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Sappho Schoolmistress*

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> If we show that poetry...is not one thing for men and another for women but the same, by comparing the songs of Sappho with those of Anacreon...will anyone have any reason to find fault with the demonstration?
>
> Plutarch, *On the Virtues of Women* (243b)

I. Introduction.

"Monique Wittig and Sande Zeig in their *Lesbian Peoples: Material for a Dictionary* devote a full page to Sappho. The page is blank." So John Winkler began one of the most perceptive articles of recent years on Sappho (162). Wittig and Zeig's blank page is a salutary warning that we know nothing about Sappho. Or worse: Everything we know is wrong. Even the most basic "facts" are simply not so or in need of a stringent critical reexamination. A single example. We are told over and over again that Sappho "was married to Kerkylas of Andros, who is never mentioned in any of the extant fragments of her poetry" (Snyder 1989: 3). Not surprising, since it's a joke name: he's Dick Allcock from the Isle of MAN.[1] It's been over 139 years since William Mure pointed this out (1850-57: III.2, 278 [1854]; Calder 147, 150) and it is there in Wilamowitz (1913: 24) and easily accessible in the *Real-Encyclopädie* (Aly 2361 [§7]). The only source for this factoid is the *Suda,* and it is clearly taken from one of the numerous comedies on Sappho.[2] Yet one finds this piece of

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[1]From κέρκος 'penis,' cf. Henderson 128. I might be willing to accept Kerkylas as a real person if the name were ever attested anywhere else and if he came from any other place on the planet except Andros (an island, not a city, *pace* Lardinois 22). The etymology is quite sound. For other such names built to κέρκ-, e.g., Κερκίδας (*RE* 21: 292-3, s.v., for the etymology), see Bechtel 482. The ending is intended to recall the semi-productive type in -υλας (deriving originally from u-stem by-forms of thematics, e.g., Νικύλας, Δημύλας, etc.) and may in fact be a pun directly on Κερδύλας (< κέρδος 'profit') attested as a title of Zeus (Lyc. 1092).

[2]*Sappho* by Ameipsias (Kock 1.674), Amphis (Kock 2.94-96), Antiphanes (Kock 2.94-96), Diphilos (who has Archilochus and Hipponax as her lovers; Kock 2.564=Kassel-Austin [K-A]

information repeated without question from book to book, usually omitting the dubious source, usually omitting any reference at all.[3]

Thus the note I am sounding is cautionary and my purpose in this paper is primarily negative. I hope to foster an atmosphere of skepticism. Whenever anyone presents a statement about Sappho, I want us to ask, "How do you know? Says who and where?" I wish to remind us to distrust.[4]

My purpose in this brief animadversion is not to attack the straw men of previous centuries, nor to rehearse the fascinating history of the critical fortunes of Sappho (for which see Lefkowitz 1973/1981 and for France, DeJean). Rather, I wish to reconsider a single interpretive paradigm which continues to have remarkable influence: Sappho as schoolmistress. I want first to examine

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5.94), Ephippus (Kock 2.262=K-A 5.148), Timocles (Kock 2.464=K-A 7.777). Other comedies possibly about Sappho: *Phaon* by Plato Comicus (Kock 1.648=K-A 7.508-17) and Antiphanes (Kock 2.104, if not identical with *Sappho*); *Leucadia* by Menander (Körte 2.96-98), Diphilus (Kock 2.558=K-A 5.81), Alexis (Kock 2.344), Amphis (Kock 2.243); *Leukadios* by Antiphanes (Kock 2.69=K-A 2.387); *Antilais* by Epikrates (Kock 2.284=K-A 5.156). Also a *Leucadia* by Turpilius telling the story of Phaon, based presumably on Menander (Ribbeck 2.113-18; Rychlewska 1971: 29-37). See Aly 2366; Campbell 1982: 27.

[3]So for standard works subsequent to Aly, see Schadewaldt 1950: 9 ("Von dem Mann erfahren wir nur eben seinen Namen und vielleicht nicht einmal diesen," without mentioning why the name is in doubt); Hadas 51; Bowra 176 ("There is no need to doubt that she was married to Cercylas of Andros reputed to be a rich man," without mentioning by whom or why it had been doubted); R. Cantarella 203; Flacelière 126; Lesky 139; Campbell 1967: 261 (who notes Aly's doubt later in 1982: 5 n. 4); West 1970: 328 ("She acquired a husband, though he is conspicuous by his absence from the fragments"); Tarditi 73; Fränkel 171; Kirkwood 101; Pomeroy 54; Levi 82 (in a passage still gallantly defending her against charges of homosexuality); E. Cantarella 1981/1987: 71, 1988/1992: 78. None of these cites the source of the information. Rose 94-95 is unique in citing Aly and explicitly arguing against him. Wilamowitz (1913: 73) defends her as a "vornehme Frau, Gattin und Mutter," and though he recognizes that the husband's name is a joke (24), the husband himself must still have existed to account for the daughter Kleis (so too Schadewaldt and Lardinois 1989: 22). Mure (1857: 591) had already pointed out the basis of this argument: "My opponent [Welcker] and his fellow apologists every where assume that Sappho was married; on the ground chiefly that she had a daughter, and the daughter of so exemplary a woman must necessarily have been a legitimate child" (see Calder 153). Others working to rehabilitate her as a nineteenth-century schoolmistress flatly assert that she was unmarried and consequently a virgin; so Schmid-Stählin (417 and n. 9) baldly state: "Verheiratet kann sie kaum gewesen sein . . . Der reiche Mann Kerkylas von Andros (Suid. s. Σαπφώ) wird der Legende angehören . . . Mit dem Mann fällt auch die Tochter" (failing to cite Aly, missing the point that Kerkylas comes from comedy, criticizing Wilamowitz for tastelessness in doing so, and evidencing the same curious assumptions about the birth of children); so too Jaeger I, 133.

[4]Welcker II, 80 in his defence of Sappho on the charge of being a homosexual quotes Epicharmus (250 Kaibel) as his epigraph: νᾶφε καὶ μέμνασ' ἀπιστεῖν ἄρθρα ταῦτα τᾶν φρενῶν ("Be sober and remember to distrust that organ of the mind"). Though Welcker had a different ax to grind, his attempt at an attitude of skepticism is commendable. See Calder 1986.

this picture of Sappho and what, if any, evidence has been used to construct it, then to look at the models which (explicitly or implicitly) have formed the basis for this picture. Next, I turn my attention to two particular attempts to rescue this image—Sappho as music teacher and Sappho as sex-educator. To support these models there has arisen a curious double movement of assimilation and isolation. Her sexuality (the expression of which she shares with no one else)[5] has been absorbed into a male model of pederastic power and aggression, while her poetry (the expression of which she shares with many) has been cut off from all other poets. Finally, I consider a different paradigm for understanding Sappho, which I believe is truer to the few facts we do possess.

II. Palimpsest.

Perhaps an even better image for Sappho than the blank page is the palimpsest. There does exist a text of Sappho, but it is so thickly written over with critical accumulation that it is almost impossible to make out the words beneath. This repetition of statements and assumptions from book to book is indicative of what seems to me to be a widespread tendency in the study of Sappho, where statements are taken from previous works without any critical evaluation, frequently without citation, as if they were facts so basic that "everyone" knows them. Further, this lack of critical evaluation towards Sappho stands in sharp contrast to the general skeptical approach to the other lyric poets, for example Alcaeus.[6] Specially, there is a failure to try as far as possible to look at the text without first reading the commentary.

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[5]That is, the first-person expression of desire by a woman for a woman.

[6]For this widespread attitude Lesky can be taken as an exemplar. Contrast the following statements: "Ancient and modern interpretations have often grossly simplified this period of history and have romanticized the part played by Alcaeus. The fortunes of the poet . . . gave rise in antiquity to a legend founded mainly on the writings of Alcaeus himself, eked out by local legends, and certainly incorporating a strong element of guesswork to fill up the holes. It is advisable to bear in mind the uncertainty that prevails on several points, and to emphasize the few ascertainable facts rather than make up a continuous narrative" (130-31). "Sappho was widely read throughout antiquity, and in consequence we find many biographical details about her, mostly derived from her own writings. What has survived still gives us a certain amount of biography" (138). For two examples of the ongoing novelization of Sappho, see Lesky (146) on fr. 150, "When her daughter is mortally ill she forbids loud wailing." The citation is taken from Max. Tyr. (18.9) and actually says "He [Socrates] was angry with Xanthippe when he was dying, and she [Sappho] with her daughter." See also Fränkel 171, "She herself, by *her own account* [my italics], was small and dark and not very pretty." Her "own account," of course, is Ovid (well, perhaps), *Her.* 15.31-40, backed by Max. Tyr. 18.7 (259 V) and *P. Oxy.* 1800 (T1 Loeb=252 V); they may indeed have drawn on her poetry, but that is an

The reasons are in part understandable and even creditable. The text of Sappho is in fragments which we must shore against their ruin. The language is difficult, the society obscure. We turn to the handbooks and commentaries for aid. But this means that we come to Sappho already blinded by the largely unexamined assumptions of the previous generations of scholars;[7] and in the case of Sappho the accumulation of assumptions is millennia deep and includes Greek comedies, Italian novels, and French pornography. The case is worse for Sappho than for any other author, including Homer. For here we are dealing not only with archaic literature but with sexuality; the commentaries are heavily endued with emotion and our own preconceptions. More importantly, we are dealing with homosexuality (or rather what we construct as homosexuality)[8] and women's sexuality. Sappho creates idiocies and raises questions that simply are never asked of any male poets.

It is not that these various constructions and reconstructions of Sappho are necessarily wrong. Rather, they are largely unprovable and completely unexamined. My note throughout will be that there is simply no evidence for many of the statements so decisively made. Rather than argue *ex silentio*, I hope to point out that much of what we read in the handbooks is an *argumentum ex nihilo*, based solely on unexamined tradition, presupposition and prejudice. Classicists experience a *horror vacui* (especially of biographical data) perhaps more strongly than others and few have been able to resist the temptation to fill in the blanks (cf. Dover 1978: 173). Every age creates its own Sappho. Her position as *the* woman poet (as Homer is the male poet),[9] the first female voice heard in the West, elevates her to a status where she is forced to be a metonym for all women. Sappho ceases to be an author and becomes a symbol. She is recreated in each age to serve the interests of all who appropriate her, whether friend or enemy. We, of course, are doing the same. All we can hope to do is be as little blind to what evidence there is and explicitly to acknowledge the limitations of our knowledge and the bases for our assumptions.

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inference, not a fact. For the novelistic and romantic treatments of Alcaeus, see DeJean 158-60, 190-91, 258-59.

[7]Cf. the remarks of Lefkowitz 1973/1981: 69 and Jenkyns 6-7.

[8]Cf. Dover 1978: vii: "I know of no topic in classical studies on which a scholar's normal ability to perceive differences and draw inferences is so easily impaired."

[9]Antipater *AP* 7.15, Galen 4.771.18K (Marquandt 2.35.14, not *Protr.* 2 as stated by Aly 2368, the source of fr. 50). Cf. Antipater of Thessalonica *AP* 9.26, where Anyte is the female Homer.

III. Sappho Schoolmistress.

In its strongest form, Sappho Schoolmistress is the well-known creation of Wilamowitz (1913), who was concerned with defending Sappho from charges of homosexuality, in particular Pierre Louÿs' recently published *Chansons de Bilitis* (1895). To do so, Wilamowitz took over the theories of Karl Müller (1840: 172-78=1858: 228-36) and Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker (98), and recast Sappho as a virgin schoolmistress.[10] This whole construction was created to explain away Sappho's passion for her "girls," allowing her the emotion of love but denying it any physical component, by recasting it in the form of an explicitly "Platonic" and propaedeutic love.[11] Calder and DeJean (198-220) have dealt with this at length (see also Jenkyns 1-4 and Rüdiger). I will merely point out that it arises from a historically conditioned construct of feminine psychosexual development, unique to England and Germany, springing in part from an attempt to justify the role of and allay anxieties about the current regime of single-sex schools. Thus, Sappho is cast as a friendly spinster teacher at a boarding school—this is not an exaggeration—educating girls before turning them over to a normal life of marriage and motherhood.[12] The girls in turn pass through a phase of a crush on an older teacher which somehow or other "prepares" them for normal heterosexuality (see section VIII below). With the authority of Wilamowitz, Sappho the Schoolmistress came to be enshrined in the canonical pages of the *Real-Encyclopädie* (Aly), in Schmid-Stählin's *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur* (1929) and once embalmed there, it seems as if it can never be buried. It passed to Jaeger (111), Flacelière (125), Campbell (1967: 261), Gerber (161), Arthur (42) and beyond.[13] It

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[10]Welcker and Müller had a precedent in the novels of Billardon de Sauvigny 1773: I, 64 (who speaks of her female disciples) and Barthélemy 1790: II, 69 (=Beaumont 1806: II, 63, where Sappho is in charge of a literary school); see DeJean 139 and 341 n. 20

[11]Müller 1857: I, 319-22=1858: I, 234-6; cf. Wilamowitz 1913: 77, Schmid-Stählin 418, Jaeger I, 143-44, Flacelière 128. The comparison between Sappho and Socrates is originally made by Max. Tyr. 18.9 (T 20 Loeb), see below.

[12]Welcker 97 and following him Wilamowitz 1913: 73 and Schmid-Stählin 418 let us know that the school was in Sappho's house (on the basis of frg. 150); so too Kranz 88 (complete with curriculum); West 1980: 83 ("a group of unmarried women or girls who gathered at Sappho's house to practice music and song"); Burnett 211 n. 8.

[13]Wilamowitz 1912: 41 proposed an analogy: "Wen der moderne Ton nicht schreckt, mag das immer ein Mädchenpensionat nennen." Calder 140 n. 49 attempts to protect him from Pöschel's sarcasm (in Flashar 377) by saying, "Wilamowitz did not mean it seriously. He was drawing an amusing modern analogy for laymen." I see no desire to amuse in the disclaimer to the comparison, but in any case his analogy has passed to others as part of the baggage of Sappho Schoolmistress; two examples, Flacelière 125: "Sapho, justement, dirigea une sorte de

reaches its ultimate point of absurdity in Devereux' now infamous picture of Sappho waking up one morning, realizing she has no penis, and dashing off fr. 31 in a (literally) hysterical seizure. He comments (1970: 31):

> These findings [of Sappho's "authentic lesbianism"] can neither prove nor disprove that she was *also* a schoolmistress or a cult-leader. If she was either (or both), this would prove no more than that in Lesbos, quite as much as in some modern societies, female inverts tended to gravitate into professions which brought them in contact with young girls, whose partial segregation and considerable psycho-sexual immaturity—and therefore incomplete differentiatedness—made them willing participants in lesbian experimentation.

Perhaps the most astonishing thing in this quote is the word "professions." Devereux shows no hesitation in recreating archaic Mytilene on the basis of *Mädchen in Uniform* (see the criticisms of Marcovich). Sappho Schoolmistress has become Sappho Gym Teacher.

In the midst of all this reconstruction (or rather romancing), one most important (and most frequently ignored) fact must be pointed out: nowhere in any poem does Sappho teach, or speak about teaching, anything to anyone. Page demolished the silly notion of Sappho in some sort of formal teaching position in 1955 (111-12) and since we have had to be reminded by Lefkowitz (1973/1981: 63), Kirkwood (101), Pomeroy (53), Snyder (1990: 12), and others, that there is simply no evidence for Mistress Sappho's School for Young Ladies. Yet despite these efforts, this image of Sappho continues to be taken as gospel.[14] So we encounter Eva Cantarella flatly asserting: "But Sappho was not only mistress of the intellect—her girls learned about the weapons of beauty, seduction, and charm: they learned the grace (*charis*) that made them desirable women. Here the description finishing school is not incorrect, but it

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«pensionnat de jeunes filles» qui peut faire penser au Saint Cyr de M^me^ de Maintenon"; Arthur 42: "It is difficult to define the exact nature of this circle, but since it was frequented by girls only during a brief interval between childhood and marriage, it is perhaps most analogous to a finishing school." See E. Cantarella's remarks quoted in the text below.

[14]The unquestioning attitude of classicists bears a share of responsibility for the distortions of Sappho in works written by non-Classicists. Here, for example, are quotations from two popular reference works: "In time she returned to her homeland and there became mistress of a school for the daughters of the aristocracy" (Gettone 1153) and "Sappho: Director of a girls' school on the island of Lesbos; widely known poet of her time" (Kramarae and Treichler 400 citing Boulding 262); it is all the more upsetting to note the order of presentation of these last two sentences in a work entitled *A Feminist Dictionary*.

is certainly insufficient."[15] Though Cantarella does not tell us how she came by a copy of the syllabus at Sappho's school, we can see that she took the details from Schmid-Stählin, and if we ask where *they* got them from, we find out they just made them up. Since Sappho had a school—something we all know—it must have had a curriculum, and they grub through the poems in search of details. Anything mentioned in the poems becomes a course offering. Thus the wedding of Hector and Andromache (44) is part of a series of "Stories from Greek Myth" for her pupils, nor they do fail to list the lessons in cosmetics.[16] On this basis, Sappho 16 would be proof that she trained her girls in cavalry maneuvers. Merkelbach (4 n. 1) accepted Wilamowitz' *Mädchenpensionat* "cum grano salis," but still provides a syllabus including "weibliche Arbeiten," for which his evidence is fr. 102 (in which a girl tells her mother she can no longer spin; no mention that she learned to do so at Sappho's Boarding School), inc. auct. 17 (which he assigns to Sappho, apparently *because* it speaks about spinning), and the existence of sewing circles in Germany and other cultures. Burnett writes: "Cult, deportment and dress were all apparently matters for study among Sappho's girls, but music was at the core of their curriculum" (215). The college catalogue is derived from the various descriptions of clothes; the deportment from 57 (a rustic girl) and 16 (Anactoria's walk): a love poem is reduced to a report card. Most recently Lardinois: "Sappho's teaching need not have been restricted to music and dance, however. An impression of all the activities Sappho performed with her girls is to be found in fragment 94" (26). Flowers, garlands, perfumes, soft beds on which to expel desire, shrines, groves, and dance, become parts of a course description.

IV. The New Paradigm: "Girls" and Ritual.

Thus Sappho's School for Girls still seems to be a going concern. Yet despite these periodic attempts to close it, one thing remains untouched and unquestioned, which shows the lingering influence of Sappho Schoolmistress even among those who ignore it or explicitly reject it. Sappho is still assumed in nearly every book, monograph, and paper to be an older woman with some kind of power over a group of young unmarried girls. This is the unquestioned

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[15]E. Cantarella 1981/1987: 86-87, 1988/1992: 79 (cf. 3-4). Supplying a Greek word is essential to make it appear as if there were any ancient support for these statements. Cf. the comments on the use of "thiasos" below. Cantarella is led into making direct misstatements. So she claims (1981/1987: 86, 1988/1992: 79) that the *Suda* calls Sappho a *didaskalos*.

[16]Schmid-Stählin 419-20; 422 n. 9: "ein Muster lyrischer Erzählung für die Schülerinnen"; see Page's strictures (1955: 111 and n. 1); for the cosmetics, cf. Saake 1971: 200 (quoted below).

assumption we have inherited from the handbooks which still forms the basis for discussion of Sappho. Oddly enough then, it is the most Victorian, anachronistic, sexist, and perverse part of Müller and Wilamowitz' picture of Sappho that continues to exert the strongest influence.

A new paradigm has grown up. In this view, which is the dominant interpretive model (apart from making Sappho a headmistress outright), she is still seen as an older woman presiding over an organization devoted to educating young girls before they leave for marriage, but now she does so in a *ritual* context. The all-pervasiveness of this assumption left over from Sappho Schoolmistress is shown by the pandemic use of the words "girls," "Mädchen," "jeunes filles," "fanciulle," and the like.

The new model is informed primarily by the growing realization of the importance of the oral performance of lyric poetry (Merkelbach; Russo; Segal; Gentili 1988: 3-23, with 235 n. 2 for a full bibliography) and by anthropological studies (Brelich; Calame 1977). This important stressing of the primarily oral nature of Sappho's poetry provides the basis for the important new interpretations of, among others, Merkelbach, Hallett (1979), Burnett, and Gentili (1985/1988). Sappho sang, and she must have sung to an audience. However, all of these scholars unquestioningly assume, still on the basis of the old all-pervasive paradigm, that her audience consisted entirely of unmarried girls. For this, to put the matter briefly, there is no credible evidence at all.[17]

V. The Evidence.

Three factors have contributed to this dominant belief: the lingering influence of Wilamowitz and others in the handbooks, certain late testimonia, and an anachronistic model of female homoerotics derived from Sparta. I will deal with the last two in turn. Since so much has been built on the ancient citations, it seems necessary to quote them in full and treat them at some length.

Five late testimonia speak of Sappho as a "teacher" in some sense. None of them is evidence that Sappho ran an institution of any sort. The earliest is Ovid *Trist.* 2.363-65:

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[17]Page 1955: 111 refers rightly to "the copious but inane biographical tradition." Lardinois might be taken as emblematic. In what purports to be a critical and skeptical reexamination of whether Sappho was a lesbian, he provides fairly copious documentation. He then inanely states (17): "It is, however, certain that these poems concern young girls. Sometimes Sappho herself refers to them as such and the *testimonia* confirm this repeatedly." He has just referred to the testimonia as "a collection of fiction, truths, and half-truths" (15) but here provides not a single reference for a statement which is central to his reconstruction.

> quid, nisi cum multo Venerem confundere vino,
> praecepit lyrici Teia Musa senis?
> Lesbia quid docuit Sappho, nisi amare, puellas?
>
> What, except how to mingle Venus with much wine, did the Tean Muse of the old lyric poet teach? What did Sappho of Lesbos teach the girls, except how to love?

Here, of course, Ovid is no more imagining Sappho running a school for love than he is imagining Anacreon running an drinking academy. Maximus of Tyre (c. 180-5 A.D.) in his oration τίς ἡ Σωκράτους ἐρωτική; (18.9a-d=T 20 Loeb) compares Sappho to Socrates:

> ὁ δὲ τῆς Λεσβίας [ἔρως] . . . τί ἂν εἴη ἄλλο ἢ αὐτό, ἡ Σωκράτους τέχνη ἐρωτική; δοκοῦσι γάρ μοι τὴν καθ' αὑτὸν ἑκάτερος φιλίαν, ἡ μὲν γυναικῶν, ὁ δὲ ἀρρένων, ἐπιτηδεῦσαι. καὶ γὰρ πολλῶν ἐρᾶν ἔλεγον καὶ ὑπὸ πάντων ἁλίσκεσθαι τῶν καλῶν. ὅ τι γὰρ ἐκείνῳ Ἀλκιβιάδης καὶ Χαρμίδης καὶ Φαῖδρος, τοῦτο τῇ Λεσβίᾳ Γυρίννα καὶ Ἀτθὶς καὶ Ἀνακτορία· καὶ ὅ τι περ Σωκράτει οἱ ἀντίτεχνοι Πρόδικος καὶ Γοργίας καὶ Θρασύμαχος καὶ Πρωταγόρας, τοῦτο τῇ Σαπφοῖ Γοργὼ καὶ Ἀνδρομέδα· νῦν μὲν ἐπιτιμᾷ ταύταις, νῦν δὲ ἐλέγχει καὶ εἰρωνεύεται αὐτὰ ἐκεῖνα τὰ Σωκράτους.
>
> What else was the love of the Lesbian woman except Socrates' art of love? For they seem to me to have practiced love each in their own way, she that of women, he that of men. For they say that both loved many and were captivated by all things beautiful. What Alcibiades and Charmides and Phaedrus were to him, Gyrinna and Atthis and Anactoria were to the Lesbian. And what the rival craftsmen Prodicus and Gorgias and Thrasymachus and Protagoras were to Socrates, Gorgo and Andromeda were to Sappho. Sometimes she upbraids them, sometimes she refutes them and uses irony, just like Socrates.

Maximus' concern here is to show the nobility of love. He no more states that Sappho ran a school than he sets up one for Hesiod, whom he cites for comparison with Socrates immediately before this passage or for Archilochus or Anacreon, whom he quotes immediately afterward (18.9 l-m). Further, the important point is missed that not even *Socrates* ran a "school." As Page (1955: 111 n. 2) points out: "There is no suggestion of any formal association." The comparison is made on the basis of their love of beauty and a certain ironic and

sarcastic tone that Maximus finds in his quotations.[18] And, we should note, even Maximus does not speak of "girls" and "boys," but of "men" and "women." It is as wrong to deduce that Sappho was surrounded only by prepubescent girls as it would be to deduce that Socrates never spoke to anyone except males under the age of eighteen.

Maximus is our only source for such "rivals." Yet by taking his comparison in a naively literal fashion, there has sprung up the widespread vision not just of Sappho's Academy but of a Lesbos littered with warring boarding schools.[19] This in turn has had profound effect on the interpretation of the poems. Thus when Atthis leaves to go to Andromeda (131), some scholars (e.g., Kirkwood 125) speak of her "defecting" from Sappho to Andromeda's possibly "larger group," despite the fact that apart from this one, late, broad, humorous, and superficial analogy there is no indication that Andromeda is anything other than a rival *lover* nor is there even a mention that any of the women that Sappho dislikes had a "circle" of young girls. This idea of "defection" is applied even to poem 1, where the woman Sappho loves is said to be "deserting the Sapphic *thíasos* for the community of a rival" (Gentili 1988: 80). But Sappho says nothing of a *thiasos*, or a community, or desertion, or even a rival; there is only Aphrodite and Sappho, and a woman who does not love Sappho back. This is absurdly out of hand. Compare the situation of Anacreon 357: there is only Dionysus, Anacreon and a boy who does not love him back; or compare Theognis 250-54 or 1299-1304. Yet does anyone say that Kleoboulos or Kyrnos had "defected" from the "*thiasos*" of Anacreon or Theognis and joined that of a "rival"?

Philostratus (c. 200 A.D.) in the *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* writes (1.30=T 21 Loeb) about a Pamphilian woman:

> ἡ δὲ Σαπφοῖ θ' ὁμιλῆσαι λέγεται . . . καλεῖται τοίνυν ἡ σοφὴ αὕτη Δαμοφύλη καὶ λέγεται τὸν Σαπφοῦς τρόπον παρθένους θ'

[18]Max. Tyr. is a source for frgs. 47, 49b, 57, 130, 150, 155, 159, 172, 188. A reading of the entire passage will how superficial his comparison is and is meant to be. Cf. n. 6 above.

[19]E.g., Schadewaldt 1950: 11, Page 1955: 133, Merkelbach 5, Fränkel, Lesky 145, Gentili 1966: 49, Rivier 89 (who conjures up a vision of each "new girl" being sworn into Sappho's school in a religious ceremony which constitutes a contract: "engagement"), Calame 1977: I, 370, Burnett 212 (who misquotes Max. Tyr.), Podlecki 88 (who plays down the formal aspects of "schools"), Cantarella 1981/1987: 87 and 1988/1992: 79, Gentili 1988: 80-83. Scholars have plunged headlong into creating rival girls' schools, taking Maximus' comparison as literally true for Sappho, without stopping to realize that it is not even literally true for Socrates. To what extent were Gorgias & Co. "rival craftsmen" of Socrates?

> ὁμιλητρίας κτήσασθαι ποιήματά τε ξυνθεῖναι τὰ μὲν ἐρωτικά, τὰ δ' ὕμνους.
>
> Who is said to have associated with Sappho . . . This wise woman was called Damophile and is said also to have gathered maidens as disciples in the manner of Sappho and to have written love poetry as well as hymns.

Again the model envisaged for Damophile, and by implication for Sappho, is that of Socrates and his pupils (ὁμιλητρίας), and again this does not show the existence of a formal school. Dover (1978: 175) cites this passage "for what it is worth—and this is very little, except as an indication of the form of the Sappho-legend in much later times" and comments: "If in the generation after Sappho there were other women poets in the Eastern Aegean, Lesbian tradition will have regarded them as pupils of Sappho."

Two sources, however, speak more directly of Sappho as teaching, but neither is remotely solid evidence for Sappho "running a school." The oldest is a fragment of an anonymous commentary on Sappho dating to the second century A.D. (214b V=S 261a *SLG=P. Colon.* 5860): ἡ δ' ἐφ' ἡσυχία[ς] παιδεύουσα τὰς ἀρίστας οὐ μόνον τῶν ἐγχωρίων ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἀπ' Ἰωνίας ("But she in peace educating the best women not only from the natives [of Lesbos] but also of Ionia"). The contrast in the ἡ δὲ (the papyrus begins ὁ μὲν. . .) is apparently between Sappho's quiet life in teaching and Alcaeus' stormy life in politics.[20] We have no idea of the commentator's sources or accuracy and Treu (1968: 1235) rightly comments, "Nicht verpflichtet sind wir . . . Glauben zu schenken."[21] Likewise the *Suda* (Σ 107=T 2 Loeb) seems to make a distinction between comrades and pupils:

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[20]So Gronewald 114. Not with Burnett 210 n. 4 who translates ἐφ' ἡσυχίας as "at her leisure," commenting "surely ἐφ' ἡσυχίας must mean that Sappho acted as a private citizen, not as a priestess or the appointed leader of an initiation group." While I agree with her conclusion, the contrast of ἡσυχία here following a reference to κρατοῦσι is with war (cf. Thuc. 3.12), not with public status. Burnett cites Strabo 13.2.4 for "the foreign membership" of Sappho's circle, but he says nothing of the sort, merely mentioning that Hellanicus, the historian, and Kallias (c. 200 B.C.), the commentator on Sappho and Alcaeus, were from Lesbos.

[21]Note that the first part of the fragment (on Sappho's teaching) is not attributed to any source. Burnett 210 n. 4 mistakenly says that the authority is Kallias (see note above). Rather, he is cited only for Sappho's subsequent reputation. Further, as Dover notes, "Kallias will probably have based his statement about 'high favour' on tradition as he knew it, not on evidence giving direct access to the sentiment of the Lesbians in Sappho's lifetime" (1978: 175). Calder 140 n. 49 accurately says, "Kallias of Mytilene is invoked."

> ἑταῖραι δὲ αὐτῆς καὶ φίλαι γεγόνασι τρεῖς, Ἀτθίς, Τελεσίππα, Μεγάρα· πρὸς ἃς καὶ διαβολὴν ἔσχεν αἰσχρᾶς φιλίας. μαθήτριαι δὲ αὐτῆς Ἀναγόρα Μιλησία, Γογγύλα Κολοφωνία, Εὐνείκα Σαλαμινία.
>
> She had three companions and friends, Atthis, Telesippa, and Megara, for whom she was slandered as having a shameful love. Her pupils were Anagora of Miletus, Gongyla of Colophon and Eunica of Salamis.

Megara, Telesippa, and Eunica of Salamis are mentioned only here in the surviving evidence as is Anagora of Miletus, unless she is the same as (or a mistake for) Anactoria (so Page 1955: 135 n. 1), while Gongyla is mentioned but in poems too fragmentary to tell if Colophon was mentioned (22, 95, 213, 213Aa, 214A). The *Suda* is merely continuing the standard process of turning poetry into biography (see Fairweather; Lefkowitz 1981). The prosopography of Sappho contains more than six entries, and the distinction the *Suda* makes between three friends and three pupils is illusory. It is also clear on what basis the *Suda* makes that distinction: the "companions and friends" all appear without a geographical designation, the "pupils" are foreign. That is, wherever the *Suda* or its sources found some reason for thinking a character was not from Lesbos, they explained her presence by assuming she was a "pupil."[22] The

[22]These foreign women have played an important role in the history of Sappho Schoolmistress. Three points need to be made. 1) The presence of foreign women on Lesbos is attested only by this bit of the *Suda* and by the Cologne commentary quoted above, which may share a common source and that source, like so much else, might be comedy (see n. 3 above). I would be reluctant to assume a regular traffic of women between Athens and Sparta on the basis of *Lysistrata*. There may be some truth hidden here (Ionia matching up with Colophon and Miletus). However, if we are to use Ovid as evidence, he ought to be used consistently: the *Heroides* mentions no lover of Sappho's coming from further afield than Lesbos (15.15-16, 201) and implies that Anactoria (the *Suda*'s Anagora of Miletus?) is a native (15.17). Lardinois 17 and 29 attempted to explain why these two sources say that foreign women were on Lesbos: "The regions to which some of the girls, *according to the poems* [my emphasis], went *after* their stay in Sappho's circle, may have been held to be their places of origin. In most cases the girls were married there." The last statement has no evidence at all to back it up, not in most cases, not in any case. In 16 Anactoria is gone, but we don't know where; in 96 someone has left for Sardis, but we don't know who (that *arignota* in 4-5 is a proper name had been debunked by Page in 1955: 89; yet see note 73 below). Lardinois has accepted others' speculations as facts and then convinced himself that he has read them in the poems. 2) Unlike Lardinois, I do not find the idea of foreign women on Lesbos inherently improbable. However, even if they did come to Lesbos, it does not follow, as he and many others think, that they therefore came because of Sappho. This is a fine example of what Wiseman calls "the fallacy of the conspicious" (1-2). Was Sappho the only possible reason to visit Lesbos? 3) Even if they were

idea of Sappho with pupils, common to these two sources, rests on this basis alone. There is still no mention of any sort of "school" and, let us note, even the wretched evidence of the *Suda* has been misinterpreted: it limits her "shameful love" to her "companions and friends," not to her students. On the value that can be assigned to such Byzantine speculation we need only recall that both Erinna (*Suda* η 521, Eust. *Il.* 326.46) and Nossis (*AP* 7.718 in the lemma) are turned into pupils of Sappho.[23]

Seven testimonia present some sort of picture of Sappho consorting with "girls." Ovid (*Trist.* 2.365, quoted above; *Her.* 15.15) and Horace (*Odes* 2.13.24-35) speak of her as in love with *puellae*. They may be imagining pre-pubescents here, but *puella*, of course, is used equally of girls, mature women, and goddesses, especially as objects of love, and Horace calls Sappho herself a *puella* at *Odes* 4.9.12. There is an implication in the passages of Philostratus (Δαμοφύλη καὶ . . . παρθένους θ' ὁμιλητρίας), Maximus of Tyre (Alcibiades, Charmides and Phaedrus were young men), and the Cologne Commentary (παιδεύουσα) that Sappho had young women as students. Even then there is no indication that these women were girls on their way to the marriage market. Himerius (*Or.* 28.2=T 50 Loeb) speaks of her singing of the beauty of a young girl (παρθένος).

Chronologically, the earliest witness (Horace) is 600 years after Sappho. As evidence the testimonia are valueless, again turning poetry into biography. They do not prove that Sappho ran a school. They do not prove that Sappho loved only nubile girls. What they do show is something quite familiar to feminists: the wholesale restructuring of female sexuality and society on the model of male sexuality and society.[24] This is precisely the type of construction

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on Lesbos, and there because of Sappho, it does not follow that they were little girls there to *study* with Sappho, much less to live with her in her house. We find nowhere in the Greek world an equivalent for unmarried girls being shipped around the Mediterranean by their fathers. This picture would be odd even for adult males: Gorgias comes to Athens, not the other way around. The idea that the women were on Lesbos to "study" with Sappho arises from the preconception that they were pre-pubescents. In turn, the idea that they were "pupils" is used as proof that they were "girls." If the presence of these non-native women is indeed a fact, why could they not have been there with their (native or not) husbands and families?

[23]Further on the dubious chronology of the sources, Hermesianax makes her the contemporary of Anacreon (Athen. 13.598b-c; 2.47-51 Diehl; p. 99 Powell) perhaps as a deliberate joke (so Athen. 599c-d), while Pausanius (9.29.8) makes her a borrower from Pamphos, whom he apparently believed to be pre-Homeric, but who seems to be Hellenistic (see Maas *RE* 18.3.352).

[24]For the Roman world, see Hallett 1989, for the construction of the *tribas* on the model of masculine sexuality.

we find in Lucian's portrayal of the women of Lesbos in *DMeretr.* 5. The analogy, whether stated or assumed, for the relation of Sappho to her lovers is that of *paiderastria*, a power relation of older to younger, teacher to pupil, initiator to initiated (Dover 1978). Sappho wrote of love; she therefore must be the (necessarily older) *erastes*, those about whom she sang the (necessarily younger) *eromenoi/ai*. Lardinois is at least explicit: "She appears to have been a kind of female pederast" (17-18). Surely, this ought to make us suspicious. This reinscription of Sappho along the lines of male power relations is implicit in Maximus of Tyre and explicit in several other texts. So the Oxyrhynchus commentary (252 V=*P. Oxy.* 1800=T1 Loeb) says that she was accused of being a γυναικ-ε[ράσ]τρια, a nonce-formation meaning "(female) *erastes* of women" (see Dover 1978: 174). Porphyrion, on Horace's use of *mascula* to describe Sappho, comments (ad *Ep.* 1.19.28=T 17 Loeb): *vel quia in poetico studio est <incluta>, in quo saepius viri, vel quia tribas diffamatur fuisse* ("either because she was famous for her talent in poetry in which men figure more often or because she is slandered as having been a tribade"). Themistius (*Or.* 13.170d=T 52 Loeb) writes: Σαπφοῖ μὲν γὰρ καὶ 'Ανακρέοντι συγχωροῦμεν ἀμέτρους εἶναι καὶ ὑπερμέτρους ἐν τοῖς ἐπαίνοις τῶν παιδικῶν ("We allow Sappho and Anacreon to be unrestrained and excessive in the praises of their beloveds"). Themistius uses παιδικά, a technical term for the *eromenos*, the younger boy partner in a male pederastic relationship (Dover 1978: 16).

To a large extent, I believe it is precisely this reinscription that accounts for the extraordinary power of Sappho Schoolmistress over the imaginations of so many, despite the total lack of evidence for it. I can illustrate this best, perhaps, by bringing up an incidental criticism of Sappho Schoolmistress. Why is Sappho always called the "leader" of her "*thiasos*"? Poets were important figures in the life of the polis to be sure, but there is no evidence to show that they "led" anything other than songs. Alcaeus is never called the "leader" of his *hetairia*. Sappho comes to interpretation already presumed to be the older woman in control of younger girls. Again, the model is of controlling male to controlled Other, and reveals a disturbing obsession with power and hierarchy. Sappho, the female poet, is being assimilated as much as possible to the male, in order to neutralize her.

There is absolutely nothing in her poetry to show that Sappho was an older woman.[25] There is nothing in the texts to show that her addressees were

[25]Old age is referred to in 58.13-14, but we do not know whose.

young children, or that they left her care for marriage. This latter wide-spread assumption seem to be built entirely on the fact that she wrote *epithalamia*—as if that were all she wrote. Outside of the obvious wedding songs (27, 30, 105, 107, 113, 114, 194), where the youth and virginity of the bride are mentioned, there are exactly six references in the surviving fragments, some of which might also be *epithalamia*, to the age of the women for whom or about whom she is singing. On this slender basis has been erected the whole tower of Sappho Schoolmistress. In 140a, she refers to the celebrants as κόραι. But the Adonia was everywhere that we know of a private festival of adult women, and κόραι is ritual language, not age description.[26] At the mutilated end of 17, a prayer to Hera, in what seems to be part of a ritual, she probably refers to maiden(s): π]αρθ[εν . . . , though the reference is not necessarily to the celebrants. In 56, in an unknown context, she says that no girl will have such skill. In 153, again in an unknown context, she refers to a "sweet-voiced girl," using πάρθενος both times. In 122 a tender child (παῖδ' †ἄγαν† ἀπάλαν) is plucking flowers; the context is unknown and may well be mythological. Finally, in the most famous example (49), she says, ἠράμαν μὲν ἔγω σέθεν Ἄτθι πάλαι ποτά ("I loved you once, Atthis") and elsewhere, σμίκρα μοι πάις ἔμμεν' ἐφαίνεο κἄχαρις ("You seemed to me to be a small child and graceless"). Even if we accept that these two lines are consecutive or even necessarily belong to the same poem or referred to the same person, which I do not,[27] there is nothing here that shows that Sappho was an older woman. Indeed, the imperfect ἐφαίνεο could equally argue quite the opposite, that Sappho speaks here to an age-mate about the time when both Sappho and the woman were children. That is certainly what is implied by Terentianus Maurus' (2154-5=6.390.4-5 K) recasting of 49a: *cordi quando fuisse sibi canit Atthida / parvam, florea virginitas sua cum floret* ("when she sang that she loved little Atthis, when her own virginity was in flower"); the *virginitas sua* in question is Sappho's. This notion of Sappho surrounded by age-mates is further strengthened by a fragment, which, since it does not gibe with the communis opinio, has been ignored, and this is fr. 24a.2-5:

] . [μ]εμνάσεσθ' ἀ[
κ]αὶ γὰρ ἄμμες ἐν νεό[τατι

[26]Winkler 189 with n. 2. Cf. the same use in Telesilla (717). It would, in any case, presumably apply to the poet as well.

[27]The only reason for connecting these two fragments, which are nowhere quoted by the same source, is the fact that Terentianus Maurus (see text) uses the adjective *parvam*. See my article, "What Bergk Hath Joined Together: Sappho 49a and b," forthcoming.

ταῦτ' [ἐ]πόημμεν·
πόλλα [μ]ὲν γὰρ καὶ κά[λα

. . . you will remember . . . for we also did these things in our youth.
For many beautiful things . . .

Here, despite the damage to the papyrus, we have clear picture of age-mates, who shared common experiences while growing up together. In the same papyrus, we find fr. 23:

ὡς γὰρ ἄν]τιον εἰσίδω σ[ε,
φαίνεταί μ' οὐδ'] Ἑρμιόνα τεαύ[τα
ἔμμεναι,] ξάνθαι δ' Ἐλέναι σ' ἐίσ[κ]ην
οὐδ' ἓν ἄει]κες

[for when] I look directly at you [not even] Hermione [seem to me to be]
equal to you, and to compare you to blonde Helen [is not] unsuitable.

Now although Hermione, Helen's daughter, might be a proper comparison for a young girl, Helen is the *comparanda* for a mature woman.[28] No male lyric poet compares his *pais* with the adult male gods or heroes.[29] The same comparison to goddesses is made in 96.3, 21-3 and the statement that Λάτω καὶ Νιόβα μάλα μὲν φίλαι ἦσαν ἔταιραι ("Leto and Niobe were dear companions,"142) may also have introduced a comparison to Sappho and a friend (see n. 78). The fragments, therefore, point not to Sappho the predatory gym teacher of Devereux' fancy, but to a woman in love with women of her own generation. The only thing odd about this picture is that is not generally held.[30]

[28]The speaker may not be Sappho, though I am assuming that she probably is, and it is not impossible that these two, like 27 and 30, are *epithalamia*; see Page 1955: 125. Helen in fr. 16 is the image not for the beloved but the lover (contra Lardinois 19).

[29]Instead, for an example, cf. Pin. *Ol.* 10.104-105 where the boy victor Hagesidamos is compared to Ganymede.

[30]Cf. Stigers [Stehle] 1981: 52 (though she seems to be imagining an older Sappho, cf. p. 45). If, however, Sappho and Atthis are age-mates, we have something very similar to Erinna's *Distaff*, and to show that this is not a matter of feminine poetics, see Theog. 1063-68 for an explicit statement that there is nothing sweeter for men and women than to sleep together all night after a party with one of their own age group (ὁμῆλιξ). Further, whatever we make of Anacreon 358, if the "girl" (νήνι) from Lesbos does refer to a woman in love with another woman (about which I am uncertain), we have again an image of the young girl herself as lover.

Most importantly, in none of the *epithalamia* is the girl getting married addressed by name; in none is she spoken of as loved by Sappho. Nor in any of the poems in which Sappho speaks to or about her companions, is there a mention of their marriages, their having "studied" with Sappho in preparation for their marriages, or anything else to indicate that they were other than what Sappho calls them (160): her "companions" (ἑταίραις).[31] In short, the "girls" of the *epithalamia* and the "companions" of the lyric poems are simply not at all the same people, a point rightly made by Winkler (165, cited below). Only the presuppositions of Sappho Schoolmistress has caused them to be so mistaken.

VI. Sparta.

The search for formal occasions involving young girls has led many into invoking Alcman's *partheneia*.[32] However, as Treu (1968: 1235) succinctly says, "Doch schon die allernächste Parallele, Alkman und die Mädchenschar seiner Mädchenchöre, stimmt nicht." Alcman is not the same as Sappho nor doing the same things as Sappho.[33] Alcman is a man, hired by the community, to provide choral songs, on civic occasions, for choruses composed of young women and of young men, to whom he evidences no individual erotic emotions.[34] Sappho is a woman, independent of any demonstrable civic role, a

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For the most recent work on this puzzle, see Marcovich 1983, Renehan, Gentili 1988: 94-96, Pelliccia.

[31]At 96.6-7, a companion now stands out among the women (γυναίκεσσιν) of Sardis. McEvilley 262 presupposes that the woman has left Sappho a virgin to go to Sardis to be married and so translates γυνή as 'wife,' arguing that: "In the other occurrences of γυνή, for example, the γυναῖκες or matrons, are specifically distinguished from the πάρθενοι, or unmarried girls." This is not so: γυνή occurs only two other times in Sappho, both in 44: at line 15, they are indeed contrasted with the virgins, but 44.31 refers only to γύναικες . . . προγενέστερα[ι 'the older women,' a contrast with the young matrons, if with anyone. Further, in Alcaeus, our only close dialectical *comparandum*, γυνή simply means 'woman' (130b.19, 347.4, 390; 41.21 is fragmentary; cf. also Inc. Auc. 35.6 V). If the use of γυνή in 96 is evidence of anything it is evidence that the unnamed woman of 96 was indeed a *woman*.

[32]The first uses of this comparison that I know are Diels 352 and Wilamowitz 1897: 259-60.

[33]Even Gentili writes: "It hardly needs saying, of course, that Alcman composed his partheneia on commission for the Spartan *thíasoi* of his time, whereas Sappho, being a poet, composed songs for performance in her own *thíasos*" (1988: 77). Since it hardly needs saying, Gentili proceeds to ignore it.

[34]In the surviving frgs. Alcman talks about his relation to the chorus only at 26 (his lament that he is too old to dance with them), and 34: 'Αλκμὰν τὰς ἐπεράστους κόρας λέγει ἀίτιας ("Alcman calls beloved girls '*aitis*' "); the masc. ἀΐτας is a Thessalian (not Doric) term for the ἐρώμενος, according to the scholiast on Theocritus 12 (cf. 12.14, *Anecd. Bekk.* 348.2=Aristophanes frg. 738 [prob. A. of Byzantium, see Gow 1950: II, 224]: ἀείταν· τὸν ἑταῖρον. 'Αριστοφάνης δὲ ὁ ἐρώμενος, *Et. M.* 43.41), which I am assuming refers to the

lyric poet performing solo songs, who also writes choral works for private marriage ceremonies, singing often to individual women, with whom she is in love.

Not only is Sappho lumped in with Alcman, but their societies are held to be identical. However, archaic Lesbos and archaic Sparta share only a single factor: expressions of desire by women for women.[35] The assumption underlying their facile equation, therefore, is a form of sexual essentialism: all female homosexuality is the same, and therefore the societies are the same. This is logically fallacious as well as theoretically and anthropologically naive. We know little about archaic Lesbos apart from Sappho and Alcaeus; we know little about archaic Sparta apart from Alcman; but it seems unlikely that the two had much in common, whatever picture one may form of Alcman's Sparta by contrast with Tyrtaeus or the austere *mirage spartiate* of later times.[36] To compare the two on the basis of this shared ignorance does not profit us much.

In a famous sentence in the *Life of Lycurgus* (18.9), Plutarch says of the Spartan type of paedeutic male homoeroticism:

> οὕτω δὲ τοῦ ἐρᾶν ἐγκεκριμένου παρ' αὐτοῖς, ὥστε καὶ τῶν παρθένων ἐρᾶν τὰς καλὰς καὶ ἀγαθὰς γυναῖκας, τὸ ἀντερᾶν οὐκ ἦν, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον ἀρχὴν ἐποιοῦντο φιλίας πρὸς ἀλλήλους οἱ τῶν αὐτῶν ἐρασθέντες, καὶ διετέλουν κοινῇ σπουδάζοντες ὅπως ἄριστον ἀπεργάσαιντο τὸν ἐρώμενον.
>
> This love was so approved among them, that even the beautiful and good [i.e., noble] women loved virgins. But rivalry in love did not exist. Rather those men [specifically masculine] who were in love with the

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chorus (see, however, Gallavotti 186-89). Lardinois 27 implies that the masc. ἀΐτας is known to have been in official use at Sparta (for the facts, see Gow II, 224, Dover 1978: 193 n. 16; contra Cartledge 1981/1988: 391 n. 18; for a possible Laconic attestation, see Gallavotti) and writes that the fem. was the term "for a young girl in a sexual relationship." Even if this were so, with whom? Not necessarily each other or older women as he seems to assume; the word, of dubious etymology, seems to mean no more than 'comrade, beloved.' Cantarella 1988/1992: 84 implies that *aitis* was a term in general use. Contrast this with Sappho's expressions of love for women, and compare her lack of expressions of love for the brides in the *epithalamia*.

[35]Page 1951: 66-67 and Lardinois 28 deny that the language of the girls of Alcman's chorus is erotic, but Diels had already rightly noted its character (352-53) and see Calame 1977: II, 86-97. So Lardinois 28-29 in a circular argument says that Lesbos resembled Sparta because "in both cases we are dealing with highborn women. . . . Also the age of the Spartan girls and those of Sappho's circle appear to be similar."

[36]For the difficulty of the sources see Forrest 16. For what little we know or surmise about Alcman's Sparta, see Huxley 61-62, Michell 11-28, Fitzhardinge 129-35; and for the social role of women at Sparta, Redfield, Cartledge 1981.

> same boys made it a starting place for friendship between themselves, and continued to strive in common to make the beloved boy [masc.] the best.

Note here that Plutarch mentions *female* homoeroticism only in order to show the high regard the Spartans had for *male* homoeroticism. He does not allot women a part of the *agoge*.[37] Scholars have shown remarkably little restraint in taking this single remark[38] and recasting Alcman's Sparta, some 700 years earlier, on its basis, and then using that reconstruction of *Sparta* as a model for *Lesbos*. Gentili (1988: 72-89), for example, swings back and forth from Sappho's Lesbos to Alcman's Sparta to Plutarch's Sparta, with a breath-taking disregard of both space and time. Thus when he reaches his "single, unambiguous conclusion" that Alcman's "partheneion is an epithalamium composed for ritual performance within the community to which the girls belonged"

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[37]So rightly Hallett 1979: 452; and cf. the cautious assessment of Cartledge 1981/1988: 405. Cantarella in her paraphrase mistakes the Greek: "At Sparta, says Plutarch, the best women loved girls, and when it happened that more than one adult fell in love with the same girl, they were rivals with one another but joined forces to educate the beloved" (1981/1987: 87), an error repeated in 1988/1992: 84. Talbert 31 correctly makes the distinction; cf. Cartledge 1981/1988: 394. She therefore believes that the women and their lovers also were viewed as having a separate but equal form of education. So she writes: "It is perhaps no accident that it is a man (Plutarch) who stresses the pedagogical function of the relationship between women, whereas Sappho—though she insists on the educational and ennobling aspect of life in the *thiasos*—stresses instead the affective and erotic aspect of the relationship" (89; cf. 1988/1992: 84). This is typical of the problems created by the presuppositions involved in Sappho Schoolmistress. Note: 1) the facile equation of Plutarch's remarks on Sparta with Sappho's situation; 2) the statement that Sappho insists on ennobling education, in the complete absence of anything of the sort in the poems; 3) the uncritical use of "*thiasos*" to validate the reconstruction; 4) the isolation of Sappho: how does Sappho's emphasis on the "affective and erotic" differ from that of any other poet?

[38]An additional piece of remarkably misunderstood evidence is cited by Calame 1977: I, 434, followed by Bremmer 292, Cantarella 1988/1992: 84 n. 25 and Lardinois 27. Calame states that a certain Academic philosopher, Hagnon, tells us that Spartan women had sexual relations with young girls before their marriage. The source is Ath. 13.602e and clearly says that among the Spartans πρὸ τῶν γάμων ταῖς παρθένοις ὡς παιδικοῖς νόμος ἐστὶν ὁμιλεῖν ("It is the custom to have intercourse with virgins before marriage as with *paidika*"), i.e., anal intercourse (so rightly Devereaux 1967: 83=1988: 222, Dover 1978: 188; Cartledge 1981/1988: 407 n. 69). The Greek is unmistakable, but Calame asserts, with the aid of a misleading French translation, that because the context of the passage is "homosexualité," we can be certain that the custom is that of adult females, thus anachronistically ascribing to the Greeks our lumping together of male and female homoeroticism as forms of the same deviancy. He protests against Devereaux by saying, "la Sparte antique n'est pas un pays latin et catholique," apparently ignorant of the fact that the custom was not unknown to Greece (Hdt. 1.61) and was a standing joke about the Spartans (Ar. *Lys.* 1173-74); see Dover 1964: 37. The entire discussion is not about "homosexuality," but *Knabenliebe*; no women have been mentioned for pages.

(75), i.e., a homosexual ritual quasi-marriage between Agido and Hagesichora, he is able to cut immediately away and state (76), "Himerius, writing in the fourth century A.D., and interweaving his orations with paraphrases and citations from archaic lyric, particularly that of Sappho and Anacreon, bears witness in one passage [*Or.* 9.4=T 154 Loeb] to the presence of an internal ceremony of exactly this sort [i.e., two women in a formal marriage]." In passing, beside the dubious methodology of employing a fourth century A.D. paraphrase of Sappho as if it were evidence about seventh century B.C. Sparta, Gentili mistakes a metaphorical treatment of Sappho's poetry as a description of a real event, turns the textual mess †γράφειτ παρθένους ⟨εἰς⟩ νυμφεῖον into evidence for lesbian marriage in Sparta/Lesbos, and ignores Alcman 81, where the poet has the chorus of maidens ask for a husband.

Gentili states (1988: 73): "We know from Plutarch (*Lyc.* 18, 9) that homoerotic female relationships were also allowed in archaic Sparta, in communities of more or less the same type as the Lesbian ones. And it has been demonstrated . . . that the partheneia of Alcman are full of stylemes, metaphors and typical expressions that derive from the the language of love and are extensively paralleled in Sappho." But we "know" nothing of the sort. We don't know what, if any, source Plutarch had for this statement; we don't know that female erotic relationships in archaic Sparta were in the form Plutarch imagines for them; we don't know anything about Spartan women's "communities" (in the plural) nor of Lesbian "communities," nor that they were "more or less the same type." What we do have is ample evidence for Plutarch's back-projection of his assumptions about contemporary Sparta onto the time of Lycurgus.[39] Plutarch may well be right about the existence of female homoeroticism in contemporary Sparta or even the Sparta of Alcman's day. However, we must be suspicious of his construction of it. Even Cantarella notes: "In some way, then, one senses that female homosexuality was culturally 'constructed' on the model of the male and presented—by the few male sources that allude to it—as a copy of this" (1981/1987: 89).[40]

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[39]See Ollier II, 187-215, Redfield's remarks (146), and Plutarch's own opening statement in *Lyc.* 1.1.

[40]By 1988 Cantarella was, rightly, even more suspicious of the male construction of female (homo)sexuality: "My feeling, in short, is that female homosexuality . . . was constructed from the outside—which is to say, by men—on the model of pederasty" (1988/1992: 83-84). She shows, however, a curiously split vision on this point. While arguing against any sort of initiatory function (e.g., for marriage) for ancient Greek female homosexuality in general and Sappho in particular, she is yet unable to rid herself of the notion of Sappho as teacher and Sappho as sex instructor before marriage.

I do not know exactly what is going on in Alcman's *partheneia*, but there is no trace of this male type of *erastes* to *eromenos* / older to younger love in them. Instead, we find something quite different: expressions of love between age-mates, each for the other.[41] In the Louvre *Partheneion*, the singers, including Hegesichora and Agido (Page 1951: 46), are ten girls together (99), who call Agido their cousin (52).[42] Outside the circle of the chorus stands the shadowy figure of Aenesimbrota but she is not a candidate for a role of elder female *erastes*. In 73-77 the chorus sings:

οὐδ' ἐς Αἰνησιμβρ[ό]τας ἐνθοῖσα φασεῖς·
'Ασταφίς [τ]έ μοι γένοιτο
καὶ ποτιγλέποι Φίλυλλα
Δαμαρ[έ]τα τ' ἐρατά τε ϝιανθεμίς·
ἀλλ' 'Αγησιχόρα με τείρει.

Nor going to Aenesimbrota's house will you say:
"Let Astaphis be mine"
and "Let Philylla look at me
and Damareta and lovely Vianthemis."
But Hagesichora wears me out."[43]

First, let us admit that we have no idea who Aenesimbrota is. All we know is that she has some connection with the four girls named here. Page (1951: 65) suggests that she is "one to whose house you would go if you were looking for Astaphis, Philylla, and the rest." This seems reasonable, though in fact all the text says is that her house is a place to go to *say* things about the four girls.[44] However, Page's next sentence quite oversteps the evidence: "In

[41]The erotic language is directed only at each other; see above, note 35. Yet the effect of Sappho Schoolmistress is so powerful that it can blind scholars even to this. So Lardinois, in order to save his model of a pederastic female homosexuality, is prepared to deny that the girls' language is at all erotic and writes: "There is, however, no reason to suppose that relationships also existed among the girls themselves. The *other sources* [emphasis mine] also refer only to relationships between adult women and girls" (28).

[42]For the choruses consisting of age-mates, see Calame 1977: I, 63-70.

[43]On the reading τείρει and its meaning, see Page 1951: 91, Merkelbach 3.

[44]West 1965: 199-200 has the bizarre suggestion that she might be a dispenser of love-potions, followed by Griffiths 22, Puelma 40; tentatively raised by Campbell 1988: 367, Lefkowitz 1991: 19, and Lardinois, who adds, "Otherwise she might have been a woman who allocated the girls among the women of Sparta" (28). Aenesimbrota has become the official civic lesbian procuress (so explicitly Hooker 79). Again, it is possible to see the strange slant that the discussion of female sexuality can occasion. The point in all these authors is a supposed parallelism between male and female versions of the *agoge*. Yet despite all that we do know

short, the text indicates, without the least obscurity, that she is the keeper of a training school for choir-maidens."[45] While Hagesichora's leading of the chorus is explicit in the text (44, 84, besides her name), there is no mention of any "training" by Aenesimbrota. There would seem to me to be a superfluity of trainers: the chorus leader Hagesichora, her second-in-command Agido,[46] now Aenesimbrota, all of whom leave very little for Alcman to do.[47] Page's suggestion may very well be so, but there is more obscurity here than he was willing to admit. An equally possible (and equally unprovable) scenario is that Aenesimbrota is the mother of the four girls,[48] especially if the chorus consisted of actual cousins,[49] and this notion receives some support from Pindar's fragmentary *Partheneion* II.[50]

Yet whatever Aenesimbrota was to the girls, there is one thing that she most definitely was not, and that is their lover. Even Calame (1977: II, 97) believes that Aenesimbrota was a teacher to the chorus, "mais qui resterait en dehors de leurs relations amoureuses." In short, there is no evidence for the sort of masculine *erastes* to *eromenos* relationship that Plutarch envisions for Spartan women to be found in Alcman at all.

Aenesimbrota cannot be turned into Sappho. I doubt she was a professional chorus trainer. Even if she was, Sappho wasn't. Page (1951: 65-66) explicitly denied any comparison to Sappho's "school," but others were and continue to be less circumspect. Thus we have a vicious circle: the image of

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about the formal male *agoge* and all the commentary that has been written on it (for which see Brelich 113-207, Cartledge 1981/1988), no one has ever suggested that the boys had recourse to love-potions or that there was an official civic boy-bursar.

[45]Page heads the section, "The Academy of Aenesimbrota." For Aenesimbrota as teacher, cf. also Bowra 57.

[46]Rightly Page 1951: 44-46.

[47]If she is a trainer, she seems to be responsible for only half the chorus—less one leader—and Page himself (1951: 48, 57-62) has fairly well demolished the idea that there were semi-choruses, in the singing at any rate. Further, why would the trainer of one half the chorus be mentioned and not the other?

[48]A sensible suggestion made by Campbell 1983: 189.

[49]See Page 1951: 67-68. The arguments of West 1965: 196 and Griffiths 29 for some vague use of "cousin" (explicitly influenced by English usage) are extremely weak. Gentili 1988: 259 n. 16 flatly proclaims it an "institutional designation."

[50]94b Snell-Maehler (83 Bowra), a civic ritual of the *daphnephorikon* at Thebes. The relationships between the named persons in the *partheneion* are uncertain, but they seem all to be members of the family of Aeoladas, his son Pagondas and his grandson Agasicles. Andaesistrota, who instructed the chorus-leader with her arts ('Ανδαισιστρότα ἄν ἐπάσκησε μήδεσ[ι]: 94b.71-72 Snell) is most likely the maiden's mother. For a new text, discussion, and review of the previous literature, see Lehnus (esp. 83), who is followed by Lefkowitz 1991: 17-19 (cf. Lefkowitz 1963: 188-90).

Sappho Schoolmistress is invoked to explain (and misinterpret) Alcman's Sparta which in turn is used to justify Sappho Schoolmistress. We simply cannot turn Plutarch into Alcman and Alcman into Sappho.

VII. Sappho Music Teacher.

The lingering influence of Wilamowitz, the search for a ritual setting to "explain" her poetry, and the invocation of Alcman as a parallel, have led to a very popular by-form of Sappho Schoolmistress, that of casting Sappho as music teacher. Thus Dover writes (1978: 175):

> In what, if anything, did Sappho "educate" Lesbian and Ionian girls?[51] Most obviously, in that in which she herself excelled, poetry and music, establishing a female counterpart to a predominantly male domain; there would be a certain improbability in supposing that Lesbian girls of good family were sent by their parents to a school of sexual technique, but none in supposing a school which enhanced their skill and charm (charm is within the province of Aphrodite) as performers in girls' choruses at festivals.

Dover is right to reject the notion of a "school of sexual technique" but a "charm" school (confined to the natives) fares no better.[52] Again, it is necessary to point out that in no extant poem does Sappho "teach" anything to anyone. But Dover points out a way that Sappho Schoolmistress might yet be saved. Since she wrote choral poetry, she would have, presumably, *taught* the chorus her songs.[53] However, as Page notes (1955: 119; cf. 72, 126): "There is no evidence or indication that any of Sappho's poetry apart from the Epithalamians [and 140, a fragment of a song for an *Adonia*: p. 119 n. 1], was designed for presentation by herself or others (whether individuals or choirs) on a formal or ceremonial occasion, public or private." Along with Page and others, I am presuming here that Sappho's *epithalamia* are actual songs for

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[51]Dover refers to frg. 214b=*SLG* S 261a, quoted above.

[52]For music as part of the curriculum at Sappho's school, cf. the citations in section III above, Wilamowitz 1913: 73, Aly 2371, 2377-78, Schmid-Stählin 421 (who include poetry lectures and verse composition), Kranz 88, R. Cantarella 203: "Saffo fu a capo di un «tíaso» di giovani donne . . . una specie di collegio o scuola per fanciulle che ivi apprendevano, in un ambiente di raffinata eleganza, quella che era la «buona educazione» del tempo, cioè in particolare la musica, il canto e la danza," Fränkel 175, West 1980: 83, Burnett 215, E. Cantarella 1981/1987: 72: "It was 'female' education emphasizing music, singing and dance," 1988/1992: 79, Lardinois 26 (quoted above).

[53]For a summary of the evidence for the poet as *didaskalos*, see Herington 183-84.

actual ceremonies on Lesbos,[54] but they cannot be pressed into service to turn Sappho into a professional music teacher. Dover and others are correct to state that Sappho presumably "taught" these songs to her chorus. The mistake comes not in calling her therefore a "chorus-teacher" but rather trying to use the ambiguity of that word to imply some sort of modern idea of "teacher," as if "chorus-teacher" were the name of a profession, a specific social role distinct from that of poet.

There are two extremely important differences between Sappho's *epithalamia* and the type of choral songs that Dover is imagining, and between Sappho and Alcman (the poet to whom she is explicitly or implicitly compared), Pindar, Bacchylides, or later tragic and comic poets. First, *epithalamia* are part of the private, familial, ritual of the marriage (Maas; Muth; Keydell 927-31). They are not a public, civic, or political rite. Alcman is said to be the διδάσκαλος for the traditional choruses of girls and of boys at Sparta,[55] maintained then, one presumes, at public expense to provide the chorus for public ceremonies, such as the *partheneia*. This is a completely different situation than Sappho's, whose *epithalamia* were created for the specific private occasion of individual marriage ceremonies, consisting of the relatives and friends of the bride and groom. Unlike Alcman, Sappho was not hired by the city for the occasion nor was the entire polis expected to attend. *Partheneia* and *epithalamia* are distinct genres and the mere fact that choruses of young girls feature in both does not mean that they are the same thing, have the same poetics, or serve the same societal function, a fact that Calame rightly points out (1977: I, 167). Thus the civic *choeurs de jeunes filles* that he studied have, by his own admission, simply nothing to do with Sappho.[56]

Second, there did not exist, as far as we know, anywhere in the Greek world, an institution of standing choruses. Even for the greatest of civic

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[54]Page 1955: 120, 122. The *epithalamia* are frg. 27, 30 (in Sapphics), perhaps 104-106 (?) (dactylic hexameter), 107-109 (prob. dactylic hexameter), 110-117 (a variety of meters, some uncertain). Only these last are in what might be choral meters. Demetr. *Eloc.* 167 says that her *epithalamia* are not suitable for the lyre or the chorus, but this is criticism of her choice of prosaic words rather than an indication of the modes of performance.

[55]*P. Oxy.* 2506, called by Page the "Commentarius in Melicos"=10.32-34 *PMG* (T 5 Calame): διδάσκαλον τῶν θυγατέρων καὶ ἐφή[βω]ν πατρίο[ις] | χοροῖς. Cf. also TA 11b *PMGF* (5 *SLG*=T 29 Loeb), which mentions his παιδείας 'training'.

[56]For Calame's remarks on *epithalamia* see 1977: I, 159-62; for *partheneia*, I, 18-20, 167. Cf. also [Plut.] *Mus.* 17.1136f=Alcman TB 2 *PMGF* (T 15 Loeb), where Plato knows *partheneia* by Alcman, Pindar, Simonides and Bacchylides (also *prosodia* and paeans), with no mention of Sappho. Sappho is doing something quite different in the *epithalamia* from the *partheneia* of the other poets.

celebrations, the tragic festivals at Athens for example, each chorus was put together for a single specific occasion. Nowhere did there exist choral "schools" in which the citizens of even a single polis enrolled to learn a job skill, much less a Pan-Hellenic choral academy. Alcman was the "teacher" of his choral verses to the sons and daughters of Sparta, yet no one has ever suggested that he ran a "school" there. Pindar was in demand throughout the Hellenic world, but no one speaks of his "school." He did not travel with a band, nor were children or citizens sent to any kind of central music academy run by him in order to learn how to sing and dance in his choruses.[57] Alcman and Pindar have a precise social role: it is not "teacher," not even "chorus teacher," it is "poet." These kind of suggestions are never made about any male poet, only about Sappho. There is indeed improbability—and, more importantly, no evidence—in supposing a school to train "performers in girls' choruses at festivals." And the *epithalamia* were not in fact sung at public festivals, but private weddings. The picture of girls being sent from all over Asia Minor to enter an academy in order to form a permanent chorus of bridesmaids belongs to Gilbert and Sullivan, not archaic Greece.[58]

VIII. Sappho Sex-Educator.

Earlier authors looking for details of Sappho's educational program in her poems forced the *epithalamia* into this role. And there has been a return, again in ritual guise, of the idea of Sappho as sex-educator.[59] Schmid-Stählin

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[57]Instead, Pindar, on occasion sent his poem with a *chorodidasklos* to teach it (*Ol.* 6.87-91; with scholia on 87-88=148a, 149a Drachmann). We do, however, hear of choruses traveling to other festivals, as in Pi. *Ol.* 6.98-100. *P. Oxy.* 2389 fr. 35, col. i, 16-18 (Alcman 11 *PMGF*=24 Calame) may speak of "the women of Dyne" going to Pitane (Spartan villages) to do something with the women of Pitane, but the text is severely damaged (Podlecki 111 is overly confident). According to Paus. 5.25.2-4, the Messinians regularly sent a boys' chorus, with *didaskalos*, to Rhegium. What we do not find is the Messinians sending their sons to Rhegium to be trained. For other evidence, see Herington 189-91.

[58]Further, the fact that the *epithalamia* fit so neatly into the image of Sappho Schoolmistress has led to a strange forgetfulness of Sappho's lyrics. So Tarditi 73: "Saffo era una χοροδιδάσκαλος con il compito di preparare i cori per le feste pubbliche e private, e dirigeva un tiaso," with no mention that she was a lyric poet as well. Again, note the use of Greek words to authenticate the unauthentic.

[59]Cf. Dover 1978: 175 quoted above. Lardinois evidences his own two minds about Sappho. While on the one hand, recognizing that calling Sappho a homosexual "is necessarily anachronistic" (25), he operates with a purely mechanical definition of lesbianism: if she touched the girls, she's gay. He too seems more concerned to deny the "charge" of lesbianism, than to question what would constitute proof. The question of "sincerity" raises its pointless head. He admits that "probably she engaged in sexual relations with the girls," but describes her poetry as "conventional" and warns that "it is impossible to gather from her poem her personal

(421) and Merkelbach (4, cf. 12-16) speak vaguely of "instruction and preparation for marriage." For other examples of "sex-education" courses at Sappho's school, cf. Cantarella's remarks about "beauty, seduction, and charm" quoted above (1981/1987: 86-87). Hallett, in a perceptive article (1979), is one of the few to have thought seriously about what *ritual* purpose Sappho's erotic monodies might have served.[60] However, I cannot agree with her view of Sappho as a "sensual consciousness raiser" (460), since it begins from the assumption that Sappho's circle consisted of girls being educated before marriage and that her love poetry was written only to these girls.[61] Further, I find no evidence that Greek fathers or husbands wanted their daughters' or wives' sensual consciousness raised. The emphasis throughout the society is on the repression of female sexuality rather than its encouragement.[62] A wife who enjoys sex too much is a potential adulteress, not a valuable commodity.[63]

Burnett presents the most explicit picture of Sappho's Sex Academy (1983):

> Soon the girls of these youthful groups would marry, and it was to this end that their elegant accomplishments were acquired. Their value was being increased, so that their fathers could boast more fulsomely [sic] to their prospective grooms, but they were not just polished for the market—they were being prepared for marriage itself. (216)

> Ideally they were to have enough understanding of Eros to bring their husbands pleasure. . . . Their lessons were in part practical, for . . . they, as her age-mates, accompanied the bride almost to her bed. Sappho taught them just what to do. (218)

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feelings. . . . one cannot infer that Sappho was a lesbian at heart" (20). Later, he says that "we are dealing with an institutionalized type of sexuality, in which the preferences of those involved may have been of little consequence" (30). It might then not have been Sappho's fault; society is to blame. Again, a contrast with male poets is instructive: no one has ever claimed that Alcaeus or Theognis was forced into writing homosexual poetry by convention. This necessitates his belittling the very poetry he seeks to defend (24-25): "Could it be that her frivolous songs praising the beauty of young girls gave rise to the assumption that she would also have been more than willing to sleep with numerous men, preferably in a shameless manner?" Sappho's poetry has been called many things before, but never "frivolous."

[60]In what the publishers call an "updated" edition of Dover's *Greek Homosexuality*, Hallett's influential article is still listed as "unpublished" (Dover 1978/1989: 181).

[61]See also Stigers' response (1979) and Winkler 187.

[62]See Arthur for a excellent overview.

[63]E.g., Hes. *WD* 373-75, 695-705, Sem. 48-54, 90-91, or Homer's and Aeschylus' portraits of Klytemnestra; Ar. *Lys.* 163-66 is the remarkable exception.

> Ritual songs of this sort were a form of instruction in the corporal side of marriage. (219)

Burnett's insistence on an educative/ritual function for every song leads ultimately to a distorted picture. There is simply no evidence for any of this.[64] There is no sex-education in the *epithalamia*. The purpose of an *epithalamium* is to praise the bride (103b V, 108, 112, 113, 117a) not to give her advice on the finer points of intercourse on her way to the wedding chamber. What we find instead is regret for the loss of virginity (105c, 107, 114). There is nothing said about "attendant joys."[65] And how exactly all this was supposed to work is left misty. Are we to imagine Sappho falling in love with just one girl at a time, or all of them indiscriminately, or as each one comes to market? Lardinois alone has tackled this ticklish problem head on: "Sappho had a circle of young girls around her, and it is unlikely that she had a sexual relation with all of them" (29). His solution is that Sappho slept only with the head-girl at her boarding school, who was then appointed the "*choragos*" of the school choir.

What I find curious about this reconstruction is that its origins so clearly lie in the products of masculine fantasy. This does not mean that it is *therefore* incorrect. But when dealing with a reconstruction—and it must be emphasized that it is only a recontruction—that has its origins in Victorian sexism and sexology, we should be at least suspicious.[66] This idea of a homoerotic "phase," either of "crushes" or of sexual experimentation, leading (being tamed/transformed) to "normal" heterosexual, reproductive sex is a common–place of both the literature of pornography and developmental psychology. It has a venerable history in both. For the first, cf. Nicolas Chorier's *Satyra Sotadica de Arcanis Amoris et Veneris*, which has claims to be the first pornographic best seller (1660/1935: 31-39).[67] Better known is Cleland's *Fanny Hill* (1748-49/1985: 46-51). Compare the way in which Sappho is imagined to Cleland's description of Phoebe Ayres, Fanny's first lover, "whose business it was to prepare and break such fillies as I was to the mounting block; and she was accordingly, in that view, allotted me for a bedfellow; and to give her the more authority, she had

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[64]Himerius *Orat.* 9.4 (T 154 Loeb) and *AP* 7.406.6 (T 58 Loeb) are sometimes pressed into service, but they simply mean that Sappho wrote *epithalamia*; see above.

[65]Hallett 1979: 456.

[66]Cf. Cantarella's remarks above and n. 40.

[67]Chorier published this dialogue novel under the name of the Spanish humanist and poet Luisa Sigea, in another of the ongoing series of sexual attacks on learned women.

the title of cousin conferred on her by the venerable president of this college." Marks (353-78) emphasizes the importance of the school setting to much of this literature. For psychology, Helen Deutsch (I, 30-32, 85-87, 119-20) popularized the notion of the "pashes" of Anglo-German school girls as a stage in a universal feminine psycho-sexual development.

The result is that Sappho's very lesbianism and poetry are forced into the service of normative male heterosexuality. Sappho falls in love and writes poetry on commission, it would seem, *in order* to benefit men. Sappho, whether she touches the girls (Burnett) or not (Wilamowitz), still warms them up and hands them over to men for the real thing. She is left behind, blindly jealous or tenderly regretful, as you wish, in any case not threatening. This picture borders on the literally porno-graphic.[68]

IX. Formal Isolation.

We find ourselves trapped in a particularly vicious hermeneutic circle. Aware to a greater extent perhaps than the New Critics of old that a poem can only be understood in terms of the society in which it was created, modern critics frequently wind up reconstructing a society on the basis of its poetry and then interpreting the poetry on the basis of that reconstruction. This can turn out to be only a slightly more sophisticated version of the biographical fallacy. It has, however, been the dominant form of interpretation of Sappho since antiquity. Cf. Lefkowitz' warning (1973/1981: 62): "Thus biography, itself derived from interpretation of her poems, is in turn reapplied to the poems and affects our interpretation of them." The problem is that we are almost completely ignorant of what that social background was. This is particularly true in the cases of archaic Lesbos and Sparta. The objection is made that one must have *some* lens through which to view the poetry in order to be able interpret it. The problem arises when the glass darkens what we see. A distorting contruct is a danger, not an aid—a point already made by Kirkwood in a lengthy and perceptive footnote (267-68). Here again I want to urge a greater skepticism in distinguishing what we know (and where we know it from) from what we were told, from what we assume is likely, from what we see as parallels in other societies.[69]

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[68]See Kappeler 44, Bunch 90-94. See above, for a similar view of Alcman's Aenesimbrota.

[69]Thus Gentili (1966: 48, 1988: 77) offers the fact that a friend once told Simone de Beauvoir that there were lesbian marriages in Singapore and Canton as evidence that second cent. A.D. Sparta was just like sixth cent. B.C. Lesbos. Snyder 1989: 2-3 makes the point well.

This ignorance about the circumstances of performance accounts for the large element of arbitrariness applied to assigning formal, ritual social settings for poems. This arbitrariness applies to three categories: the degree of formality envisioned, the types of poems, and the poets themselves.

First, the degree of formality can be easily overstated. An audience does not, as Merkelbach, Schadewaldt (1970) and Lasserre think, necessarily imply a ritual.[70] Winkler's remarks are to the point: "The view of lyric as a subordinate element in celebrations and formal occasions is no more compelling than the view, which I prefer, of song as honored and celebrated at least sometimes in itself. Therefore I doubt that Sappho always needed a sacrifice or dance or wedding *for which* to compose a song" (165).

Secondly, it is selectively applied to particular types of poems.[71] It is easy to visualize the social settings for choral poetry, for *skolia* and *epithalamia*. But we are almost completely ignorant of the circumstances under which solo lyric poetry might have been performed in fifth-century Athens, much less seventh-century Lesbos. The problem of "occasion" is particularly acute for erotic poetry. We can say little beyond that—for men at least—a sympotic setting seems likely.[72]

A fuller realization of the element of performance in a still predominantly oral culture has, however, led to a certain monolithic approach in some scholars. Since the *epithalamion* is an easily imagined social occasion, Sappho's poems are forced to be *epithalamia* whether they wish it or not. Thus Merkelbach (5, cf. 23-35) and others have taken fr. 17 as a "propemptikon for the passage of a bride over to her new home and country." The same is true for 94 and 96: they became a new genre of "Trostgedichte" for when the girls leave Sappho's school to get married (12-13). The absence of any mention of bride, husband, or wedding does not seem to bother him.[73] This is hardly less

[70]See the strictures of Jenkyns 6-7, Burnett 209 n. 2, Herington 36. Cf. the discussion at Russo 720-21.

[71]Merkelbach 7 and n. 1 admits the difficulty of finding an occasion for some poems: "Sappho 1 stellt ein schwieriges Problem."

[72]See West 1974: 10-13; Crotty 76-103; Herington 36, 60, 195; Gentili 1988: 89-104; Bremmer 1990. The chief ancient source for the sympotic setting and for repeat performances of solo song (here elegiacs) is Theog. 237-54.

[73]Kirkwood 269 is mistaken in saying that Merkelbach calls it an *epithalamion* but correct when he writes: "Even Fr. 17 . . . is called an epithalamian by Merkelbach, apparently because it cannot be proved not to be." So too Wilamowitz 1913: 54 on fr. 96, "jetzt ist sie in Sardes verheiratet," Rose 98, "Another, Arignota is married to someone in Sardis" or Gentili 1988: 82, "Now, however, Arignota is in Sardis—doubtless married." So too Lardinois 17 and 29 (see above note 22).

absurd than Wilamowitz' reading of fr. 31 as a *epithalamion*, which Merkelbach also endorses (7) with the change of heterosexual jealousy (*Eifersucht*) into homosexual regret for the loss of a pure beloved to "normal" life.[74] Thus in an recent article entitled "Public Occasion and Private Passion in the Lyrics of Sappho of Lesbos," Snyder (1990) shows how difficult it is to determine which poems fell into what category and West (1970: 309, 318) appeals to an equally subjective sense of decorum at symposia.

Most importantly, a degree of ritual formality is invoked for Sappho that is not invoked for any male poet. Sympotic themes make it easy to discuss Alcaeus or Theognis as operating within a formalized social setting and it has been suggested that "ritual" occasions are sought for Sappho more often than for male poets because she lacks such a clear sympotic setting. However, there are many male poets and poems which are difficult to imagine as sung at a symposium or in any other formal setting; they are not therefore labeled "ritual." Kirkwood's observations still apply: "I am not conscious of any concern to determine the specific occasion of Alcaeus 130, the remarkable description of the poet in exile . . . or the occasion of Archilochus's famous song of hatred . . . (79a), or the specific occasion of any poem of Archilochus, Alcaeus, or Anacreon, except where the subject of the poem readily suggests its occasion, as in some of Alcaeus' drinking songs. Only for Sappho are the efforts of scholarship bent on providing occasions" (267-68).

So for Sappho, Kraus (1546) calls the existence of her school, "zwar nur eine Annahme, aber eine notwendige." I think it a most unnecessary assumption, certainly an assumption no one finds necessary for any other poet. Could Sappho not have written poetry except at a ladies' seminary? Male poets are simply left to be poets but Sappho, it seems, needs to be explained away, isolated in a cult or shut away in a school. Like many a woman of genius, Sappho has been institutionalized.

X. The Nonexistent "Thiasos."

The sign of this attitude is the constant use of the word *thiasos* in connection with Sappho. This word is never used anywhere in any of the poems of Sappho (or Alcaeus) nor is it ever used anywhere in any ancient source about her. Yet it is approaching its hundredth anniversary, copied from Wilamowitz

[74]Again one would imagine the stake had been fairly well driven into this one by Page 1955: 30-33, but it rises still in Fränkel 176, and as recently as E. Cantarella 1981/1987: 73, 1988/1992: 80.

(1897: 259-60)[75] to Aly (2357, 2371, 2377-78), Rose (97), Hadas (51), Schadewaldt 1950: 11, Latte (36), Fränkel (175), Flacelière (128), R. Cantarella (196), Tarditi (73), Russo (721), Stigers (1977: 92-93, 98), Tsagarakis (70 n. 5), E. Cantarella (1981/87: 71, 86; 1988/1992: 107f.), Crotty (80), Burnett (211), and Commoti (21). Its only purpose, whether conscious or not, is to lend a spurious air of antiquity to a modern creation, and to make it sound as if we actually knew what Sappho's "*thiasos*" was.[76] I am officially announcing its death. It should never be used again in connection with Sappho. Merkelbach (4 n. 1) writes, "Ob man den Bund ‚Thiasos' oder ‚Hetaerie,' ist natürlich gleichgültig."[77] But it *is* important: the word *thiasos* is not used in connection with any one but Sappho. And its primary purpose is to isolate Sappho from all other lyric poets. Alcaeus calls his comrades ἔταιροι (129.16; 150.4); he has a *hetairia*. Sappho calls her comrades ἔταιραι (160.1); she has a *thiasos*.[78] Alcaeus has friends; Sappho has a cult.

XI. Poetic Isolation.

This isolation extends not only to the circumstances in which we visualize Sappho singing, but to her songs themselves. She is segregated as a poet from consideration with other poets. Thus Gentili (1988: 109) describes the topics and formats of the lyric poetry of praise and blame as, "political and social polemic, the occasional anecdote based on some commonplace episode of

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[75]I have not chased the application of the term to Sappho back further than Wilamowitz' article on Alcman.

[76]See also Calame's warning (1977: I, 367) about its use, "etant donné que les indices de l'existence d'un véritable thiase sapphique sont extrêmement ténus, et que le mot n'est jamais employé à propos de la poétesse de Lesbos," which does not prevent him from tossing the term about elsewhere (27, 362, 429, 438). Likewise Fernandez Galinano 56: "La reunión . . . no es un tíaso, ni una cofradía, ni un pensionado, ni una academia, ni una escuela poética" and West 1970: 324: "θίασος, for example, which some modern writers readily apply, does not occur either in Sappho or in Alcaeus."

[77]The word "natürlich" is a warning. Lanata 66 says the same thing.

[78]Further, Ath. 11.463e continues his quotation of fr. 2 with τούτοισι τοῖς ἑταίροις ἐμοῖς γε καὶ σοῖς, so some such words may have been in Sappho (Page 1955: 39; for a summary of positions, Burnett 275 n. 128). In fr. 126 she writes δαύοις ἀπάλας ἑτα⟨ί⟩ρας ἐν στήθεσιν ("May you sleep on the breast of your tender companion"). And Athenaeus quotes 142 to show that Sappho called her friends ἔταιραι: Leto and Niobe were dear companions (φίλαι ἔταιραι) and the commentary at 90 (fr. 10a), seems to say, if it is about this passage, that Sappho compared her friendship to Atthis to these two, i.e., once friends, now enemies. Even the *Suda* (Σ 107, 4.322 Adler=T2 Loeb) speaks of ἑταῖραι δὲ αὐτῆς καὶ φίλαι, as well as her μαθήτριαι (see above). So throughout Gentili 1988: 72-104, "The Ways of Love in the Poetry of *Thíasos* and Symposium," cf. 3, 56, 81 ("male clubs . . . female communities"), 259 n. 16. So Snell 30-33 on Alcaeus' "hetairia" vs. (44) Sappho's "circle."

ordinary life, personal abuse, moralizing invective, cynical criticism of traditional ideas and the poets who are their spokesmen." Such is the poetry, he says, of Archilochus, Hipponax, Semonides, Xenophanes, Solon, Theognis, Alcaeus, and especially Anacreon; in short of everyone, except Sappho. Yet all these themes (except perhaps a "cynical" criticism) are found in her poetry.[79] Burnett describes the circle of Alcaeus: "Met together for pleasure, they celebrated common cults and entertained one another with songs of every sort—hymns and exhortations, but also riddles, jokes, abuse, and salutes to the victories and defeats, departures and reunions, as well as to the sexual adventures, that made up their mutual lives" (121).[80] Again, this differs not at all from what we find in Sappho, save in perhaps substituting "love" for "sexual adventures" in both poets.

Modern scholars have ancient precedent for segregating Sappho by sex from her fellow lyric poets. Strabo (13.3.3=T 7 Loeb), Antipater of Thessalonica (*AP* 7.15=T 57 Loeb; 9.26: a list of nine women poets), Galen (4.771.18 K), Anon. *AP* 9.190.7-8 (T 35 Loeb) compare her only with other women, while Antipater of Sidon (*AP* 7.14=T 27 Loeb, 9.66), Plato (*AP* 9.506=T 60 Loeb), Plutarch (*Amat.* 18) make her a Muse not a poet.[81]

But there exists another ancient tradition which counted her simply as one of the nine lyric poets (Anon. *AP* 9.184, Gel. 19.3=T 53 Loeb, Ath. 14.639e). Sappho sang of love. A wide variety of authors recognized that her subject matter was more important to her poetry than her gender and compared her with other poets who sang about love. Above all they compared her with Anacreon (Winkler 163). So Clearchus (c. 300 B.C., Ath. 14.639a=T 39 Loeb) treats their love songs together, as do Horace (*Odes* 4.9.9-12), Ovid (*Trist.* 2.363-65, quoted above), Pausanius (1.25.1), Aulus Gellius (19.9.3=T 53 Loeb), Maximus of Tyre (18.9 l-m, see above), Themistius (4th. cent. A.D., *Or.* 13.170d-71a=T 52 Loeb), and Plutarch (*Mul. Virt.* 243b=T 54 Loeb), who provides my epigraph. Apuleius (*Apol.* 9=T 48 Loeb) says the only difference between the love songs of Sappho and Anacreon, Alcman, or Simonides is dialect. Menander Rhetor (9.132, 134=T 47 Loeb) sees no difference in the kletic hymns of Sappho and Anacreon or Alcman. Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Dem.* 40=T 42 Loeb) chooses Sappho, Anacreon, and Hesiod as representing the polished (γλαφυρά) style. Demetrius (*Eloc.* 132=T 45 Loeb) in a famous

[79]See my article, "Sappho's Public World" (forthcoming).

[80]Note here that Alcaeus is not the *leader* of his *hetairia.*

[81]Anon. *AP* 9.571 cuts her from the nine lyric poets to add her to the nine Muses; cf. also Dioscorides *AP* 7.407, Anon. *AP* 9.189, 9.521.

passage summed up "the whole of Sappho's poetry" as νυμφαῖοι κῆποι, ὑμέναιοι, ἔρωτες ("gardens of nymphs, wedding-songs, love-affairs"). These are not unique to Sappho. What is unique to Sappho is the desire to lock her up in the garden.

Sappho sang hymns, wedding songs, love songs, songs of blame, and songs of praise. Russo (721) on what he terms "the great Question of Sapphic studies" writes: "I find it easier to assume that some special *purpose* lay behind the existence of Sappho's circle of women, and that some degree of formal organization existed to carry out that purpose." My question is, why is that purpose made more formal than that which bound together Alcaeus' circle? Why is she alone made the leader of a *thiasos*, a schoolteacher, a priestess of Aphrodite and the Muses? For all his hymns, Alcaeus is never called the leader of a *thiasos*.[82] For all his choral poetry, no one says that Stesichorus (!) set up a school for young boys. For all his erotic verse, no one calls Theognis a "sensual consciousness raiser."

XII. A Different Reading/Reading Otherwise.

The interpretive model of Sappho as Schoolmistress, Sappho as Ritual Leader does not work. It has no evidence to support it and it leads to some grotesque misinterpretations of the poetry. But if Sappho was not a Schoolmistress, what was she?

Let us turn from Victorian fantasy and modern reconstructions to the one indisputable fact about Sappho: *she was a poet.* Let us look then at what *poets* did. It is time we ceased this double standard. I wish to propose an alternative reconstruction of Sappho's social world. She calls her comrades φίλαι (43) and ἔταιραι (142, 160.1). She calls herself "a firm friend" (φίλα φαῖμ' ἐχύρα γέ[νεσθαι, 88.17). She should therefore be seen, not in a *thiasos* (whatever that might be) but, like Alcaeus, in a *hetairia*, an association of friends. I am not raising this point for the first time, but it seems to have been powerless against so entrenched a series of preconceptions. So Burnett has written: "Sappho sang for an audience in some ways very much like the fraternity that Alcaeus fought with during the day and drank with at night. Her circle, like the *hetaireia*, had a customary role to play in Lesbian society, and it too was aristocratic, musical, and constrained only by bonds of love and loyalty" (209). So too Winkler: "It is by no means certain that her own poems are either for a cult-perfomance or that her circle of women friends (*hetairai*) is identical in extension with the celebrants in a festival she mentions" (165). Trumpf

[82]For his hymns see Page 1955: 244-72, Campbell 1983: 169-72.

compared the *hetairia* of Alcaeus to Sappho's circle and writes, "Der Wirkungskreis der Dichter sind die halb kultischen, halb politisch-sozialen Organisationsformen der Bünde und Hetärien mit ihren festen Institutionen" (160). Any overly stringent attempt to separate the cultic from the socio-political is fundamentally mistaken—I doubt if any Greek would have understood the distinction we were trying to make—though civic celebrations (involving the whole polis) can be differentiated from private ceremonies.[83] The point I wish to make is that there is no justification for imposing on Sappho a greater degree of ritual, formality, or institutionalization than on any other (male) poet. Sappho has a social role—it is that of poet. Since she does the same things as other poets and writes the same things as other poets, why is she not treated like all other poets? This rhetorical question has an answer: scholars for the most part are still refusing to treat Sappho as a poet and instead are turning her into a "wonderful thing" (Strabo 13.2.3=T 7 Loeb: θαυμαστόν τι χρῆμα), that is, a freak of nature.[84] A single example: Gentili says: "The closeness to the Muses can only be explained by the hypothesis of an actual cult in their honor within the community" (1988: 84). May I offer another hypothesis? Sappho invokes the Muses *because she is a poet.* Alcaeus invokes the Muses. Why do these remarks not apply to him, or to Archilochus, or Pindar or anyone else who ever wrote poetry in the entire history of Greek literature?

Men got together with other men in a variety of formal and informal settings at which poetry might be sung. These included civic festivals and competitions, banquets (θαλία, ἑορτή, θυσία) and above all the symposium.[85]

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[83]Cf., for example, McEvilley 268: "Fragment 94 does not present exactly a rite nor exactly a party, but a private occasion which involved the symbolic objects common to both." This draws a line that did not exist in Greece and asks on which side particular occasions fell. Every party began with a sacrifice; every sacrifice was followed by a party.

[84]For this attitude as basic to most interpretations of the work of women poets, see Lefkowitz 1973/1981 and Gubar.

[85]On banquets as a place for poetry, and the synonymy of these words, see Schmitt-Pantel. I follow her usage of the term "banquet" to indicate the falsity of applying modern distinctions of "secular" activity from "sacred." Cantarella in a curious section (1988/1992: 86-88) invokes symposia as sites for lesbian love. She, however, is imagining the *hetairai* at men's symposia falling for each other. How much this is influenced by modern notions of the lesbian hooker, I don't know, though her remarks certainly point in that direction (87). She can, however, offer no evidence apart from Anacreon 358 (see above note 30), which may not be about female homosexuality and fails to mention symposia, and Alciphron *Ep.* 4.14.4, a buttock beauty contest between two *hetairai*, which she reads as a "homosexual turn-on" (88). The lavishly illustrated world of the symposium offers no such images. The Apollodorus vase (*Para.* 333, 9bis; illustrated in Dover 1978: 173 [R 207], Keuls 85 [fig. 151], Boardman 1975b: 110-11),

What might these occasions have been for Sappho? Bearing in mind that we know little about archaic Lesbos, we must go primarily on the basis of her own and Alcaeus' poetry. If, however, we strip away the blinkers of Sappho Schoolmistress, we find her celebrating the same or similar occasions in settings neither more nor less formal or cultic than those celebrated in the circles of friends that included Alcaeus, or Mimnermus, or Ibycus, or Theognis, or Anacreon.

There is no theme, no occasion, in Sappho that we do not find in other poets. For identifiable occasions, those which seem to us to be more "formal" are Sappho writing choral song for an Adonia,[86] singing about some sort of all night celebrations,[87] singing about choruses (70.10, 94.27), and (according to an anonymous epigram) leading a chorus of women to the precinct of Hera.[88] The Adonia was a women's festival and Praxilla wrote an famous (and derided) hymn to Adonis (747).[89] Pindar describes an all-night festival (*Ism.* 4.65-68).[90] Alcman, of course, speaks of χορός "dancing" (besides the *partheneia*, see 10(b)11, 15; 27.3), as do Alcaeus (249), Anacreon (386), Ion (26.1, 11), Pratinas (708, 709), [Socrates] 3.1 (Ath. 14.628e), Theognis 779 (of a paean), and

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sometimes offered as evidence of lesbian masturbation (Dover ibid.), rather shows one *hetaira* perfuming the pubic hair of another (note the perfume jar) and is comparable to the bathing scenes (Boardman, ibid; Keuls, ibid.). Such a scene would not be impossible: vase painting does show women drinking by themselves (e.g., psykter by Euphormios, *ARV* 16,15=Boardman 1975a: #27; hydria by Phintias, *ARV* 23,7=Boardman 1975a: #38) and is not shy about showing women masturbating with dildos (ubiquitous; e.g., Keuls 82-86) or by hand (Thalia painter, *ARV* 113,7=Boardman 1975a: #112=Johns 140). Keuls 242 is incorrect in citing her fig. 251 (*ARV* 34,16) as a possible scene of masturbation (and fails to note the Thalia painter) and further misidentifies (87) her fig. 81 (Apulian pelike by the Truro painter, c. 350 B.C.) as homosexual gesture of a woman touching another's breast; the hand is clearly on the shoulder.

[86]140a; cf. 168, 221 b iii, *AP* 7.407 (Dioscorides 18 Gow-Page=T 58 Loeb). For the Adonia, see Detienne and Winkler's criticisms (188-209).

[87]30.3, 43, 149, perhaps 126, 151, 157; cf. 154. Since 30 is certainly an *epithalamium*, there is a possibility that some of the others are also. For 43, the direct address to friends and the end of the poem, seem to indicate a non-narrative context; we cannot know the character of the occasion. For 154, the presence of the altar seems more "cultic," but cf. Xenoph. 1.11 (below). Further, the past tenses might indicate either simply an antecedent setting, or the narration perhaps of a myth. Fr. 23.12, and 126 may simply be about about spending the night with a companion.

[88]*AP* 9.189=T 59 Loeb; Hera is also mentioned at 9, 17. Perhaps the mysterious "beauty contests" of Lesbos fit in somewhere, though Sappho in what survives makes no mention of them. The testimonia are conveniently assembled by Treu 1963: 120-21 (with German trans.).

[89]For other poets apparently writing choral works for the Adonia, cf. Cratinus, *Boukoloi* (3.16 Kock=K-A 4.131). A certain "Glykon" told his story (Ad. 1029).

[90]For which see Parke 49-50.

an anonymous drinking song (900). Alcaeus (129) invokes Hera; Alcman (3) writes a *partheneion* in her honor.[91] Numerous poets have invoked numerous gods. Only Sappho is turned into a priestess.

A principal occasion for women (and men) gathering together in a less "cultic" setting for Sappho's songs is the wedding.[92] Alcman wrote wedding songs (*hymenaia*);[93] Homer, Hesiod and Aristophanes know of them;[94] Licymnius (768) and Telestes (808) wrote dithyrambs about Hymenaios. Only Sappho sets up a school for bridesmaids.

But most of all, we find Sappho singing about (and I presume at) banquets. She speaks of the θαλία at a temple grove to which she summons Aphrodite (2.15). So do Archilochus (11, 13), Theognis (778, 983), Pindar (*O.* 7.94, 10.76, *P.* 1.37, 10.34, *Paean* 6.14), Ion of Chios (23.3), and Xenophanes.[95] She speaks of a ἑορτή for Hera (9.3); so do Anacreon (410.2) and Pindar (*O.* 3.34, 5.5, 6.69, 6.95, 10.58, *P.* 8.66, *N.* 9.11, 11.27, fr. 59.4, 193, *Thr.* 4.15).[96] She refers to sacrificial meals (θυσία, θύω)[97]; the same words are used by Alcaeus (306 A (b) 24), Hipponax (104.48), Simonides (519 fr. 73 (c) 2), Theognis (1146), Timotheus (783), Philoxenus of Cythera (823), Pindar (*O.* 6.78, 7.42, 10.57, 13.69, *P.* 5.86, *I.* 5.30, *Paean* 3.96, 6.62, 12.6, fr. 59.12, 78.2, 86a) and the anonymous drinking song the "Harmodius" (895.3). And everywhere she speaks of garlands.[98] So do Alcaeus, Alcman, Anacreon, Hipponax, Simonides, Stesichorus, Theognis, and Xenophanes.[99] To say that

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[91]Also in praise of Hera: the author of the *Homeric Hymn*, and the shadowy Olen of Lycia (Paus. 2.13.3); cf. Bacch. 11 on the just wrath of Hera. For Alcman 3 as a choral work for Hera, see Campbell 1983: 155 and Calame's cautious assessment (1977: II, 107-108).

[92]For the festival setting of the wedding, see Gernet 1981: 23-25.

[93]According to Leonidas *AP* 7.19=159 *PMG* (T 9 Calame=T 3 Loeb), of which 4c, 81 and 107 *PMG* might be examples; they are not *partheneia*. Griffiths 11 quotes Gow-Page II, 366 with approval for the existence of Alcman's *epithalamia*: "We can hardly suppose Leonidas to have been mistaken or to have confused *partheneia* with *epithalamia*"; he then does just that by interpreting Alcman's *Partheneion* 1 as an *epithalamion* for Agido and an unnamed man, in which he is followed by Gentili 1988: 73-77, who turns it into a wedding song for Agido and Hagesichora (see above).

[94]*Il.* 18.491-96, Hes. *Scut.* 273-80, Ar. *Peace* 1316-57, *Birds* 1722-65.

[95]Cf. Stesichorus 210 (the opening of the *Oresteia*).

[96]Cf. Alcman 56.2 on the feasting of the gods.

[97]Fr. 19, 40. For θυσία the sacrificial meal, see Detienne-Vernant 1989: esp. 87-92 and, for the bibliography of 1979-89, Schmitt-Pantel.

[98]Fr. 81.7, 92.10, 94.12-17, 98a.8, 125, 191; 168c V if by Sappho (fr. adesp. 964) refers merely to the earth producing garlands. See also West 1970: 321.

[99]Alcaeus 48.17, 296b.8, 306 A(b)14, 362.1, 436; Alcman 58; Anacreon 352.2, 396.2, 410.1, 434.1, 496; Hipponax 60; Simonides 506.2, 519, fr. 77.3 and fr. 80.5; Stesichorus 187.3; Theognis 828; Critias 4.1; Xenophanes 1.2. Also Critias, Philoxenos of Leucas in the

Sappho's θαλία is a cult but Archilochus' is a party, that Sappho's garlands belong to ritual but Anacreon's belong to banqueting, is a false distinction and special pleading.[100] Pollux (6.107=Sappho 191=Alcaeus 436) and Athenaeus (15.674c-d=Alcaeus 362=Sappho 96.15) make no distinction in quoting Anacreon, Sappho and Alcaeus together for the use of garlands at banquets.[101] She speaks of myrrh (94.18, 20), not as a matter of cosmetics,[102] but as part of a celebration, exactly as do Alcaeus (45.7, 50.1, 362.3; cf. 36), Anacreon (363.3, 444), Archilochus (205), Theognis (730), and Xenophanes (1.3). Finally, it is clear that wine was present at some of the celebrations at which Sappho sang. She certainly thinks it suitable for the weddings of gods (141b.1) and heroes (44.10) and she relates the story that Achelous invented the mixing of wine (212).[103] And in fr. 2, she refers to the nectar given by Aphrodite who pours the wine (2.15-16: ὀινοχόαισον; cf. 96.27 also of Aphrodite and nectar) into their *kylixes*, the cup for drinking wine (cf. 44.29 on the wedding of Hector and Andromache; 192: a description of cups from an unknown context). Athenaeus (11.463e) quotes the poem as part of a series of descriptions of the features of a perfect symposium[104] and Page (Page 1955: 43) explicates the role of Aphrodite: "The wine which Sappho and her companions drink is conceived of as being, or including, nectar poured by the hand of their invisible but unquestionably present patroness."[105]

For Bowra, Sappho 2 "has certainly the air of cult about it, and though Sappho's position may not be official, she certainly officiates" (196). Saake

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dithyramb "The Banquet" 836 (a) 3, (b) 4, 43; the drinking songs Skol. 885.2, 956, Ad. 1018 (b) 7; Ad. eleg. 30.9 (?). Corinna 654 (a) col. i.26 is mythological.

[100]For the significance of garlands, see Von der Mühll 1957: 87=1975: 486.

[101]Both show that the setting is sympotic.

[102]Saake (1971: 200) is typical of this belittling approach, in speaking of "Kosmetik" and "«medicamina faciei femineae», der Essenzen, Öle und Salben einer kultivierten Toilette." Apparently the girls were at a make-up party. Sappho merely refers to myrrh. Cf. the attack of Semonides 7.64.

[103]A myth whose relevancy outside of a festive occasion is hard to see. At 173, Sappho mentions the vine, but this might be some piece of incidental description.

[104]Ath. 11.463a-63c is the source of Xenophanes' famous description (1), as well as Anacreon *eleg.* 2 W (96 D), Ion 27, Theophr. fr. 120 (Wimmer), Alexis *Tarentines* (2.377 Kock), and Sappho 2.13-16.

[105]So also Bowra 198 and West 1970: 317. For nectar as a metonymy for wine, cf. Arch. 290, Ion 26.9, Philoxenus of Leucas 836(d)1. Yet, this has not prevented certain interpretations in which the actual wine of the celebration has been ignored in the search for the poetic meanings of the nectar of Aphrodite. So Burnett 275: "Aphrodite is to mix nectar, the matter of the gods, into the immaterial festivity of her followers." Yet she acknowledges the materiality of the images of that festivity. That the nectar "verleiht den süßen Rausch der Liebe" (Theiler-Von der Mühll 25) may be true but ignores that these images begin in the concrete fact of actual feasting.

(1972: 63) sees her as a priestess. Gentili (1988: 79) calls it a "ritual invocation." But Sappho does not rule a cult; she sings a song. Burnett (265) rightly criticizes West's flippant tone, but he is correct to call the setting of fr. 2 a "picnic" (1970: 317),[106] an outdoor banquet of a well-known type (Gernet 14-15). We may not wish to call any of these banquets symposia as such,[107] those exclusively male drinking parties, but if we compare Xenophanes 1, his description of the perfect symposium, with Sappho 2, 94, and others, we find all the same elements: cups, wine, wreaths, perfume.[108] Even the incense, altars, and hymns are as much a feature of the symposium as of the sacrifice.[109] Sappho is not serving as a priestess to girls; she is attending a banquet with friends.

XIII. Conclusion.

Just as Sappho's poetry shares concerns and subject matter with Alcaeus and the other lyric poets, so Sappho's society should also be regarded as a *hetairia*. Analogous to Alcaeus' circle, Sappho's society was a group of women tied by family, class, politics, and erotic love. Like any other association, it cooperated in ritual activities, cult practice, and informal social events. Her subjects, like those of the other lyric poets, were praising her group's friends, attacking its enemies, celebrating its loves, and offering songs for its banquets. This picture has I believe a greater fidelity to the facts. It removes a distorting series of assumptions and reveals an exciting world, where women as well as men are concerned with love and politics and where Sappho is no longer a schoolmistress but a poet.

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[106]He refers later dismissively to "jolly outings" (1970: 322).

[107]So West 1980: 38: "a women's society which was the mirror image of the men's, with their own symposia and love affairs."

[108]Fränkel 180 rightly invokes men's banquets and compares Xenoph. 1 and Sappho 2.

[109]For incense: Sappho 2.3-4, cf. Xenoph. 1.7 (both specifically frankincense); altar: Sappho 2.3, cf. Xenoph. 1.11. Xenophanes tells of the men hymning the gods, and I would have no difficulty in seeing Sappho's kletic hymns 1 and 2 in exactly this sort of festive setting.

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