Adrian Kelly

With, or without, Homer: hearing the background in Sappho

> 'Wir müssen uns hüten, unsere Vorstellung von der poetischen Produktion dieser Zeit nur nach dem erhaltenen zu machen.'[1]

Nature may well abhor a vacuum, but Classicists could definitely give her a run for her money, especially those of us who deal with the literary history of the Archaic period. Scholars in this area are used to patchy evidence, unclear lines of influence and development, and a persistent darkness surrounding the genesis, earliest transmission and reception of our texts. Readers unfortunate enough to be familiar with my previous work will recall a certain kind of intellectual fallacy to which, I have suggested, Classicists are especially susceptible — WYSIATI, or what you see is all there is.[2] That is, scholars are prone to filling the gaps in our evidence by pretending that there aren't any, as though the extant literature from this period amounts to all that we need to know, or all that is worth knowing. In practical terms, this leads them to construct the literary history of the Archaic period around the central pillars of the Homeric poems, and then to link those texts with every other, in a story of development and literary influence familiar from later stages of antiquity. In sum, we are told that we should use the same strategies of the Augustan poets in Rome as the model to understand the visible beginnings of Greek literature.[3]

With this chapter I thank Franco Montanari for his enormous contributions to Classical scholarship, though it is an inevitably unequal return. I would also thank the editors for their invitation to contribute to the volume, audiences in Cambridge, Oxford, Edinburgh and São Paulo for their patience and questions, and Bill Allan, Angus Bowie, Felix Budelmann, Penny Bulloch, Douglas Cairns, Andre Lardinois, Luke Pitcher, Lucia Prauscello, Henry Spelman, and Stephanie West (not least for the epigraph for this title) for their help with its material, though none should be presumed to agree with me. The text of Sappho is generally that of Voigt (with modifications as noted), and the translations my own.

1 Bethe 1924, 67.

2 See Kelly 2015a.

3 See Currie 2016 (and often). Following the lead of Hinds 1998, 34–47, I distinguish between 'allusion' as a reference to a particular version of a song or story, and 'intertextuality' as a reference to a more generic, less reified (and in this case, traditional) background. Historically, the former develops from the latter, and distinguishing between them in practice may well prove in many cases to be very difficult.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110695823-015

Yet this was a period when most poetry was never written down, and almost all of what was written down was lost to later ages. However it was manifest or maintained beyond the moment of performance, most poetic creation and reception in the Archaic world remains invisible to us. It thus makes little sense to privilege two works which became canonical sometime towards the end of this period as though they comprised either the norm or the entirety of early Greek poetic culture, especially since the arguments used for identifying allusions to them — essentially, that such and such a phrase or theme in another poet's work also occurs in Homer — are so weak. When there were dozens if not hundreds of bards, and hundreds if not thousands of performances and stories for audiences to listen to, the historical uncertainties are just too great, the methodology too circular and limiting: the newly fashionable 'homerocentric' enterprise is built upon sand.[4]

One has to admit, nonetheless, that scholars have enjoyed lounging on the beach thereby provided. It is very tempting to bask in the light of Homer as the epicentre of all literary creation in the Archaic Greek world; after all, its proponents say, it's natural, it works, and it produces interesting readings.[5] The first two of these reasons unwittingly reveal why it is proving increasingly popular to talk about allusion in these terms — *Graecia capta*, the process by which Roman literary culture interacted with and developed itself as a conscious reaction to the highlights of Greek literary culture.[6] No-one now, for instance, tries to interpret Vergil without first examining his deliberate, self-conscious relationship to Homer and Apollonius. This kind of reading practice, where one text develops from another in a knowingly interactive manner — and a manner designed to be recognised by its audiences — is simply part and parcel of our discipline. Because of that, because of the way in which we are trained, Classical scholars find it difficult to imagine literary dynamics of any other type.

But it is the third reason, the interesting reading, which I want to address in this chapter. Though one might wonder whether this is a particularly scholarly criterion — after all, whether a reading is 'interesting' is almost comedically subjective, and says nothing *per se* about the truth value of the overall claim as to

4 The emergence of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* into wider Greek consciousness, on which much of the homerocentric position depends, is not securely evidenced before the middle of the sixth century: see West 1999, 377 = 2011, 429. For traditions of visual art, which do not show any impact from the Homeric poems until then, see Cook 1983, Snodgrass 1998 and now Spelman 2017, 5–6.

5 Cf., e.g., Currie 2016, 4–33, and 33–5 on 'meaningfulness'; Rawles 2018, 8–11.

6 This is not to imply that the process was simple, monovalent, or inevitable: see the salutary survey of Henrichs 1995, and now Feeney 2016.

literary influence — part of the challenge here is to outline poetic meaning without falling back on allusion. So, while one can make many arguments as to why we should not believe that Homer's texts were at the centre of all literary culture in this period, what can we do once we remove these two poems from the frame? That is, if we cannot assume that all the Archaic poets and their audiences knew the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, if we cannot draw straight lines of influence from these texts to others or *vice versa*, if we cannot interpret Homer and his early reception in the same way we think about Vergil and his — well then, what can we do? Let us try to offer an answer to this question in this chapter by looking at the reception or, more accurately in my view, the non-reception of Homer in the works of Sappho.[7]

1 Fragment 1

The temptation to link the two giants in early Greek literary history is powerful, and much fruitful work has been done on the ways in which the female perspectivism of Sappho's poetry can play with the audience's understanding of epic conventions.[8] Fragment 1 is the poem almost always cited in this connection: Sappho's request to Aphrodite to aid her in an erotic venture gone wrong again seems to contain so many references to epic language and themes, specifically from the *Iliad*, that scholars have long read this is as an attack on the male ethic of war in that poem. John Winkler, for instance, speaks confidently of direct links between the authors, and Sappho's deliberate recall of a certain Homeric situation in the fifth book of the *Iliad*, where Diomedes calls on Athene to aid him in recovering from a wound given him by the Lycian hero Pandarus:[9]

7 This chapter will focus on frr. 1, 16, 44, and the 'Brothers Poem', as the principal examples of Homeric (non-)interaction. Many more cases could have been adduced (e.g. fr. 17 and its differences from the *Odyssey*), but these will serve to make the point. Though more attention will be paid to the interpretative advantages of an intertextual reading, some reasons for rejecting the plausibility of allusion will be mentioned in passing at the start of each section. For a similar argument, but more focused on rejecting allusion to Homer in Hipponax, see Kelly (forthcoming); for a wider survey, see Kelly 2015a.

8 See Kelly 2020, with much further bibliography.

9 Winkler 1990, 169. Krischer 1968, 12–14 suggests that Sappho has in mind Achilleus' prayer to Thetis in *Iliad* 1, but Book 5 seems to be the more usual target: see, e.g., Di Benedetto 1973; Svenbro 1975; Rawles 2018, 10. For treatments of Sappho fr. 1, see Marry 1979; Rissman 1983, 1–29; Winkler 1990, 169–76; Greene 1994, 50–4 (= 1996, 243–6); Snyder 1997, 7–17; Stehle 1997, 296–9; M. Johnson 2007, 41–8; Blondell 2010, 373–7.

> Sappho's use of homeric passages is a way of allowing us, even encouraging us, to approach her consciousness as a woman and a poet reading Homer. The Homeric hero is not just a starting point for Sappho's discourse about her own love, rather Diomedes as he exists in the *Iliad* is central to what Sappho is saying about the *distance* between Homer's world and her own. A woman listening to the *Iliad* must cross over a gap which separates her experience from the subject of the poem, a gap which does not exist in quite the same way for male listeners.

Before we follow Winkler down this allusive path, however, let us review the text of the fragment, with the common elements usually invoked as evidence of allusion in bold characters (and then listed underneath, with Homeric parallels):

πο]ικιλόθρο[ν' ἀθανάτ' Ἀφρόδιτα,		Cunningly-throned (?) divine Aphrodite,
παῖ] Δ[ί]ος δολ[όπλοκε, λίσσομαί σε,		Zeus' daughter deceit-weaver, I beg you,
μή μ'] **ἄσαισι** [**μηδ' ὀνίαισι δάμνα**,		don't tame my soul, mistress, with distress nor
πότν]ια, θῦ[μον,		troubles,
ἀλλ]ὰ τυίδ' ἔλ[θ', αἴ ποτα κἀτέρωτα	5	but come here, if ever at other times
τὰ]ς ἔμας αὔ[δας ἀίοισα πήλοι		hearing my voice from afar
ἔκ]λυες, πάτρο[ς δὲ δόμον λίποισα		you hearkened, and leaving your father's golden
χ]ρύσιον ἦλθ[ες		house, you came,
ἄρ]μ' ὑπασδε[**ύξαισα**· κάλοι δέ σ' ἄγον		yoking your chariot; and fair swift sparrows
ὤ]κεες στροῦ[θοι περὶ **γᾶς μελαίνας**	10	led you, wheeling their close wings around
πύ]κνα δίν[**νεντες πτέρ' ἀπ' ὠρανῶἴθε-ρο]ς διὰ μέσσω**·		the black earth from heaven through mid-ether.
αἶ]ψα δ' ἐξίκο[**ντο**· σὺ δ', ὦ μάκαιρα,		And immediately they arrived; and you, o blessed
μειδιαί[σαισ' ἀθανάτωι προσώπωι		one, smiling with your immortal face
ἤ]ρε' ὄττ[ι δηῦτε πέπονθα κὤττι		asked what now have I suffered and why
δη]ῦτε κ[άλ]η[μμι	15	now am I calling
κ]ὤττι [μοι μάλιστα **θέλω γένεσθαι**		and what now do I really wish to have
μ]αινόλαι [**θύμωι**· τίνα δηῦτε πείθω		in my maddened soul; 'whom now do I persuade
.].σάγην [ἐς σὰν φιλότατα; τίς σ', ὦ		to lead back to your love? Who, o
Ψά]πφ', [ἀδίκησι;	20	Sappho, wrongs you?
κα]ὶ γ[ὰρ αἰ φεύγει, ταχέως διώξει,		For if they flee, swiftly they will pursue,
αἰ δὲ δῶρα μὴ δέκετ', ἀλλὰ δώσει,		and if they don't receive gifts, yet they will give,
αἰ δὲ μὴ φίλει, ταχέως φιλήσει		and if they don't love, soon they will
κωὐκ ἐθέλοισα.		though she may not want to
ἔλθε μοι καὶ νῦν, χαλέπαν δὲ λῦσον	25	come to me even now, and free me from difficult
ἐκ μερίμναν, ὅσσα δέ μοι τέλεσσαι		cares, and everything my soul desires to complete,
θῦμος ἰμέρρει, τέλεσον, σὺ δ' αὔτα		complete it, and do you in person
σύμμαχος ἔσσο.		be my ally.

3–4: οὐ γάρ πώ ποτέ μ' ὧδε θεᾶς ἔρος οὐδὲ γυναικὸς / θυμὸν ἐνὶ στήθεσσι περιπροχυθεὶς ἐδάμασσεν (*Il*. 14.315–6); δάμασον θυμὸν μέγαν (*Il*. 9.496).
9: ζεύξειεν ὑφ' ἅρμασιν (*Il*. 24.14); ζεύξαθ' ὑφ' ἅρματ' (*Od*. 3.476) etc.
10: γαῖα μέλαινα (8x Hom.).
11: δινεύουσαν ὑπὸ πτέρυγος βάλε (*Il*. 23.875); ἔνθ' ἐπιδινηθέντε τιναξάσθην πτερὰ πυκνά (*Od*. 2.151) etc.
11–12: αἰθέρος οὐρανὸν ἷκε (*Il*. 2.458); οὐρανὸν εἴσω / αἰθέρος ἐκ δίης (*Il*. 16.364–5); οὐρανὸν ἷκε δι' αἰθέρος (*Il*. 17.425) etc.
13: αἶψα δ' ἔπειθ' ἵκανον (*Il*. 3.145) etc.; αἶψα δ' ἵκοντο (*Il*. 18.532) etc.
14: μειδιόων βλοσυροῖσι προσώπασι (*Il*. 7.212); ἐφ' ἱμερτῷ δὲ προσώπῳ / αἰεὶ μειδιάει (*HAphr*. 10.2–3); φιλομμειδὴς Ἀφροδίτη (6x Hom., *HDem*. 102) etc.
17–18: ὅσον ἤθελε θυμός (*Il*. 9.177) etc.; ἤθελε θυμῶι (*Il*. 16.255) etc.; εἰ σύ γε θυμῷ / σῷ ἐθέλεις (*Il*. 17.488–9 ~ 23.894).
24: ὅς μ' ἔθελεν φιλότητι μιγήμεναι οὐκ ἐθελούσῃ (*Il*. 6.165); ἐμεῖο μὲν οὐκ ἐθελούσης (*Il*. 24.389); οὐκ ἐθελούσῃ (*Od*. 2.50); καὶ οὐκ ἐθέλουσ', ὑπ' ἀνάγκης (*Od*. 2.110).

Most of these apparent allusions don't look particularly close to the Homeric phrases in question, and those which do are formular expressions. That is, the *Iliad* poet held them in common with every other narrative epic poet of his time, and so their presence in Sappho fr. 1 is not evidence that she derived them from the *Iliad*, or that her audiences would link them with that poem. If we're being methodologically honest, this list of apparent parallels cannot support a direct, allusive relationship between Sappho and Homer.[10]

It might, however, support the notion of an indirect, generic reference to all such episodes in epos (and beyond), something akin to what John Miles Foley termed 'traditional referentiality'.[11] He was talking mainly about semantics within the epic tradition itself, the ability of any repeated unit to bear with it the associations of its previous occurrences, but the principle seems naturally capable of a broader application — and, as several scholars have noted, somewhat closer to Kristeva's original conception of intertextuality.[12] In the case of fr. 1, the form of divine summoning (the so-called 'cletic' invocation) matches the patterns we can see abstracted across narrative and hymnic epos: that is, invocation of the

10 Richard Rawles suggests to me that it is the confluence of the episodes in Book 5, rather than the presence or absence of direct reminiscences, which is at issue here. He is right to point out the inherent interest in comparing the two treatments, as long as we don't treat them in a genealogical manner; indeed, under the current model, they are indispensible, complementary tools to reconstruct the totality of the poetic tradition about Aphrodite's function in the world of epic heroes.

11 See, e.g., Foley 1999, and the narrative and further references in Kelly 2007, 5–9, and 5 n. 20.

12 See, e.g., Danek 2002, 8.

deity with an epithet, reference to an established or soon to be established relationship with that deity, a request, and an immediate epiphany to complete the task.[13] This is an extraordinarily common event in early Greek poetry (and life!), and so the idea that we should valorise one particular scene from *Iliad* Book 5 in the interpretation of fr. 1 is inherently implausible. Indeed, once we get away from the allusive straitjacket, then we start to appreciate the inclusiveness and the ambition of Sappho's epic interaction: she casts herself, and her close relationship with Aphrodite, as a particular case of the typical, exalted relationship between an extraordinary mortal and a god, specifically where the hero calls on that patron deity for aid — think Heracles and Athene, Diomedes and Athene, Odysseus and Athene, Jason and Hera, Helen or Paris and Aphrodite, and so on, right throughout the potential corpus of Greek epic storytelling.[14]

Moreover, the *Dichterweihe* topos, the moment where the Archaic poet narrates a meeting with the divine patron or source of his or her poetry, is also firmly in the background here.[15] The most famous extant cases are Hesiod's meeting with the Muses in the *Theogony* (*Th.* 22–34) or the experience of Archilochus (test. 3.22–55 Gerber), but these are in themselves obviously related typologically to the narrative experiences of the epic characters exemplified above. Once we start to invoke the whole canvas, then we are open to the totality of the epic tradition, and the way in which it is received and recreated in the moment of poetic mission or ordination. This makes a much more powerful, polyvalent and universalising

13 For a review of the formal elements, see Bremer and Furley 2001, 1.50–64. For hymnic forms in melos, cf., e.g., Sappho frr. 2 (Aphrodite), 17 (Hera), Alcaios frr. 34 (Dioscouroi), 308 (Hermes), Anacreon fr. 348 *PMG* = fr. 3 Page (Artemis); see also Burzacchini 2005 on the hymn in Sappho, and Page 1955, 244–72 on hymns in Alcaeus. Though the current chapter is more concerned with the epic background, it is artificial to isolate epic in the audience's conglomerate, as Henry Spelman and Penny Bulloch point out to me: the ordinary prayer, so closely related to the 'cletic' invocation we see in the poetic tradition(s), needs to be added to our interpretative model, and to help close the triangulation between poet, myth and audience: not only can the latter relate Aphrodite to her (and analogous) poetic treatments, but it can see itself in the god-mortal relationship as well.

14 For an actual reminiscence of this theme, see Athene's claim about Herakles frequently calling on her aid during his labours (*Il.* 8.362–5); though she talks about Zeus sending her down to aid his son, this is clearly shaped for the rhetorical context (complaint about Zeus' selective memory and current disregard for her wishes) and in no way precludes her independence of action. Such figures in Homer tend to be men, as Angus Bowie points out to me (excepting Penelope's appeal to Artemis in *Od.* 20.60–90); if this represents a wider norm, then Sappho's manipulation of epos here has a gendered element.

15 For other generic self-fashioning in the poems under examination here, this time the Brothers' Poem, see below, pp. 281–3.

background for Sappho's relationship with Aphrodite in fr. 1, and the kinds of narrative situations to which she's comparing herself and her own circumstance.

In effect, Sappho claims her relationship with the goddess is a distillation and refraction of *every and any such* relationship any audience member could ever have experienced. Not just one, but all possible instantiations.[16] It's also, thereby, a more inclusive statement: it appeals to a more varied, less homogeneous audience, with differing levels of knowledge or preference, and it allows that audience to map their own, various experiences onto her claims of authority and poetic sensibility. If an audience member listening to fr. 1 recalls Heracles' summons to Athene during his labours, or Diomedes' during his rampage across the Trojan or Theban plains, or Odysseus' in his many journeys, or Nestor's in his various adventures, or Jason's calls to Hera, or whoever else's, or all of them, it doesn't matter — no individual recall needs to crowd out or prioritise any other. And this is another reason not to privilege one scene's version in this process, especially when we can't make any claim about which particular story or version of that story would do so.

Of course, we cannot preclude *a priori* the idea that Sappho's original audiences might have contained people who 'knew' the *Iliad*. But this in turn gives rise to even more questions, which must be faced. What does 'knowing the *Iliad*' mean, for instance? Does it mean knowing the text in detail, knowing of it in its outlines, perhaps having heard or even read some of its marquee episodes? In a period when this knowledge could only or mostly have come from performance, how much recall of phraseological detail can be expected? Moreover, even for an audience member who did know the *Iliad*, and knew it so well as to pick up the allusions which scholars have detected, would it have been the only source of reference in the interpretative process? Next to that poem stood hundreds of performances and stories, about Troy and many other heroic nodes, which also jostle for attention and offer their resonance.[17] Would such a person have represented

16 As Douglas Cairns reminds me, we must try to avoid exclusive categories (i.e. labelling something as *either* intertextual *or* allusive), since every tradition is only the sum total of individual realisations, and no audience member brings entirely the same range of such events to bear. This is why it is so difficult to isolate intertextuality from allusion, but also why no poet could afford to focus on only one instantiation of that tradition as the primary semantic touchstone of their work. Once we factor traditional variation back into our conception, the text and its possibilities come to life. See further the conclusion below, pp. 287–90.

17 Trojan stories held deep resonance for Lesbian culture: Lesches of Pyrrha or Mytilene was the author of the probably sixth-century *Little Iliad* (see Kelly 2015b), and the island itself is close to Troy and somewhat prominent in Homer (*Il*. 9.129, 664, 24.544, *Od*. 3.169): see West 2002, 208 (= 2011, 393–4); Spelman 2017, 5–8; Budelmann 2018, 139–40.

a majority of Sappho's audience, and would the *Iliad* have presented itself as a priority in the interpretative response to her poem? How would those who did not recognise the supposed allusion, or did not know the *Iliad*, or did not know the *Iliad* to the required extent, have interpreted the poem? Was she not concerned with those parts of her audience? In other words, unless we imagine that the appearance of the *Iliad* utterly and immediately cancels out every other artist, song or story in the audience's experience, then there must have been a tremendous amount of variation in that experience.

Thus, by moving away from an allusively homerocentric model, not only do we avoid limiting our vision, but we get a glimpse of Sappho's aims and audiences which acknowledges our uncertainties about the varied complexities of life, literary experience and poetic performance in Archaic Lesbos. By confronting the limitations in our knowledge, by recognising that what we see is not all that there is, we open up new possibilities for interpretation. At the same time, these are not really completely unfamiliar avenues. They are, rather, broader boulevards, since a more traditionally-oriented intertextuality does not negate the fundamental insights of those who have tried to link Sappho directly with Homer. Expanding the reference pool of fr. 1 as we did above doesn't change the basic fact that this fragment takes a frequently male-dominated setting or context and feminises it, eroticises it, and plays with it — in much the same manner as John Winkler, and many other scholars, have seen. Indeed, let us reprint his earlier quotation, but reformulated in line with our discussion.

> Sappho's use of the epic tradition is a way of allowing us, even encouraging us, to approach her consciousness as a woman and a poet experienced in that tradition. The epic hero is not just a starting point for Sappho's discourse about her own love, rather he is central to what Sappho is saying about the *distance* between the epic world and her own. A woman listening to an epic poem must cross over a gap which separates her experience from the subject of the poem, a gap which does not exist in quite the same way for male listeners.

His conclusion remains almost unchanged, whether one agrees with it or not, but it now stands on a much sounder methodological footing.

This kind of reading may, additionally, strengthen and expand the potential of allusive conclusions. Eva Stehle, for instance, has very plausibly argued that fr. 1 is fundamentally antipatriarchal in asserting Aphrodite's power and influence specifically as a response to her negative portrayal in Book 5 of the *Iliad*.[18] Her point in fact becomes much stronger if we discount the allusion, since all the

18 Stehle 1997, 299.

evidence we have for the treatment of this goddess in early epos shows a consistent program of downplaying her power and independence: in Aphrodite's (undated) major *Homeric Hymn*, her power is acknowledged while her sexual freedom controlled, when she is tricked by Zeus into a parturitive relationship with Anchises. That this sort of narrative can be told in an ostensibly honorific text is surely significant in itself, but it reflects the tone of her treatment throughout the literature of the period: in the *Iliad*, she is contrasted to the warlike deities and encouraged to stay out of battle, even being wounded twice (in Book 5 and Book 21), while also being tricked by Hera to give up her *kestos* as Zeus' wife attempts to foil her husband's apparently pro-Trojan plan (Book 14); in Demodocos' song in the *Odyssey*, she is the paradigm of the faithless wife (Book 8); in Trojan War myth in general, however it was known to Sappho and her audiences, Aphrodite is obviously important and responsible as one of the proximate causes of the whole war, granting Helen to Paris, and supporting the Trojans all the way to the destruction of their city.[19]

In other words, one doesn't require a single version of a single story about this goddess to see the purpose and effect of Sappho's anti-patriarchal appropriation of epic norms and situations in fr. 1. In the search for her programmatic fuel, Sappho takes the configuration of this goddess *in the entirety of epos* and twists it around. Rather than being a somewhat uncertain source of divine support to the questing or fighting hero, Aphrodite is now central to Sappho's poetic identity and the experience of her audiences — she is to Sappho in her poetry what Athene is to her hero in battle, Hermes to his in travel, Artemis or Apollo in the hunt, and so on. This appeal doesn't depend on the audience recognising one episode in one other poem, but it accounts for the variation and experience of that audience by reaching out to every possible depiction of this goddess, and other gods, in analogous narrative circumstances. The semantic potential here is enormous and ambitious; to limit it to one scene in the *Iliad* impoverishes the poet, her audiences, and our understanding. When we can't be sure that Sappho or her audiences knew the *Iliad*, then the interpretative advantages of not relying on that link are another reason not to be homerocentric.

19 For general treatments of Aphrodite in early Greek literature, see Pirenne-Delforge 1994, Budin 2003, Faulkner 2008, 18–19.

2 Fragment 16

These advantages become clearer, and more varied as well, when we move beyond the oft-studied fr. 1. Where that fragment seems to enlist the themes of epos for an eroticised and feminised program, challenging conceptions and norms in order to bend them to her purpose, fr. 16 is at least on the surface more openly antagonistic:[20]

[ο]ἱ μὲν **ἰππήων** στρότον οἱ δὲ **πέσδων**		Some say a host of charioteers,[21] others (a host) of
οἱ δὲ νάων φαῖσ' **ἐπ[ὶ] γᾶν μέλαι[ν]αν**		troops, and others (a host) of ships is the finest thing
[ἔ]μμεναι κάλλιστον, ἔγω δὲ κῆν' ὅτ-		on the black earth, but I say it is whatever
τω τις ἔραται·		someone loves.
[πά]γχυ δ' εὔμαρες σύνετον πόησαι	5	And it is entirely easy to make this understood
[π]άντι τ[ο]ῦτ', ἀ γὰρ πόλυ περσκέθοισα		to everyone, for the one who far surpassed
κάλλος [ἀνθ]ρώπων Ἐλένα [τὸ]ν ἄνδρα		the beauty of humans, Helen, leaving her husband
τὸν [...ἀρ]ιστον		the [... b]est
καλλ[ίποι]σ' ἔβα 'ς Τροΐαν πλέοι[σα		went to Troy sailing
κωὐδ[ὲ πα]ῖδος οὐδὲ φίλων το[κ]ήων	10	and neither for her child nor her dear parents
πά[μπαν] ἐμνάσθη, ἀλλὰ παράγαγ' ἄϋταν		at all had thought, but [...] led her astray
[.].[.....]σαν		...
[.....**γν**]**άμπτον** γὰρ [.....] **νόημα**		for [un?]bending thought
[....]... κούφως τ[.....] ϝοήσηι.,		... lightly ... intends, ...
[..]με νῦν Ἀνακτορί[ας] ὀνέμναι-	15	now reminding me of Anactoria when she is [not]
[σ' οὐ] παρεοίσας.		here.
[τᾶ]ς <κ>ε βολλοίμαν ἔρατόν τε βᾶμα		I would rather see her lovely step
κἀμάρυχμα λάμπρον ἴδην προσώπω		and the bright gleam from her face
ἢ τὰ Λύδων ἄρματα †κανοπλοισι		than the Lydians' chariots †and in their armour
[πεσδομ]άχεντας.	20	their [footf]ighters.

1–2: ἰππήων στρότον ... πέσδων ~ πέζοι θ' ἱππῆές τε (3x Hom.)
2: ἐπ[ὶ] γᾶν μέλαι[ν]αν ~ γαῖα μέλαινα (8x Hom.).
13–14: γν]άμπτον ... νόημα ~ νόημα / (*Il.* 24.40–1)

20 Text after Obbink 2016, once more with the apparently Homeric expressions highlighted in bold text, and their parallels set out below.

21 ἱππήων could denote 'cavalry', which would be less in keeping with epic usage, but charioteers finds its complement in the 'chariots of the Lydians' in 19 (I am indebted to David Gribble on this point).

Largely by ignoring the multiform deployment of war in the personal poetry of Alcaeus, Archilochus and Tyrtaeus, scholars frequently hold that the contrast in the opening priamel is firmly, almost exclusively, aimed at the *Iliad*. Marguerite Johnson, for instance, calls it "a rejection of the *Iliad* in particular and its martial ethics",[22] yet it should hardly need pointing out that the highlighted expressions are formular, and there doesn't seem to be any particular reason beyond these generic echoes to invoke the *Iliad* itself. As Gregory Hutchinson says, "the *Iliad* may be one element in the male militarism which the poem dismisses; but the structure of the stanza presents rather a crowd of contemporary men".[23] I would go further: there is no reason to think that the *Iliad* is being invoked here. Again, that's not because it can be ruled out *a priori*, but because a stronger case in favour of reading its influence needs to be made. It is certainly not made by arguing, as Patricia Rosenmeyer does, that to refer at this time to Helen was to refer to Homer's Helen in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*[24] — a ringing example of WYSIATI.

Aside from being unjustified on the level of evidence and argument, homerocentrism again narrows our interpretative ambitions, this time by drawing our attention away from the task of interpreting this complex poem, and offering instead the seductively straightforward paths criticised above, so that fr. 16 is all about 'love' versus 'war', Sappho versus Homer. True, the priamel is structured around the complementarity of men, ships, charioteers and war, a common and meaningful pairing throughout early Greek epos (and, once more, melos as well). But the sea and sailing, whether in the form of military ventures or trade, is a dangerous place in that world more generally; its dispreferred status as a means for livelihood of the latter sort is clear in Hesiod's *Works and Days* (45–6, 618–62), and the Homeric poems frequently exploit an opposition between a quiet life at home and a dangerous existence involving, and conducted over, the sea (e.g., *Od.* 14.244–7, cf. *Il.* 2.453–4, 11.13–14; also *Od.* 8.138–9, 15.343); this suggests that the sea's characterisation in these terms is a topos.[25] So Sappho begins fr. 16 by apparently rejecting that topos in (almost) all its variety, not just as it is found in the

22 Johnson 2007, 68. For the wider deployment of this theme in the personal poetry of the Archaic period, see Swift 2015.

23 Hutchinson 2001, 149.

24 Rosenmeyer 1997, 125; cf. Kelly 2015a, 28 n. 34.

25 Kelly 2011, 780. Stephanie West reminds me that Laertes in *Odyssey* 24 is an excellent representation of a nobleman who has opted for the quiet life, and his 'careful husbandry' of the orchard gives us one of the most pleasant images of that poem. Of course, here too epic depictions must be complemented by those from the melic tradition (see Heirman 2012, 146–72, Uhlig 2018, 80–91) as well as those drawn from contemporary life.

story-predicate of the *Iliad*. For an audience member fully to appreciate her point, they *have* to include a much bigger picture of epos within their frame.[26]

Moreover, there is a little bit more to the straightforward opposition with which the homerocentrists content themselves. After all, epos — even just the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* — is hardly monovalent on these issues: on the one hand, war and adventure is a means to *kudos* and riches during one's life and *kleos* after it, but there is also always a balancing domestic world to preserve and (re)claim. So Sappho is not just taking aim at epos, if that genre is taken as a whole. Nor is fr. 16 so straightforward about the relationship between love and that dispreferred subject matter. Sappho uses the paradigm of Helen and Menelaos (15–16) to map onto her own relationship with Anactoria, an odd comparandum if she's trying to imply a strict generic separation between epos and her own melos, since this is the archetypal story which required ships, men and charioteers to resolve.[27]

In fact, that link makes much more sense if Sappho's engagement with epos goes beyond narrowly martial themes, and does so in a complex manner. She both invokes that poetic world in all its variety, and claims her place within it. She inserts her comparison, her valorisation and her poem into the world dominated by epos, but with a(nother) twist on that background: while epic foregrounds the stories of war and risk, and the actions then required to (re)claim life and home, Sappho directs our view of that thematic nexus onto the central figure of the beloved, as an object both of desire and interest, and not simply the starting off point for a story.[28]

Thus, merely to invoke the *Iliad* as the target for Sappho's poetic alienation is as unwarranted and as limiting as it was with fr. 1, though the effect of that limitation is felt a slightly different way. Here, homerocentrism amounts to a distraction, a refusal to look beyond easy comparisons and simplistic conclusions. When we use instead a more flexible conception of intertextuality to think

26 This should be obvious, as Emily Kearns points out to me, from the multiplicity indicated by οἱ μέν / οἱ δέ / οἱ δέ. One might reply that Sappho is positioning herself rhetorically against an imagined plurality so as to increase the individuality of her claim, but there is surely more than enough nonhomeric early Trojan War (or more widely heroic) material for us to to be confident that the plurality here is an actual one.

27 Much in this paragraph is owed to Pfeijffer 2000.

28 Felix Budelmann pertinently asks me if the above characterisation is entirely fair to early epic, given the prominence of female figures and agents, especially in the *Odyssey*. Yet the role which these figures have in that poem in particular is granted because of, and very much after, the central fact of the Trojan War: the large-scale ramifications of Helen and Paris' elopement, and their opportunities for interesting narrative, are more important to the epic aesthetic than they are to Sappho in fr. 16.

through how Sappho's composition invokes the traditional background, we reach beyond narrow definitions and routes of significance to challenge and enrich our readings of the text.

3 The 'Brothers Poem'

To vary the tune a bit, let's look at Sappho's invocation of the *Odyssey*. Most scholars doubt whether that latter poem was known at all to the Lesbian poets,[29] but the discovery of the 'Brothers Poem' seems to some to have changed that, with Dirk Obbink suggesting that Sappho was playing the role of a Penelope-style figure in waiting for her brother to come home, or making Larichos into a Telemachos figure.[30] Eva Stehle has taken Obbink's seemingly throwaway suggestion further: Sappho's desire that Charaxos 'find us *steadfast*' (ἐπεύρην ἀρτεμέας P. Sapph. Obbink 9) is, for them, an allusion to Odysseus' wish that he 'return *to find* [his] wife at home with her *steadfast* friends' (ἄκοιτιν / νοστήσας εὕροιμι σὺν ἀρτεμέεσσι φίλοισιν *Od*. 13.42–3).[31] But the adjective is formulaic when a warrior returns safely from battle (*Il*. 5.515 = 7.308) and the idiom could well be an underrepresented formula adapted for the context of a *nostos* or return song. Moreover, it is also an expression deployed just once in the *Odyssey*, and so it could only activate and sustain an allusion if we assume that Sappho's audience knew their *Odyssey* well-nigh verbatim. Again, we can't rule that out *a priori*, but — in a context where performance is the most realistic setting for audience interaction with the poem — is it likely?[32] Perhaps if there were other such Odyssean interactions in the vicinity, or elsewhere in what we have left of Sappho (or Alcaeus), one might be inclined to consider this a direct interaction. But there aren't such other traces,[33] and the general context is rather dissimilar as well.

---

29 Meyerhoff 1984, 13, West 2002, 214 = 2011, 401; *contra* Mueller 2016. Winkler 1990, 178–80 links the opening of fr. 31 with Odysseus' praise of Nausicaa (*Od*. 6.158–61).

30 Obbink 2014. For recent studies of this poem, see the essays in Bierl and Lardinois 2016.

31 Stehle 2016, 275–6.

32 Henry Spelman reminds me of Xenophon's Nikeratos (*Sym*. 3.5–6), who was cast as quite peculiar for having been made to memorise both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. How much less likely is this kind of knowledge two hundred years earlier, when texts were much less prevalent?

33 See above, n. 29. Mueller 2016 attempts to read several Odyssean intertexts into the Brothers Poem, but none are convincing, and all her (perfectly sensible) conclusions about Sappho's take on the *nostos* can be reached (and strengthened) without them, as we have seen above with regard to frr. 1 and 16.

Granted, a male figure (in this case the brother Charaxos) is absent, and women are left at home to deal with that absence. But there is also another younger brother, Larichos, who is roundly denounced for his failure to live up to his family's needs, and another female figure (perhaps Charaxos' lover Doricha) who is unwisely happy about his current fortunes. Is Larichos to be framed as Telemachos in this arrangement, while Charaxos plays Odysseus? But Charaxos and Larichos are brothers, neither child nor husband to Sappho, and so surely more caution is needed before we bed the poem down into the somewhat procrustean frame of the *Odyssey*. After all, the *nostos* was a popular type of song, as we can see even in the *Odyssey* itself; we know of at least one archaic poem called the *Nostoi* which told the stories of the other heroic homecomings from Troy,[34] and it seems to be typical in these songs to focus on the hero's ability to reclaim the home, and so the wellbeing of the household in his absence.[35] There must have been many such epic women in Sappho's position, and a sister rebuking an absent and missed brother might seem closer anyway to the frame of the Orestes myth, which was already so well-known to Homer as to be used as a paradigmatic story for his central narrative in the *Odyssey*.[36] Moreover, intra-sibling strife is a common parainetic setting in early Greek poetry, as Laura Swift has recently shown,[37] so that Sappho's riff on that theme here amounts to another feminised take on a very typical narrative trope.

What's the effect of all this? Sappho's tone and purpose in this poem puts her at odds with epic women who try to deal with the actual or imminent absence of their menfolk: Hecabe seeks to dissuade Priam from going to the Greek camp (*Il.* 24.200–16), Andromache and, to a lesser extent, Hecabe and even Helen try to stop Hector from returning to the fight (*Il.* 6.407–9, 354–8, 22.79–89), and so on. Unlike those women, and the many others in extant epos who try to have an influence of varied sorts on the world around them, there is no male to close down or deny her voice. While Priam silences Hecabe, and Hector Andromache, Telemachos Penelope, and so on, Sappho is not silenced, she does not return to a confined space, and she dispenses authoritative advice to all those around her. Indeed, having rebuked one brother for his failings, she then turns her attention to the other (P. Sapph. Obbink 17–20)! Where the limitations on the epic female

34 See now Danek 2015.

35 Foley 1999, ch. 5.

36 See Olson 1990. I doubt whether the basic thrust of Olson's thesis — that the parallel is used to raise real doubts in the audience's mind about the fate of Odysseus and his family — is right, but the use of the story in this way shows the strength of its presence in the tradition.

37 Swift 2018.

are enforced by the men around her, Sappho asserts her continued agency. In doing this she appropriates a usually male parainetic role, such as we see in figures like Nestor and Phoenix in the *Iliad*, and Theoclymenos in the *Odyssey*, but we can readily extend this kind of authoritative criticism to poetic self-portraits within and beyond epos, informing the 'characters' of Hesiod, Theognis, Archilochus, etc. This is a project of self-fashioning which takes us well beyond the very tired cliché of 'Sappho, lover', or even 'Sappho, poet of love'. Once more the poetic background, and Sappho's use of it, becomes much more interesting when we stop trying to oversimplify it.[38]

4 Fragment 44

The proof — or otherwise — of the pudding served up in this chapter has to come in an examination of fr. 44, 'Sappho's most Homeric poem'.[39] The story itself is not known from our exiguous traces of early epic, but it is not difficult to imagine it within the narrative scope of several other stories linked with the Trojan War, as Henry Spelman has most recently argued.[40] He points to the prominence of the wedding of Helen and Paris in the *Cypria* and early art as reasons for us to think that this popular episode may have been Sappho's most immediate source.[41] Fr. 44 would still be seen as referring to Troy's destruction, but once more we do not need the *Iliad* — or even the *Cypria* — to see the point of the poem.

Yet, predictably, this is precisely what the majority of scholars try to do. Given the fact that Homer mentioned their wedding on several occasions (most memorably in *Il.* 22.470–2),[42] these scholars have suggested that Sappho is drawing directly on several passages from that poem, principally from Books 6, 22 and 24, in order to create a lyric, miniature *Iliad*, undermining the ostensibly happy

38 This remains true, by the way, even if the phraseological link with *Odyssey* 13.43 we touched on above is in fact an allusion: there is so much more going on in this poem, in the intertextual sense, that any allusion here plays a decidedly secondary role.

39 Rissman 1983, 121. For treatments of this poem, see e.g., Rissman 1983, 119–41; Meyerhoff 1984, 118–39; Schrenk 1994; Bowie 2010, 71–4; Kelly 2015a, 28–9; Sampson 2016; Spelman 2017; Sampson 2019.

40 Spelman 2017.

41 Other scholars have found connections with the *Cypria*: see, e.g., Steinrück 1999, Suarez de la Torre 2008. But Spelman's undoubtedly correct point is that Sappho refers to the episode, not to any single treatment of it.

42 Cf. also 1.366–9, 2.691, 6.394–7, 413–28, 9.188, 16.153–4, 23.826–9.

moment of Hector and Andromache's marriage with Troy's inevitable fall as represented, or foreshadowed, in the poem.[43] Here follows the fragment, with the usual markings for apparent Homeric allusions:[44]

<	>	a
<	>	b
<	>	c

Κυπρο.[– 22 –]ας·	Cypro- ...
κάρυξ ἦλθε θε[– 10 –]ελε[. .].θεις	a herald came ...
Ἴδαος ταδεκα. . . φ[. .].ις **τάχυς ἄγγελος**	the swift messenger Idaios
<“ >	‘ ...
τάς τ’ ἄλλας Ἀσίας .[.]δε.αν **κλέος ἄφθιτον**·	and of the rest of Asia ... undying fame.
Ἕκτωρ καὶ συνέταιρ[ο]ι ἄγοισ’ ἐλικώπιδα	Hektor and his companions bring a bright-eyed girl
Θήβας ἐξ ἱέρας Πλακίας τ’ ἀπ’ [ἀι]ν<ν>άω	from holy Thebe and Placia which always flows
ἄβραν Ἀνδρομάχαν ἐνὶ ναῦσιν **ἐπ’ ἄλμυρον**	graceful Andromache – in their boats over the salt
πόντον· πόλλα δ’ [ἐλί]γματα χρύσια κἄμματα	sea. Many are her golden coils,
πορφύρ[α] καταΰτ[με]να, ποίκιλ’ ἀθύρματα,	purple-scented halters, elaborate playthings,
ἀργύρα τ’ ἀνάρ|ι]θμα |ποτή]ρ|ια] κἀλέφαις.”	countless are her cups of silver and ivory.’
ὣς εἶπ’· ὀτραλέως δ’ ἀνόρουσε πάτ[η]ρ φίλος·	So he spoke, and his dear father leapt up deftly.
φάμα δ’ ἦλθε κατὰ πτόλιν εὐρύχορον φίλοις.	To friends the rumour circulated through the broad-wayed city.
	At once the Ilian men yoked to their well-wheeled
αὖτικ’ Ἰλίαδαι σατίναι[ς] ὑπ’ ἐυτρόχοις	wagons mules, and the whole mob climbed on,
ἄγον αἰμιόνοις, ἐπ[έ]βαινε δὲ παῖς ὄχλος	of women and [?]-ankled maidens.
γυναίκων τ’ ἅμα παρθενίκα[ν] τ. . [. .]. σφύρων	And separately Priam's daughters
χῶρις δ’ αὖ Περάμοιο θυγ[α]τρες[	and their men yoked their chariots to horses
ἵππ[οις] δ’ ἄνδρες ὕπαγον ὑπ’ ἀρ[ματ	a[ll] young men, and greatly
π[ ]ες ἠίθεοι, μεγάλω[σ]τι δ[	... charioteers ...
δ[ ]. ἀνίοχοι φ[. . . . .] . [	...
π[΄]ξα.ο[	< six or seven verses are missing >
< *desunt sex vel septem versus* >	
ἴ]κελοι θέοι[ς	alike to the gods
] ἄγνον ἀολ[λε-	altogether [?] ... holy ...
|ὄρμαται|[ ]νον ἐς Ἴλιο[ν	they set out .... to Troy
|αὖλος δ’ ἀδυ[μ]έλης|[ ]τ’ ὀνεμίγνυ[το	and the sweet-sounding aulos ... and [?] blended
|καὶ ψ[ό]φο[ς κ]ροτάλ]|[ων, λιγέ]ως δ’ ἄρα	and the din of castanets, too. And the maids clearly
πάρ[θενοι	
|ἄειδον μέλος ἄγν|[ον, ἵκα]νε δ’ ἐς αἴθ[ερα	sang a holy song, and unto the ether went

43 For such readings, cf. e.g. Rissman 1983, 119–41, Schrenk 1994 (‘more speculative’ according to Budelmann 2018, 143); for a more positive interpretation, which (to my mind) is unpersuasive in its attempt to remove these negative intimations, and which still relies on seeing the *Iliad* directly in the background, see Pallantza 2005, 79–88.

44 Text after Sampson 2016. Budelmann 2018, 144 suggests that the lacuna indicated after verse 20 is probably smaller than Sampson believes.

|**ἄχω θεσπεσία** γελ|[
|πάνται δ' ἦς κὰτ ὄδο|[ις
|κράτηρες φίαλαί τ' ὀ|[...]υεδε[. .]. . εακ[.] . [
|μύρρα κα|ὶ κασία λίβ]ανός τ' ὀνεμείχνυτο
|γύναικες δ' ἐλέλυσδο|ν ὅσαι προγενέστερα[ι
|πάντες δ' ἄνδρες ἐπ]ήρατον ἴαχον ὄρθιον
|πάον' ὀνκαλέοντες] Ἐκάβολον εὐλύραν,
|ὕμνην δ' Ἔκτορα κ'Α]νδρομάχαν **θεο<ε>ι-**
κέλο[ις.

a divine echo ...
and everywhere in the streets was ...
bowls and saucers ...
the aromas of myrrh and frankincense mingled
and the women cried out – all the elders
and all the men raised the lovely high cry
of Paian, calling on the Far-shooter, the well-lyred,
and they hymned god-like Hektor and Andromache.

3: *re* Idaios, cf. *Il.* 5.11 (another figure); also Wathelet 1988, 1.598–600 (§ 157); τάχυς ἄγγελος ~ *Il.* 18.1, 24.291, 309, *Od.* 15.5252, etc.
4: κλέος ἄφθιτον = *Il.* 9.413, Hes. fr. 70.5; *CEG* I 344.2 (Phocis, 600–550?); Ibycus S 151.47 *PMGF*.
7–8: ἐπ' ἄλμυρον πόντον ~ ἁλμυρὸν ὕδωρ (8x Hom.)
22: ἴ]κελοι θέοι[ς ~ ἐπιείκελον ἀθανάτοισιν (6x Hom.)
27: ἄχω θεσπεσία ~ ἠχῆι θεσπεσίηι (*Il.* 15.353) ~ θεσπεσίη ἔχε (9.1)
34: θεο<ε>ικέλο[ις ~ *Il.* 1.131 = 19.155 (of Akh.), but also *Od* 3.416 (Telemachos), 4.176 (Deiphobos), 8.256 (Alcinoos), *HDem.* (Doso) etc.

The case against the homerocentrists need only be brief: formular expressions (κλέος ἄφθιτον 4, ἐπ' ἄλμυρον / πόντον 7–8, ἴ]κελοι θέοι[ς 21, θεο<ε>ικέλο[ις 34) cannot be used as evidence for a direct link with the *Iliad*, nor can the occurrence of shared characters (such as Idaios) or their situations. So how might a less allusive approach help us here? Firstly, in the story itself. The murder of Astyanax had an early presence in the visual discourse about the Trojan War.[45] It was also a fixed element in the poetic discourse, since the *Little Iliad* (fr. 21 Bernabé) and *Iliou Persis* (arg. 20 Bernabé) differed on whether Neoptolemos or Odysseus was the murderer.[46] So the marriage of Hector and Andromache is notably bound up with the death of their child, and the end of their community, and any reference to their wedding is likely to invoke that curtailed future, whether the *Iliad* — which did not narrate this death — is involved or not. Andromache's post-Trojan War fate is a little more varied in the early traditions, with e.g. the *Iliou Persis* (arg. 20 B) and the *Little Iliad* (fr. 21 B) having her allotted to Neoptolemos at the war's end, but the Trojan couple's marriage always has this ending point.

Secondly, somewhat like the situation of the familial advisor in the Brother's Poem, fr. 44 also invokes a wider narrative circumstance well-known to epos —

45 Anderson 1997, 54–6.
46 See Kelly 2015b, 324–5.

the heroic wedding.[47] This kind of event is often rather fraught: the apparently positive images of (non-narrative) weddings on the shields of Achilleus (*Il.* 18.491–6)[48] and Heracles (*Scut.* 272–80) seem isolated when compared to Helen's wedding in the *Catalogue of Women* ('Hes.' frr. 196–204 M-W) and the *Cypria* (arg. 19–20 Bernabé), or the cause of the Lapith-Centaur war (*Il.* 1.262–8), the unhappy transformations consequent on the *Wedding of Ceyx* ('Hes.' frr. 263–9 M-W),[49] or the fact that the *Odyssey*'s remarriage contest ends in the slaughter of all Penelope's suitors. The 'marital' entrance of Helen and Paris into Troy in the *Cypria* would hardly have been an occasion for unbridled joy (whether narrated as a full event or not), still less her subsequent marriage to Deiphobos in the *Little Iliad* (arg. 10, fr. 4 Bernabé), while the wedding of Peleus and Thetis in the *Cypria* (arg. 5–6 Bernabé) was not an easy process, and had ended unhappily already in the *Iliad*, where she is living with her sister sea-nymphs in the house of Neleus (18.35–65). Both Johannes Haubold and Ettore Cingano have noted the common association between marriage contests and violent death in early epos.[50] In short, a wedding in epic narrative style seems a somewhat ambivalent blessing, and was probably also, at least with regard to the Trojan War, bound up with the notion that this war was one way of getting rid of the heroic race.[51] The openly epicising wedding in fr. 44, therefore, consistently points the audience forward to the marriage's unhappy end.

As in our earlier cases, we observe here the continuities between the traditional, intertextual interpretation and the allusively homerocentric reading, in the gloomy prediction they both share. Sappho's poem once more takes the usually privileged male view and gives a great deal more emphasis to its female agents, and maps that appeal onto a broad vision of the heroic marriage. The description of Andromache's appearance, as well as the catalogue of her dowry, is

47 This is not to deny the presence or traditionality of this theme in melos (see n. 51 below), as revealed in the very existence of *epithalamium* as a song type; a complete interpretation of fr. 44 would have to engage, as we have noted elsewhere, with the entirety of the melic tradition as well. Angus Bowie points out to me that would cancel out the negativity at play here, but the probability that this poem is not straightforwardly epithalamic suggests at least a generic play, or the manipulation of that play to create an associative conflict in the audience.

48 Taplin 1980 notes that the scene on the Shield of Achilleus is somewhat at odds with the rest of the poem.

49 The marriage party itself seems to have been relatively peaceful, but it is set within a series of violent and aggressive deeds of its apparent focus, Heracles: see Cingano 2009, 125–6.

50 Haubold 2000, 137–43; Cingano 2005, 124–7.

51 Once more, it should not be forgotten that this theme is also reflected in Lesbian melos as well, e.g. in Sappho fr. 16 and Alcaeus fr. 283, both of which treat Helen's wedding to Paris as something a little less than perfect.

matched by the joyful participating of the Trojan women, set off next to the communal singing of the maidens and the older women. Idaios' message (5–6) is typically Sapphic in its praise for Andromache's beauty (for ἄβραν, cf. frr. 2.14, 58.25, 128, etc.), and the κλέος ἄφθιτον (4) is surely not unconnected with the wife's contribution.

Thus, the gloom of the future is contrasted with the happy promise endowed specifically in the figure of the bride and her accoutrements, so that Sappho's recreation of the epic stories juxtapose the loss and violence of that world — in its entirety — with the hope and expectation represented in the figure of Andromache herself.[52] She is like every heroic bride who hoped for something great, and this focus on her, this encouragement to look at the female participant in this typical epic situation, represents the same kind of reorientation we saw in fr. 16: in both poems, Sappho harnesses epos for new ends by asking us to view a familiar epic circumstance or figure in her own right, as the focus for poetic contemplation. Again, she is not taking a merely oppositional or derivative stance vis-a-vis the *Iliad*, but engaging in a recreation of the heroic wedding and the very story of Troy, an angling into the world of epic from a different starting point — and to a different end.

None of this, once more, is alien to those scholars who see the *Iliad* as the semantic touchstone for fr. 44 and its exploration of marriage and future loss, but nothing here requires us to privilege one text as the basis for the entire program. It doesn't even require a single epic version of this actual event for Sappho to be working with or referring to, rather than starting from the potential danger and destruction behind *all* heroic weddings, especially those in Troy, that lie behind her manipulation of the audience's understanding. If we look solely for allusive evidence of the Homeric poems in Sappho, we miss a lot of what she's doing, and the ambition of what she's doing. When we cast our net more widely, we come up with a bigger haul.

***

This chapter has sought to put the case for the kind of 'interesting' reading one can derive from using a generic, traditionally intertextual model for thinking about the relationship between a literary artist and his or her background in the Archaic period. This kind of intertextuality is to be preferred to an allusive model

52 One may suspect that Sappho is also, through the catalogue of the dowry items (and perhaps even the stress on her conveyance to Troy), hinting at Andromache's future marriages and peregrinations, and at the idea that her story is not coterminous with that of Hector and Astyanax. For details, see Wathelet 1988, 2.277–83.

for several reasons, not the least of these being the fundamental contiguity between the results derived from the two. That shouldn't surprise us, because allusion is intertextuality once the reference points are more fixed and better known, so that the question is one above all of diachronic literary and textual development. Yet the reader must be eager at this point to ask, if it doesn't really change the fundamentals in our interpretation of Sappho's readings of epic or Homer, why should we bother? If the earliest or original audiences understood these epic appropriations in roughly the same way, why make the distinction?

The first response is to ask some questions in return, such as, why should we frame the question in these terms, as though allusion is an ordinary part of Sappho's toolkit, a given, something that has to be disproven? If allusion adds nothing to a traditional intertextual reading, isn't that a reason to question the validity or applicability of an allusive reading in the first place? That is, why look for allusion in Sappho at all, when — aside from the fact that it may not have been possible — it does not add materially to the interpretation? However, though more scepticism would be welcome in this area than we see currently, this is probably the wrong way to proceed, since any tradition is made up of individual examples, and individual audience members are likely to have particular passages or songs in mind, making the line between an intertext and an allusion always difficult to determine. Far better, then, to recognise that, if allusive dynamics were possible, they would have functioned within the usual referential, intertextual framework, as one more version for the audience to add to its store of knowledge, one more version to bring into play as the poem is performed or experienced. The challenge for any poet in such a circumstance, i.e. when no version dominates the consciousness of its audience, is to cast the appeal broadly, to capture as much of that audience as s/he can. So, before we start wondering about the boundary between intertextuality and allusion, let's first be sure that there is good evidence for the latter's presence and interaction.[53]

Indeed, as it is conceived and practised at the moment, there are two serious disadvantages to allusive homerocentrism. The first is that we gain — or rather, we reinforce — a false impression that other poets in this period were only or

53 That allusion did come to play an increasingly prominent role over the course of the Archaic period is beyond question: Kelly 2015b argues that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are used for allusive play in the work of Stesichorus, roughly a generation after Sappho. But the story does not proceed in a simple developmental line: though a contemporary of Stesichorus, Hipponax of Ephesos does not seem to allude to Homer in the same way (Kelly forthcoming), but this may be due to his region or genre as much as to his putative knowledge of the Homeric poems.

mainly concerned with Homer, and that all other artists and songs simply evaporated once the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* hove into view. The second drawback is that it leads us away from interpretative opportunities and challenges; when we remain aware of the limits to our knowledge, we can widen and deepen our readings, and do so in a more historically grounded manner.

For example, the discussion of fr. 1 showed that Sappho's programmatic appeal to Aphrodite can be framed and understood next to any similar action in the multitude of epic narrative situations with which the individual audience member would have been familiar; its appeal is not limited to Homeric *cognoscenti*. This kind of intertextual dynamic, drawing on the typical situation and the range of particular stories possible within it, enlarges our readings, as it did with fr. 16, where we saw that the temptation of constructing simply oppositional readings with the *Iliad* had led scholars away from Sappho's complexity; and with the Brothers Poem, which is dealing with other stories from the body of Greek myth and the typical strategies of poetic self-representation found across the whole spectrum of Archaic literary culture. But Sappho's program of reorienting epic is perhaps clearest in fr. 44: this poem invoked the many such marriages which presaged or ended in suffering for all those involved, and encouraged her audience to revisit the epic world and its framing of marriage from another perspective, through the figure of Andromache.

Finally, though, the basic question with which I am concerned, as an historian of early Greek literature, is what Sappho and her audiences thought they were doing. And not just Sappho, but every poet in the Archaic period as it progressed. How did they respond to the spread of writing and the physical textualisation of poetic phenomena usually experienced in performance? Was it all just self-evident, and did the strategies of Callimachus just appear fully-formed at the start of this process, as Athene from the head of Zeus?[54] We would be naive, or lazy, to expect it.

If we neglect these difficult questions, we lose sight of the distinctive qualities and challenges of thinking about Archaic literary history. It cannot be enough, as C. Michael Sampson does in his forthcoming essay on fr. 44, simply to put all this down to 'methodological anxiety' and then continue reading texts next to one another as though it doesn't matter.[55] It cannot be enough, but a lot of scholars simply ignore the particularities of literary dynamics in this period, or nod at them as they fly past in a headlong rush to prove Sappho as 'sophisticated' as Callimachus or Catullus. Yet to consider these methodological questions as

54 I am grateful to Henry Spelman for the expression.

55 Sampson forthcoming.

central to the process of interpretation is not to suggest that Sappho is in some way 'primitive' or lacks sophistication; it is just to acknowledge the possibility that the poetic sophistication of Archaic Lesbos was not necessarily the same as that of Augustan Rome — or Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon.[56]

There is, therefore, a wider purpose to the kind of project advanced here: let us stop the convenient practice of reading one period as simply another in disguise, forgetting the need to ask difficult, historically contingent questions of our material. It is easier not to do so, since the payoff is quicker, easier, more seductive, and the results can be interesting and point us in the direction of a reasonable, if somewhat limited, interpretation. Yet, by acknowledging the diversity of the epic background to the melic tradition, by not ignoring the 'known unknowns', we get *more*, not less, interesting readings of our texts. Once we cease running in homerocentric circles, we will be free from thinking that the reality of poetry, performance and reception in the Archaic world was as limited as our very imperfect vision of it would have us believe.

Bibliography

Anderson, M.J. 1997. *The Fall of Troy in Early Greek Poetry and Art*, Oxford.
Bethe, E. 1924. *Die griechische Dichtung*, Potsdam.
Bierl, A./Lardinois, A. (eds) 2016. *The Newest Sappho: P. Sapph. Obbink and P. GC inv. 105, frs. 1–4*, Leiden.
Blondell, R. 2010. 'Refractions of Homer's Helen in Archaic *Lyric*', *AJP* 131, 349–91.
Blondell, R. 2013. *Helen of Troy: beauty, myth, devastation*, Oxford.
Bowie, E. 2010. 'The Trojan War's reception in early Greek lyric, iambic and elegiac poetry', in Foxhall, L./Gehrke, H.–J./Luraghi, N. (eds), *Intentional History. Spinning Time in Ancient Greece*, Stuttgart, 57–87.
Budelmann, F. 2018. *Greek Lyric: A Selection*, Cambridge.
Budin, S. 2003. *The Origin of Aphrodite*, Bethesda MD.
Burzacchini, G. 2005. 'Fenomenologia innodica nella poesia di Saffo', *Eikasmos* 16, 11–40.
Cingano, E. 2005. 'A catalogue within a catalogue: Helen's suitors in the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* (frr. 196–204)', in Hunter, R. (ed.), *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women: constructions and reconstructions*, Cambridge, 118–52.
Cingano, E. 2009. 'The Hesiodic Corpus', in Montanari, F./Rengakos, A./Tsagalis, C. (eds), *Brill's Companion to Hesiod*, Leiden, 91–130.
Cook, R.M. 1983. 'Art and Epic in Archaic Greece', *BABesch* 58, 1–10.
Currie, B. 2016. *Homer's Allusive Art*, Oxford.

56 A point entirely lost on Currie forthcoming, à propos the arguments in Kelly 2015a.

Currie, B. forthcoming. 'Intertextuality and Epinician: The rise of written texts and the constant of festival performance'.
Danek, G. 2002. 'Traditional referentiality and Homeric intertextuality', in Montanari, F./Ascheri, P. (eds), *Omero: Tremila anni dopo*, Rome, 3–20.
Danek, G. 2015. 'Nostoi', in Fantuzzi, M./Tsagalis, C. (eds), *The Epic Cycle and its Ancient Reception*, Cambridge, 355–79.
Di Benedetto, V. 1973. 'Il volo di Afrodite in Omero e in Saffo', *QUCC* 16, 121–3.
Faulkner, A. 2008. *The Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, Oxford.
Feeney, D. 2016. *Beyond Greek: the Beginnings of Latin Literature*, Harvard.
Foley, J.M. 1999. *Homer's Traditional Art*, Philadelphia.
Furley, W.D./Bremer, J.M. 2001. *Greek Hymns*, 2 vols., Tübingen.
Greene, E. 1994. 'Apostrophe and women's erotics in the poetry of Sappho', *TAPA* 124, 41–56 [= Greene, E. (ed.) 1996. *Reading Sappho. Contemporary Approaches*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, 233–47].
Haubold, J. 2000. *Homer's People: epic convention and social formation*, Cambridge.
Heirman, J. 2012. *Space in Archaic Greek Lyric: City, Countryside and Sea*, Amsterdam.
Henrichs, A. 1995. 'Graecia Capta: Roman Views of Greek Culture', *HSCP* 97, 243–61.
Hinds, R. 1998. *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry*, Cambridge.
Hutchinson, G. 2001. *Greek Lyric Poetry: a Commentary on selected larger pieces*, Oxford.
Johnson, M. 2007. *Sappho*, London.
Kelly, A.D. 2007. *A Referential Commentary and Lexicon to Homer,* Iliad *VIII*, Oxford.
Kelly, A.D. 2011. 'Sea', in Finkelberg, M. (ed.). *The Homer Encyclopedia*, Oxford, 779–80.
Kelly, A.D. 2015a. 'Stesichorus' Homer', in Finglass, P.J./Kelly, A.D. (eds), *Stesichorus in Context*, Cambridge, 21–44.
Kelly, A.D. 2015b. '*Ilias Parva*', in Fantuzzi, M./Tsagalis, C. (eds), *The Epic Cycle and its Ancient Reception*, Cambridge, 318–43.
Kelly, A.D. 2020. 'Sappho and Epic', in Finglass, P.J./Kelly, A.D. (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Sappho*, Cambridge (forthcoming).
Kelly, A.D. forthcoming. 'Homer and Hipponax', in Cazzato, V./Prodi, E.E. (eds), *Framing Hipponax*, Cambridge (forthcoming).
Krischer, T. 1968. 'Sapphos Ode an Aphrodite (typologische Bemerkungen)', *Hermes* 96, 1–14.
Marry, J.D. 1979. 'Sappho and the heroic ideal: ἔρωτος ἀρετή', *Arethusa* 12, 71–92.
Meyerhoff, D. 1984. *Traditioneller Stoff und individuelle Gestaltung. Untersuchungen zu Alkaios und Sappho*, Hildesheim/Zürich/New York.
Mueller, M. 2016. 'Re-centering Epic Nostos: Gender and Genre in Sappho's Brothers Poem', *Arethusa* 49, 25–46.
Obbink, D. 2014. 'New Poems by Sappho' *Times Literary Supplement*, 5 February.
Obbink, D. 2016. 'The Newest Sappho: Text, Apparatus Criticus, and Translation', in Bierl/Lardinois, 13–33.
Olson, S.D. 1990. 'The stories of Agamemnon in Homer's *Odyssey*', *TAPA* 120, 57–71.
Page, D.L. 1955. *Sappho and Alcaeus*, Oxford.
Pallantza, E. 2005. *Der Troische Krieg in der nachhomerischen Literatur bis zum 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr.,* Stuttgart.
Pfeijffer, I.L. 2000. 'Shifting Helen: an Interpretation of Sappho, fragment 16 (Voigt)', *CQ* 50, 1–6.
Pirenne-Delforge, V. 1994. *L'Aphrodite grecque*, Athens/Liège.
Rawles, R. 2018. *Simonides the Poet: Intertextuality and Reception*, Cambridge.
Rissman, L. 1983. *Love as War: Homeric Allusions in the Poetry of Sappho*, Königstein.

Rosenmeyer, P.A. 1997. 'Her Master's Voice: Sappho's Dialogue with Homer', *MD* 39, 123–49.
Sampson, C.M. 2016. 'A New Reconstruction of Sappho 44. (P. OXY. X 1232 + P. OXY. XVII 2076)', *Proceedings of the 27th International Congress of Papyrology. Warsaw, 29 July – 3 August 2013*, Warsaw, 53–62.
Sampson, C.M. forthcoming. 'Sappho 44: Troy via Mytilene', in Acosta-Hughes, B. (ed.) *Her Songs Yet Remain*, Cambridge.
Schrenk, L. 1994. 'Sappho Fr. 44 and the *Iliad*', *Hermes* 122, 144–50.
Snodgrass, A. 1998. *Homer and the Artists*, Cambridge.
Snyder, J.M. 1997. *Lesbian Desire in the Lyrics of Sappho*, New York/Chichester.
Spelman, H. 2017. 'Sappho 44, Trojan Myth and Literary History', *Mnemosyne* 70, 1–18.
Stehle, E. 1997. *Performance and Gender in Ancient Greece*, Princeton.
Stehle, E. 2016. 'Larichos in the Brothers Poem: Sappho Speaks Truth to the Wine-Pourer', in Bierl/Lardinois, 266–92.
Steinrück, M. 1999. 'Homer bei Sappho?', *Mnemosyne* 52, 139–49.
Suárez de la Torre, E.S. 2008. '"Ya vienen los novios': una lectura socioantropológica del fragmento 44 V. de Safo', *Faventia* 30, 143–60.
Svenbro, J. 1975. 'Sappho and Diomedes', *Museum Philologicum Londiniense* 1, 37–49.
Swift, L. 2015. 'Lyric visions of epic combat', in Bakogianni, A./Hope, V.M. (eds), *War as Spectacle: Ancient and Modern perspectives on the Display of Armed Conflict*, London, 93–110.
Swift, L. 2018. 'Thinking with Brothers in Sappho and Beyond', in Allan, W./Swift, L. (eds), *Moralising Strategies in Early Greek Poetry*, *Mouseion* 59, 71–87.
Taplin, O. 1980. 'The Shield of Achilles within the *Iliad*', *Greece and Rome* 27, 1–21.
Uhlig, A. 2018. 'Sailing and Singing: Alcaeus at Sea', in Budelmann, F./Phillips, T. (eds), *Textual Events: Performance and the Lyric in Early Greece*, Oxford, 63–92.
Wathelet, P. 1988. *Dictionnaire des Troyens de l'Iliade* (2 vols.), Liège.
West, M.L. 1999. 'The Invention of Homer', *CQ* 49, 364–82 (repr. in id. 2011, 408–36).
West, M.L. 2002. 'The View from Lesbos', in Reichel, M./Rengakos, A. (eds), *Epea pteroenta: Beiträge zur Homerforschung (Festschrift für Wolfgang Kullmann zum 75. Geburtstag)*, Stuttgart, 207–19 (repr. in id. 2011, 392–407).
West, M.L. 2011. *Hellenica: Selected Papers on Greek Literature and Thought* Volume I: *Epic*, Oxford.
Winkler, J. 1990. The *Constraints of Desire: the anthropology of sex and gender in ancient Greece,* London.