22 (1970) 317, n. 25.

¹²C. Gallavotti, "L'ode saffica dell' ostracon Fiorentino," *StItal* 18 (1942) 175–202. See the apparatus for Gallavotti's ingenious, if, perhaps, unlikely, solution of line 1a: the scribe, having accidentally omitted the end of the third strophe, inserted it later in the only space left on the sherd.

¹³It is worth mentioning that the poem of Horace which seems, at least in part, to be based on fr. 2—*Carm.* 3. 18—is complete in four sapphic stanzas.

will see that, despite questionable external "rules," it seems internally adequate as it stands.

GEOGRAPHY AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

The central question in the interpretation of ode 2 is indeed the central question for all of the Sapphic fragments: Does she mean it? Or, we might ask, What kind of song is it? A cult song? A record of personal experience? A reverie? A conceit?

Those who see autobiography in Sappho's poems not unnaturally connect the mention of Crete in the first line with the exile in Sicily, of which the Parian Marble informs us: on her way to Sicily, Norsa says, she stopped off in Crete.¹⁴ And Hesychius testifies appropriately that Aphrodite was worshipped as *Ἀφροίτα* at Knossos.¹⁵ The reading "from Crete," however, is, as Page says, the "best sense with the least change,"¹⁶ and the Parian Marble speaks from the age in which all testimony about Sappho has been polluted by the attention of the comic poets.¹⁷ (Schubart, now followed by West, wanted to remove Crete from the line altogether,¹⁸ but it seems to be confirmed by a parallel in Gregory Nazianzus.¹⁹) In any case, the mention of Crete seems to strengthen the view, basic to most criticism of this poem, that it is a real grove in a real geographical location which Sappho is referring to. But in fact this would be most unusual for Sappho. As much as we would like to learn about her life from her poems, we must face the fact that she does not help us in this. She does not, for example, use place names to express either autobiographical or historical fact; rather, for mythological, or purely poetical purposes. They are few enough to survey, to make the point clear.

Cyprus is royal (fr. 65) and the home of Aphrodite (fr. 35). Sappho longs to see the flowery banks of *Acheron* (fr. 95), and she will find fame there after death (fr. 65), because she has invoked the *Pierian* muses (fr. 103). But a woman who had no share in the roses of *Pieria* will be forgotten when she goes to *Hades* (fr. 55). There is a road to great *Olympus* (fr. 27.12). *Panormos* and *Paphos*, like royal Cyprus, are homes of Aphrodite (fr. 35). Love's power sent Helen to *Troy* (fr. 16). Aphrodite

¹⁴*Op. Cit.* (above, note 3) 10. But the evidence for Sappho's exile, like that for her school, is practically non-existent.

¹⁵See C. Theander, "Zum neuesten Sapphofund," *Philologus* 92 (1927) 466.

¹⁶*Op. Cit.* (above, n. 2) 36.

¹⁷For a discussion of this see W. K. Prentice, "Sappho," *CP* 13 (1918) 347-360.

¹⁸See the apparatus above; W. Schubart, "Bemerkungen zu Sappho," *Hermes* 73 (1938) 303; West, *op. cit.* (above, n. 11) 316.

¹⁹See Q. Cataudella, "Saffo Fr. 5(4)-6(5) Diehl," *Atene e Roma*, ser. 3, vol. 8 (1940) 199.

is invoked from *Crete* (fr. 2). . . . In the world which these place-names suggest, a spiritual autobiography may lie, but no geographical one. In fr. 44 (where the frequencies of personal names and of ornamental epithets are at their highest too, consistent with the choral lyric style) we find *Asia*, *Ida*, *Ilion* (twice), *Plakia*, and *Thebe*—all “literary” references, of course. Closer to home, we find that *Lydia* is mentioned four times: Sappho would not trade Kleis for it (fr. 132); Anaktoria’s walk is to be preferred to the chariots of Lydia (fr. 16); a gown of rare beauty is imported from there (fr. 39); a departed girl who assumes a sort of mythic status shines out among the Lydian wives (fr. 96). Similarly, *Sardis* is the source of an imported kerchief (fr. 98a), and perhaps is named in relation to the departed girl (fr. 96). It seems that Lydia and Sardis are mentioned not really as geographical locations where events took place, but as symbols of wealth and of a somewhat gauche monumentality to which Sappho opposes her subjective and internal value (*ὄττω τις ἔραται*). A *Lesbian* singer (who, judging from a remark of Aelius Dionysus [*ap.* Eust. *Il.*1.129; see Edmonds, *Lyra Graeca* 1. 28], was probably Terpander) towers over the singers of other lands (fr. 106). Altogether nineteen place names are mentioned a total of twenty-seven times and only two seem possibly to represent external facts about Sappho’s life: a kerchief sent from *Phocaea* is praised as a lovely gift, and *Mytilene* is mentioned in a broken and unclear context, probably involving Lesbian politics (fr. 98b3). We have no autobiography here—rather, if anything, a veil is pulled before our eyes. Sappho’s place-names refer to the geography of the imagination, not the geography in which the body moves. Crete is mentioned in fr. 2 because it is associated with the cult of Aphrodite, and that is as far as we can go with it.²⁰

Turyn, looking, I think correctly, to spiritual geography rather than physical for the location of this grove, suggests that it contains elements common to Orphico-Pythagorean descriptions of the afterlife.²¹ Most prominent is Pindar’s dirge (114 Bowra):

²⁰The only other mention of Crete in Aeolic lyric—the famous fragment beginning *κρήσσαι νυ ποτ’ ὦδ’ ἐμμελῆς πόδεσσιν*—bears out this judgement. Lobel and Page obstinately include it among the *Fragmenta Incertum Utrius Auctoris* (16), though it is indicated as Sapphic by its similarity to her fr. 154, the typically Sapphic *ἄπαλος* (eight times in Sappho, three in Alcaeus), *ἄνθος* (six times uncompounded in Sappho, only once in Alcaeus), the association of Crete and Aphrodite in fr. 2, the metre, which would fit Sappho’s sixth book, and, above all, the subject and treatment, which are distinctively hers. In favour of Alcaeus I find only his fr. 397, *τερένας ἄνθος ὀπώρας* (but this phrase is a part of their common inheritance from Homer—e.g., *Od.* 9.449), and *ἐρῶεις*, which occurs once and possibly twice in Alcaeus, never in Sappho. Many fragments preserved *sine nomine auctoris* (e.g., 105c, 108, 115, 129, 132, 140) are assigned to Sappho by Lobel and Page on less evidence. Though one can be sure of nothing in this area, it seems proper to treat the fragment as Sappho’s.

²¹A. Turyn, “The Sapphic Ostrakon,” *TAPA* 73 (1942) 308–318.

φοινικορόδοις δ' ἐνι λειμώνεσσι προάστιον αὐτῶν
καὶ λιβάνω σκιάρων καὶ χρυσέοις καρποῖς βεβριθός.
καὶ τοὶ μὲν ἵπποισι (τε) γυμνασίαις (τε), τοὶ δὲ πεσσοῖς,
τοὶ δὲ φορμίγγεσσι τέρπονται, παρὰ δὲ σφισιν εὐανθῆς
ἅπας τέθαλεν ὄλβος.
ὄδμα δ' ἐρατὸν κατὰ χώρον κίδναται
αἰεὶ θύα μειγνύντων πυρὶ τηλεφανεῖ παντοῖα
θεῶν ἐπὶ βωμοῖς . . .

In purple-rosed meadows is the space before their city
and shadowy with incense-fume and heavy with golden fruits,
and some with horses, some with gymnastics, some with games
and some with lyres enjoy themselves, and among them
the flower of happiness blossoms whole;
a lovely scent lies over their land
and sacrifices of all kinds are mixed forever with fire far-shining,
on the altars of the gods.

If the spirit is quite different, still many images are shared: roses, incense, shadows, horses; and several words occur in both passages: *λείμων*, *τέθαλεν*, *χώρος*. The afterlife of Ps.-Plato *Axioch.* 371c is also to be compared, where pure springs in flowery meadows recall Sappho's *ὔδωρ ψυχρόν*, a phrase which recurs again in an Orphic grave tablet!²² The Elysium of the *Aeneid*, too, contains an echo: *passimque soluti/per campum pascuntur equi* (6.652–653), and Turyn finds others in Lucian's paradise in the *Vera Historia*, the *Apocalypse of Peter*, and later patristic literature. "Sappho herself was inspired by the old Orphic eschatologic poetry," he concludes, and "... simply transferred the picture of paradisiacal landscape, known from Orphic poetry, from the paradise to the holy precinct of Aphrodite."²³

In criticism of Turyn's view let us compare the following passage of Xenophanes:

- 4 κρητὴρ δ' ἔστηκεν μεστός ἐυφροσύνης
ἄλλος δ' οἶνος ἐτοῖμος, ὃς οὐποτέ φησι προδώσειν,
μέλιχος ἐν κεράμοις ἄνθεος ὁσδόμενος.
ἐν δὲ μέσοις ἀγνὴν ὀδμὴν λιβανωτὸς ἦησι,
ψυχρόν δ' ἔστιν ὕδωρ καὶ γλυκὺ καὶ καθαρὸν . . .
- 11 βωμός δ' ἄνθεσιν ἂν τὸ μέσον πάντη πεπύκασται
μολπή δ' ἀμφὶς ἔχει δώματα καὶ θαλίη.

²²And cf. W. K. C. Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion* (London 1952²) 177: "The word *ψυχρόν* means of course not simply cold, but refreshing . . . It is of the same root as *psyche*, soul . . . the word *ἀναψύξει* in the Orphic line . . . literally means 'to be refreshed from evil.' "

²³*Op. cit.* (above, note 21) 315.

The crater stands full of good cheer.
 and other wine is ready, which swears it will never betray,
 sweet and smelling of flowers in the cups;
 and among them the frankincense gives off its holy scent,
 and there is cold water both sweet and pure
 In the midst of it all the altar is piled with flowers;
 round about, song and good cheer hold the halls.

And from Theognis:

1249 παῖ, σὺ μὲν αὐτῶς ἵππῳ, ἐπεὶ σκιρτῶν ἐκορέσθης
 αἰθῆς ἐπὶ σταθμοὺς ἤλυθεν ἡμετέρους
 ἡνίοχον τε ποθῶν ἀγαθὸν λειμῶνα τε καλὸν
 κρήνην τε ψυχρὴν ἄλσεά τε σκιερά.

Boy, you are like a horse when, having had enough
 of running loose you come back to our stables,
 desiring your rider and good pasture, your fountain
 fair and cold, and shadowy groves.

The first passage shares with Sappho's poem the readiness of everything, the frankincense, the cold water, the cups, the flowers, the altar piled high—but it is an introduction to a feast, not a scene of paradise. Has Xenophanes used attributes of paradise to glorify his feast? Or is the Greek paradise based on a banquet? Is Sappho alluding to paradise, introducing a feast, or both, or neither? Is Theognis, in welcoming his catamite back, consciously using phrases suggestive of a return to paradise? Or is he merely using the ancient sexual metaphor of taming a horse, and implying that the boy has returned because he wants a good dinner in comfortable surroundings? As so often in early Greek poetry (and in particular in Sappho) we find that ritual, paradisiacal, and festal imageries overlap. It might be more reasonable to assume that the Orphic authors, when framing their descriptions of paradise, merely dipped into the common fund of imagery for their own purposes, as Sappho, Theognis, and Xenophanes did for theirs.

A brief look at Horace, *Carm.* 3. 18 is suggestive in this context.²⁴

*Faune, Nympharum fugientum amator
 per meos fines et aprica rura
 lenis incedas abeasque parvis
 aequus alumnis.*

²⁴Adduced by N. Bartoletti, "Saffo ed Orazio," *StItal* 15 (1938) 75–77. *Carm.* 1. 30, compared with the Sapphic passage by L. Righini, in "L'ode saffica dell' ostrakon ed Orazio," *StItal* 22 (1947) 101–104, does not, as far as I can see, tell us anything about Sappho. Nor does the passage from Gregory Nazianzus, discussed by Q. Cataudella, help us beyond confirming the reading *κρήτας* in line 1.

*si tener pleno cadit haedus anno,
larga nec desunt Veneris sodali
vina craterae, vetus ara multo
fumat odore.*

*ludit herboso pecus omne campo,
cum tibi Nonae redeunt Decembres;
festus in pratis vacat otioso
cum bove pagus;*

*inter audaces lupus errat agnos;
spargit agrestes tibi silva frondes;
gaudet invisam pepulisse fossor
ter pede terram.*

Vetus ara multo/fumat odore is a fairly close parallel to lines 3/4 of the Sapphic poem, and in the same position in the strophe. Further, the last three of the four strophes are arranged in tri-cola, as are the first three of Sappho's poem. (The cola are not enjambed, but this is typical of the difference between Horace's sapphics and Sappho's own.) The most striking similarity, perhaps, is the paradisiacal description in strophes three and four, for which Horatian scholars can find no reason. T. E. Page says, commenting *ad loc.*, "The introduction of the miraculous element here into the account of the village festivities seems to us inharmonious."²⁵ But if Horace was, indeed, imitating the Sapphic passage, then he may have seen clearly what is only dimly suggested to us, namely the conventional paradisiacal features of her grove.

Finally, although the presence in fr. 2 of elements of an Orphic tradition about paradise is perhaps no more than a strong possibility (not, I would think, a strong *probability*), let us consider what it means if it is in fact so. Probably Sappho is not describing an actual afterlife (elsewhere she uses more conventional pictures of Acheron and Hades). To lend, however, to the worship of Aphrodite some of the atmosphere of a mystery cult might well suit her purpose. Surely the altar, golden cups, nectar, are more suggestive of a *sacrament* than of a conventional banquet. Is it a waking dream in which Sappho imagines Aphrodite pouring out for her alone (the faithful *θεράπων*) the nectar of joy, in an atmosphere suggestive of an initiation? Of the mysteries of Aphrodite . . . ?

THE POEM

We may approach the mood of Sappho's grove by comparing the only other long description of nature in early Greek lyric, Alcman's fr. 89, *εὐδουσιν δ' ὄρεων κορυφαί τε καὶ φάραγγες*. This, it seems, is a night world, a world that is still and silent, but not empty. Beneath the silence a current

²⁵T. E. Page, *Horatii Flacci Carminum Libri iv* (London 1895).

of potential energy runs. It is full of images of beasts and comes alive from the contrast between their teeming activity at day and their sleep at night. But the emptiness of Sappho's grove is immensely deeper; it has a sense of unchanging trance-like stasis. The stillness here is neither the stillness of night nor of day²⁶ but of timelessness— of the sacred. Nor is mere sleep the psychological condition for such stillness: it is a coma, or magic sleep, that drips from the tree limbs. It is a magical scene, like the house in the woods that is stumbled upon in fairy tales, where everything stands in readiness, but no one is home.²⁷ It is surely as much (probably more) a description of an inner condition, a readiness in the heart, than of an outer scene.

The grove, like the house in fairy tales, stands ready for a feast—but a feast of some awesome and unseen power whose impending presence hangs over all. There are no celebrants, yet the sacred objects stand in order in the ritual place. There is no one who has lit the incense or tends it, yet it lies smoking on the altar. No voices sing the hymn, but the water of refreshment sings through the apple branches. There is no one either sleeping or waking, but from the flowers, leaves, and trees, a magic sleep descends. There is no one to drink the sacred drink, but golden cups stand ready on the smoking altar. There is only the invisible presence of an observer, who waits, slowly, methodically, with an almost obsessive sensitivity to detail, noting the rich features of the landscape.

If the poem is complete in four stanzas then it is clearly a symbolic picture, describing a spiritual condition. Sappho herself (or the observer, whoever it is) is defined by the invocation, by her desire to have Aphrodite come and grant the nectar of joy (the drink of gods—as in the Orphic communion the initiate becomes one with the god); Aphrodite, by her ability to do so and by her tendency to withhold herself, as her name is withheld until the end. The description of the grove unfolds under the increasing tension of the missing name, which the reader, or auditor, familiar with the conventions of Greek prayer, will listen for from the start. Finally the emptiness of the grove is filled and the lack of the name supplied simultaneously by the mention of the goddess. The second invocation is elaborated till it has the force of an apparition seen in intense detail; the prayer seems to be answered even as it is spoken. The goddess appears in the heart of the faithful devotee, pouring into ghostly cups immortal wine. At the same time the halting, enjambed rhythm of

²⁶In the world of Sappho's poems shadows are as apt to be cast by moonlight as by sunlight—and she seems especially fond of the full moon. See frs. 34, 96, and 94 (D).

²⁷Page, in translating line 9 "Therein a meadow, where horses pasture," goes too far. *ἰππόβοτος* merely indicates what is potential, and perhaps only a mood: the horse is a symbol of sexuality elsewhere also associated with Aphrodite (for *Ἀφροδίτα ἐφιππος* see schol. *Il.* 2.820).

the poem is purified and, like a flower blossoming, the verse runs smoothly to its end. The poem itself becomes a visual pun, with Sappho (or the observer) at the beginning gazing across the intervening grove at Aphrodite, at the end.

Now if we ask again, where is this grove, we can see the immense suggestiveness of the poem and the naïveté of the question. The grove is a symbol and as such has not one identity only, but many. It lies not only (if, in fact, at all) in the external world, but in the imagination of the poet. Further, it *is* the imagination of the poet, the grove of transformations in which visions are seen and the breaches in reality are healed. It lies locked in the verses of the poem; but further, it *is* poetry itself, that primal affirmative act rising from the love of beauty. For Sappho the poem, as much as (or possibly rather than) the sex act, has become the primary rite of Aphrodite. Fragment 2, in fact, as it creates in the heart of the reader the trance of paradise and the vision of beauty, *is* the grove which it describes.

The poem presents a general picture of life through which, as through a lens, much of the rest of Sappho's poetry (probably all of the "normal" poems) should be seen. Finally it is the heart and what it longs for (*ἔττω τις ἔραται*) that are signified under the images of invoker and invoked. The grove is the general image of a relationship of desire and withholding, of emptiness and fullness, of art and life, that is acted out in various specific forms in the other poems. The inner rite which the lone suppliant plays in this still place is the central rite of life itself—the rite of the vision that alleviates as in a magic sleep the tension between dream and reality. Somehow, the promise of happiness seems to have been fulfilled, but really it has only been imagined. Sappho gazes across the grove, at the goddess who gives joy in golden cups, eternally.

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