

## How Did Sappho's Songs Get into the Male Symptotic Repertoire?

*Ewen Bowie*

It is as a performer on the *barbitos*—presumably accompanying the singing of her own songs—that Sappho is imagined by late sixth- and early fifth-century Attic vase painters, and was doubtless recognised by many Athenian symptotic users of these vases.<sup>1</sup> The *barbitos* (as was shown by Yatromanolakis) is closely associated with comastic activity, and painters and their patrons seem to imagine Sappho in a context where she can chase (or be chased by, or perhaps both) an attractive young woman,<sup>2</sup> or can find herself propositioned by an Alcaeus whose bashful down-turned gaze is in some tension with his clearly displayed penis.<sup>3</sup> It must be conceded that the most common female musical performer in Attic representations of symposia and *komoï* is not a *barbitos*-player but an *auletris*, playing the *aulos* to accompany a male symposiast's singing.<sup>4</sup> Likewise male are most of the figures who are shown holding a stringed instrument, whether a *barbitos* or a lyre, and singing to their own accompaniment. But both

1 Note the caution of Yatromanolakis (2007) 76 on whether the shape of the red-figure kalathoid vase of ca. 480–470 BC (Munich inv. no. 2416, his fig. 3a and 3b) representing Sappho and Alcaeus is indeed symptotic. His argument, however, from the representation on the other side of the vase of Dionysus holding a *kantharos* and a female 'devotee' holding an *oinochoe* is strong; and one cannot question the symptotic function of the red-figure *oinochoe* representing a female figure holding a *barbitos* (Harvard Art Museum, inv. no. 1960.354) of ca. 490–480 BC (his fig. 2) or of the red-figure *kalyx-krater* representing Sappho with a *barbitos* (Bochum, Ruhr-Universität, Kunstsammlungen, inv. No. s 508) of ca. 480–470 BC (his fig. 4a). The *barbitos* is attested by Athenaeus 4.182e (= Sappho fr. 176) as an instrument mentioned by Sappho and has been supplemented in the last line of the new fragment pre-58 yielded by P.Köln 21351 + 21376 [ἦ βάρβιτον ἢ τάνδε χε]λύνην θαλάμοισ' αἰείδω. For a choral interpretation of the context of performance of the Tithonus poem see Bierl 2010.

2 Yatromanolakis (2007) fig. 4a, and for the label ΗΕ ΠΑΙΣ fig. 7.

3 Yatromanolakis (2007) fig. 3a.

4 For the predominance of *auletrides* over players on the *kithara* or *barbitos* in the particular class of images involving 'Anacreontic' figures see Frontisi-Ducroux and Lissarrague (1990) 225.

the *aulos* and a stringed instrument are regular providers of sympotic music,<sup>5</sup> and several vases, including those just mentioned, suffice to show that the idea of a great female singer performing, accompanied on her *barbitos*, in a sympotic or comastic context was at the very least imaginable.<sup>6</sup> That *auletrides* and young women dancers were regularly present at *symposia* will have made the introduction of a female virtuoso singer a small step, but it may be indicative of the higher status of a woman lyre- or *barbitos*-player that (so far as I have discovered) such players are never depicted naked, though several *auletrides* and a few lyre-playing youths are so portrayed.<sup>7</sup>

We do not, of course, know that symposia on Lesbos in the late seventh and early sixth centuries were like those depicted on later sixth-century Attic vases, though the presence of musical performances in symposia of that period is established for Mytilene by the poetry of Alcaeus and for Corinth by painted sympotic pottery, of which the earliest example is dated to the last quarter of the seventh century.<sup>8</sup> We have no painted pots produced in Lesbos of the late seventh and early sixth centuries that depict symposia and that might support the hypothesis that elite symposia in Mytilene and other cities were indeed attended by *hetairai*, though recent excavations at Eresos have yielded a fragment of a middle Corinthian *krater* painted with a sympotic scene.<sup>9</sup> That

5 Cf. *Theognidea* 533–534, and for lyre-playing male symposiasts see the red-figure *krater* Cleveland 26.549 = ARV<sup>2</sup> 563(9) (Lissarrague [1990] 12), the tondo of a red-figure cup Louvre G 127 = ARV<sup>2</sup> 427(1) (Lissarrague [1990] 35, fig. 21) and a red-figure cup Louvre G 245 = ARV<sup>2</sup> 366(86) (Lissarrague [1990] 35, fig. 22).

6 Note too the tondo of the red-figure cup attributed to the Pedieus painter (whose outside depicts an orgy of men in threesome and foursome coupling with naked *hetairai*), Louvre inv. No. G 13: a female lyre-player wearing an elaborate chiton is embraced by a youth holding a cup and a walking stick. Among 'Anacreontic' vases note (1) a red-figure *krater* in Vienna, Vienna 770, CB II, no. 21, ARV<sup>2</sup> 576(33) representing a 'female kitharode' (so Frontisi-Ducroux and Lissarrague) between a male dancer and a male *kylix*-carrier, Frontisi-Ducroux and Lissarrague (1990) 225 with 250 fig. 7.28, and (2) a red-figure *stamnos* once in Rome, Cippico, now lost, CB II, no. 99, ARV<sup>2</sup> 291(25), which has a female *barbitos*-player flanked by two 'Anacreontic' figures on one side and a female cithara-player so flanked on the other, Frontisi-Ducroux and Lissarrague (1990) 225 with 250 fig. 7.29 (also registering in n. 83 a lone female *barbitos*-player on Munich 2317).

7 See Peschel (1987), Schäfer (1997) with numerous illustrations. Note however that in fourth-century Athens the same two-drachma limit was applied to expenditure on *auletrides*, *psaltrai* and *kitharistriaí*: Arist., *Ath. Pol.* 50.2.

8 An early Corinthian *kytyle*, British Museum inv. 73.8.20.387, Schäfer (1997) 25–35, Katalog II 1 (a) with Plate 2. 2 and 3.

9 Zachos (2012) 309 with fig. 11, cf. Zachos (2010). I am grateful to Catherine Morgan for

the local Lesbian pottery was initially a grey bucchero, and was almost never painted, and later in the archaic period a hard red ware,<sup>10</sup> has deprived us of what might have been valuable testimony. It must also be remembered that the representation of *hetairai* on Attic pottery, especially on sympotic vases, only begins with the depiction of individual women's presence in the middle of the sixth century, and moves to the depiction of scenes, often orgiastic, with several participating *hetairai*, only in the last quarter of the sixth century.<sup>11</sup> This iconographic evidence can be played in various ways. It can always be claimed that in the scenes on vases (as in the case of some of their grotesque *Mischwesen*) their painter's imagination ranges far from reality.<sup>12</sup> But other late-sixth-century evidence, such as the poetry of Anacreon, suggests there is some basis in real life. At the same time the relatively late appearance of *hetairai* in sympotic scenes on Attic vases cannot be pressed to insist that they were absent from pre-550 BC Attic symposia.<sup>13</sup> Whichever position is taken on the evidentiary value of Attic pottery, we are still left groping in the dark concerning the place (or otherwise) of *hetairai* in elite symposia on Lesbos.<sup>14</sup>

One glimmer of light, however, comes to us from a much-discussed poem of Anacreon and from the Attic terms *Λεσβίζειν* and *Λεσβιάζειν*. The lines of Anacreon (fr. 358) in which the singer presents himself as incited by the cast of a dark-red ball by Eros to 'sport with' (*συμπαίζειν*) a girl with fancy sandals, and as then rebuffed because of her pretentious Lesbian origin and his own advancing age, shows at the least that in Samian or Athenian symposia around the years 520–490 BC there were (or could be imagined to be) Lesbian *hetairai*, and that they might occasionally claim an up-market status. The lines' conclusion may also indicate (though this is contested ground) that one of this girl's favoured sexual entertainments was *fellatio*. At least when a century later we first encounter the terms *Λεσβίζειν* (in the future *Λεσβιεῖν*,

---

directing my attention to these articles. Slightly later (ca. 540–520) an outdoor symposium is represented on the temple of Athena at Assos, an Aeolic settlement in the Troad, see Wescoat (2012): I am grateful to Vanessa Cazzato for this reference.

- 10 See Lamb (1932a) and (1932b), and note (1932b) 52 'amongst thousands of sherds only one shows traces of white paint'.
- 11 Reinsberg (1989) 104–112, Kurke (1999) 199–200 with further references n. 63.
- 12 For scepticism about the relation between vase-scenes and sympotic reality, see Kurke (1999) 205–206, Topper (2012), esp. 136–161.
- 13 Reinsberg (1989) 108–114, Kurke (1999) 201.
- 14 A fragment attributed to Alcman (fr. 174) seems to attest *komoi* in late seventh century Sparta: ἄγ' αὐτ' ἐς οἶκον τὸν Κλησίππω.

Aristophanes, *Wasps* 1346–1347) and Λεσβιάζειν (Aristophanes, *Frogs* 1308) they seem certainly to refer to *fellatio*.<sup>15</sup>

One thing, however, can and should be stressed. The archaic and classical *hetaira* could be a free citizen,<sup>16</sup> and she could express her preference for association with one young man rather than with another.<sup>17</sup> The Theodote of Xenophon's *Memorabilia* offers her favours only to those who persuade her and seems (together with her mother) very much in control of her life.<sup>18</sup>

One prominent component of the content of Sappho's songs was certainly *eros*, and the centrality of *eros* to male sympotic activity is documented beyond doubt by the later sixth century poetry of Theognis and Anacreon, by that of Pindar, and by scenes on sixth- and fifth-century Attic vases. What again is not so well-documented is the place of *eros* in late seventh-century Mytilenean *symposia*. A full text of Alcaeus would have had more amorous songs than have been preserved in quotation or happen so far to have turned up on papyri from Egypt—that is clear from Horace's reference to Alcaic love poetry about *Lycum nigris oculis nigroque / crine decorum*.<sup>19</sup> But what survives falls short of linking *eros* and the symposium in the way we find in Anacreon, in Theognis 237–254 or in 'Book 2' of the *Theognidea*. Yet despite the known unknowns, I think it reasonable to put the sort of *symposia* of which we know from these poets and from vases together with the recurrent focus on *eros* in Sappho's songs and to hypothesise that she is singing for a male sympotic audience whose minds and bodies are so often directed to *eros*—whether that *eros* had as its object a young elite male or a young professional female—and that her self-presentation as a sexual agent who was also fired by desire for young females made an important contribution to raising the erotic temperature of male participants. The effect of Sappho's songs of

15 See MacDowell on *Wasps* 1346–1347 and Dover on *Frogs* 1308, with further literature.

16 Antiphanes fr. 210 K-A, cited by Kurke (1999) 185 n. 19.

17 Anacreon fr. 372: ξανθήι δ' Εὐρυπύλῃι μέλει ὁ περιφόρητος Ἀρτέμων with Kurke (1999) 190; a red-figure *psykter*, St Petersburg 644 (St. 1670) = ARV<sup>2</sup> 16(15) ca. 520 BC (Lissarrague [1990] 83 fig. 69) on which two naked women recline on cushions playing *kottabos*; one, called Smikra, says τὴν τάνδε λατάσσω, Λέαγρε ('I pitch this one for you, Leagros'); a red-figure *hydria*, Munich 2421 = ARV<sup>2</sup> 23(7) also ca. 520 BC (Lissarrague [1990] 83 fig. 70) on which two naked women reclining on cushions play *kottabos*, and the one on the left utters σοὶ τεῖνδι Εὐθυμιδεῖ ('[I throw] this one for you, Euthymides').

18 Xen. *Mem.* 3.11.

19 *Odes* 1.32.11–12. The 'charming Menon' (τὸν χαρίεντα Μένωνα) whom Alcaeus asks to be invited to a symposium at fr. 368 and the Damoanactidas of 296(b) seem also to be among his ἐρώμενοι; see Vetta (1982).

desire for young women, I suggest, may have been similar to that proposed by Leslie Kurke for the impact on male symposiasts of sympotic vases depicting sexually uninhibited symposia of naked *hetairai*: ‘these vessels represent fantasies painted for the gaze of male symposiasts, who enjoyed seeing their own activities mirrored in those of sexually available female “companions” (often nude or semi-nude)’ and (in relation to the *hetaira* represented as dedicating her *kottabos* throw to Euthymides) ‘the *hetairai* on the hydria’s shoulder are there to ventriloquize male desire: male symposiasts can savor the fantasy of a gathering of sexually active women sharing their longing for the beautiful Euthymides. And through their shared desire, the represented *hetairai* can stand metonymically for the eroticized sphere of the elite symposium generally’.<sup>20</sup>

My title is intended to draw attention to how much easier such a hypothesis makes an attempted reconstruction of the movement of Sappho’s songs into a male sympotic repertoire. There are of course other possible models.<sup>21</sup> Those who believe that Sappho’s songs of *eros* were composed for performance in a circle of female friends can suppose that Charaxos, when he was in town, could pass on the music and words of his sister’s songs to his fellow symposiasts in Mytilene, or take some of them with him to Naucratis.<sup>22</sup> Some similar mode of transmission could be imagined for a later generation. But that Sappho’s songs were sung in male symposia *ab initio* avoids any objections that might be formulated to these other hypotheses.

Amongst these other hypotheses one of the most influential has been that of André Lardinois arguing in favour of ‘public performance’.<sup>23</sup> I suggest that many of his points are met by taking that ‘public’ performance to be one which took place in the restricted space of the symposium, a space both private and public. Thus the girls addressed by the singer are her fellow-entertainers, sometime, as he suggests, dancing. There are certainly a number of poems that he and others rightly see as marked by features of choral ritual performance: the *hymenaia*, and perhaps now in its augmented form fr. 17. But fr. 58.6 uses not the term *χορεύειν* but *ὄρχησθ(αι)*.<sup>24</sup> The new fragments of fr. 17 are interpreted in the *editio princeps* as supporting the view that this poem was

20 Kurke (1999) 206. For the Euthymides *hydria* see above n. 17.

21 Cf. that proposed by Lardinois (2001).

22 The hypothesis of performance in a small circle of women is admirably argued against by Lardinois (1996) 154.

23 Lardinois (1996).

24 The only example so far of a *χορός*-term is in fr. 70.10 .[ ]*αθην χόρον, ἀα*].

composed for choral performance,<sup>25</sup> but a resolute sceptic might insist that it simply presented to a sympotic audience a re-creation of a choral, cultic song.

It might be asked whether the *polis* or its leading families would be comfortable with having a woman who sang to symposiasts to the music of her *barbitos* or *lyra* also play and sing for a chorus of women engaged in wedding rituals or cultic activities for Lesbian divinities. That is an unanswerable question, but in a later period and different cities we know that in a fourth-century dramatic fiction a sympotic *psaltria*, Habrotonon, could be imagined as also playing for girls' choruses at the Tauropolia;<sup>26</sup> that between 200 and 150 BC a woman named Seddis was active as a *kitharistria* in a temple precinct in Sardis;<sup>27</sup> and that it is possible that a *kitharistria* mentioned by Dinarchus in connection with the *Eleusinia* was actually playing in some festival ritual.<sup>28</sup>

25 Burris, Fish, and Obbink (2014) 5: "The appearance, however, of *έόρτα* (or *έόρταν*) at line 2, along with other new readings, indicates that the poem is not "personal" in theme, but is (or at least is presented as being) a choral song intended for cultic performance, as has already been suggested by Calame. The new first-person plural *πόημεν* at Fr. 2 ii 19 (= Sa. 17.11) suggests choral performance, and when taken together with *νύν δέ ... κατ τὸ πάλ[αον]* the verb clearly announces a communal, cultic continuation of the preceding mythic material: "and now ... we act according to the old way." The make-up of the communal voice is probably indicated by the reference to "girls" and "women" at Sa. 17.13–15, who together make up a joint chorus, assuming the supplement *ὄ]χλος* is correct (cf. Sa. 44.14–15 *ὄχλος / γυναικῶν τ' ἄμα παρθενικά[ν] τ'*). The likely performance context is the temenos of the so-called "Lesbian triad", i.e. Zeus, Hera, and Dionysus, known from Alc. 129 and tentatively identified by Robert with the temple remains at Messa north of Pyrrha'.

26 Men. *Epit.* 477–479.

27 "Εφεσος μάγειρος, / ἀδελφὴ Σεδδῖς κιθαρίστρια, / 5 γυνὴ Ἐφέσου Νίνις, / υἱὸς Ἄτταλος, / θυγάτηρ Ἄρτεμις, *Sardis* VII 1.3 ii 3–5.

28 Dinarchus 1.23. That Themistius of Aphidna was executed for committing an act of *hubris* against this female *kithara* player (*kitharistria*) from Rhodes during *Eleusinia* can be taken as an indication that she might have been playing in the Mysteries, as it is by Power (2010) 365 n. 138. For the other cases see Power (2010) 60 n. 136. The question of whether certain female performers on stringed instruments in the Hellenistic period are properly termed *kitharoidoi*, the subject of an animated discussion by Goldhill (2005), is only marginally relevant to my subject here.

### Some Test Cases

Before turning to the ‘Brothers Poem’ I offer some brief sketches of how some long-known poems or fragments might be read in the light of the hypothesis of a chiefly male sympotic audience.

Fr. 1 (ποικιλόθρον’ ἀθανάτ’ Ἀφρόδιτα ...)

On my hypothesis this would be a sympotic prayer of the sort we find in the *Theognidea* 1–22 or in Anacreon fr. 357,<sup>29</sup> a song in the form of a prayer addressed to a god whose sphere includes the activities of the symposium. The male audience may or may not suppose that the object of the singer’s desire is one of the girls who, like the singer, are performing at the symposium—playing the *aulos*, dancing, or showing off her physical attractions or acrobatic skills; they (or the συνετώτεροι among them) may simply take it as an example of a song that could be sung by one young woman infatuated with another. Either way it can kindle or feed their own fires of passion for a youthful love-object, whether male or female.

Fr. 2 (δευρυμῆμεκρητασ.π[ ]. ναῦον)

Although this song is as strong a candidate as any for first performance in a ritual space, the vivid evocation of that space in the first three stanzas becomes much harder to interpret as relating precisely to the context in which it is being sung when we reach the fourth stanza:

ἔνθα δὴ σὺ στέμ(ματ’) ἔλοισα Κύπρι  
 χρυσίαισιν ἐν κυλίκεσσιν ἄβρωσ  
 ὀμ(με)μείχμενον θαλίαισι νέκταρ  
 οἶνοχόαισον.

In this place, Cypris, take the garlands  
 and delicately in golden cups  
 wine-pour the nectar that has been mixed for banquets.

If this is a hymn accompanying a ritual act, what can Aphrodite do that will count as ‘taking’ the garlands? ‘Taking’ is quite different from the normal ritual term for ‘receiving’, some part of the verb δέχομαι. But even if is inter-

29 ὦναξ, ὦι δαμάλης Ἔρωσ ... (‘Lord, with whom *Eros* the subduer ...’) discussed in Bowie (2012).

preted as an untypical way of singing about such divine acceptance, what will Aphrodite do that can be described as ‘wine-pouring nectar in golden cups’? This stanza undermines any literalist interpretation and brings the imaginary *locus amoenus* of the sacred grove into the sympotic performance space where wine, cups and *oinochooi* are in plentiful supply: were Aphrodite to come and pour liquid into the symposiasts’ cups, that liquid would inevitably be nectar, as it is in what seems to be a memory of the first-person speaker of fr. 96.26–28, the memory of an occasion whose nature is irrecoverable as a result of the tattered state of the papyrus.<sup>30</sup>

Fr. 5 (πότνια Νηρήιδες ἀβλάβη[ν μοι] / τὸν κασίγνητον δότε τυίδ’ ἔχεσθαι)

Like frs. 1 and 2, I suggest that this is a sympotic prayer, and that Sappho can rely on her male sympotic audience knowing who Charaxos is, why he is in Egypt, and what reasons Sappho has for praying for his safe return. Her mention of φίλοι and ἔχθροι taps into a recurrent theme of male sympotic song, amply attested in the iambic poetry of Archilochus, the melic poetry of Alcaeus and the elegiac poetry of Theognis, though it is of course widespread in almost all genres of archaic and classical Greek literature.

Fr. 16 ([ο]ὶ μὲν ἱππῶν στρότον οἱ δὲ πέσδων / οἱ δὲ νάων φαῖσ’ ἐπ[ι] γᾶν μέλαι[ν]αν / [ἔ]μμεναι κάλλιστον ...)

Like fr. 1, this song prompts reflection on *eros*, but Sappho moves to that through a range of very masculine hypothetical answers to the question ‘What is most fair (κάλλιστον)?’<sup>31</sup> Although Greek pronominal use has many examples of ‘masculine’ for ‘feminine’, here the successive οἱ μὲν ... οἱ δέ, and οἱ δέ (‘some ... some ... some ...’), when interpreted against these οἱ’s canvassing of cavalry, infantry and ships, are easiest to take as genuine masculines: Sappho starts her investigation from the foil of a male perspective. It may also be a male perspective that explains her decision to pick out the pre-eminent beauty of Helen. As has often been remarked, Helen’s beauty is not relevant to the point that she left the best of husbands, her daughter and her parents because of *eros*. But it brings home to men who may each think himself the best of husbands the danger of losing the woman who for him has been out-

30 [ο]ς Ἀφροδίτα / καμ [ ] νέκταρ ἔχευ’ ἄπ[ὸ] / χρυσίας [. As for fr. 2, there are problems in taking this as the memory of a ‘real’ *ritual* occasion on which Aphrodite was herself present and the liquid that was poured into golden (? cups) was ‘really’ nectar.

31 Cf. *Theognidea* 255–256, the *epigramma Deliacum*. Among many discussions see especially Bierl (2003).



standingly attractive—a danger whose realisation is followed up by Sappho's surprising shift of focus to longing felt by an abandoned lover for a departed love-object.

Fr. 17 (πλάσιον δη μ[ ... / πότνι' Ἥρα σαχ[ ...]).

As I have already said, the newly augmented text of this poem makes it a strong candidate for ritual performance. But the text remains too lacunose to clinch the matter, and a sympotic prayer which evoked cultic activity at the *temenos* of Hera, Zeus and Dionysus at Messon remains a possible interpretation.

Fr. 31 (φαίνεται μοι κήνος ἴσος θεοῖσιν / ἔμμεν' ὄνηρ, ὅττις ἐνάντιός τοι / ἰσδάνει ...)

The presence in the same space of a man and the young woman who arouses Sappho's passionate physical reactions has always been a problem for hypotheses that Sappho's first audiences were a circle of such young women, and the solution offered by Wilamowitz's 'bridegroom' hypothesis now has few if any takers. Interpretation becomes easier if we envisage Sappho singing this song accompanying herself on her *barbitos* in a sympotic space where youths and *hetairai* sit or recline on the same seats or couches. The *hetaira* is doing what a *hetaira* is expected to do—chatter, perhaps sing, and laugh in a seductive way. We are not told if she is standing, sitting or reclining. That the man is sitting (*ἰσδάνει*), not reclining, differentiates him from most men in Attic and Corinthian sympotic vase scenes. But we do not know how uniformly the oriental habit of reclining was adopted in archaic Greek *poleis*. It may be attested around 650 BC for Ephesus by the term *κατακείσθε* ('lie back') in Callinus fr. 1.1, and for Thasos or Paros by *κεκλιμένος* ('leaning' or 'reclining') in Archilochus fr. 2.2. Alcman fr. 19.1 attests seven *κλίνας* in what seems to be the description of a symposium, presumably but not certainly in Sparta, but we have to wait for Dionysius Chalcus fr. 3.5 in late fifth-century Athens before we find a *κλίνη* in a sympotic elegy. It could be argued that if Alcaeus refers to a 'soft pillow', *μόλθακον ... γνόφαλλον*, at fr. 338.8, then he imagines himself reclining. But that is not certainly the meaning of *γνόφαλλον*—in his 1982 Loeb Campbell had moved from his 1967 translation 'cushion' to the quite different rendering 'fillet'<sup>32</sup>—and to the best of my knowledge no excavation of an *andron* so shaped as to accommodate *κλίνας*, 'couches', has established that when Alcaeus had a symposium in Mytilene with his *hetairoi* they are likely always to have reclined.

32 Campbell (1982a) 375 'put a soft fillet round your brows'.

Fr. 58 (..... Μοίσαν ἰ]οκ[ό]λπων κάλα δῶρα παίδες / [..... τὰ]ν φιλάοιδον λιγύραν χελύνην)

This is one of very few poems in which we find both Sappho and a plurality of girls. Unfortunately even after the new papyrus, its lacunose first lines leave us uncertain what relation the song set out between the 'fair gifts of the violet-laden Muses' (Μοίσαν ἰ]οκ[ό]λπων κάλα δῶρα) and the 'girls', παίδες. West's supplement at the beginning of line 1 of ὕμμες πεδᾶ and at the beginning of the second of σπουδάσδετε καὶ creates a sequence in which the παίδες are addressed with a command in the second line, encouraging the supposition that Sappho may be acting as some sort of *choragos*. But there are other possibilities, e.g. Gronewald and Daniel's φέρω τάδε at the beginning of line 1 and λάβοισα or ἔλοισα πάλιν at the beginning of line 2: these supplements would reduce the role of the girls to no more than an audience. They may be implicitly an audience that, unlike the singer as represented in her sad song, is still young enough to dance, but this dancing could as well be sympotic entertainment for men as choral ritual: note the point made above that the term used here for dancing is ὄρχησθ' and not χορεύειν or another χορ- term. The warning that old age inevitably succeeds youth was a sympotic theme favoured by Mimnermus (e.g. fr. 1, fr. 2, and fr. 5) and Anacreon (e.g. fr. 395) and one highly relevant to the life of the pleasures of wine, women (and boys) and song chosen and celebrated by symposiasts.

Frs. 94 and 96: like fr. 1 and fr. 31, these songs will have turned male symposiasts' thoughts to the pains and pleasures of *eros*— the pain of parting which could be occasioned by the sort of mercantile adventures that, as the evidence from Naucratis shows, Charaxos was not alone among Mytileneans in undertaking; the pleasures of memory; and the association of some of these pleasures with sympotic accessories—perfume, garlands, and soft beds or cushions of the sort on which, at least on some Attic vases, drinkers are depicted as reclining.

### The Brothers Poem

As in fr. 5 (πότνια Νηρήιδες ...) the focus of Sappho's thoughts in our new poem is her brother Charaxos, a man perhaps more likely to be well-known to male symposiasts than to a circle of choreutic *parthenoi*. But who is the addressee? I do not want to spend time bringing arguments against other scholars' proposals, but shall rather raise what seems to me a problem with the text as it is presented by the new papyrus.

Ever since Dirk Obbink released his preliminary publication I have been unhappy about the sense proposed for lines 7–13(3–9):

... σὲ δ'οὐ χρεῖ  
ταῦτα νόησθαι,

ἀλλὰ καὶ πέμπτην ἔμε καὶ κέλεσθαι  
10 πόλλα λίσσεσθαι βασιλῆαν Ἥραν  
ἐξίκεσθαι τυίδε σάαν ἄγοντα  
νάα Χάραξον

κάμμ' ἐπεύρην ἀρτέμεας

These lines he translated as follows:<sup>33</sup>

But it is not necessary  
for you to think these things,

but especially to send me and command to beseech  
Queen Hera over and over again  
that Charaxos may arrive, piloting  
his ship safe back here

and find us safe and sound.

Cf. Raylor's translation in Raylor and Lardinois (2014) 160:

Don't think about that,

but send me, yes command me  
to keep praying to Queen Hera  
that Charaxos return here  
guiding his ship safely.

and find us secure.

This is an oddly indirect way of the singer suggesting that she herself should go to pray for her brother's return, oddly oblique concerning *where* the singer is being sent, and odd too in the overlap in sense of 'send' and 'command', perhaps responsible for Raylor's rendering 'send me, yes command me' (which seems to

33 Obbink (2014b) 39–40.

betray a degree of discomfort). The parallel offered from *Iliad* 6.269–279<sup>34</sup> is not at all close and involves a simpler sequence. In the *Iliad* Hector (a male relative) asks Hecuba (a female relative) to gather the old women of Troy and go to the temple of Athena to make an offering (of a *peplos*) and a vow (to sacrifice twelve oxen if she takes pity on the Trojans); in the papyrus text of the Sappho poem the singer tells an addressee (supposed by some to be a female relative) to tell *her* to supplicate Hera with the request that Charaxos (her male relative) return safely. In Sappho's poem there is neither offering nor vow; in the *Iliad* the term 'supplicate' (λίσσεσθαι) is not used.

Bearing in mind that the scribes of papyri regularly make mistakes, I offer a tiny conjecture—we should read ἔμα ('my things') in place of ἔμε ('me'):

... σὲ δ' οὐ χρῆ  
ταῦτα νόησθαι,

10 ἀλλὰ καὶ πέμπην ἔμα, καὶ κέλεσθαι  
πόλλα λίσσεσθαι βασιλῆαν Ἥραν  
ἐξίκεσθαι τυίδε σάαν ἄγοντα  
νᾶα Χάραξον

Don't you think of that,

but both send my stuff, and tell  
Charaxos to make many supplications to queen Hera,  
that he should arrive here bringing his ship safely.

Sappho's ἔμα are not difficult to cash out as the fuller phrases she may know from the *Odyssey* or from lost epic poetry that deployed the same or similar formulae—ἐμὰ κτήματα ('my possessions') from *Odyssey* 2.213, or ἐμὰ χρήματα ('my resources') from *Odyssey* 13.283. And although in Homer πέμπειν ('to send') usually has a person as its object, there are exceptions. Thus at *Odyssey* 16.83 we find εἶματα δ' ἐνθάδ' ἐγὼ πέμψω καὶ σίτον ἅπαντα ('I shall send clothing here and all the food he needs'). Then, in a seventh-century poem that seems to have quite close links with Lesbian poetry, the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, the precious objects that Aphrodite feigns will be sent as her dowry to Anchises: οἱ δὲ κέ τοι χρυσόν τε ἄλις ἐσθῆτά θ' ὑφαντῆν / πέμψουσιν, σὺ δὲ πολλὰ καὶ ἀγλαὰ δέχθαι ἄποινα ('And they will send you in ample quantities gold and woven garments, and you will receive a large and brilliant dowry', 139–140).

34 A suggestion of Joel Lidov kindly communicated to me by André Lardinois.

It might be objected that not ἔμα but τὰ ἔμα would be expected. Against that objection I make two points. First, it is well established that the article is used much less, and in many respects differently, in the Lesbian Aeolic of Alcaeus and Sappho by comparison with Attic and Ionic. In the particular case of possessive pronouns, Lobel noted, ‘The possessive adjectives ἔμος, σός (τέος) Φός, ἄμμος and ἀμμέτερος, σφός are found both accompanied and unaccompanied by the definite article ...’<sup>35</sup>

Second, there are parallels in other poetry:

ἄμα δ' ἠοῖ φαινομένηφι  
φρασσόμεθ' ἢ κε νεώμεθ' ἐφ' ἡμέτερ' ἢ κε μένωμεν'  
*Il.* 9.618–619

And at the time when dawn displays herself  
we shall ponder whether we are going to go to our home or to stay.

Ἄτρεΐδη Μενέλαε διοτρεφές, ὄρχαμε λαῶν,  
βούλομαι ἤδη νείσθαι ἐφ' ἡμέτερ'· οὐ γὰρ ὄπισθεν  
οὖρον ἰὼν κατέλειπον ἐπὶ κτεάτεσσιν ἐμοῖσι.  
*Od.* 15.87–89

Menelaus, son of Atreus, nurtured by Zeus, marshal of peoples,  
I now wish to go to our own place: for when I came  
I did not leave behind a watcher over my possessions.

In both these Homeric passages the audience supplies a noun with the neuter possessive adjective ἡμέτερ(α)—in the *Iliad* passage perhaps οἰκία ‘dwelling’ (as in *Iliad* 6.15 etc.) or δώματα (as in *Odyssey* 3.355, 8.31, 8.41); in the *Odyssey* passage either οἰκία or δώματα or (slightly differently) κτήματα or κτέατα (cf. κτεάτεσσιν in line 89).

If this change is accepted, it is hard not to think that the addressee of this song, sung to men in Mytilene who knew Charaxos, was none other than the absent *hetaira* Doricha of Naucratis, on whom Charaxos spent loads of money,<sup>36</sup> and whom Sappho attacked in fr. 15. It also seems likely that the μιν whom Herodotus recalls a *melos* of Sappho as having abused (admittedly in

35 Lobel (1927) lxxxi, #23(a). I am grateful to Felix Budelmann for directing me to this discussion which I must admit not to have read carefully since 1960.

36 Ath. 13.598b–c cf. *POxy.* 1800 col. i 7–13 (both = fr. 202).

a discussion that confuses Doricha with Rhodopis) is not Charaxos himself but the *hetaira*, as has been well argued by Maria Kazanskaya in a recent paper.<sup>37</sup> In our poem Sappho sings of a situation—either real, or a mixture of reality and imagination—in which Doricha is represented as sending repeated reassurances that Charaxos will return with a fully-loaded ship; but that has not actually happened, and Sappho here urges Doricha to send Charaxos on his way home and to tell Charaxos to pray for a safe return at a temple of Hera—presumably the one at Naucratis mentioned by Herodotus and identified by excavators on the basis of inscriptions on sixth-century pottery, several of them marking dedications by Mytileneans.<sup>38</sup> On this interpretation the first-person plurals of lines 13 (9) *καῶμι* and 21 (17) *καῶμεν* refer to Sappho and the members of her family who have remained on Lesbos—certainly Larichos, perhaps the third brother Erigyios. What metaphorical storm has threatened that family we can only guess—something that presumably threatened Sappho's own station in Mytilenean society—but it is one whose replacement by (metaphorical) plain sailing Sappho hopes will be secured by the return of Charaxos, already, perhaps for some years, a man, and by a hitherto unseen readiness to be self-assertive on the part of the still immature Larichos.

What was the stuff, the *ἔμα*, that Sappho expected from Naucratis? In 1964 John Boardman guessed the things archaic Greeks got from Naucratis were corn, papyrus and linen.<sup>39</sup> But it was only an educated guess.<sup>40</sup> I have consulted

37 Hdt. 2.135, discussed by Kazanskaya forthcoming. In favour of the traditional interpretation, see Lardinois in this volume.

38 Hdt. 2.178.3. For the inscriptions from the *temenos* of Hera, see Gardner (1888) 67, nos. 841–844, and for those from the *temenos* of Aphrodite Gardner (1888) 63–67 nos. 701–882, including inscriptions in Aeolic on grey bucchero, Gardner (1888) 65 nos. 786–793, Möller (2000) 259–260. Some corroboration of Herodotus' story comes from a dedication by Archedice (cf. Hdt. 2. 135.5), cf. *ABSA* 5 (1898–1899) 56 no. 108, illustrated by Möller (2000) fig. 3d.

39 Boardman (1980) 129–133 at p. 129 (a revised and enlarged edition of the book which first appeared in 1964). For Naucratis' trading role, see Möller 2000. For the fifth century BC Hermippus, *Phormophoroi* fr. 63.12–13 PCG (quoted by Athenaeus 1.27–28) attests sails and papyrus ropes (*κρεμαστὰ ἰστία καὶ βίβλους*) as coming to Athens from Egypt, presumably but (by this date) not certainly *via* Naucratis (see Raaflaub in this volume n. 43).

40 For corn from Egypt in the early to mid fifth century see Bacchylides fr. 20b Maehler. That linen was to be had, and perhaps was worked, in Naucratis, at least in the third century BC, was later shown by Posidippus 36 A.-B., a girl's dedication to Arsinoe-Aphrodite (see Bing [2009] 246) of a *βύσσινον* ... *βρέγμα' ἀπὸ Ναυκράτιος*, line 2 ('scarf of fine linen from Naucratis', transl. C. Austin). It is tempting to think that the idea that the dead and deified Arsinoe wants the scarf 'to wipe off the sweet perspiration when she has ceased from her

one of the leaders of the international Naucratis project, Alan Johnston, and he replied: ‘Not an enormous amount known. There are trinkets of various kinds, and the Berlin palimpsest of probably 475 BC gives only natron as an outgoing cargo’.<sup>41</sup>

That natron is documented is not without interest. I quote Wikipedia:

... natron was harvested directly as a salt mixture from dry lake beds in Ancient Egypt and has been used for thousands of years as a cleaning product for both the home and body. Blended with oil, it was an early form of soap. It softens water while removing oil and grease. Undiluted, natron was a cleanser for the teeth and an early mouthwash. The mineral was mixed into early antiseptics for wounds and minor cuts. Natron can be used to dry and preserve fish and meat. It was also an ancient household insecticide, was used for making leather and as a bleach for clothing.

For Sappho, then, natron could be used both to wash herself and her clothes, something to which any high-class performer, including singers and *hetairai*, would—or should—attach some importance. It was also used to wash drinking vessels, ἐκπώματα.<sup>42</sup> And fish-preservation, still important to the twentieth-century economy of Ayvalık/Kydonia in the Mytilenean *peraia*, might be a useful component of whatever local services other than sympotic entertainment Sappho and her brothers were providing. Finally its application in leather-making would not be irrelevant to the production of ἄλισβοι, ‘dildoes’, which may be mentioned by Sappho.<sup>43</sup>

Not surprisingly, then, the second-century lexicographer Phrynichus attests the mention of natron/νίτρον by Sappho:<sup>44</sup>

---

energetic labours’ (ὁμόρξασθαι γλύκυν ἰδρῶ ... ὀτηρῶν παυσαμένη καμάτων, lines 3–4) is a cheeky reworking of a lost Sapphic reference to such material in an erotic context (cf. Mesomedes 9 = *Ecphrasis of a sponge* 13–15 ἵνα σου κατὰ χιονέων μελῶν / λύση μετὰ νύκτα, γύναι καλά, / κάματον ἴτων ἐρωτικῶν ὀμμάτων).

41 For a text and thorough discussion of the Elephantine papyrus see Yardeni (1994): I am grateful to Peter Haarer for directing me to this publication.

42 Alexis fr. 2 K.-A. = Ath. 11.502 f.

43 For the appearance of ἄλισβοι in Sappho’s poetry see fr. 99 (a) 5 Campbell: ἄλισβ[ο]δοκοισ(ι). As the editors point out to me, however, this papyrus fragment was assigned to Alcaeus by Voigt (her fr. 303A), and in the context the sense of ἄλισβο- may be ‘plectrum’ (cf. χόρδαισι in line 4), cf. Yatromanolakis (2007) 251–254, Rayor and Lardinois (2014) 125–126.

44 Fr. 189 = Phrynichus *Ecloga* 272 Fischer = 273 Rutherford.

Νίτρον. τοῦτο Αἰολεὺς μὲν ἄν εἶπεν, ὥσπερ οὖν καὶ ἡ Σάπφω διὰ τοῦ ν, Ἀθηναῖος δὲ διὰ τὸ λ, λίτρον.

*Nitron*. This is what an Aeolian would have said, as indeed does Sappho, with a *nu*. But an Athenian would have said it with a *lambda*, *litron*.

Why is Charaxos bringing Sappho things she wants, some of them perhaps closely related to her activity as an entertainer, from Naucratis? To humour her? More likely, I would guess, we have traces of a coordinated family business. Charaxos exports wine from the family's estates to Naucratis,<sup>45</sup> Larichus pours wine from these same estates in the *prytaneion* at Mytilene.<sup>46</sup> This activity of Larichus is often read together with a remark by a scholiast on the *Iliad* that Sappho said it was the custom for 'noble youths' (νέους εὐγενεῖς) to pour wine:<sup>47</sup> but without the context in which she said this—not necessarily the same poem as that to which Athenaeus refers—we cannot tell whether Larichus and his family are thus shown to be 'noble' (εὐγενεῖς) or whether the point was that Larichos was doing something that *normally* only εὐγενεῖς did. At the time of the new poem's composition Larichos seems to be still too young to fend for himself in a highly competitive adult male society, and his role in the *prytaneion* may be that not of a social equal but a social inferior. He may even be in the vulnerable position of the *oinochooi* on Attic vase-paintings, often naked, some of whom are clearly the passive objects of older men's sexual attention.<sup>48</sup>

45 That Charaxos was 'importing Lesbian wine to Naucratis to trade' (οἶνον κατάγοντος εἰς Ναύκρατιν Λέσβιον κατ' ἐμπορίαν) is stated by Strabo 17.1.33, 808c (cf. Ath. 13.596b), presumably ultimately on the basis of what could be inferred from Sappho's poetry. Möller (2000) 55 suggests that Charaxos 'takes the surplus from his estates' and should be seen 'more as a traveller than as a trader'. I tend to accept in full Strabo's κατ' ἐμπορίαν: without knowing the size of Charaxos' estate and the quality of its production we cannot judge whether he would have benefited his ἐμπορία by carrying other Mytileneans' wines as well as (or instead of) his own.

46 Test. 203 = Ath. 10.425a, attesting a poem in which Sappho praised Larichos in his capacity as wine-pourer in the *prytaneion* (ὡς οἴνοχοῦντα ἐν τῷ πρυτανεῖω τοῖς Μυτιληναῖοις).

47 Schol. τ on *Iliad* 20.234 (v 41 Erbse) = Sappho test. 203c.

48 For the problem of interpreting the status of *oinochooi* on Attic vases see Topper (2012) 53–85 (a chapter entitled '*Eros*, Service and the *Oinochoos*'). For their possible sexual role, see Breitenberger (2007) 181–185.



### Conclusions

The first part of this paper stated the case for seeing the first context of performance of many of Sappho's songs as the male symposium, and for seeing Sappho herself as an outstanding singer to the accompaniment of a *barbitos* or *lyra*, a singer whose virtuosity was such that she was also in demand for performance at weddings and perhaps civic religious rituals. I then offered a discussion of how several well-known pieces of Sappho's poetry that involve expressions of desire, *eros*, might be understood on this hypothesis. Finally I turned to the 'Brothers Poem', suggesting that the complexity of the sequence in which the singer commands her female addressee to command her to pray for Charaxos' safe return justifies emendation of ἔμε ('me') to ἔμα ('my things'). The addressee will thus be the absent Doricha herself; the song will be testimony to Sappho's own interest in some of the cargo with which Charaxos was hoped to return from Egypt; and it will be one of a number of songs in which male symposiasts, some of them known to Charaxos and perhaps even seeing themselves as his comrades, ἑταῖροι, were entertained by Sappho's expressions of loyalty to him and of her hostility to the entertainer in Naucratis who had led him astray.