The Reception of Sappho in Attic Comedy as it Reflects the Performance of her Poems

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Abstract

No poet and no woman featured more prominently in Athenian comedy than Sappho. Between the fifth and early third centuries BCE, we know that 6 poets each wrote a comedy called *Sappho* and at least 3 others directly parodied her persona or poetry. Unfortunately, these plays only survive as fragments, except for brief references in Aristophanes. There is a longstanding pattern in modern scholarship, dating at least to the early nineteenth century, that credits unexpected or unsavoury parts of her biography, especially those related to her sexuality, to these comedies. My thesis pushes back on this scholarly tradition. I re-examine comedy's reception of Sappho in light of recent scholarship about Athenian social dynamics and the performance of Lesbian lyric in Athens. The comedies especially reflect the performance of Sappho's songs at elite male drinking parties (*symposia*) and do not condemn Sappho's same-sex erotics. Rather, they associate Sappho with the *hetaira*, a figure whom modern research identifies as a broadly-applied stereotype of a non-Athenian woman who attends *symposia* and has sexual practices that do not conform to Athenian ideas of female propriety. In other words, the comedies about Sappho reveal a connection between the most prominent Greek poetess and the socially marginal women who performed her songs.

Résumé

Aucun poète ni aucune femme n'a figuré plus dans la comédie athénienne que Sappho. Entre le cinquième et le début du troisième siècle avant notre ère, nous savons que 6 poètes ont écrit une comédie appelée *Sappho* et au moins 3 autres ont parodié sa personnalité ou sa poésie. Malheureusement, sauf celles d'Aristophane, ces pièces ne survivent que sous forme de fragments. Ma thèse reconsidère une tradition, datant au moins du début du XIXe siècle, qui attribue certains détails sexuels indésirables de sa biographie à ces comédies. Je réexamine la réception comique de Sappho en vue d'études récentes sur la dynamique sociale athénienne et la performance de la poésie lyrique lesbienne à Athènes. Les comédies reflètent en particulier l'interprétation des chansons de Sappho lors de soirées élitistes masculines (*symposia*) et ne condamnent pas l'érotisme homosexuel de Sappho. Au contraire, ils associent Sappho à l'hétaïre, que la recherche moderne identifie comme une femme stéréotypée non athénienne qui participe à des *symposia* et qui a des pratiques sexuelles qui ne sont pas conformes aux idées athéniennes de la propriété féminine. En d'autres termes, les comédies portant sur Sapho révèlent un lien entre la poétesse grecque la plus proéminente et les femmes subalternes qui ont interprété ses chansons.

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Textual Note

Translations are my own unless otherwise noted. There is a complete list of primary sources in the bibliography, but I cite the following editions regularly:

Aristophanes	
Plays	Wilson, N. G., ed. *Aristophanis Fabulae*. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
Scholia	Koster, W. J. W., et al., eds. *Scholia in Aristophanem.* 11 vols. Groningen: Bouma, 1974–.
Athēnaios	Olson, S. Douglas, ed. *Deipnosophistae*. 4 vols. Berlin: Brill, 2019–22.
Demosthenes	Dilts, Mervin R., ed. *Demosthenis Orationes*. 4 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002–09.
Euripides	
Plays	Diggle, James, ed. *Euripidis Fabulae.* 3 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981–94.
Scholia	Schwartz, Eduard, ed. *Scholia in Euripidem*. 2 vols. Berlin: Reimer, 1887–91.
Graffiti from the Athenian agora	Lang, Mabel L. *Graffiti and Dipinti*. Athenian Agora, v. 21. Princeton, NJ: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1976.
Homer	
Iliad	West, Martin L., ed. *Homeri Ilias.* 2 vols. Monaco: Saur, 1998–2000.
Odyssey	von der Mühll, P., ed. *Homeri Odyssea*. Basel: Helbing & Lichtenhahn.
Isokratēs	Mandilaras, Basilius G., ed. *Isocrates: Opera Omnia.* 3 vols. Monaco: Saur, 2003.
Menander	Austin, Colin, ed. *Menander: Eleven Plays*. Cambridge: The Cambridge Philological Society, 2013.
Other comic fragments (including Aristophanes)	Kassel, Rudolf, and Colin Austin, eds. *Poetae comici Graeci.* 8 vols. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1983–.
Plato	Burnet, John, ed. *Platonis Opera.* 5 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900–7.
Plutarch	
Parallel Lives	Ziegler, Konrat, ed. *Plutarch: Vitae Parallelae*. 6 vols. Leipzig: Teubner, 1971–8.
Moralia	Hubert, C., ed. *Plutarchi Moralia*. 5 vols. Leipzig: Teubner, 1971–8.

Sappho & Alkaios	
Numbered fragments	Voigt, Anna-Maria, ed. *Sappho et Alcaeus*. Amsterdam: Athenaeum – Polak & van Gennep, 1971.
Tithōnos Poem [TP]	West, Martin L. "The New Sappho." *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 151 (2005): 1–9.
Suda	Adler, Ada, ed. *Suidae Lexicon*. 2nd ed. 5 vols. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1967–71.

Abbreviations

I abbreviate according to the Diccionario Griego-Español, with the following additions:

FrGH	Jacoby, Felix, et al. eds. *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. 21 vols. Berlin: Weidmann; Leiden: Brill, 1923–.
LGPN	Fraser, P. M., and E. Matthews, eds. *A Lexicon of Greek Personal Names*. 5 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987.
PA	Beckby, Hermann, ed. *Anthologia Graeca*. 4 vols. 2nd ed. Munich: Heimeran, 1965–68.

Introduction

My thesis addresses Sappho's early reception in Attic comedy, where she appears to have been a very popular figure. From the late fifth century to (perhaps) the early third, we know of six plays named after her—more than any other woman or any other poet—of which about 40 lines survive. Two other short fragments mention her by name and Aristophanes alludes to her, but does not name her, on at least two occasions. These comic texts, although brief and few in number, represent the most extensive surviving body of Athenian literature about Sappho and her poetry. The small corpus of comic fragments that treat Sappho directly have had an outsized impact on how the tradition remembers her and her work, especially on what the Germans call the *Sapphofrage*, the question of whether the erotic content in Sappho's poetry reflects real woman-woman love in late seventh-century Lesbos. While this perception of comedy's important place in Sappho's early reception is not entirely unwarranted, the specifics of comedy's influence often go unquestioned. Old ideas from the nineteenth century remain prominent. Currently, the ongoing, monumental Kassel-Austen project, *Poetae Comici Graeci*, is making the works of minor Attic comedians more readily available than ever before. Since it was these lesser-known comedians who wrote the most about her, now is a good time to look again critically at Sappho's role in Athenian comedy.

History of Scholarship

The gap between what we know—that Sappho appeared regularly on the comic stage—and what we do not—most of the content of those plays—creates a blank space onto which modern scholars can cast their hopes and fears. Sappho is a totemic figure in the modern reception of Ancient Greece, especially when we talk about gender and sexuality, but she is one about whom we know very little. Famously, Monique Wittig and Sandy Zeig illustrate our ignorance by giving Sappho a blank page in *Lesbian Peoples: Material for a Dictionary*.[1] Both Sappho's own poetry and the earliest centuries of her reception survive in piecemeal fragments and it is very difficult to conclusively say anything about her biography, although many have

[1] Wittig and Zeig, *Lesbian Peoples*, 176. Winkler was the first to introduce this blank page into the scholarly conversation ("Gardens of Nymphs," 89), after which referencing it has become something of a cliché (Parker, "Sappho Schoolmistress," 309; Rosenmeyer, "Her Master's Voice," 125, n. 7; Coo, "Sappho in Fifth- and Fourth-Century Greek Literature," 263, n. 1, etc.).

tried. One problem is that many stories about Sappho's life circulated in antiquity. Some of them must be fictional, but exactly which ones is a controversial question. Answering that question often depends on who the reader *wants* Sappho to be. As modern critics sift through these stories, the Attic comedians who wrote about Sappho make a useful scapegoat, a collective someone to blame for whatever 'fictions' we wish to see in her biographical tradition.

Take one example. The story that Sappho was married to man named Kerkylas (Κερκύλας) from Andros only appears in the Suda (Suda σ 107 = Sapph. test. 2), and yet modern scholars regularly credit this story to a joke in Attic comedy.[2] The connection to comedy is dubious. 'Kerkylas' certainly does not appear in any surviving comic text. Related names appear in the epigraphic record a handful of times for men living well after Sappho died—most notably there is a 'Kerkylos' attested in Euboia in the third century before the common era—but the Suda's spelling only survives in the Suda.[3] On the balance of probability, it appears that her husband's name is an obscene joke, based on a Greek slang term for 'penis' (κέρκος, 'tail') and the similarity between the toponym Ἄνδρος and the Greek for 'man' (ἀνήρ). You can translate this joke name as creatively as you like—Parker gives us "Dick All-cock from the Isle of MAN," while Brooten prefers "Mr. Putzhead from He-mansville."[4] The idea that Kerkylas was a comic invention originated with Mure in 1854, although his Victorian mores prevent him from spelling out the "broadly indecent etymology."[5] Wilamowitz picks up the thread, although he assumes that Sappho was indeed married and that only the husband's name comes from Attic comedy.[6] And yet no such joke survives from any known play. This is the sort of joke that a comedian could make, the argument goes, so a comedian must have made it. While Aristophanes uses κέρκος to mean 'penis' (*A.* 785; *Th.* 239), there is no indication whatsoever that the joke the Suda reports as fact dates back as far as classical Athens.[7] The same sort of joke was still current at later dates—the epigrammatist, Rouphinos, who writes well into the common era, disparages a

[2] Johnson, *Sappho,* 23; Kivilo, *Early Greek Poets' Lives*, 178; Lardinois, introduction to *Sappho: A New Translation of the Complete Works*, 4; Boehringer, *Female Homosexuality,* 192. And this is the critical stance; see Parker, "Sappho Schoolmistress," 310, n. 3, for a list of twentieth-century critics who happily accept that Sappho had a husband named Kerkylas.
[3] *LGPN*, 1:154. See Yatromanolakis, *Sappho in the Making*, 294, n. 16.
[4] Parker, "Sappho Schoolmistress," 309; Brooten, *Love Between Women*, 39.
[5] Mure, *Critical History*, 3:278.
[6] Wilamowitz, *Sappho und Simonides,* 24.
[7] For κέρκος as obscene slang, see Henderson, *Maculate Muse*, 128.

sex worker he calls Kerkourion (Κερκούριον; PA 5.44.1), a diminutive nickname from the same root as Kerkylas. This case illustrates how the *Sappho* comedies figure in Sapphic scholarship: when a detail in her post-classical ancient reception does not align with how the modern reader would like to interpret Sappho's persona or poetry, then they tend to assume that an unknown Attic comedian invented that detail, even if more careful digging could point out another possible origin. This is just one example from a long tradition of crediting comedy with a much bigger role in Sappho's biographical tradition than the evidence actually bears out.

The question of Sappho's sexual orientation has animated much of modern readers' interaction with her figure and has driven critics most often to look at her representation in comedy, including the scholarship we have discussed about her husband's name. More recent scholarship that denies Kerkylas' historicity overlaps with the general contemporary consensus that Sappho (or at least her poetic persona) expresses heartfelt queer longing in her poetry, reacting to older scholarship that resists the homoeroticism in Sappho's poetry. Since the nineteenth century, Kerkylas has been a valuable talisman for those who wish to deny Sappho's queerness. Even though he thinks Kerkylas's name is a comic invention, Wilamowitz rejects Sappho's homosexuality and emphasizes that she was "an elegant lady, wife, and mother [*Eine vornehme Frau, Gattin, und Mutter*]."[8] That body of older, lesbophobic scholarship finds non-sexual interpretations for the homoerotic moments in her poetry and insists that the idea of Sappho's homosexuality, which has never been perfectly absent from her afterlife, was a scurrilous smear secreted into her biography by later authors. Comedy has been the preferred scapegoat.[9]

We can trace this comedy-scapegoating back to 1817, when Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker published this stream of thought's *Urtext*, with an evocative title that makes clear his polemical stance: *Sappho: Freed from a Reigning Prejudice* [*Sappho: von einem herrschenden Vorurtheil befreyt*].[10] As the title suggests, Welcker—an early proponent of nineteenth-century 'scientific' philology with a deep nostalgia for classical culture—strongly condemns any suggestion that Sappho loved other women. In his view, moments of reception that take the homoerotic content

[8] Wilamowitz, *Sappho und Simonides*, 73.
[9] Rieder, *Der gegenwärtige Stand der Sapphofrage*, 25–6; Smyth, *Greek Melic Poets*, 227; Wilamowitz, *Sappho und Simonides*, 72.
[10] On Welcker's influence, see Calder, "F. G. Welcker's *Sapphobild*."

of her songs seriously are simply repeating a scandalous slander that has overshadowed her contributions to poetry. Due to the great wealth of surviving evidence, he acknowledges the general acceptance of male homosexuality among the ancient Greeks, but states unequivocally that "almost the opposite of this occurs regarding women [*Von diesem allem tritt beinahe das gerade Gegenteil ein in Hinsicht der Frauen*]."[11] In this light, the Greeks could not have celebrated Sappho so widely if they had known her to be queer. He believes the roots of this misconception spring from the comic stage of Athens and he expresses this belief in no uncertain terms:

> When one has successfully interpreted the artificial perception which has been suggested here (which would require a great deal to be fully developed), then the question that raises itself of how the opposite could have taken root—how the malicious rumor still can take root—seems much easier to answer.
>
> So naturally and necessarily does one now look to comedy that one cannot understand why it has never before been considered in this respect. Nevertheless, the Poetess was brought so often onto the stage that one can presume that it will also be seen to have happened in different ways. The proud Athenian was always comfortable enough amusing himself with the story and parodied emotions of a character who was the object of so much ambition for the quaint island folk of Lesbos.[12]
>
> [*Wenn es gelungen ist, für den Gesichtskunst, welcher hier angedeutet worden (den ihn völlig zu entwickeln würde sehr viel erfodern) einzunehmen, so wird die von selbst sich aufbringende Frage, wie der entgegengefetzte habe genommen werden und das bösliche Gerücht dennoch Wurzel fassen können, ungleich leichter zu beantworten sehn.*
>
> *So natürlich und nothwendig richtet man hier sogleich den Blick nach der Komödie, dass man nicht begreift, warum sie niemals in dieser Hinsicht in Betracht gekommen sen. Indessen ist die Dichterin so häufig auf die Buhne gebracht worden, dass man sich denken kann, es werde auch in sehr verschiedenem Sinn geschehen sehn; blieb es doch immer behaglich genug für den stolzen Athener, sich an den Geschichten und parodirten Empfindungen einer Person zu belustigen, die für das Inselvölkchen von Lesbos der Gegenstand eines sehr ernsthaften Ehrgeizes war.*]

I appreciate the insistence that different comedians must have treated Sappho in different ways, yet his stated caution serves mostly to screen the blurry picture he paints of Sappho's comic

[11] Welcker, *Sappho*, 16.
[12] *Ibid.*, 86–7.

reception. He claims that Sappho's obsessive love for Phaōn was a popular theme, which may or may not be true, and acknowledges that Diphilos' *Sappho*, according to Athēnaios' testimony, depicts Arkhilokhos and Hippōnax as her (male) lovers (Athēnaios 11.487a = Diphilos fr. 71).[13] If this is the evidence that survives for him to cite, then the assertion that he makes based on that evidence is a non-sequitur:

> And generally Attic comedy, if it touched on Sappho's friends, could not do anything else than project the exact counter-image of the real figure who carried these feelings, in order, in the manner of comedy, to dissolve her into nothing and annihilate her morally.[14]
>
> [*Und überhaupt konnte die Attische Komödie, wenn sie die Freundinnen der Sappho berührte, nicht anders, als von der wirklichen Gestalt, die diese Empfindungen trugen, das gerade Gegenbild ausstellen, um sie nach der Weise der Komödie in ein Nichts aufzulösen und sittlich zu vernichten.*]

He has no grounds to make this claim. As far as we know, no comedy paired Sappho with a female lover and none of the female characters who feature in her poetry are mentioned. Welcker wants to have his cake and eat it, too. This is the same logic as that which identifies Kerkylas as a comic creation: if comedy could have made a joke about Sappho's sexuality, then it must have made such a joke, even if we have no evidence for it.

Responding to Welcker and Wilamowitz, modern scholarship that takes an interest in Sappho's sexuality tends to see comedy as a corrupting force in her afterlife that recasts her as a heterosexual.[15] On one extreme stands Lardinois, who reads the comic version of Sappho as an "extreme heterosexual."[16] While I appreciate any approach that takes the queer content of Sappho's poetry in good faith, this reading oversimplifies Sappho's role in comedy, stripping it back to simply one of a sex object. Similarly, some studies of same-sex erotics in Greece, including Kenneth Dover's pivotal *Greek Homosexuality*, take the comedians' apparently heterosexual Sappho as evidence that comedy observed a rigorous taboo against female

[13] *Ibid.*, 87–91.
[14] Welcker, *Sappho*, 91.
[15] Lardinois, "Lesbian Sappho and Sappho of Lesbos," 22; Parker, "Sappho Schoolmistress," 309–10; Reynolds, *The Sappho Companion*, 70; Most, "Reflecting Sappho," 17; Gilhuly, *Erotic Geographies*, 105–7.
[16] Lardinois, "Lesbian Sappho and Sappho of Lesbos," 22.

homoeroticism.[17] In Chapter 2, I address this claim by looking at attitudes towards queer femininity in Attic comedy and Athenian culture more generally. By observing moments where these sources acknowledge love or sexual activity between women, I suggest that Athenians observed no such taboo and, rather, that they found the same-sex erotics of Sappho's poetry unremarkable, rather than shameful.

However, my thesis' main thrust is to look at Sappho's comic reception for evidence on other questions. As her orientation looms so large in her reception, very little ground has been cut in this direction. In the mid-90s, an Italian scholar, Sandra Brivitello, wrote a thoughtful review of Sappho's role on the comic stage, which emphasizes Athenian misogyny (not lesbophobia) as the overarching context in which these plays were composed.[18] A few critics have drawn data from a long fragment from Antiphanēs' *Sappho* in which the title character tells a riddle (Antiphanēs fr. 194), which touches on questions of fourth-century Athenian politics, gender, and literary genre more than Sappho's persona.[19] Some scholarship on Sappho's Athenian reception bafflingly ignores comedy, the genre that mentions her most often.[20] In his thoroughly-researched and well-argued book on Sappho's early reception, Dimitrios Yatromanolakis discusses comedy at length, but firmly downplays its importance to her legacy.[21] Gregory Nagy, whose work on Sappho's early performance I follow closely, only rarely cites comedy.[22] One of the studies that first encouraged me to take up this project was Nagy's chapter on Athenian performance of Sappho's songs between the chorus, the symposium—the culturally marked, more-or-less ritualized after-dinner drinking party—and the *kōmos*—the unstructured extra-sympotic revel.[23] While he briefly mentions Aristophanes in that essay, he does not

[17] Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 172–3; "Two Women of Samos," 226; Boehringer, *Female Homosexuality*, 191–3.
[18] Brivitello, "Saffo sulla scena."
[19] Buis, "De madres, ciudades, y tablillas"; Ceccarelli, *Ancient Greek Letter Writing*, 244–57; Gardella Hueso, "Un enigma sobre el enigma;" Tueller, "Writing, Women's Silent Speech," 188–91; Coo, "Sappho in Fifth- and Fourth-Century Greek Literature," 269–75.
[20] Snyder, "Sappho in Attic Vase Painting"; Bierl, "Sappho in Athens."
[21] Yatromanolakis, *Sappho in the Making*, 3; 293–312.
[22] The *Sappho* comedies make a brief appearance in an as-yet-unpublished manuscript that Nagy has made available on his blog, where he references Diphilos and Antiphanēs to make sense of Catullus' reception of Sappho, the real subject at hand (Nagy, "Homo ludens at Play With the Songs of Sappho," §90–2).
[23] Nagy, "The 'New Sappho' Reconsidered."

mention the *Sappho* comedies. My thesis has in mind Yatromanolakis' tendency to downplay the importance of Sappho's comic reception, which is unfounded, as well as this gap in Nagy's important research into how, why, and where classical Athenians sang Sappho's songs, research which I aim to shore up, not dismiss. For the rest of the introduction, let us set the stage for a deeper reading of her comic reception by reviewing what we know about Sappho's presence in Athens.

Sappho in Athens

Although we appreciate Sappho's lyrics today as page poetry, they were originally set to music and sung in a variety of settings. In Athens, Nagy speaks of formal, public performance contexts for her songs, including the citharodic competitions of the Panathenaic festival.[24] Performers also sang her songs at private events like symposia, as attested by a Roman-era anecdote in which Solon begs his nephew to teach him one of Sappho's songs "over drinks" (παρὰ πότον; Ael. fr. 187 Hercher = Stobaios 3.29.58). Plutarch's *Sympotic Questions* mentions Sappho being performed at a symposium (781d) and Aulus Gellius' *Attic Nights* shows a mixed chorus of boys and girls singing Sappho and Anakreōn at a dinner party (19.9 Marshall). Nagy also points to a Hellenistic epigram that speaks of women weaving while singing "Sapphic songs one after the other" (Σαπφώιους ἐξ ὀάρων ὀάρους; Poseidippos 55.2 Austin–Bastianini).[25] These post-classical literary sources speak to a great variety of performance contexts, with men and women among both performers and audience.

Late-archaic and classical Athenian art reinforces these literary accounts. Four extant Attic vases bear inscriptions that identify a female figure as Sappho.[26] The three earliest pictures, dating from the late-sixth and early-fifth centuries, show her in performance. To take one example, a red-image *kalyx-kratēr* shows Sappho dancing, one foot outstretched; in her left hand, she holds a *barbitos* from which an *aulos* bag hangs (Wuppertal, Von de Heydt-Museum, inv.

[24] On Sappho at the Panathenaia, see Nagy, "Transformations of Choral Lyric"; "Transmission of Archaic Greek Sympotic Songs," 34; "The 'New Sappho' Reconsidered"; "On the Shaping of the Lyric Canon in Athens," 103–4.
[25] Nagy, "Echoes of Sappho in Two Epigrams of Posidippus"; "Girl, Interrupted: More About Echoes of Sappho in Epigram 55 of Posidippus." For Poseidippos' reception of Sappho in general, see Lardinois, "Sappho als anker voor mannelijke en vrouwelijke dichters," 303–6.
[26] For photos and a longer description of these four Attic images, see Snyder, "Sappho in Attic Vase Paintings," 109–13.

49). *kratēres* are wine-mixing cups, and Yatromanolakis concludes that the illustration places Sappho in a sympotic context, especially through the instruments that she carries—women playing the *aulos* and the *barbitos* were recognizable symposium entertainers.[27] The other two pots from this period, a *hydria* held in Warsaw (Warsaw, National Museum, inv. 142333) and a kalathoid *kratēr* held in Munich (Antikensammlungen, inv. J753), represent Sappho in a similar way.

The fourth pot, an Attic red-figure *hydria* dated to the last half of the fifth century, shows her sitting and reading a book-scroll with other women gathered around her (Athens, National Museum, inv. CC1241). Her mouth is closed, indicating that she reads silently. The woman directly in front of Sappho holds a *barbitos* out to her, but she does not look up. While Yatromanolakis goes to great lengths to caution us against reading these images as direct representations of Athenian women's lived experience, he points out parallels between this vase and the many *hydriai* with women performing music produced by the same workshop.[28] *Hydriai* were intended primarily for women's use, so the two vases of this type indicate that female audiences would recognize Sappho from some form of public or private performance.[29]

The pictorial shift from a singing, dancing Sappho to a seated, reading Sappho presages how, from the end of the fifth century, oral performance of non-Athenian melic poetry encouraged textual scholarship on Sappho and her ilk in Athens.[30] Nagy cites Isokratēs' Letter 8, dating to the 350s, which speaks of a Mytilinean music teacher in Athens working on "the history of this discipline" (τὴν ἱστορίαν τῆς παιδείας ταύτης; Isokratēs *Epist.* 8.4). Nagy argues that this use of ἱστορία implies that "scholars in fourth-century Athens were engaged in research on producing a dialectally accurate 'script' for teaching the songs of Alkaios and Sappho" and further that παιδεία "refers to the practical activity of teaching youths how to *perform* these songs."[31] The Athens *hydria* indicates that Sappho could already be imagined reading, rather than singing, her songs in the late fifth century, but Nagy shows that such textualization

[27] Yatromanolakis, *Sappho in the Making*, 108–9.
[28] *Ibid.*, 143–153.
[29] On *hydriai* as objects intended for women's use, see Rabinowitz, "Excavating Women's Homoerotics," 107.
[30] Nagy, *Poetry as Performance*, 40–1; 192–3; "On the Shaping of the Lyric Canon in Athens," 106-7. See also "Transmission of Archaic Greek Sympotic Songs," 37-40.
[31] Nagy, "Transmission of Archaic Greek Sympotic Songs," 40.

enhances, rather than replaces, oral performance, just as the seated Sappho on the Athens *hydria* has a *barbitos* hovering over her head, ready for her to take up the song should she wish.

Comedy begins to parody Sappho in the late fifth century and picks up steam in the fourth, at the same time that written versions of Sappho's songs appear to begin supplementing oral performance. Still, I suggest that—with one notable exception—comedy largely ignored this shift and focused instead on Sappho's longstanding oral performance tradition, especially that linked to the symposium. Corroborating, although circumstantial, evidence comes from Plato's *Phaidros*, in which Socrates credits "Sappho the beautiful" (Σαπφοῦς τῆς καλῆς) and Anakreōn, another popular symposium poet, as traditional authorities on erotic love (235c).[32] Symposia were associated with certain kinds of literary discourse: toasts, boasts, ribald jokes, riddles, and erotica.[33] By convention, symposiasts reclined on couches arranged roughly in a circle, around which they passed drinking cups and, with the cups, the responsibility to sing or speak in turn. Symposium culture had a mixed "egalitarian and competitive character" and sympotic performance, correspondingly, could be both agonistic and collaborative.[34] As we will see, comedy confirms that Athenian symposiasts performed Sappho's poems in this context.

Sympotic egalitarianism only extended among the male symposiasts, not to the hired or enslaved workers on the margins of the party. Our literary sources indicate that the Athenian symposium only admitted women as servants and entertainers, like the *aulētris* (αὐλητρίς, 'female flute-player') whom the male symposiasts send out of the room at the beginning of Plato's *Symposium* to play for the women gathered in another part of the house (176e). Athenian literature also constructs a female sympotic sex worker known as the *hetaira* (ἑταίρα, 'female companion,' often translated 'courtesan'). However, we should not assume that the male-only symposium of literature reflected real-life practice, either in Athens or abroad, or that the only women who attended symposia did so in a subordinate position as entertainers, servants, and sex workers (although such women certainly attended, too).[35] This is key, because another claim that

[32] This reference signposts parallels between Sappho's erotics and Plato's argument in the *Phaedrus* (Carson, *Eros the Bittersweet*; Foley, "The Mother of the Argument"). Notably, Sappho's search for the "most beautiful" (κάλλιστον; 16.3) presages Plato's conception of *eros* as pursuit of truth.
[33] On sympotic performance and performative masculinity, see Stehle, *Performance and Gender*, 213–27.
[34] Węcowski, *The Rise of the Greek Aristocratic Banquet*, 304.
[35] Blazeby, "Women + Wine = Prostitute."

is sometimes made of comedy is that it depicts Sappho as a *hetaira*.[36] My thesis puts this claim into conversation with Rebecca Futo Kennedy's assessment that the *hetaira* does not exist as a "distinctive status category" in the classical period, and that classical sources invoke the *hetaira* archetype to disparage a broad range of women, from "prostitutes who attend symposia" to "elite women" whose behaviour scandalized polite society.[37] Literature like Plato's *Symposium* depict a conservative Athenian convention—the male-only symposium—but non-Athenian women moving to Athens or marrying into the Athenian citizen class likely brought mixed-gender sympotic practices with them, Kennedy argues. Comedy conflates elite foreign women and non-elite female entertainers in the figure of the *hetaira*.

Chapter 1 of this thesis will chart every reference to Sappho in Athenian comedy, showing that the performance of her songs in symposia was the key point of reference. In Chapter 2, as I mentioned, we consider how Sappho's (homo)sexuality figures—or pointedly does not figure—in her comic afterlife. Careful attention to other Athenian literature shows that her queerness was not an important feature in how the comedians parodied Sappho. As an alternate reading, Chapter 3 will reinterpret the comedians' treatment of Sappho in relation to the figure of the *hetaira*, who is herself a fraught and complicated literary archetype with a complex relationship to real, flesh-and-blood women. I reconsider arguments for Sappho's hetairization in light of recent scholarship like Kennedy's that sees *hetaira* discourse as a reflection of violent anti-immigrant sentiments in classical Athens. In so doing, I tentatively suggest that Sappho's figuration in comedy as a *hetaira* both obscures and records non-Athenian women's influence on her Athenian reception. My research in this thesis confirms some ideas about Sappho's reception in Athens—that the comedians assimilated her to the figure of the *hetaira*—while disrupting other narratives—that they aggressively played up or played down Sappho's queerness. In so doing, my main aim is to reconsider all comic references to Sappho, a project that has not been attempted since Yatromanolakis' book from 2007. New Sappho texts have come to light since then, as well as new critical methodologies. With data to be drawn both about Sapphic reception and Athenian culture more generally, the *Sappho* comedies deserve more attention, and I hope that this thesis goes some way to starting that conversation.

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[36] Smyth, *Greek Melic Poets*, 227; Wilamowitz, *Sappho und Simonides*, 24; Webster, "South Italian Vases and Attic Drama," 24.
[37] Kennedy, "Elite Citizen Women," 73.

Chapter 1 - Fragments Shored Against Our Ruin

In this chapter, we will discuss the surviving evidence for Sappho's reception in comedy. The project here continues what I started in the introduction: enumerating the data, contextualizing it, and clarifying a few mistaken ideas about Sappho's role on the comic stage, especially comedy's role in promulgating the myth of her love for the boatman, Phaōn. I contend that Sappho's comic reception draws on the performance of her songs in other Athenian contexts, especially the symposium, explaining what Brivitello calls the "sympotic dimension [*dimensione simposiale*]" of the *Sappho* comedy fragments.[38] This includes the Sappho-Phaōn myth, whose origins remain murky, but do not seem to be in comedy itself. We can divide the evidence into three categories. First, we know of six comedies called *Sappho,* each by a different playwright. In rough chronological order, those authors are Ameipsias, Amphis, Ephippos, Timoklēs, Antiphanēs, and Diphilos. Very little survives from these comedies, fewer than forty lines total, and the fragments do not necessarily mention Sappho or her poetry. Still, we can assume that a play named after her tells us something about Athens' appreciation of her poetry, as Claude Calame contends: "References to the names of 'lyric' poets and melic verse-forms in comedy are evidence of their wider reception in classical Athens."[39] This brings us to a second category: references to Sappho by name in plays that are not named after her. Two examples survive, short, evocative passages from Menander and Epikratēs. Quotations or close allusions to Sappho's poetry make a third category. Here, we will look at Aristophanes' plays, where he closely alludes to Sappho's erotic poetry to parody other kinds of love. Aristophanes also quotes a *skolion* that might be Sapphic, but is usually ascribed to Praxilla. The question of its authorship speaks to the chaotic creativity of sympotic performance, as we will see, and clarifies the dynamics under which the comedians encounter Sappho's poetic persona, even if the historical Sappho did not originally write this particular poem. Per Calame's straightforward formulation, these three types of reference record Sappho's reception in Athens in a similar way: poets' "names" and "verse-forms"—a category which should include direct quotations, close parodies, and general allusions to their style—are part of the same referential matrix. Therefore, in this chapter, we will move chronologically, instead of treating each type of comic reference separately. Moving in chronological order will particularly clarify the Sappho-Phaōn story, since

[38] Brivitello, "Saffo sulla scena," 204.
[39] Calame, "Melic Poets and Melic Forms," 114.

we will firmly establish the sympotic roots of her comic reception before we look at Menander, the only comedian to pair Sappho and Phaōn together, at the end of the chapter.

How to Read a Fragment

The fragmentary comic texts that address Sappho most directly demand a careful methodology. The context under which a fragment survives informs our reading of the fragmentary text. Writing about the pre-Socratic philosophical tradition, Catherine Osborne reads quotations by one ancient author of another as "embedded" rather than fragmentary—ancient philosophers who quote their pre-Socratic predecessors necessarily know more of the original text than they quote.[40] Even a "biased reading" in an ancient text reflects greater access to the original text than we have, or at least greater context.[41] For example, Ceccarelli suggests that Athēnaios quotes a long passage of Antiphanēs' *Sappho* from Klearkhos of Soloi's lost treatise *On Riddles*, not the playscript itself, which he made not have had.[42] However, even access to Klearkhos, a perceptive student of Aristotle who wrote the first work on the generic conventions of Greek riddles in the late fourth century BCE, gave Athēnaios contextualizing information about the riddle genre that informs how and why he quotes Antiphanēs.

Osborne's advice is productive when we consider the *Sappho* comedies. The bulk of our evidence for these plays comes embedded in two texts, Athēnaios' *Deipnosophistai* and Ioulios Polydeukēs' *Onomastikon.* The longer fragments of the *Sappho* comedies (Antiphanēs fr. 194; Diphilos frr. 70, 71; Ephippos fr. 20) come from Athēnaios, while Polydeukēs, as a lexicographer, preserves two single-word fragments (Ameipsias fr. 15; Antiphanēs fr. 155). One other single-word fragment comes from the Antiatticist (Amphis fr. 32), another lexicon written around the same time Athēnaios and Polydeukēs were active. Although we do not know who compiled the Antiatticist, we know that Athēnaios and Polydeukēs both hailed from Naukratis, the oldest Greek community in Egypt, and wrote in Greek between the second and third centuries CE under the Roman Empire. Both authors show a deep nostalgia for classical Athenian culture, a common thread in Greek literature from the Imperial period.[43] Polydeukēs, who was a well-

[40] Osborne, *Rethinking Early Greek Philosophy,* 10.
[41] *Ibid.*, 8–9.
[42] Ceccarelli, *Ancient Greek Letter Writing*, 244.
[43] On Atticist nostalgia in second- and third-century Greek literature, see Bowie, "Greeks and Their Past in the Second Sophistic."

respected scholar in his time and held a professorship in rhetoric at Athens, devoted his career to his *Onomastikon,* one of several attempts to catalogue and preserve 'proper' Attic Greek by mining classical literature for idiosyncratic words and phrases in that dialect—Dover calls him "the Atticist's Roget."[44] Athēnaios' *Deipnosophistai,* which resembles a hack copy of Xenophōn's or Plato's *Symposium,* has only a very thin veneer of narrative and authorial voice. Instead, Athēnaios has compiled an anthology of choice citations from Attic literature—Nesselrath calls the *Deipnosphistae* a "citation-sea [*Zitatenmeer*]."[45] He is our best source on the minor comic poets, whom he cites deeply and often, mining their plays for data about the Athenian dinner party and its accoutrements: food, flatware, wine, and sex. Whereas Polydeukēs and other Atticist lexicographers want to preserve Athenian language and literature, Athēnaios also wants to preserve the aristocratic male drinking culture in which so much of that literature was performed.

The one papyrus to mention a *Sappho* comedy leaves us with a bit of a conundrum. P.Oxy. 2659, a fragmentary index of comic titles, lists a play called *Sappho* alongside the title *Adulterers* (Μοιχοί); the playwright's name is lost. Kassel and Austin include P.Oxy. 2659 fr. 1, col. 1 as Ameipsias test. 2, following follow the 1968 *editio princeps* of the papyrus, since the papyrus mostly lists plays from Old Comedy and Ameipsias is known from other sources to have written both a *Sappho* and an *Adulterers*. Yatromanolakis points out that Antiphanēs also wrote plays with those titles, so the attribution is at best dubious.[46] Since the list of titles seems to have been organized alphabetically by author, and the titles in question come near Aristophanes' plays, then either poet is plausible. Still, this papyrus records a valuable detail about the diachronic circulation of comic texts, including the *Sappho* comedies. The list dates to the second century of the common era and probably records the contents of a library, showing that copies of some of the comedies we are looking at survived until the same period that Athēnaios and Polydeukēs extracted their quotations. If Antiphanēs' *Sappho* was circulating in Egypt in the second century, then that would question, but not refute, Ceccarelli's assertion that Athēnaios did not have a copy of the play itself.

[44] Dover, "Two Women of Samos," 225.
[45] Nesselrath, *Mittlere Komödie,* 67.
[46] Yatromanolakis, *Sappho in the Making,* 296–7.

Aristophanes

Athēnaios certainly had a complete copy of Aristophanes' plays, at least as many as survive today. Although he eludes to her poetry, none of Aristophanes' extant playscripts mention Sappho by name. He names other female poets, however, often making them the butt of a joke. In *Frogs*, the fictional version of Aeschylus disparagingly credits a female songwriter, Kyrēnē, as an inspiration for Euripides (*R.* 1325–8). In *Assemblywomen,* an old woman references Kharixenē—an *aulētris* of the fifth century whom later authors name as a famous songwriter (Phot. ε 1797 Theodoridis; Eust. vol. 1, p. 509 van der Valk)—to disparage a younger woman's musical abilities as they compete to attract men (*Eccl.* 943). Aristophanes' disparaging jokes indicate that, while he expected his audience to recognize these songwriters' styles, he did not think highly of their musical abilities.

In contrast to Kharixenē and Kyrēnē, Aristophanes appreciates Sappho's poetry and models his own after it. Brivitello identifies that *Eq.* 730 (τίς, ὦ Παφλαγών, ἀδικεῖ σε; "Who, o Paphlagonian, wrongs you?") parodies Sapph. fr. 1.19–20 (τίς σ', ὦ Ψάπφ', ἀδίκησι; "Who, o Sappho, wrongs you?").[47] This allusion reduces Sappho's religiously-tinged erotics to an earthy political satire, with Demos, the speaking character in *Knights,* standing in for Aphrodite, the speaking character in Sappho's poem. And what is it that "wrongs" the Paphlagonian, a cipher for the politician Kleōn? His professed love for the people of Athens—Aristophanes would say 'lust for power'—goes unrequited (ὁτιὴ φιλῶ σ', ὦ Δῆμ', ἐραστής τ' εἰμὶ σός; "Since I love you, o Demos, and am your lover"; *Eq.* 732). The allusion integrates Sapphic language into a common Athenian rhetoric of political eroticism, which is prominent in the *Knights,* showing that Sappho's love songs have become recognizable erotic models, ripe for parody.[48]

Another passage connects Sappho to Praxilla of Sicyōn, a mid-fifth-century poet, and shows us the performance context in which both their poetry came to be famous. In *Wasps,* Aristophanes quotes a short sympotic *skolion* that we usually credit to Praxilla (Prax. fr. 749

[47] Brivitello, "Saffo sulla scena," 179–80. She also cites Bonanno ("Sapph. fr. 44A(a)," 96–7), who suggests that the chorus' invocation of the clouds at *Nub.* 275–80 alludes to Sapph. fr. 44. This assertion is, however, insubstantial, as the hymnic invocation of a descending goddess is generic, not particularly Sapphic.

[48] Scholtz, "Friends, Lovers, Flatterers." Compare the *polis*' troubled longing for Alcibiades in *Frogs*: "[Athens] longs for him, hates him, wishes to have him" (ποθεῖ μέν, ἐχθαίρει δέ, βούλεται δ' ἔχειν; *Ra.* 1425).

PMG = Ar. *V.* 1238–9). However, Yatromanolakis points out that the scholiast on whose authority we ascribe these lines to Praxilla also reports that others credit the poem to Sappho or Alkaios (Σ in Ar. *V.* 1238–9; cf. Eust. *Il.* 2.711–715, vol. 1, 509 van der Valk).[49] In this scene from *Wasps*, Bdelykleōn tries to replace his father's love for Kleōn, the target of Aristophanes' satire, with a love for trendy symposium entertainments. Together, they rehearse the *skolia* game:

(Βδ.) τί δ' ὅταν Θέωρος πρὸς ποδῶν κατακείμενος
ᾄδῃ Κλέωνος λαβόμενος τῆς δεξιᾶς·
Ἀδμήτου λόγον, ὦταῖρε, μαθὼν τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς φίλει.
τούτῳ τί λέξεις σκόλιον; (Φι.) ὡδί πως ἐγώ. 1240
οὐκ ἔστιν ἀλωπεκίζειν,
οὐδ' ἀμφοτέροισι γίγνεσθαι φίλον. (*V.* 1236–42)

(Bd.) What about when Theōros, lying at Kleōn's
feet, takes his right hand and sings:
Understand Admētos' story, my friend, and love good men.
What *skolion* will you sing then? (Ph.) I would sing like this:
It is impossible to be foxy
and befriend both sides.

The scholiast reports the disputed authorship of the first poem, the one Bdelykleōn proposes. We do not know who wrote the second poem. This authorship dispute reflects the agonistic creativity of Attic *skolion* performance, a poetic game in which players, who were by turns both performer and audience, competed to 'cap' the prior statement in a competition of wits, creativity, poetic memory, and comic timing.[50] Sometimes they improvised new responses, but they also quoted or adapted snippets from well-known songs, like Bdelykleōn does here. The game's passage back-and-forth across the room, rather than around the circle, may explain the name of the genre (σκολιὰ μέλη, 'twisted' or 'crooked songs').[51] In Book 15 of the *Deipnosophistai*, Athēnaios lists 24 examples of Attic *skolia*, the largest surviving collection, that look a lot like the examples that

[49] Yatromanolakis, *Sappho in the Making*, 215–6.
[50] I generally follow Martin, "Crooked Competition," with the caveat noted below. See also Stehle, *Performance and Gender*, 218–22.
[51] I find Martin's alternative etymology unconvincing: A *skolion* refers to a "'indirect,' slanted, crooked, para-discourse" by which a speaker could address a touchy topic or criticize a powerful target from an oblique angle ("Crooked Competition," 70). He relies too heavily on the examples we find in Aristophanes, which necessarily colour our perception of the *skolia* game through the invective conventions of Old Comedy.

Aristophanes mentions in *Wasps*. However, his simple list format does not capture the classical Athenian performance as well as Aristophanes does.

The *skolia* game was not the only kind of sympotic performance, but there was certainly slippage between more formal sympotic monody and skoliastic play—an author whose work became familiar in the former also became fodder for the latter.[52] Alcohol must have lubricated this slippage, and new versions of old songs could become recognizable standards. This sympotic remixing explains how two Lesbian poems each survive in two different versions. In the first case, a section from one of Alkaios' songs (fr. 249.6–9) winds up on Athēnaios' list as an anonymous *skolion* in the Attic dialect (fr. 891 *PMG* = Athen. 15.695a).[53] In the second case, two papyri preserve different versions of Sappho's Tithōnos Poem. Nagy argues convincingly that the longer version, preserved on the Cologne Papyrus that came to light in 2005, reflects choral performance, where the singers begin and end each song together. The shorter version, he argues, reflects relay performance either at public citharodic festivals or at private symposia, where it may have been fodder for the *skolia* game.[54] Nagy and Yatromanolakis both mention the two surviving versions of Sappho fr. 2, arguing that both would be appropriate for the symposium, where performance dynamics created the variation.[55]

Athēnaios does not mention Sappho as a skoliastic author, but he does record that Alkaios, Anakreōn, and Praxilla contributed prominently to the genre, citing Aristophanes' *Banqueters* for credibility:

> ἐμέμνηντο δὲ πολλοὶ καὶ τῶν Ἀττικῶν ἐκείνων σκολίων· ἅπερ καὶ αὐτὰ ἄξιόν ἐστί σοι ἀπομνημονεῦσαι διά τε τὴν ἀρχαιότητα καὶ <τὴν> ἀφέλειαν τῶν ποιησάντων, ἐπαινουμένων ἐπὶ τῇ ἰδέᾳ ταύτῃ τῆς ποιητικῆς Ἀλκαίου τε καὶ Ἀνακρέοντος, ὡς Ἀριστοφάνης παρίστησιν ἐν Δαιταλεῦσι λέγων οὕτως·
>
> ᾇσον δή μοι σκόλιόν τι λαβῶν Ἀλκαίου κἀνακρέοντος
> καὶ Πράζιλλα δ᾽ ἡ Σικυωνία ἐθαυμάζετο ἐπὶ τῇ τῶν σκολίων ποιήσει.
>
> (Ar. fr. 235 = Athen. 15.693f–694a)

[52] Yatromanolakis notes that "[s]ymposiastic encomia were hard to distinguish from *skolia* (*Sappho in the Making*, 215).
[53] Yatromanolakis, *Sappho in the Making*, 210; Nagy, "Transmission of Archaic Greek Sympotic Songs," 38–9.
[54] Nagy, "The 'New Sappho' Reconsidered," 193.
[55] Yatromanolakis, *Sappho in the Making*, 344-8; Nagy, "The 'New Sappho' Reconsidered," 192.

> Many have mentioned the famous Attic *skolia*, which are worth mentioning again to you on account of both the antiquity and simplicity of those who wrote them and which are praised on account of the style of Alkaios and Anakreōn, as Aristophanes proves in *Banqueters*:
>
> Sing me a *skolion*, drawing something from Alkaios and Anakreōn
> And Praxilla of Sicyōn was amazing at writing *skolia*.

Sappho and Alkaios share an obvious connection through their Lesbian origin and Yatromanolakis notes how Attic *skolia* commonly used Aeolic meters, even when the lyrics were in the Attic dialect.[56] The two sources that I mentioned in the introduction—Plato's *Phaidros* and Gellius' *Attic Nights*—are not the only ones that pair Sappho and Anakreōn together as the archetypal male and female love poets (Klearkhos fr. 33 Wehrli; Plu. *Mulier.* 243b; Paus. 1.25.1 Spiro). Since there are clear connections between Sappho, Alkaios, and Anakreōn, that these two male poets would have their songs sung as *skolia* suggests Sappho's were fodder for the game, too. Based on Athēnaios' testimony in this passage and references to symposiasts singing her songs, Nagy concurs, arguing that Lesbian poetry, including Sappho's, must have been fodder for skoliastic performance at symposia.[57]

Recognizing this complex performance tradition, the *skolion* of disputed authorship that Aristophanes quotes in *Wasps* does not need to be Sappho's to tell us how her poetry was appreciated in Athenian culture broadly and in comedy specifically. Nagy emphasizes the connection between comic theatre and symposia as Dionysian spaces in which "influential lyric models like Sappho become conventional subjects of amusement and even ridicule."[58] Since the men who performed her songs embodied the speaking character, often identified as Sappho herself, the manipulation of her figure on the comic stage was linked to the playful interpolation of her songs in symposia, especially in the *skolia* game. Aristophanes' subtle references to Sappho have not received as much attention as the fragmentary comedies that play with her persona, but he testifies to the patterns of performance under which other comedians also interacted with her songs.

[56] Yatromanolakis, *Sappho in the Making*, 216.
[57] Nagy, "Did Sappho and Alcaeus Ever Meet?" 271.
[58] *Ibid.*, 228.

Three Single-Word Fragments

Ameipsias' *Sappho* is the only other work from Old Comedy that we know addressed her. Unfortunately, very little survives from this play. As we established that P.Oxy. 2659 does not definitively refer to Ameipsias' play, the only credible reference is one of the three Roman-era lexicon entries that cite a *Sappho* comedy, each only a single word. Ameipsias was a poet of later Old Comedy whose career, like Aristophanes', stretched into the fourth century. Aristophanes mocks him by name right at the beginning of the *Frogs* (*R.* 12–5) and the surviving list of Lenaian victors, if the inscription has been reconstructed properly, places him four lines after Aristophanes; four lines after the other prominent Old Comedian, Eupolis; and directly before the comedian Plato (*IG* ii^2 2325). With only one single-word fragment surviving from the play, we cannot say with any certainty at all when in his career Ameipsias staged his *Sappho*. Polydeukēs offers no additional context:

> ἐν δὲ τῇ Ἀμειψίου Σαπφοῖ καὶ νωθρότερον εὑρήκαμεν.
> (Ameipsias fr. 15 = Poll. 9.138 Bethe)

> In Ameipsias' *Sappho,* we also find *nōthroteron* ('duller').

In the same entry, he also quotes other forms of the word from Plato, Lycophron, and Demosthenes. There is no commentary—no note on what happens in the play, or what sort of scene or even sentence this single word comes from—beyond the respectable company Ameipsias keeps here. Does the neuter singular refer to a 'slothful' or 'stupid' object? Do we take the neuter as an adverb? Or has Polydeukēs changed the gender or case to fit his own purposes, to fit the grammar of his sentence? It is unclear.

In the same way, the anonymous Antiatticist does not give much context when it cites the only remnant of Amphis' *Sappho*. Amphis wrote later in the fourth century than Ameipsias, fully in the period of Middle Comedy, of which he was a minor figure, with only 49 surviving fragments and a three-word entry in the Suda: "Amphis, an Athenian comedian" (Ἄμφις, κωμικός, Ἀθηναῖος; Suda α 1760). Contra the Suda, he may have been born on Andros, if he is the same as the "Anphis of Andros" known from an Attic funerary inscription (*IG* ii^2 347). Amphis was a contemporary of the philosopher Plato, whose doctrine he parodies (fr. 6). The Antiatticist quotes the only surviving fragment from his *Sappho* as a lexical oddity:

> διενεχθῆναι· ἀντὶ τοῦ μάχεσθαι. Ἄμφις Σαπφοῖ
> (Amphis fr. 32 = Antiatt. δ 29)

> *dienekhthēnai* (‘to quarrel’): in place of *makhesthai* (‘to fight’). Amphis in *Sappho.*

Unlike Polydeukēs, who regularly quotes multiple authors at a time to give different spellings or uses of the same word, the anonymous Antiatticist usually quotes only a single source for a word. Here, I would be surprised if διενεχθῆναι appeared in exactly this form in Amphis’ original text, since verbs in the Antiatticist are indexed in the infinitive. It also is not clear if the compiler is making a point about the aorist form by comparing it to the present tense. Unfortunately, neither lexicographer gives us much information about either Ameipsias’ or Amphis’ reading of Sappho or the structure of either play. Their most useful contributions to our understanding of Sappho’s role in comedy is that she was a popular subject over a long period of time, since Polydeukēs’ testimony that Ampeipsias wrote a *Sappho* play shows that she already took center stage in Old Comedy.

When Polydeukēs quotes another *Sappho* comedy, he provides quite a bit of useful context by comparing many compound words from the root βιβλίον (‘book’), finding one, βιβλιογράφος (‘book-writer’), in Antiphanēs’ *Sappho*. Antiphanēs was one of the most celebrated Attic comedians of the fourth century, with 8 Lēnaian victories (*IG* ii^2 2325.144). The Suda lists both Smyrna and Cius as possible birthplaces (Suda α 2735). Unlike in the previous cases, Polydeukēs provides interesting comparisons when he quotes from Antiphanēs’ play:

> καὶ βιβλιοπώλην μὲν παρὰ Ἀριστομένει εὑρήσεις ἐν Γόησιν, βιβλιαγράφον δὲ παρὰ Κρατίνῳ ἐν Χείροσιν, βιβλιογράφος δὲ παρὰ Ἀντιφάνει ἐν Σαπφοῖ. παρὰ δὲ τῷ νεωτέρῳ Κρατίνῳ ἐν Ὑποβολιμαίῳ βιβλιοθήκη. Ἀντιφάνης δὲ ἐν τῷ Μύλωνι εἴρηκε βιβλιδίου κόλλημα.
>
> (Antiphanēs fr. 195 = Poll. 7.211 Bethe)

> And you will find *bibliopōlēn* (‘bookseller’) in Aristomenēs’ *Cheats* (fr. 9), *bibliagraphos* (‘book-writer’) in Kratinos’ *Inferiors* (fr. 267), but *bibliographos* in Antiphanēs’ *Sappho.* According to Kratinos Junior’s *Unexpected Child*, there’s *bibliothēkē* (‘book-case, library’; fr. 11). And Antiphanēs said *biblidiou kollēma* (‘a little book’s glued-together roll’) in *Millhouse* (fr. 160).

The citations from comedy trace an increased interest in written texts as the genre transitions from Old to Middle—Kratinos hailed from the generation before Aristophanes and Aristomenēs’ career straddled the fifth and fourth centuries, but the other comedians whom Polydeukēs lists

here are solidly Middle Comedians. Formal variations suggest that these compound words are new and dynamic.

Antiphanēs fr. 194

The other fragment from this play, a dialogue in which Sappho poses a riddle to a male character, is the longest surviving fragment from any of the *Sappho* comedies. This fragment comes from a long digression in Book 10 of the *Deipnosophistai* on the subject of sympotic riddles, for which Greek uses two words mostly interchangeably: γρῖφος (*griphos*) and αἴνιγμα (*ainigma*). This section of the *Deipnosophistai* follows a discussion on the moral peril posed by alcoholism. The dinner-sophists were just beginning to talk about drinking-cups when the topic of riddles comes up. Athēnaios borrows this definition of the Greek γρῖφος from Klearkhos' *On Riddles*: "a riddle (*griphos*) is a facetious problem, which requires one to find out through thoughtful inquiry what has been proposed and which is spoken for the sake of honour or censure" (γρῖφος πρόβλημά ἐστι παιστικόν, προστακτικὸν τοῦ διὰ ζητήσεως εὑρεῖν τῇ διανοίᾳ τὸ προβληθὲν τιμῆς ἢ ἐπιζημίου χάριν εἰρημένον; Athen. 10.448c = Klearkhos fr. 86 Wehrli). Klearkhos emphasizes the personal, reputational stakes in riddle-telling, with parallels to a game of chance like knucklebones. Anna Potamiti, who has written extensively on the ancient riddle, emphasizes the ludic role of folk genres like the riddle and points out Klearkhos disdains the sorts of riddles that he hears performed as too crass, a pale shadow of the riddles his ancestors used to tell (Klearkhos fr. 63 Wehrli = Athen. 10.457c-f).[59] Rooting the *griphos* in the sympotic tradition, one of Athēnaios' examples is a drinking game: if the guesser cannot figure out the solution, then he has to drain his cup (10.448e). According to a scholion on Aristophanes' *Wasps,* Klearkhos agrees that "enigmatic problems posed at symposia are called *griphoi*" (γρῖφοι δὲ λέγεται τὰ ἐν τοῖς συμποσίοις προβαλλόμενα αἰνιγματώδη ζητήματα; Klearkhos fr. 85 Wehrli = Σ in Ar. *V.* 20). In a fragment from a different comedy, Antiphanēs explains that that participants in the riddle game guessed at the answer "one after another" (ἐφεξῆς; Antiphanēs fr. 122.4), mirroring the circular passage of songs and drinks in the symposium. More telling still, Derek Collins argues compellingly that the Attic *skolia* tradition drew inspiration from

[59] Potamiti, "Playing at Riddles," 140.

traditional riddles, both in form and content, which means that Antiphanēs' riddling Sappho once again connects her poetry to this specific sympotic discourse.[60]

It is unclear how many of the literary references in Athēnaios' digression are requoted from Klearkhos' treatise and how many Athēnaios tracked down himself. It appears that riddles were of particular interest to Antiphanēs, since he is quoted more than any other author in this passage. Immediately after giving Klearkhos' definition and typology, Athēnaios quotes two passages from Antiphanēs in which male speakers complain angrily about riddlers (Athen. 448e–449e = Antiphanēs fr. 122; fr. 55), showing that he found comedy in excoriating people who use overly complicated, riddling language in day-to-day conversation—perhaps this comic moralizing overlaps with Klearkhos' appeal to "honour or censure" as a key factor in riddle games. The quotation from his *Sappho* comes a little later, when Athēnaios is merely listing examples of riddles without much commentary:

> ἐν δὲ Σαπφοῖ ὁ Ἀντιφάνης αὐτὴν τὴν ποιήτριαν προβάλλουσαν ποιεῖ
> γρίφους τόνδε τὸν τρόπον, ἐπιλυομένου τινὸς οὕτως· ἡ μὲν γάρ φησιν·
> (Σα.) ἔστι φύσις θήλεια βρέφη σῴζουσ᾽ ὑπὸ κόλποις
> αὐτῆς, ὄντα δ᾽ ἄφωνα βοὴν ἵστησι γεγωνὸν
> καὶ διὰ πόντιον οἶδμα καὶ ἠπείρου διὰ πάσης
> οἷς ἐθέλει θνητῶν, τοῖς δ᾽ οὐδὲ παροῦσιν ἀκούειν
> ἔξεστιν· κωφὴν δ᾽ ἀκοῆς αἴσθησιν ἔχουσιν
> ταῦτά τις ἐπιλυόμενός φησιν·
> (Β.) ἡ μὲν φύσις γὰρ ἣν λέγεις ἐστὶν πόλις,
> βρέφη δ᾽ ἐν αὐτῇ διατρέφει τοὺς ῥήτορας.
> οὗτοι κεκραγότες δὲ τὰ διαπόντια
> τἀκ τῆς Ἀσίας καὶ τἀπὸ Θράικης λήμματα
> ἕλκουσι δεῦρο. νεμομένων δὲ πλησίον
> αὐτῶν κάθηται λοιδορουμένων τ᾽ ἀεὶ
> ὁ δῆμος οὐδὲν οὔτ᾽ ἀκούων οὔθ᾽ ὁρῶν.
> (Σα.) πῶς γὰρ γένοιτ᾽ ἄν, ὦ πάτερ,
> ῥήτωρ ἄφωνος; (Β.) ἢν ἁλῷ τρὶς παρανόμων.
> καὶ μὴν ἀκριβῶς ᾠόμην
> ἐγνωκέναι τὸ ῥηθέν. ἀλλὰ δὴ λέγε.
> ἔπειτα ποιεῖ τὴν Σαπφὼ διαλυομένην τὸν γρῖφον οὕτω·
> (Σα.) θήλεια μέν νυν ἐστὶ φύσις ἐπιστολή,
> βρέφη δ᾽ ἐν αὐτῇ περιφέρει τὰ γράμματα·
> ἄφωνα δ᾽ ὄντα <ταῦτα> τοῖς πόρρω λαλεῖ
> οἷς βούλεθ᾽· ἕτερος δ᾽ ἄν τύχῃ τις πλησίον
> ἑστὼς ἀναγιγνώσκοντος οὐκ ἀκούσεται
> (Antiphanēs fr. 194 = Athen. 10.450e–451b)

[60] Collins, *Master of the Game*, 131–4.

In *Sappho*, Antiphanēs makes the poetess tell riddles in this way, while someone tries to unravel them. She says:

(Sa.) She's a feminine creature who keeps her young safe under
her clothes. Her voiceless children cause a loud uproar
across the sea-swell and throughout all dry land
to whichever mortals she wishes, but those who are right beside her
can't hear them—they have a dull sense of hearing…

Someone says this as an answer:

(B.) This creature which you're talking about is the *polis*,
and it nourishes its children, the *rhētōrs*, within itself.
Cawing like crows, the pull in their overseas revenues
here out of Asia and from Thrace.
As they divvy it up among themselves close by
and insult each other the whole time, the *demos*
sits there, not listening, unable to see anything.
(Sa.) But how can a *rhētōr* be voiceless,
father? (B.) If he is convicted of illegalities three times!
And yet I thought that I had correctly
figured out what you were talking about. Come on, tell me!

Then he makes Sappho explain the riddle like this:

(Sa.) Well, the feminine creature is a letter (*epistole*)!
The children are the letters (*grammata*) that she carries around inside herself.
Although voiceless on their own, they chatter at those who are far away,
whoever they want. And anyone else who is nearby
won't overhear whoever is reading.

Kassel and Austen edit out Athēnaios' interjections between the three sections of this dialogue, leaving only a gap after line 5—I have kept their line numbers to illustrate the unity they see (Athēnaios' interjections are unnumbered). The three chunks fit together neatly as one flowing dialogue, but we know on metrical grounds that Athēnaios has omitted sections of lines 14 and 16. Two small gaps of two iambs each could indicate interjections, perhaps longer extending over several lines, from a third character or from the chorus that Athēnaios (or Klearkhos) chooses to omit for clarity.

As with other fragmentary plays, it is not clear exactly when Antiphanēs staged his *Sappho* or how audiences received it. However, scholarship has picked up on details in this long passage that may relate to known events in Athenian history. Antiphanēs references "overseas revenues … out of Asia and from Thrace" (fr. 194.9–10), which may or may not refer to a recent change in Athenian tributaries and therefore could perhaps be dated to a certain decade in the

fourth century. Webster argues that this must reflect the Athenian general Timotheos' "forward policy" in Asia and Thrace in the late 360s.[61] However, we know that Antiphanēs had a long career of about 80 years, from the 380s to the turn of the third century (see the reference to "King SeLeukos" at fr. 185.4, from a different play), so his *Sappho* could date from some time later.[62]

Unlike the other comedians we have seen so far, Antiphanēs plays with Sappho's persona, putting her on stage as a character and bringing her femininity to the fore in the riddle exchange. The wordplay that Antiphanēs ventriloquizes into Sappho's mouth conflates grammatical and social gender. Like a good Athenian housewife, the "feminine creature" that Sappho is looking for is defined by her children, who manage to cause quite a ruckus even though their mother holds them close. This contrasts with her interlocutor's masculine, political answer. A modern feminist reading points out that Athenian culture thought of epistolary writing as a particularly feminine form of discourse, contrasting it with male oral discourse.[63] The riddle's two solutions contrast the kind of noise that politicians and letters make: the explicitly masculine *rhētōrs* caw like crows (κεκραγότες; fr. 194.8), a threatening, boisterous noise, while the implicitly feminine epistolary discourse consists merely of "chatter" (λαλεῖ; fr. 194.19), using a verb that denotes inconsequential speech (cf. Eupolis fr. 116: λαλεῖν ἄριστος, ἀδυνατώτατος λέγειν).[64] We know nothing about the man who tries to answer Sappho's riddle except that she calls him πάτερ (fr. 194.13). Williamson interprets him literally as "Sappho's father."[65] However, we should exercise some caution. The word occurs as a respectful form of address for an unrelated older man (*Od.* 7.28, 7.48; Ar. *Eq.* 725; *V.* 556).[66] Writing around the same time as Antiphanēs, the comedian Xenarkhos likewise reports that sex workers, hanging out the brothel window with bare breasts, called potential customers πατρίδια (Olson translates "daddykins"; fr. 4.15).[67] The honorific that Sappho uses in this scene could therefore carry a range of meanings,

[61] Webster, "Chronological Notes," 15.
[62] Konstantakos, "Notes on the Chronology and Career of Antiphanes," 174–80.
[63] Williamson, *Sappho's Immortal Daughters,* 15–6; Reynolds, *Sappho Companion,* 70; Ceccarelli, *Ancient Greek Letter Writing,* 244–57; "Écriture féminine, écriture épistolaire"; Tueller, "Writing, Women's Silent Speech," 188–91; Buis, "De madres, ciudades, y tablillas."
[64] Ceccarelli, *Ancient Greek Letter Writing,* 256–7.
[65] Williamson, *Sappho's Immortal Daughters*, 15.
[66] Dickey, *Greek Forms of Address*, 79.
[67] Olson, *Broken Laughter*, 461.

from mundanely descriptive to flirtatious; the lack of diminutive suggests that the sexual use is unlikely, but it remains a possibility.

The attention Antiphanēs pays to the written word in frr. 194 and 195 mirrors the seated, reading Sappho on the Athens *hydria*. Fr. 194 plays with the tension between different modes of oral and written discourse: a joke about a riddle about a letter, in a play about a poet, containing a satire that retells specific details about contemporary political rhetoric. It is telling that Sappho, whose poetry was increasingly appreciated in written form when this play was performed, champions the written word in her 'correct' answer to the riddle, but the riddle form itself, a hallmark of an older oral literary tradition, returns us to a the sympotic sphere and the oral performance of Sappho's poetry. The scholarship on fr. 194 has picked up on Antiphanēs' metapoetic interest in literature, both written and oral. Back in the 1960s, Bernard Knox cites Sappho's answer to this riddle as proof that silent reading was already well-understood in fourth-century Athens.[68] More recently, Svenbro cites this fragment as late evidence that the real Sappho herself composed "allegorical poems, even allegories on writing," to bolster his allegorical reading of Sappho fr. 31, an ambitious, but ahistorical, argument.[69] Picking up on ancient sources that identify iambics as one kind of poetry that Sappho wrote (Philodēmos *De Poem.* 2 Janko fr. 117), Rosenmeyer sees "an invective or iambic undercurrent in this dramatic situation: a clever female poet reveals her own intellectual powers at the expense of others."[70] We certainly feel an invective tone in Sappho's response, but does Antiphanēs really think she is smarter than her interlocutor? Ceccarelli points out that this exchange highlights "the relationship between the oral speech of the rhetors and the epistolary genre: for even if Sappho considers the first solution a wrong one, it must have had some degree of plausibility or her interlocutor would not have proposed it."[71] Like Ceccarelli, I see a great deal of plausibility in the male speaker's answer, as he himself asserts (καὶ μὴν ἀκριβῶς ᾠόμην ἐγνωκέναι τὸ ῥηθέν; fr. 194.15–6). I read his ἀλλὰ δὴ λέγε as the exasperated exhortation of a man who no longer enjoys the game in front of him.

[68] Knox, "Silent Reading in Antiquity," 432–3.
[69] Svenbro, *Phrasikleia,* 158. His allegorical interpretation of fr. 31 is unconvincing (*Ibid.*, 150–7).
[70] Rosenmeyer, "Sappho's Iambics," 18.
[71] Ceccarelli, *Ancient Greek Letter Writing,* 244.

Ceccarelli further warns us not to ignore either answer, but to consider the "tension" between them.[72] The tension that she sees is between the masculine and feminine answers to the riddle, which both have their merits as answers to the question, but I would also like to point out a tension in the riddle genre. Antiphanēs seems to keep to the generic conventions of riddles in this fragment. Sappho sets her riddle in hexameter, a common but not universal convention for ancient riddles.[73] According to Olson's commentary on this fragment, introducing a riddle with ἔστι is also common.[74] The tension in this genre, which Antiphanēs sticks to so closely, comes from the gendered gap between its conventional setting (masculine symposium) and conventional performers (women). Potamiti approaches this tension merely as two related, but distinct, directions in which the Greek riddling tradition pulls.[75] However, we know that women attended symposia as entertainers, so it is possible that they participated in the riddle game. Greek literature, including comedy, shows women playing at riddles over drinks at festivals, as Potamiti points out (at the Adōnia in Diphilos fr. 49; at the Agriōnia in Boiōtian Orkhomenos in Plu. *Quest. Conv.* 717a5), but never at symposia proper.[76] I would suggest that, just as Aristophanes incorporates female-authored poetry into the *skolia* canon and how female musicians accompanied sympotic performance, Antiphanēs demonstrates how female entertainers could take part in the game itself.

Many scholars compare Antiphanēs' fictional Sappho with Kleoboulinē, daughter of Cleobolus, to whom several Greek authors attribute a number of *ainigmata*.[77] Another archaic woman with a reputation for intellectual creativity, Kleoboulinē was also the subject of comedies by Kratinos, the first author to mention her, and by Alexis. Willamowitz goes so far as to say that Kratinos made her up entirely based on her father, who was counted among the Seven Sages.[78] The earliest citation of one of her riddles comes from the anonymous *Dissoi Logoi* (3.11 Becker–Scholz), written in late-fifth- or early-fourth-century Athens. Aristotle is so besotted by one of

[72] Ceccarelli, *Ancient Greek Letter Writing*, 247.
[73] See the collection of Late Roman Latin-language hexameter riddles credited to 'Symposius,' a pseudonym that also suggests a connection between riddles and the symposium.
[74] Olson, *Broken Laughter*, 201.
[75] Potamiti, "Playing at Riddles," 137.
[76] *Ibid*., 137–8.
[77] Wilamowitz, *Sappho und Simonides*, 23; Brivitello, "Saffo sulla scena," 182; Ceccarelli, "Écriture féminine," 6–9; Yatromanolakis, *Sappho in the Making*, 301-12.
[78] Wilamowitz, *Kleine Schriften*, 4:60–63.

her riddles that he quotes it twice in different treatises (*Rhet*. 1405a35, *Poet*. 1458a29; cf. Athen. 10.452b; Demetr. *Eloc.* 102 Rademacher; Plut. *Sept. Sap. Conv.* 154b). Riddles ascribed to her likely circulated in the sympotic canon, from which they moved to philosophical literature. Building on Aristophanes' appreciation for her riddles, in the *Convivium Septem Sapientium,* Plutarch gives us the most complete view of Kleoboulinē, although he falls prey to the same conservative nostalgia as Athēnaios, which offers a very rarified version of the symposium. Kleoboulinē and her mother sit with the men for dinner, but do not speak. Instead, male characters quote Kleoboulinē's riddles as she sits mutely to one side, and the women retire quietly before the men start drinking. They are not the sort of women, in Plutarch's moralizing view, who would show up to a symposium. The *Kleoboulinē* comedies, although poorly attested, are not so genteel. Athēnaios provides the only reference to Alexis' *Kleoboulinē,* a brief plot paraphrase in which he names one character, Sinope, as a *hetaira* (Athen. 10.585f–586a = Alexis fr. 109).[79] This suggests that Alexis might have characterized Kleoboulinē herself as a *hetaira*, which in turn implies that Athenian audiences might have seen Antiphanēs' riddling Sappho as a *hetaira,* too.

Antiphanēs fr. 194 is the only surviving comic text in which a character called 'Sappho' has a speaking part, which also makes it the earliest text besides Sappho's own poetry in which 'Sappho' speaks. This allows us the best view of how a comedian characterizes her, even if we cannot assume that other playwrights treat her the same way. The focus on literary themes emphasizes Sappho as a poetic celebrity, an intelligent woman who can match wits with a politically-savvy man. While Antiphanēs does not target her with pornographic or invective language, the interplay of sympotic and erotic themes—Sappho's flirtatious persona, the riddle game, the self-infantilizing use of πάτερ—preserves a version of Sappho who engages in markedly oral discourse forms like riddles, even as the content of her riddle draws highlights the femininity of epistolary writing. This tension somewhat undercuts feminist readings of this fragment, which ignore the orality of the riddle itself to focus on the tension between the two proposed answers. Sappho's speaking part in the fragment also problematizes comparisons to Plutarch's fictional Kleoboulinē, who does not tell riddles herself and leaves the party before the drinking starts in earnest. Antiphanēs' Sappho tells her own riddle, speaking wittily with a man

[79] See Gardella Hueso, "Un enigma sobre el enigma," 10.

as if they were at a symposium, in line with comedy's idea of a *hetaira*, which we will explore more in Chapter 3.

Ephippos fr. 20

The Suda records that Ephippos came from Athens and was a poet of Middle Comedy (Suda ε 3929). His name appears just before Antiphanēs' on the list of Lēnaian victors preserved in *IG* ii^2 2325.145, confirming that he wrote in the middle of the fourth century. He mocks Plato in one long passage (fr. 14), and several of his plays have titles that indicate mythological burlesque (*Artemis*, *Kirkē*, *Gēryones*). He also wrote at least one play named after a *hetaira*, the *Philyra*, of which Athēnaios preserves three passages (frr. 21–3). His *Sappho* may have resembled a *hetaira* comedy, since the only surviving fragment comes from Book 13 of the *Deipnosophistai*. In this book, two characters debate whether *hetairai* are virtuous or vicious, effectively discussing whether it is advisable for men to engage in love affairs with women at all. The Cynic philosopher, Kynoulkos, argues that *hetairai* are bad, while his opponent, Myrtilos the grammarian, provides examples where *hetairai* displayed virtue and love affairs turned out alright. Myrtilos quotes a scene from Ephippos' *Sappho* to illustrate that young, philosophically-inclined men (ὑμέτερος φιλοσοφομειρακίσκος τοιοῦτος; "your little philosopher-boy such as this"; 13.572b) are too mercenary in their love affairs, not women:

> καλῶς δὲ περὶ τῶν τοιούτων Ἔφιππος ἐν Σαπφοῖ φησιν·
> ὅταν γὰρ ὢν νέος
> ἀλλότριον † εἰσελθὼν ὄψον ἐσθίειν μάθῃ
> ἀσύμβολόν τε χεῖρα προσβάλῃ βορᾷ,
> διδόναι νόμιζ' αὐτὸν σὺ τῆς νυκτὸς λόγον.
> (Ephippos fr. 20 = Athen. 13.572c)

> Ephippos speaks nicely about that sort of person in *Sappho*:
> Whenever a young man
> notices as he comes in that you are eating a hot meal
> and launches his unpaying hand towards your food,
> make it your custom that he settles his tab at night

Immediately after this quote, he cites, but does not quote, the famous case of male prostitution from Aiskhinēs' *Against Timarkhos*. Ephippos' euphemistic joke that the young parasite will pay for his meal with sex tells us nothing about Sappho's characterization, but shows us that Ephippos dealt with contemporary sexual politics in a play named after her. Perhaps the context

in which Athēnaios quotes this passage indicates that Ephippos joked about the title character's sexuality, too. Brivitello tentatively suggests that Ephippos might have characterized Sappho as a *hetaira,* who was a stock character in fourth-century comedy, like the parasitic young man.[80] We cannot confirm Brivitello's suggestion, but it would align with Antiphanēs' characterization from around the same time.

Timoklēs fr. 32

Kassel and Austin judge that the two comedians named Timoklēs listed in the Suda are the same person (Suda τ 623–4). According to Suda, he was an Athenian. Timoklēs was active until at least the 340s, since he wrote a *Neaira* "probably … shortly after" the famous trial featuring a woman of the same name.[81] His career therefore spanned Middle and New Comedy, much as Antiphanēs' does.[82] Timoklēs wrote on mythic themes (*Dionysus, Lēthē*) and commented on famous affairs of his day, as in *Neaira.* Athēnaios is our only witness for his *Sappho.* He quotes two lines in Book 8 of the *Deipnosophistai*, the only surviving fragment of the play:

> ὁ Μισγόλας οὐ προσιέναι σοι φαίνεται
> ἀνθοῦσι τοῖς νέοισιν ἠρεθισμένος
>
> (Timoklēs fr. 32 = Athen. 8.339c)

> Misgolas does not seem to approach you,
> although he's mad for the young blossoms.

Calder dates Timoklēs' *Sappho* to c. 350 because it mentions Misgolas, a famous Athenian pederast who we know as a key player in Aiskhinēs' *Against Timarkhos* from around that time. In fact, Athēnaios quotes these lines in a passage that is mostly about seafood to illustrate a digression about Misgolas, which he initiates with a passage from Antiphanēs *Fisher-Women* that compares one man's appetite for fish to Misgolas' appetite for attractive young musicians (Antiphanēs fr. 27). Timoklēs' wording suggests that the characters could expect to run into Misgolas himself in the storyworld of the play, showing that he set it in contemporary Athens.

[80] Brivitello, "Saffo sulla scena," 204.
[81] Kapparis, introduction to *Apollodoros "Against Neaira,"* 44.
[82] I follow the general consensus that dates New Comedy a little later in the early 320s, with the death of Alexander, the transition to Hellenistic culture, and the rise of Menander (Hunter, *The New Comedy of Greece and Rome*, 1).

These two lines do not mention her, so we cannot know exactly, but Timoklēs' interest (perhaps two decades later) in Neaira, a purported *hetaira* at the center of a contentious immigration lawsuit, overlaps with his interest in the famous sex pest Misgolas to show an ongoing concern for the intersections between sex and celebrity. We should not be surprised if this influenced how he depicted Sappho, the archetypical female love poet.

Epikratēs's *Antilaïs* and Sappho's Erotica

Epikratēs' *Antilaïs* refers to Sappho as a canonical author of erotic songs. We do not know much about Epikratēs' life and career. Only 10 sure fragments are listed in the Kassel-Austen collection, plus one dubious one, and almost everything we know about him comes from the *Deipnosophistai*. Athēnaios tells us that Epikratēs was surnamed Ἀμβρακιώτης ("the Ambracian"; Athen. 10.422f), meaning he traced his ancestry to Ambracia, a mid-sized city in southern Ēpeiros. Therefore, he lived in worked in Athens as an immigrant, like many other Middle Comedians—we have no record that he was granted citizenship. Like Ephippos and Amphis, he mocks Plato and his school (fr. 10).

His *Antilaïs*, which lampoons a famous *hetaira* named Laïs, is the best attested of his plays; Athēnaios quotes 27 lines in three multi-line passages, including the one that mentions Sappho. All three come from Book 13 of the *Deipnosophistai*, the same passage on women and sexuality where Athēnaios references Diphilos' and Ephippos' *Sappho* comedies. Two characters predominate in this debate and both quote from Epikratēs' play in an interesting tit-for-tat rhetorical display. Arguing against *hetairai*, Kynoulkos quotes from Epikratēs' *Antilaïs* twice, right back-to-back, near the end of his opening speech, to illustrate how fundamentally rapacious women are—both quotes compare the eponymous *hetaira* to birds of prey (13.570b = Epikratēs frr. 2, 3). Myrtilos gives us the passage from *Antilaïs* that mentions Sappho, but only much later in the debate, when he finishes his defence of women with a long digression about unusual love affairs. In this part of the speech, Athēnaios shows off his familiarity with Greek thaumatography and demonstrates the diversity that eros can take, with some light moralizing layered on top. The anecdotes come thick and fast, and seem to relate to each other very little. The previous anecdote is about the dancer Pharsalia, murdered through divine intervention after her boyfriend gave her a stolen crown that had originally been dedicated to Aphrodite:

> ὁρᾶτε οὖν καὶ ὑμεῖς, ὦ φιλόσοφοι, οἱ παρὰ φύσιν τῇ Ἀφροδίτῃ χρώμενοι καὶ ἀσεβοῦντες εἰς τὴν θεόν, μὴ τὸν αὐτὸν διαφθαρῆτε τρόπον· τότε γὰρ καί οἱ παῖδές εἰσι καλοί, ὡς Γλυκέρα ἔφασκεν ἡ ἑταίρα, ὅσον ἐοίκασι γυναικὶ χρόνον, καθάπερ ἱστορεῖ Κλέαρχος· ἐμοὶ μὲν γὰρ καὶ κατὰ φύσιν δοκεῖ πεποιηκέναι Κλεώνυμος ὁ Σπαρτιάτης, πρῶτος ἀνθρώπων εἰς ὁμηρείαν λαβὼν παρὰ Μεταποντίνων γυναῖκας καὶ παρθένους τὰς ἐνδοξοτάτας καὶ καλλίστας διακοσίας, ὡς ἱστορεῖ Δοῦρις ὁ Σάμιος ἐν τῇ τρίτῃ τῶν Περὶ Ἀγαθοκλέα Ἱστοριῶν· κἀγὼ δὲ κατὰ τὴν Ἐπικράτους Ἀντιλαΐδα
>
> τἀρωτίκ᾽ ἐκμεμάθηκα ταῦτα παντελῶς
> Σαπφοῦς, Μελήτου, Κλεομένους, Λαμυνθίου
>
> (Epikratēs fr. 4 = Athen. 13.605d–e)

> Watch out, you philosophers who resort to Aphrodite unnaturally and dishonour her, lest you be destroyed in the same way. For the *hetaira* Glykera once said that boys are beautiful only so long as they look like women, according to Klearkhos (fr. 23 Wehrli). Thus it seems to me that Kleōnymos of Sparta acted naturally when, the first time anyone took hostages, he seized two hundred of the most beautiful and most esteemed women and teenage girls from among the Metapontians, as Douris of Samos reports in the third book of his *Histories about Agathoklēs* (*FGrH* 76 F18). And I too, as Epikratēs says in *Antilaïs*:
>
> I have learned completely these erotic songs (*erōtika*)
> from Sappho, Melētos, Kleomenēs, Lamynthios.

Myrtilos wants us to know that loving women is more natural than loving boys, even when you kidnap those women like Kleōnymos did. The quip that Klearkhos ascribes to Glykera makes pederastic love a shadow of heterosexuality. Who knows if Klearkhos' anecdote has any basis in history, but we can imagine a sex worker making such a comment about the boys who attract potential clients away from her. Athēnaios positions Epikratēs' quote as agreeing with this sentiment. Slotting himself into the grammatical structure of the comic fragment, Myrtilus' κἀγὼ shows continuity from the previous idea, and that he agrees with Epikratēs' curriculum: a good philosopher, one who does not want to anger Aphrodite with improper sexual expression, should study Sappho and these other poets.

In this fragment, Epikratēs acknowledges Sappho as a poet—not simply a woman who likes literature, as in Antiphanēs—more explicitly than any other comedian. This fragment also explicitly recognizes her poems' erotic content. He references Sappho as a writer of "erotic songs" along with three poorly known poets, Melētos, Kleomenēs, and Lamynthios. Yatromanolakis breaks down who these other poets are: Aristophanes describes Melētos as a

writer of erotic *skolia* without mentioning whether he preferred women or boys (*Ra.* 1301–2), while Lamynthios is known only by the title of a long poem which he named after his girlfriend, a *hetaira* named Lydē, presumably after her Lydian homeland—Klearkhos calls her a "barbarian" (fr. 34 Wehrli).[83] This demonstrates yet again that comedy's picture of Sappho draws on the performance of her songs in the *skolia* game and other informal or semi-formal forms of private performance, mostly at symposia, where her songs would become associated with those of other poets.

Diphilos frr. 70, 71

Diphilos does not have his own entry in the Suda, but it appears that he was one of the most prominent comedians of the later fourth century. Kassel and Austin list 135 fragments over 62 titles, as well as a remarkably high number of testimonia: 20 ancient sources that discuss Diphilos' biography and poetics. The anonymous *De Comedia* synchronizes him with Menander and tells us that he came from Sinopē and died in Smyrna (61–2). A funerary inscription from Athens might contradict that last point, as it memorializes a Diphilos, son of Diōn, from Sinopē who was buried on Attic soil (*IG* ii^2 10321.3–4). We cannot date Diphilos' play with any precision, but it is likely the newest of the *Sappho* comedies, from the end of the fourth century or the very beginning of the third. Diphilos offers a pure, refined view of the connection between Sappho and the symposium, a tacit theme in previous comedies, in the most obviously sympotic extant fragment from a *Sappho* comedy:

> Ἀρχιλοχε, δέξαι τήνδε τὴν μεταναιπτρίδα
> μεστὴν Διὸς σωτῆρος, Ἀγαθοῦ Δαίμονος
> (Diphilos fr. 70 = Athen. 11.486f)

> Arkhilokhos, take up this *metaniptris*,
> full of Zeus Saviour, of the Good Divinity.

Athēnaios records this fragment in a section of the *Deipnosophistai* that talks about the *metaniptris* (11.486f–7a). Literally the 'after-washing cup,' Athenian symposiasts used the *metaniptris* for an initial dedicatory drink of unmixed wine right after washing their hands, but before they started the regular festivities. They dedicated this first drink to the Good Divinity in some sources (Antiphanēs fr. 135; Nicostratos fr. 19) or to another anonymous god (Pl. *Sym.*

[83] Yatromanolakis, *Sappho in the Making,* 291.

176a). In an interlude between topics in Book 15, Athēnaios' characters offer toasts to different gods: "And after that, most of them demanded a drink, some in the name of the Good Divinity, some of Zeus Saviour, some of Health, and others of another god" (καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα πλείστων τῶν μὲν Ἀγαθοῦ Δαίμονος αἰτούντων ποτήριον, τῶν δὲ Διὸς Σωτῆρος, ἄλλων δὲ Ὑγείας καὶ ἑτέρων ἑτέρου ἐπιλεγόντων; 15.692f). Athēnaios then quotes five passages from comedy in which characters toast these gods (Antiphanēs fr. 3, Alexis fr. 234, Nicostratos fr. 18, Xenarkhos fr. 2, Eriphos fr. 4). We should note that we see no indication of women making these toasts. While Athēnaios does not record who speaks these two lines or who else is present on stage when they are spoken, the two lines offer no indication that Sappho was present for this scene and no indication of how Diphilos characterized her.

Arkhilokhos' name in this fragment gives us some textual basis to confirm Athēnaios' testimony on an apparently key plot detail, that Diphilos represented the iambic poets Arkhilokhos and Hippōnax as Sappho's lovers. Athēnaios references Diphilos' play for a second time right after he has quoted a long song by Hermēsianax, which includes the claim that Anakreōn and Alkaios competed for Sappho's love. Here is that section from Hermēsianax's poem:

Λέσβιος Ἀλκαῖος δὲ πόσους ἀνεδέξατο κώμους
Σαπφοῦς φορμίζων ἱμερόεντα πόθον,
γιγνώσκεις· ὁ δ' ἀοιδὸς ἀηδόνος ἠράσαθ', ὕμνων
Τήϊον ἀλγύνων ἄνδρα πολυφραδίῃ.
Καὶ γὰρ τὴν ὁ μελιχρὸς ἐφημίλλητ' Ἀνακρείων
στελλομένην πολλαῖς ἄμμιγα Λεσβιάσιν·
φοίτα δ' ἄλλοτε μὲν λείπων Σάμον, ἄλλοτε δ' αὐτὴν
οἰνηρῇ δειρῇ κεκλιμένην πατρίδα
Λέσβον ἐς εὔοινον·

(Hermēsianax 7.47–55, p. 99 Powell = Athen. 13.598b–c)

How many *komoi* did Lesbian Alkaios lead,
strumming his sweet long for Sappho?
You know. The bard loved his nightingale and
vexed the Tean with the eloquence of his hymns.
For honeyed Anakreōn also competed for her,
she who in disorder was ready for many Lesbian women.
He would visit, sometimes leaving Samos, sometimes
his own homeland, sloped with a vine-rich collar,
for well-wined Lesbos.

And here is the following section where Athēnaios refutes Hermēsianax's speculation:

> ἐγὼ δὲ ἡγοῦμαι παίζειν τὸν Ἑρμησιάνακτα περὶ τούτου τοῦ ἔρωτος. καὶ γὰρ Δίφιλος ὁ κωμῳδιοποιὸς πεποίηκεν ἐν Σαπφοῖ δράματι Σαπφοῦς ἐραστὰς Ἀρχίλοχον καὶ Ἱππώνακτα.
>
> (Diphilos fr. 71 = Athen. 13.599d)

> I believe that Hermēsianax is joking about this love affair, for Diphilos the comedian wrote in *Sappho* that Arkhilokhos and Hippōnax were Sappho's lovers (*erastai*).

This testimonium provides the closest we have to a plot for any of the *Sappho* plays. Having two men as Sappho's *erastai* sets up a love triangle and, judging from Menander's surviving plays along with Roman comedy, the resolution of love triangles provided many New Comedies with their plots. Athēnaios' view that Hermēsianax "is joking" (παίζειν), with the comparison to comedy, also tells us that we should not take Diphilos' plot too seriously. Hermēsianax plays with biography in a recognizable way, a way that Athēnaios can compare to the recognizably fictitious jokes in comedy. That Athēnaios feels the need to refute these claims shows that they have trickled into general ideas about Sappho's biography, and indeed Athēnaios also tells us in the same passage that Khamaileōn, the chief Hellenistic Sappho scholar and Hermēsianax's contemporary, believes that Anakreōn addressed a sardonic love poem (fr. 358) to Sappho (Athen. 13.599c = Khamaileōn fr. 26 Wehrli); Athēnaios disagrees with Khamaileōn's biographical interpretation of the poem on chronological grounds.

Diphilos associates Sappho with two iambic poets whose poetry was also popular at symposia. That Hippōnax and Arkhilokhos would pursue Sappho sexually on stage mirrors male symposiasts' erotic pursuit of a female symposium-goer, which likely means that Diphilos portrays her as a *hetaira* or an entertainer of some type. Although fr. 70 only mentions Arkhilokhos, fr. 71 suggests that all three poets appeared on stage, making literal the poets' figurative presence in the symposium. The two surviving lines from this play carry with them a bit of domestic, but figuratively rich, dramatic action: a poetic persona come to life, passing around the after-dinner cup with other characters, one of whom invokes Zeus as is convention at this part of the symposium ritual.

Menander's *Leukadia* and the Myth of Phaōn

Menander's only mention of Sappho comes from his *Leukadia* ('The Girl from Leukas'). Although we do not have the complete play, we have more fragments from his *Leukadia* than we

do for all the *Sappho* comedies put together. One significant chunk apparently from the opening scene survives on papyrus, and later authors provide 10 book fragments. Like *Sappho*, we know that several poets composed comedies with this title. Diphilos and Amphis both wrote a *Leukadia*, Alexis wrote a play known as either *Leukadia* or *The Runaway Slaves*, and Antiphanēs wrote a *Leukadius*, using the masculine equivalent. All these plays came out in the fourth century or perhaps early third, during the periods of Middle and New Comedy. We know little of any of them except Menander's. In this play, we find the earliest figuration of Sappho's affair with the boatman Phaōn, which overshadows her other loves for much of Sappho's pre- and early-modern afterlife.[84]

The story goes something like this: as an older woman, Sappho falls madly in love with the beautiful Phaōn, perhaps in Sicily, but when he spurns her, she travels to Cape Leukas and dies by suicide, leaping from the white cliffs. The longest, clearest version of the story comes from Ovid's Sapphic epistle (*Her.* 14). Menander only refers to the story in passing. The consensus dating back to Wilamowitz says that Menander made some other Leukadian girl the heroine, comparing her to Sappho.[85] The famous poet was not the 'Girl from Leukas' in the title since, as far as we know, Sappho does not appear in this play as a speaking character. He sets the scene at the temple of Apollo above the cape; the speaking characters are priests, pilgrims, and passers-by, following Menander's preference to set his dramas in a a recognizable present. It seems that Menander's reference to Sappho comes very early in the play and emphasizes her leap from the eponymous cliff, reducing the passionate love that inspired her suicide to an instrumental dative in a participial phrase. With the prayer at the end, a priest likely spoke these lines:

> οὗ δὴ λέγεται πρώτη Σαπφώ
> τὸν ὑπέρκομπον θηρῶσα Φάων᾽
> οἰστρῶντι πόθῳ ῥῖψαι πέτρας
> ἀπὸ τηλεφανοῦς· ἀλλὰ κατ᾽ εὐχὴν
> σήν, δέσποτ᾽ ἄναξ, εὐφημείσθω 5
> τέμενος πέρι Λευκάδος ἀκτῆς.
>
> (Menander *Leukadia* fr. 1)

[84] See Most, "Reflecting Sappho," 15–6.
[85] Wilamowitz, *Sappho und Simonides*, 26. Traill sees a "scholarly consensus" that the play had a "happier ending" than Sappho's myth, but I see no indication in the text ("Acroteleutium's Sapphic Infatuation," 531).

> Where first Sappho was said,
> while hunting over-boastful Phaōn
> with maddening passion, to jump
> from the far-seen rocks. But per your
> vow, my lord, may the sanctuary be kept
> silent on the heights of Leukas!

We know the first five lines up to ἄναξ from Strabōn (10.452), who quotes them to illustrate the annual ritual of lovers jumping from the Leukadian cliffs to be cured of their doomed love, and the last two from a later lexicographer who uses them to illustrate an entry for the word Λευκάδος (Hsch. λ 719 Hansen–Cunningham). This established ritual probably gave Menander the plot for his play, although, as we seem to have much more of the play's opening than its ending, we cannot know for sure.

Much like the name of Sappho's husband, modern critics dating back to Mure have argued that Sappho's suicidal obsession for Phaōn, which she does not mention in her surviving poetry, must have been a comic invention.[86] Compared to their claims connecting her husband Kerkylas and comedy, here we are on firmer footing. However, Menander only talks about the story of Sappho and Phaōn in broad strokes, using a quick reference early in the play to set the scene in Leukas and illuminate a longstanding tradition associated with that place. He expects his audience to know the story already, so it would be unwise to assume that he himself made up the connection. That does not mean another comic poet could not have initiated the connection between Sappho and Phaōn, but we have no record if they did. In fact, there are clear precedents for this story in earlier myth, suggesting that it predates comedy. Three threads somehow wove together to form this story: Sappho's reputation as a love poet, the myth of Phaōn and Aphrodite, and the ritual of psychic release through a Leukadian leap. Having shown that comedy drew its interpretation of Sappho's persona from the creative matrix of the symposium, I propose that the Phaōn story was also assembled in that context from bits of previous myth.

The earliest references to Phaōn mark him as a fundamentally mythic character, Aphrodite's lover, not a mortal's. Nagy identifies Phaōn as one iteration of a mythic type, a young male lover paired with a goddess, like Tithōnos and Adōnis.[87] On a *hydria* by the Meidias Painter, active in the late fourth century in Athens, a young man lying in Aphrodite's lap has

[86] Mure, *Critical History*, 3:281, n. 2; Dörrie, *Der Brief der Sappho an Phaon*, 15–29.
[87] Nagy, "Phaethon, Sappho's Phaon, and the White Rock of Leukas."

been identified as Phaōn; another *hydria* by the same painter shows Adōnis reclining in his mistress' arms in much the same way.[88] While Sappho mentions both Adōnis (frr. 117b, 140, 168) and Tithōnos (Tithōnos Poem), she does not mention Phaōn at all. The earliest texts that mention him are comedies that pair him with Aphrodite, not Sappho (Kratinos fr. 370; Plato frr. 188–98). The story of the Leukadian leap also has deep roots. Homer talks about a Λευκάδα πέτρην ("white" or "Leukadian rock," depending on capitalization; *Od.* 24.11), past which the souls of Penelope's dead suitors journey with Hermes. Anakreōn and Euripides both write about a plunge from the Leukadian rock from a male perspective (Anakreōn fr. 376 *PMG*; Eur. *Cycl.* 163–8), referring metaphorically to a lovesick man's sexual release and to drunkenness respectively. In these three early cases, men, not women, interact with the white rock at a moment of ecstasy, either from love, death, or alcohol. The leap offers some form of release. As well as these examples, Nagy draws our attention to the passage in which Strabōn quotes from Menander's play.[89] Strabōn speaks of the cliff-jumping ritual as well-established at Leukas, and references Menander's passage, it seems, to give an aetiological explanation for it. There are similar cliff-jumping rituals at Colonus in Attica and near Phocaea on the Ionian coast, speaking to a deep-seeded mythic *topos* around the Greek-speaking world.[90]

In a recent paper, D'Alessio argues that Sappho or a Sappho-like female character featured in Pherekratēs' *Miners*, a late-fifth-century Old Comedy, basing his analysis on the dive described in these two lines:[91]

> οἴμ᾽ ὡς ἀπολεῖς μ᾽ ἐνταῦθα διατρίβουσ᾽ ἔτι,
> παρὸν κολυμβᾶν ὡς ἔχετ᾽ ἐς τὸν Τάρταρον.
>
> (Pherekratēs fr. 113.20–21 K.A.)

> Oh, you'll kill me, woman, wasting time here still,
> since you could dive as you are into Tartaros.

These two lines are an interjection from a 'character B' partway through 'character A's lyric description of a verdant, luxurious underworld. D'Alessio thinks that 'character A' might be Sappho. We know that she is female from the participle διατρίβουσ᾽ and D'Alessio identifies flower terms shared between 'A's speech and Sappho's poetry. Still, he is rightly cautious in

[88] Burn, *Meidias Painter*, 40–4. For illustrations, see plates 22–5a, 27–9 in the same volume.
[89] *Ibid.*, 227.
[90] *Ibid.*, 230–2.
[91] D'Alessio, "The Afterlife of Sappho's Afterlife," 3–6; 12–7.

naming ‘A’ definitively as Sappho, since we have no testimonium to confirm it. While I agree that there are Sapphic allusions in ‘A’s speech, in light of the earlier literature that sees many people, male or female, making ecstatic leaps into the underworld, I do not believe that ‘B’s interjection necessarily links Sappho to the Leukadian leap myth. Menander, not Pherekratēs, remains the earliest known author to link Sappho definitively to that story.

The rationalizing mythographer credited (perhaps pseudonymously) as Palaiphatos knows a version of Phaōn’s story that references both Aphrodite and Sappho. Although we do not know for sure, our best guess is that Palaiphatos worked in late-fourth-century Athens, perhaps out of the Peripatetic school.[92] If this is true, then his version of the story gives us another point of view on the development of the myth from the same time that Menander was active:

> Τῷ Φάωνι βίος ἦν περὶ πλοῖον εἶναι καὶ θάλασσαν. πορθμὸς ἦν ἡ θάλασσα· ἔγκλημα δὲ οὐδὲν παρ’ οὐδενὸς ἐκομίζετο, ἐπεὶ καὶ μέτριος ἦν καὶ παρὰ τῶν ἐχόντων μόνον ἐδέχετο. θαῦμα ἦν τοῦ τρόπου παρὰ τοῖς Λεσβίοις. ἐπαινεῖ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἡ θεός· Ἀφροδίτην λέγουσι τὴν θεόν· καὶ ὑποδῦσα θέαν ἀνθρώπου, γυναικὸς ἤδη γεγηρακυίας, τῷ Φάωνι διαλέγεται περὶ πλοῦ. ταχὺς ἦν ἐκεῖνος καὶ διακομίσαι καὶ μηδὲν ἀπαιτῆσαι. τί οὖν ἐπὶ τούτοις ἡ θεός; ἀμεῖψαί φασι τὸν ἄνθρωπον, καὶ ἀμείβεται νεότητι καὶ κάλλει τὸν γέροντα. οὗτος ὁ Φάων ἐστίν, ἐφ’ ᾧ τὸν ἔρωτα αὐτῆς ἡ Σαπφὼ πολλάκις ἐμελοποίησεν.
>
> (Palaeph. 45)

> Phaōn’s livelihood was on boats and on the sea. The sea was his ferry-route. No one ever had any complaints, since he was a moderate man and only took payment from those who had the means. His habits were a marvel among the people of Lesbos. A goddess approved of this man. They say that Aphrodite was this goddess. She disguised herself as a human, as an old woman, and asked Phaōn for a ferry trip. He carried her across quickly and asked for nothing in return. And what did the goddess do for that? They say she paid him back, and changed his old age into youth and beauty. This is Phaōn. Sappho wrote many songs of her desire for him.

With Sappho appearing right at the end, Palaiphatos’ construction of the story reaffirms what the visual record already suggests: the tradition tacked Sappho onto a myth that originally concerned Aphrodite and a mortal lover. Note that Palaiphatos does not mention Leukas or Sappho’s suicide—that version of the myth is not fully formed. But what happened to all the songs that she

[92] Hawes, *Rationalizing Myth in Antiquity*, 38.

supposedly wrote about Phaōn? Perhaps they have all been lost. More likely, they never existed, or perhaps Palaiphatos misinterprets some of Sappho's other love songs. We have seen how references to Sappho in comedy drew from her performance in other, poetically-creative performance spaces, especially the symposium. Given as much, we need not credit the myth of Sappho and Phaōn to comedy. We know that Sappho's songs were performed in symposia and that Anakreōn, another poet popular in symposium performance, could have carried the Leukadian story into the Athenian sympotic repertoire. These are the ingredients and their origins. We do not know exactly who the chef was. But I would suggest that the dish was prepared through the creative medium of symposium performance before Menander served it on the comic stage. The *skolia* game, in which one poet's ideas are 'capped' onto another's, provides exactly the right venue for a story like Palaiphatos' to take form.

Preliminary Conclusions

In some ways, it may seem impractical to group these scattered fragments together, since they span almost two hundred years. However, as Mure pointed out almost two centuries ago, no other poet was the subject of so many comedies.[93] Brivitello, reviewing the *Sappho* comedies in the 90s, concurs and notes further that the span of time separating these plays suggests that Sappho held a prominent place in the Athenian literary imagination for a long time.[94] She was, returning to Plato's words from *Phaidros* 235c, "Sappho the beautiful." The affective relationship that the Athenians had with her beautiful love poetry turned to an affective relationship with the poet herself. As evidence for different poets' popularity, Peter Parsons identifies how Attic vase painters prefer to "depict Sappho and Alkaios; they do not depict Simōnidēs or indeed Pindar—it is the pop singers (alive or dead) who concern the public, not the composers of cantatas."[95] Both on the comic stage and on vases, Athenian culture found Sappho a more compelling subject than other lyricists. There is no comedy called *Pindar*. We know no poet who wrote a *Simōnidēs*, nor an *Anakreōn* or *Alkaios* for that matter—and Anakreōn and Alkaios were also popular with the pot-painters. We have seen in this chapter that the Athenian

[93] Mure, *Critical History,* 3:274.
[94] Brivitello, "Sappho sulla scena," 182.
[95] Parsons, "'These Fragments,'" 56.

public loved Sappho as a pop star, but we have also seen that her celebrity did not prevent her poetry and persona from shifting under the pressures of an active oral performance culture.

Admittedly, this means that we end the chapter with something of an anti-climax. The main throughline that we can draw across all these fragments simply confirms a fact that we know from other sources: that Athenian symposium culture absorbed and remolded Sappho's poetry and poetic performance. We should exercise caution even with this conclusion, as the throughline stands out more vividly than it might have otherwise done due to Athēnaios' focus on the symposium, which narrows our window onto the *Sappho* comedies. Each comedian treats Sappho in a slightly different way, from Antiphanēs' witty riddler, alive and tactile in a recognizable Athenian space, to Menander's doomed lover, dead long before the play's story starts. The comedies that transport Sappho to then-contemporary Athens seem to have depicted her as a *hetaira*; however we should not make sweeping generalizations about the comedians' influence on Sappho's biographical tradition or uncritically credit them with inventing her lover Phaōn or her husband Kerkylas. In the next chapter, we will see that broad claims about comedy's reception of Sappho's sexuality similarly cannot stand up to scrutiny. Aristophanes and Epikratēs will be important in the second chapter. Looking forward to the third, we should remember how the *Sappho* comedies, especially Antiphanēs', reify Sappho's figurative presence in sympotic space by transposing the fictional 'Sappho' of her poetry to Athens. We will then explore how these comedies allow us to look towards the real-life women that the comedians associate with Sappho's poetic persona, including a more detailed interrogation of the *hetaira*.

Chapter 2 - Sappho's Sexuality

Now that we have outlined the remaining evidence for Sappho's place in Attic comedy, it is time to turn back to the question of how these plays depicted Sappho's sexuality. As I outlined in the introduction, this debate has two extreme positions: either the comedians totally fabricated a homosexual version of Sappho, or they depict Sappho as an "extreme heterosexual," to repeat Lardinois' turn of phrase.[96] Classical Athenian attitudes towards love between women are central in this debate, and especially the place of female same-sex sexuality in Greek comedy. Compared to male homosexuality, which Athenian art and literature regularly engages with, relatively little evidence survives about women's queer life in Athens. As I mention briefly in the introduction, Kenneth Dover, who initiated modern studies of ancient sexuality with his 1973 *Greek Homosexuality,* sees a consistent Athenian taboo around discussions of female-female love. He writes in 2002 that "in the classical period admiration for [Sappho's] art seems to have co-existed with something like a 'conspiracy of silence' about any sexual orientation which resembled hers," reiterating concisely a point he makes in more detail in *Greek Homosexuality*.[97] He compares this silence to the taboo in comedy against mentioning menstruation or the terrible plague of 430.[98] His thinking on this topic stayed remarkably consistent over 30 years. Sandra Boehringer's *Female Homosexuality in Ancient Greece,* published originally in 2007 and in English translation in 2021, broadly concurs with Dover: "a deafening silence surrounds relations between women in several literary genres (for instance, in comedy) and in iconography."[99] Both Dover and Boehringer simultaneously claim that comedy does not discuss lesbian sexuality while acknowledging exceptions to the rule. The number of exceptions challenge the validity of this 'rule' altogether.

In this chapter, I will demonstrate that no taboo against lesbian desire existed in the classical Athenian imagination. Indeed, no evidence exists for the 'lesbian' as a defined sexual type, and we would expect to see a strong definition of the 'lesbian' in Athenian literature as a prerequisite for a taboo against her. Instead, love between women was one of a few non-normative, but not abnormal, forms of female sexual expression that stood to one side of hetero-

[96] Lardinois, "Lesbian Sappho and Sappho of Lesbos," 22.
[97] Dover, "Two Women of Samos," 226. See also Yatromanolakis, *Sappho in the Making,* 366.
[98] Dover, *Greek Homosexuality,* 172–3.
[99] Boehringer, *Female Homosexuality,* 126.

patriarchal sexuality as codified through civic institutions like heterosexual marriage. As such, the modern term 'queer' fits neatly. I hope to set aside the broad debate about comedy's role in shaping Sappho's sexual reputation, as it will become clear that comedy neither embraced nor rejected the queer content in her poetry, at least so far as the surviving evidence can tell us.

Greek examples play a prominent role in modern Western narratives about sexuality. Early Victorian gay rights activists, looking for ancient counterweights to Biblical homophobia, described themselves as 'Uranians' after the "Uranian Aphrodite" from Pausanias' speech in Plato's *Symposium* (180d–e).[100] Kenneth Dover, under the influence of the French psychoanalyst George Devereux, says in the introduction to *Greek Homosexuality* that he would prefer to "replace 'heterosexual' by 'sexual' and treat what is called 'homosexuality' as a subdivision of the 'quasi-sexual.'"[101] This language needlessly pathologizes homosexuality, which he turns into a collection of behaviours that mark the actor as a certain 'type' of sexual agent. Over the following decades, Michel Foucault's *History of Sexuality* begins a trend to suggest that 'sexuality' as a locus of individual identity is a modern invention. He uses ancient Mediterranean culture as a primary comparison point. Foucault's American student, the classicist David Halperin, proposes that in pre-modern culture "certain kinds of sexual *acts* could be individually evaluated and categorized, and so could certain sexual tastes or inclinations, but there was no conceptual apparatus available for identifying a person's fixed and determinate sexual *orientation*, much less for assessing and classifying it."[102]

Just as Foucault and his colleagues redrew 'sexual orientation' as a social construct, post-Foucauldian scholarship has redrawn categories of 'sex' and 'gender,' further destabilizing modern constructions of 'sexuality' that rely on a neat gender binary. The *Urtext* here is Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble*, which argues that culture delineates the 'sexed' body itself, that the 'sex'/'gender' binary is therefore unstable even as it reinforces culturally hegemonic 'male'/'female' binaries, and that 'sexuality'—either compulsory heterosexuality, reactive homosexuality, or pseudo-natural bisexuality—comes about as a coterminous construction. The queer theory that builds on Butler's work embraces shaky delineations between genders and

[100] See Halperin, "One Hundred Years of Homosexuality," 16; Matzner, "From Uranians to Homosexuals."
[101] Dover, preface to *Greek Homosexuality*, vii. On the relationship between Devereux and Dover, see Davidson, "Dover, Foucault and Greek Homosexuality," 9–11.
[102] Halperin, "One Hundred Years of Homosexuality," 26.

sexualities. It has been slow to trickle into classical studies.[103] My embrace of the term 'queer' reflects a broader Butlerian understanding of sex, gender, and sexuality, allowing consideration of a slightly larger data set, while still aspiring to a relatively traditional philological methodology. Mel Y. Chen points out that 'queer' "is found in humanities scholarship less as a name that designates an identity or group than as an analytic and method."[104] In response to a classical historiography that still deals mainly in binaries between 'male' and 'female' and 'hetero-' and 'homosexuality, a 'queer' identity category is useful. Although that would be a legitimate project, I am not trying to 'queer' Attic comedy in a methodological sense, to read the texts against the grain and destabilize our conclusions. Rather, I appreciate the broad penumbra cast by the queer umbrella in terms of what kind of behaviours, speech acts, and emotions we consider when we talk about our sexual experiences. One reason that Kenneth Dover sees a "conspiracy of silence" around female-female desire in Athenian society is that he is only willing to consider the homosexual, and not the homoerotic, asserting that only "genital friction" between women evidences homosexuality.[105] Apart from being maddeningly inconsistent with the range of evidence that he accepts for male homosexuality (and slightly prurient), Dover defines his terms in such a way as to forgo the conclusion. Of course one would believe that there was a taboo on queer female sexuality if only pornographic depictions of sex acts count as evidence! Not even Sappho clears that bar. Embracing the possibility of female queer sexuality allows us to consider a broader range of data when discussing constructions of sexual experience.

One challenge that is posed by Sappho's reception in comedy is that pairing her with a male lover or lovers, as Menander and Diphilos do, seems to undercut modern readings of Sappho as a 'lesbian' in the modern sense. 'Queer' as an identity category incorporates sexual interactions that sit outside the 'homo-'/'heterosexuality' binary and undercuts that critique. By reading such constructions as historically contingent, queer theory also challenges modern attempts to transpose our hegemonic ideas of sex, gender, and sexuality onto the past. The

[103] For a rallying cry on queer theory's relevance to the classics, see Zajko, "'Listening With' Ovid."
[104] Chen, *Animacies*, 57. In the same chapter, Chen thoughtfully elucidates the history of the word 'queer' (*Ibid.*, 58–85). Mueller, "Sappho and Sexuality," puts Sappho's poetry into conversation with Chen's idea of "queer affect."
[105] Dover, "Two Women of Samos," 225.

Athenian 'woman' was divided into subcategories by age, class, slave status, ethnicity, and profession.[106] While the expectation on citizen women to marry and produce children was inescapable, my intention in this chapter is to show that extra- or pre-marital sexual contact with other women did not create a new 'type' of woman in the same way. Athenian authors rarely remark on female homosexuality because it is unremarkable to them. This limited body of evidence means that we should look at diachronic changes to triangulate Athenian attitudes to female-female sexuality. In the rest of the chapter, we will consider the forms female queerness takes in Sappho and Anakreōn, before we look at the Athenian context.

Queer Love in Archaic Lyric: Sappho and Anakreōn

The whole project of trying to excavate a late-seventh-century woman's intimate relationships is at least a little foolhardy. We know very little about Lesbos at that time. Several challenges make Lesbos a difficult place for archeologists to dig—the island's military importance on the border between Greece and Turkey, the ongoing inhabitation of ancient population centres—and correspondingly very little has been published on the Lesbian archeological record. Like Sappho's poetry, the rest of the literary record for archaic Lesbos is fragmentary. We continue to synchronize Sappho (more or less) with Alkaios and the statesman, Pittacus, who themselves leave fragmentary corpora. As I have mentioned, these fragments are themselves the product of archeological excavation, either literally—as with the well-publicized trickle of 'New' and 'Newest' Sapphos that have recently emerged on Egyptian papyri—or figuratively—the rest of Sappho's surviving corpora has been mined from other Greek and occasionally Latin works, all dating at least several centuries after Sappho's *floruit.*

The study of ancient sexuality is a particularly difficult archeological exercise. Although markers of our sexual practice and identity can be publicly visible, as when we exchange vows openly at our wedding or simply walk hand-in-hand with a partner in the park, large parts of human sexuality are necessarily very intimate. Even as a love poet who publicizes some parts of her sexual life—or at least a fictional version of it, as we can never perfectly equate the poet and the poem's speaker, even when the speaker is called "Sappho" (Sapph. fr. 1.20)—Sappho's private life remains private. Lardinois offers an easy, quippy solution: just as male pederastic

[106] Gilhuly, *Feminine Matrix*.

poets rarely discuss explicit sex acts with their lovers, "Sappho did not have to write pornography in order to be a lesbian poet."[107] Indeed, she only talks subtly about sexual activities. Her wedding songs joke about the possibility of (implicitly heterosexual) sexual contact when they allude to genitalia. Noting that sexual double entendre was common in Greek *epithalamia*, Kirk identified many years ago that, in fr. 111, Sappho calls on the wedding guests to "raise the roof pole" (ἴψοι δὴ τὸ μέλαθρον; fr. 111.1) to make room for the groom's enormous erection (he is "far larger than a large man"; ἄνδρος μεγάλω πόλυ μέσδων; fr. 111.7).[108] Knowing Sappho's willingness to go blue in her wedding songs lends an erotic tinge to the "the bride with a violet in her lap" (νύμφας ἰοκόλπω; fr. 30.4–5) in another song. The adjective ἰόκολπος, which occurs only in Sappho (also of a goddess at fr. 103.4;5), presents some difficulties of translation—what part of the body does κόλπος indicate exactly, and what is (are?) the violet(s) doing there? I would suggest that the term in the *epithalamion* draws our attention to the bride's genitalia, just as Winkler sees reference to communities of women sharing intimate sexual knowledge about their bodies with one another in Sappho's wedding songs, based on the double meaning of νύμφη as both 'bride' and 'clitoris' and μᾶλον as both 'fruit' and 'breast.'[109]

One fragmentary passage that does not appear to be from a wedding song discusses activities on a bed that are tangibly, almost haptically, erotic:

καὶ στρώμν[αν ἐ]πὶ μολθάκαν
ἀπάλαν παρ[ ]ονων
ἐξίης πόθο[ν] . νίδων (fr. 94.21–3)

and on a soft bed,
tender [
longing you released [

[107] Lardinois, "Lesbian Sappho and Sappho of Lesbos," 19. While he argues that Sappho's poetry reflected sexual contact between women in that paper, returning to the question in 2010, he concludes that "her sensual descriptions of young women, which are certainly expressed in homoerotic terms, were meant to praise the erotic appeal of these young women as experienced by men and women alike but intended to be consummated in heterosexual marriages" ("Lesbian Sappho Revisited, 13). However, as he himself admits, marriage does not preclude extramarital queer relationships for archaic Greek men, a queer lens problematizes the hetero-/homoerotic binary in which he operates, and his study does not consider the explicitly erotic language of frr. 46, 126, 213.
[108] Kirk, "A Fragment of Sappho Reinterpreted."
[109] Winkler, "Gardens of Nymphs," 102–5.

The single-line fr. 126 expresses a similar sentiment: "may you sleep on the chest of a soft female companion" (δαύοισ(᾽) ἀπάλας ἐτα<ί>ρας ἐν στήθεσιν). One fragment describes one woman as the "yokemate" (σύνδυγος) of another (fr. 213), using a word that the tragedians will use for a wife (Aesch. *Chor.* 599; Eur. *Alc.* 314) and that Theocritus will later use for a homosexual lover (*Id.* 30.29).[110] Since he sees Sappho's circle as an educational *thiasos*, Gentili reads σύνδυγος as a ritual title in the symbolic female-female marriage that marks the entry into Sappho's circle, which he sees as having a sexual component.[111]

For the most part, however, Sappho focuses on the psychological and physiological responses of a woman struck by erotic longing, rather than its physical consummation. Her poetry often cannot be about sexual body contact because the speaker pines for someone who is not present or does not reciprocate her desire—the erotic moment in fr. 94 is in the past tense because the speaker's lover has left her. The most famous example comes from Sappho 31:

φαίνεταί μοι κῆνος ἴσος θέοισιν
ἔμμεν᾽ ὤνηρ, ὄττις ἐνάντιός τοι
ἰσδάνει καὶ πλάσιον ἆδυ φωνεί-
σας ὐπακούει 4

καὶ γελαίσας ἰμέροεν, τό μ᾽ ἦ μὰν
καρδίαν ἐν στήθεσιν ἐπτόαισεν·
ὠς γὰρ ἔς σ᾽ ἴδω βρόχε᾽ ὤς με φώνη-
σ᾽ οὐδὲν ἔτ᾽ εἴκει, 8

ἀλλὰ †καμ† μὲν γλῶσσα †ἔαγε†, λέπτον
δ᾽ αὔτικα χρῷ πῦρ ὐπαδεδρόμακεν,
ὀππάτεσσι δ᾽ οὐδὲν ὄρημμ᾽, ἐπιβρό-
μεισι δ᾽ ἄκουαι, 12

†έκαδε† μ᾽ ἴδρως κακχέεται, τρόμος δὲ
παῖσαν ἄγρει, χλωροτέρα δὲ ποίας
ἔμμι, τεθνάκην δ᾽ ὀλίγω ᾽πιδεύης
φαίνομ᾽ ἔμ᾽ αὔτᾳ. 16

ἀλλὰ πὰν τόλματον, ἐπεὶ †καὶ πένητα†

He seems to me an equal to the gods,
that man, whoever sits across from
you and listens closely as you

[110] Mueller, "Sappho and Sexuality," 39.
[111] Gentili, *Poetry and its Public*, 75–6.

speak sweetly 4

and laugh lovely. Yes, it sets my
heart aflutter in my chest.
For when I look at you, even just a little, it seems
I make no sound. 8

My tongue has broken down. Suddenly, a
subtle fire has run under my skin,
I see nothing with my eyes, and
my hearing roars. 12

I pour with sweat, a tremour
seizes me all over, I am greener than
grass, and I, a feeble female, seem to have died,
just a little. 16

But all must be dared, since even a labourer…

The erotic experience is here as Sappho puts it so succinctly elsewhere: "sweet-bitter" (γλυκύπικρον; fr. 130.2). The female speaker catalogues a long list of physical responses to seeing her female crush sitting with someone else, including a change in her heartbeat (31.5–6), a fire under her skin (31.10: χρῷ πῦρ ὐπαδεδρόμακεν), sweat all over her body (31.13), and finally the feeling of a little death (31.15: τεθνάκην δ᾽ ὀλίγω ᾽πιδεύης). Importantly, it is the man who can properly hear this young woman's voice, not the speaker, who can only see her. The narrator's strong physiological response is mediated by looking at her beloved (31.7: ἴδω; 31.11: ὄρημμ᾽) and at herself (31.16: φαίνομ᾽ ἔμ᾽ αὔτᾳ), an emphasis on the visual which is, as Claude Calame points out, a generic feature of Greek erotic lyric.[112] According to this convention, sight mediates a stronger erotic response than hearing.

Although a woman inspires the speaker's strong erotic reaction, fr. 31 challenges our rush to label Sappho as an exclusive lesbian. Sappho does not open the poem by gazing at the beautiful woman. Instead, her gaze falls first on the man sitting next to her beloved (31.1: φαίνεταί μοι κῆνος). Under the strongly visual conventions of Greek lyric, this would suggest that her romantic interests do not fall exclusively on women, that (at very least) the attraction she feels towards the beautiful girl refracts onto the man who accompanies her. Silvio Bär also points out that the speaker only reveals her own gender at the end of the fourth stanza (31.14: παῖσαν;

[112] Calame, "Amorous Gaze," 291 and *passim*.

χλωροτέρα).[113] Sappho carefully and intentionally withholds this seemingly key information, given that the introspective description of her symptoms in the previous lines would naturally invite a gendered adjective sooner. Withholding this information further queers the love triangle that the poem suggests in its first stanza: a speaker of indeterminate gender gazes longingly at both a man and a woman.

We can compare the queer love triangle in Sappho 31 with a near-contemporary male poet's approach to a similar situation. Anakreōn fr. 358 resonates with Sappho fr. 31 because the poetic 'I' alludes to female homosexuality obliquely as he mourns an abortive affair with a disinterested young woman. We almost saw this poem in Chapter 1, since Athēnaios quotes the whole poem at 13.599c, right after he quotes the long Hermēsianax poem with Anakreōn and Alkaios competing over Sappho and right before he tells us that Diphilos jokingly made Hippōnax and Arkhilokhos Sappho's lovers. Remember, Khamaileōn the authoritative Hellenistic Sappho scholar wrote that Anakreōn addressed these lines directly to Sappho:

σφαίρῃ δηῦτέ με πορφυρῇ
βάλλων χρυσοκόμης Ἔρως
νήνι ποικιλοσαμβάλῳ
συμπαίζειν προκαλεῖται·
ἡ δ', ἐστὶν γὰρ ἀπ' εὐκτίτου
Λέσβου, τὴν μὲν ἐμὴν κόμην,
λευκὴ γάρ, καταμέμφεται,
πρὸς δ' ἄλλην τινὰ χάσκει. (Anakreōn fr. 358 *PMG*)

Once again, with a purple ball,
golden-haired Eros hits me,
calling me forth to play
with the girl with embroidered sandals.
But she, since she's from well-settled
Lesbos, disparages my hair
for being white
and gapes at another.

Athēnaios rejects Khamaileōn's biographical interpretation of these lines on the grounds that she lived a generation or two before Anakreōn. Even though the poem is not about her, details in the poem suggest that Anakreōn is alluding to Sappho. When describing clothing and textiles, Sappho regularly uses adjectives that look like ποικιλοσαμβάλῳ (frr. 1.1, 44.8–10, 98a.11), the

[113] Bär, "Gendered or Ungendered," 6.

only thing that Anakreōn tells us about the young Lesbian woman beside her age and ethnicity. West points out the similarities between Anakreōn's complaint about age, with the emphasis on the speaker's white hair (the concise, emphatic λευκὴ γάρ; fr. 358.7), and Sappho's mediation on aging in the Tithōnos Poem: λεῦκαι δ' ἐγ]ένοντο τρίχες ἐκ μελαίναν ("and my hair has turned white from black"; TP.4).[114] The poem's tricky-to-translate final line might indicate that the young woman is looking at another woman instead of Anakreōn, perhaps indicating another connection to Sappho, although interpretations vary. On the one hand, some prefer to translate ἄλλην τινὰ as "some other head of hair," especially given the clear grammatical parallel with κόμην.[115] In that case, we do not know the gender of Anakreōn's victorious rival. On the other hand, ἄλλην τινὰ may refer simply to another woman.[116] The third possibility is that Anakreōn intended the wording to be ambiguous, allowing both readings.[117] This would certainly gel with the sort of wordplay we expect from a sympotic poet like Anakreōn, and that wordplay would be richer if we understand ἀπ' εὐκτίτου / Λέσβου as a reference to Sappho or at least to a stereotype that women from Lesbos preferred sex with other women, although neither are explicitly clear.

When placed alongside Sappho's introspective list of physical symptoms, Anakreōn's experience of love is purely external. Eros personified is the prime mover in this exchange. The whole love triangle feels very impersonal. All that Anakreōn wishes us to know about the girl he likes is that she has fancy sandals and comes from Lesbos—no physical descriptions, no sense of how she makes the speaker feel. The verb συμπαίζειν conveys sexual play in Greek erotic poetry (cf. Theocr. *Id.* 11.77, which may allude to this poem: πολλαὶ συμπαίσδεν με κόραι τὰν νύκτα κέλονται, "many girls call me to play with them through the night"), so the desire that the speaker feels is apparently strictly physical. Indeed, all we know about the speaker is that they are older, with white hair. And Anakreōn only very, very obliquely refers to his romantic rival, so obliquely that we cannot even be sure that she is there at all. This brings Sappho's overt praise of the man sitting beside her crush into sharper relief and underscores the queer tension in fr. 31: Sappho meditates on the complete love triangle, while Anakreōn is only really interested in two of its points. He acknowledges, then dismisses, the possibility of love between women while also

[114] West, "New Sappho," 6.
[115] Marcovich, "Anacreon, 358 PMG"; Pelliccia, "Anacreon 13 (358 PMG)."
[116] West, "Melica," 209; Woodbury, "Gold Hair and Grey."
[117] For a more ambiguous reading, see Budelmann, "Anacreon and the *Anacreontea*," 229–31.

drawing our attention back to the male character's important role in Sappho's poem as a focus of the speaker's praise alongside the beautiful young woman.

The Athenian Context

In the Athenian imagination, sexual or romantic activity with another woman does not mark a woman as a particular kind of sexual person. Rather, such behaviours stood alongside other kinds of non-marital sexuality as natural, but socially marginal. Women, whom Athenian culture imagined to have a much stronger sex drive than men, were more susceptible to sexual temptations of all types, and men who succumbed to such temptation too deeply feminized themselves. Direct discussions of female homosexuality may indeed be rare in Athenian literature, but they do occasionally appear, and their rarity alone does not indicate a strong taboo. Sex between women, which definitionally excludes men, was so marginal to the male sexual imagination that it inspired little response, neither titillation, nor condemnation. As such, we should not be surprised that Attic comedy does not explicitly discuss the queer content of Sappho's poems. In this section, once again, Athenian visual art provides a helpful preface to Athenian comedy.

Greek art occasionally shows erotic contact between women. Dover identifies "only two vases in which a woman touches the genitals of another woman," but then he only accepts pictures of unambiguous genital touch.[118] Brooten, whom he cites in his 2002 article, considers other vase images in which women make flirtatious gestures, gestures that he would be willing to accept as homosexual between two men. For example, in *Greek Homosexuality,* Dover identifies that a man placing his hand under a woman's chin is a common courting gesture in archaic and early classical art; correspondingly, he argues that we should read the same gesture among men as evidence of erotic feeling.[119] However, he neglects to mention another image from seventh-century Thera which shows one woman placing her hand lightly under the chin of another, a picture which Brooten identifies for us and which Dover himself had mentioned in *Greek Homosexuality*.[120] It is easy to find more examples of this sort of queer female flirtation in visual

[118] Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 226.
[119] *Ibid.*, 182.
[120] Brooten, *Love Between Women*, 57 & fig. 1; Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 173. Yatromanolakis says that examples of "female sexual fluidity" from art are the only possible counterargument to Dover's idea of a "taboo" (*Sappho in the Making*, 366.

art once we look for it. On the Florence *hydria* attributed to the Meidias painter that shows Aphrodite canoodling with Adōnis, the goddess Paideia sits in Hygeia's lap, in a distinct parallel to Aphrodite's embrace of her boy lover. They gaze together at the *erotes* hovering above the central pair, just as Adōnis does. This visual iconography shows a clear parallel between female desire for men and female desire for women. As the Meidias painter was active in Athens at the end of the fifth century, he operated in the same cultural milieu as Old Comedy. Moreover, that this image appears on a *hydria*—which we know were intended primarily for women's use—indicates that female audiences appreciated pictures of female-female intimacy.

If we move beyond Dover's disturbingly narrow criteria for sincere female homoeroticism in art, we notice how one of the four Attic vases that depict Sappho engages directly with the homoerotic content of one of her poems. Directly opposite Sappho on the far side of the Wuppertal *kalyx-kratēr* appears another dancing woman, holding no instrument and named only as "the girl" (ΗΕ ΠΑΙΣ).[121] Both Sappho and the girl step to their left with an outstretched foot, looking back at each other over their right shoulder. Nagy and Yatromanolakis write movingly about the circularity of these dual dancers, who seem to chase each other in a circle around the pot.[122] They tentatively suggest that their circular dance mirrors both the oral relay performance of Sappho's songs and recognizes the circular erotics of Sappho's homosexual lyric:

> καὶ γὰρ αἰ φεύγει, ταχέως δίωξει,
> αἰ δὲ δῶρα μὴ δέκετ᾽, ἀλλὰ δώσει,
> αἰ δὲ μὴ φίλει, ταχέως φιλήσει
> κωὐκ ἐθέλοισα. (Sapph. fr. 1.21–4)
>
> For if she runs away, she will soon chase you;
> if she does not accept gifts, she will give them;
> if she does not love, soon she will love you,
> even if she doesn't want to.

The inscription labeling the other woman as a παῖς aligns with Sappho's use of the term for a young lover (frr. 49.2, 102.1). This reading confirms that, from the early fifth century, Athenian

[121] Yatromanolakis only recently identified the ΗΕ ΠΑΙΣ inscription ("Contrapuntal Inscriptions," 23).
[122] Yatromanolakis, "Visualizing Poetry," 162–5; "Nagy, "The 'New Sappho' Reconsidered," 193–5.

visual culture recognizes the same-sex erotics in Sappho's poetry. The *topos* of queer love between women was not so taboo that market-conscious vase painters avoided it.

Attic comedy addresses women's queerness in the same humorous, oblique way that we see in Anakreōn fr. 358. One example comes from Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, an example that has been overlooked as least as far back as Welcker, who writes that there is "nothing [about lesbianism] in Aristophanes (who certainly had enough occasion in the *Lysistrata*) [*nichts im Aristophanes (der doch in der Lysistrata Anlass genug gehabt hätte)*]."[123] However, as with Anakreōn fr. 358, identifying this lesbian moment requires a broader definition of what might count as sexual contact, as well as a willingness to read onstage action into the text. Consider Lampitō's introduction in the *Lysistrata* as an instance of lesbian sexual contact in Aristophanes:

(Μυ.) ἡδὶ δὲ καὶ δὴ Λαμπιτὼ προσέρχεται.
(Λυ.) ὦ φιλτάτη Λάκαινα, χαῖρε, Λαμπιτοῖ.
οἷον τὸ κάλλος, γλυκυτάτη, σου φαίνεται.
ὡς δ' εὐχροεῖς, ὡς δὲ σφριγᾷ τὸ σῶμά σου.
κἂν ταῦρον ἄγχοις. (Λα.) μάλα γ', οἰῶ, ναὶ τὼ σιώ·
γυμνάδδομαί γα καὶ ποτὶ πυγὰν ἄλλομαι.
(Κα.) ὡς δὴ καλὸν τὸ χρῆμα τῶν τιτθῶν ἔχεις.
(Λα.) ἅπερ ἰαρεῖόν τοί μ' ὑποψαλάσσετε.
(Λυ.) ἡδὶ δὲ ποδαπή 'σθ' ἡ νεᾶνις ἠτέρα;
(Λα.) πρέσβειρά τοι ναὶ τὼ σιὼ Βοιωτία
ἵκει ποθ' ὑμέ. (Μυ.) νὴ Δί' ὡς Βοιωτία
καλόν γ' ἔχουσα τὸ πεδίον. (Κα.) καὶ νὴ Δία
κομψότατα τὴν βληχώ γε παρατετιλμένη.
(Λυ.) τίς δ' ἠτέρα παῖς; (Λα.) χαΐα ναὶ τὼ σιώ,
Κορινθία δ' αὖ. (Κα.) χαΐα νὴ τὸν Δία
δήλη 'στὶν οὖσα ταυταγὶ κἀντευθενί. (*Lys.* 77–92)

(Kal.) And Lampitō is coming already.
(Lys.) Dearest Lakōnian Lampitō, hello.
How beautiful you look, sweetie!
What nice skin you have! And your body is so plump.
You could throttle a bull. (Lam.) Yes, I suppose so, by the Twins!
I exercise naked and high kick at my butt.
(Kal.) And you have such a beautiful set of tits!
(Lam.) You are touching me softly like a sacrificial victim!
(Lys.) Where's this other young lady coming from?
(Lam.) By the Twins, an old Boiōtian woman
approaches you. (Myr.) By Zeus, Boiōtia sure
has a pretty lowland! (Kal.) And—Zeus!—

[123] Welcker, *Sappho*, 22.

she's plucked the loveliest pennyroyal.
(Lys.) Who's the other girl? (Lam.) By the Twins,
she's a Corinthian. (Kal.) By Zeus,
she clearly is *here* and over *there*.

It would be difficult to stage this scene without taking ὑποψαλάσσετε ("touch gently") as a clear stage direction—one of the Athenian women is manhandling their Spartan visitor's breasts for it to make sense that Lampitō asks them to be gentler. Although a woman's breasts are not sexual in all cultures, Greek erotic lyric often praises the shape or beauty of breasts in a way that is clearly sexual. Therefore, Lampitō's request indicates a form of erotic contact that very nearly equates to the "genital friction" that Dover sets as the sole, irrefutable criterion for homosexual activity. The double entendres about the Boiōtian and Corinthian girls do not indicate the same hands-on interaction as clearly, but they certainly do not preclude it. LSJ defines παρατίλλω as "pluck the hair from any part of the body but the head" and here at line 89 Aristophanes surely wants us to understand that the Boiōtian has removed her pubic hair. We can imagine that her costume includes some representation of her depilated genitalia to flash at the audience, much like male characters later in the play have comically enflamed penises. This would match a metaphorical reference later in the play to an Athenian woman's unshorn pubic hair (ἔριά μοι Μιλήσια; "my Milēsian woolens"; *Lys.* 729), which, according to a commentator, an actor could elucidate with a gesture to the crotch.[124] As with her sexually aggressive welcome for Lampitō, Kalonikē likely handles this part of the costume or makes some sort of other gesture that would meet Dover's criteria. The deictics ταυταγὶ κἀντευθενί suggest that she pokes at the Corinthian girl in a similar way, although Aristophanes does not tell us exactly which parts of her body make her look so Corinthian. In any case, the joke in this scene does not flow if we do not understand her gestures towards these other women as sexual. While this single scene is not enough to show that comedy regularly displayed woman-woman erotic relationships, it certainly is enough to put to rest his theory of a complete taboo on depictions of lesbian love in classical Athens.

I am, however, inclined to agree with Dover's reading of the other Aristophanic passage that acknowledges love between women. Dover claims that the fictional Aristophanes in Plato's *Symposium* espouses "a view of sexual love which is radically different from Plato's own view

[124] Méndez Dosuna, "Milesian Wool," 671.

and explicitly rejected later in the work," a reading that I support.[125] It would also be a stretch to say that the actual Aristophanes would recognize the myth that Plato ventriloquizes into his mouth. However, Plato's willingness to discuss female-female love as of a type with male-male and female-male would violate the ostensible taboo.

The 2002 Dover chapter that I have been leaning on examines one text that might cast aspersions on woman-woman love. The Palatine Anthology records a Hellenistic epigram by Asklēpiadēs of Samos which accuses two Samian women of some sort of sexual impropriety.[126] Asklēpiadēs writes in clear, crisp Attic Greek:

> αἱ Σάμιαι Βιττὼ καὶ Νάννιον εἰς Ἀφρωδίτης
> φοιτᾶν τοῖς αὐτῆς οὐκ ἐθέλουσι νόμοις,
> εἰς δ᾽ ἕτερ᾽ αὐτομολοῦσιν ἃ μὴ καλά. Δέσποτι Κύπρι,
> μίσει τὰς κοίτης τῆς παρὰ σοὶ φυγάδας.
> (Asklēpiadēs 7 Sens = AP 5.207)

> The Samian women, Bittō and Nannion, don't want
> to visit Aphrodite by her own rules,
> but have deserted her for different things, which are not proper. Lady
> Cypris, abhor your bed's escapees.

Since Asklēpiadēs pairs these two women together for censure, it seems likely that the epigrammist is condemning them for a lesbian relationship. This is how Dover reads the poem, and Boehringer again, at least in broad strokes, concurs: "a general condemnation is expressed: the poet-character Ego brutally attacks women who have sex with other women," although she reads this as more a momentary expression of individual jealousy than a broader cultural attitude.[127] However, our interpretation of the poem as a whole hinges on our reading of Asklēpiadēs' coy line, μὴ καλά. Dover interprets these women's inelegant practice as homosexuality, based on his longstanding belief that Greek authors in this period hate lesbianism so much that they are unwilling to even mention it.[128] If we follow Dover and interpret the Samian women's inelegant practice as a lesbian affair, then Asklēpiadēs, writing at the very beginning of the third century, seems to assume a very Victorian tone: the love that dare not speak its name, indeed. Since the two poets were near contemporaries, perhaps Diphilos' *Sappho*

[125] Dover, "Two Women of Samos," 226; 224.
[126] Dover had previously discussed this epigram in *Greek Homosexuality,* 172–3.
[127] Boehringer, *Female Homosexuality,* 170.
[128] Dover, "Two Women of Samos," 223–4.

reflects a similar lesbophobia as Asklēpiadēs' when it casts Hippōnax and Arkhilokhos as the poetess' competing lovers.

Since the assumptions that Dover makes about a strict taboo around female homosexuality are impossible to substantiate, it is not clear that μὴ καλά refers to a lesbian encounter between the two women, even if Asklēpiadēs groups them together for criticism. There is no strong evidence, for example, that Aphrodite did not oversee romantic relationships between women, as Dover suggests. Sappho's numerous references to Aphrodite (fr. 1, 102, etc.) suggest that women could and did appeal to the goddess of love for help in all their romantic affairs, homosexual or otherwise. Perhaps Bittō and Nannion did not love each other, but rather loved others in a way that Asklēpiadēs wanted to censure—they were too rough, too voracious, too mercantile, or too mercenary. Or if they were lesbian lovers, Asklēpiadēs gives no explicit indication that it was their homosexuality that reflected poorly on them. It may be that Asklēpiadēs could not even conceive of these women's object-choice as a category by which to define their sexuality, let alone a criterion for either censure or praise. The comedians stereotype women as sexually insatiable, without strong regard for the gender of their sexual object. Groping Lampitō's breasts by way of greeting is part of a broader pattern of behaviour for Kal, who is initially very reluctant to give up sex with her husband. In the long, humorous scene where she teases and then denies her husband, Kalonikē shows that her personal preference (but for Lysistrata's plan!) would be to jump his bones. Kalonikē's bisexual orientation is not nearly as funny to Aristophanes as her immense sexual appetite, regardless of her choice of target. Aristophanes underlines the general stereotype that women had large appetites by expanding her range of interests to include women, but this does not mark her as anymore sexually deviant than any of her oversexed compatriots.

Strictly speaking, Asklēpiadēs does not speak from a classical Athenian perspective. If we are considering texts from later than the fourth century, a work of Second Sophistic historical fiction provides a clear-eyed view of classical Athenian female queerness and how Sappho fits into the picture:

> Οὐκέτ' εἰμὶ ἐν ἐμαυτῇ, ὦ μῆτερ, οὐδὲ ἀνέχομαι γήμασθαι ᾧ με κατεγγυήσειν ἐπηγγείλατο ἔναγχος ὁ πατήρ, τῷ Μηθυμναίῳ μειρακίῳ τῷ παιδὶ τοῦ κυβερνήτου, ἐξ ὅτου τὸν ἀστικὸν ἔφηβον ἐθεασάμην τὸν ὠσχοφόρον, ὅτε με ἄστυδε προὔτρεψας ἀφικέσθαι Ὠσχοφορίων ὄντων. καλὸς γάρ ἐστι, καλός, ὦ μῆτερ, καὶ ἥδιστος, καὶ βοστρύχους ἔχει βρύων οὐλοτέρους, καὶ μειδιᾷ τῆς θαλάττης γαληνιώσης χαριέστερον, καὶ τὰς

> βολὰς τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ἐστι κυαναυγής, οἷος τὸ πρῶτον ὑπὸ τῶν ἡλιακῶν ἀκτίνων ὁ πόντος καταλαμπόμενος φαίνεται. τὸ δὲ ὅλον πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ—ἐνορχεῖσθαι ταῖς παρειαῖς εἴποις ἂν τὰς Χάριτας τὸν Ὀρχομενὸν ἀπολιπούσας καὶ τῆς Ἀργαφίας κρήνης ἀπονιψαμένας• τὼ χείλη δὲ τὰ ῥόδα τῆς Ἀφροδίτης ἀποσυλήσας τῶν κόλπων διήνθισται ἐπὶ τῶν ἄκρων ἐπιθέμενος. ἢ τούτῳ μιγήσομαι ἢ τὴν Λεσβίαν μιμησαμένη Σαπφὼ οὐκ ἀπὸ τῆς Λευκάδος πέτρας, ἀλλ᾽ ἀπὸ τῶν Πειραϊκῶν προβόλων ἐμαυτὴν εἰς τὸ κλυδώνιον ὤσω.
>
> (Alkiphrōn Epist. 1.11 = Sapph. test. 211 V)

> I am not myself anymore, mother, and I cannot bear to marry the one to whom my father has recently announced I am engaged, the Mēthymnian boy, the pilot's son—not after I saw the young city boy who was Vine-Carrier during the Ōskhophoria, when you urged me to go to the city. He is beautiful, mother, beautiful and the sweetest thing, and he has curls woollier than moss, and he smiles more gracefully than the calm sea, and he is dark-gleaming in his eyes' glances, just as the sea seems, lit up for the first time by the sun's rays. His whole face… You might say that the Graces have left Orkhomenos and washed themselves clean of Argos' spring and are now dancing in his cheeks. Having stolen Aphrodite's roses from her lap, he has garlanded his two lips by pressing them to their tips. Either I will have sex with him, or I, remembering Lesbian Sappho, will throw myself not from the Leukadian rock, but from the cliffs of Peiraieus into the surf.

Alkiphrōn's *Epistles* are short, witty fictional letter exchanges from a variety of everyday characters, written in the second century CE. Here, a young woman, Glaukippē, writes to her mother, Kharopē, who responds in the next letter, calling her daughter crazy and warning her not to tell her father about her new crush. We know that the story is set in Athens because Glaukippē mentions the Ōskhophoria and Peiraieus. The direct reference to Sappho comes right at the end of the letter, but we should not be surprised: the "Mēthymnian boy" puts us in contact with Lesbos and the flowers in Aphrodite's lap repeat a potently erotic Sapphic *topos.*

The Ōskhophoria introduces the hint of queerness, which Alkiphrōn's readers would only recognize if they knew about then-ancient Athenian festivals. Onofrio Vox notes that Glaukippē "reverses the stereotype of the male in love after seeing a maiden on a festive occasion."[129] He fails to note that the ephebe would have been dressed as a woman, which provides a queer undercurrent to the role reversal. During the autumn Ōskhophoria, two noble young men would be selected to dress in female clothing and carry clusters of grapes from the temple of Dionysus

[129] Vox, "Women's Voices," 113.

to a temple of Athena in Phalēron.[130] The young man's transvestism queers Glaukippē's desire as it regularizes her effusive description of his beauty, but the shift in erotic object does not mark her as a particular species of erotic subject. The kind of soft queer desire that she expresses for this gender non-conforming boy bears the same weight to her mother as the love she might feel for the boy she is supposed to marry: it is remarkable that she does not want to marry him, not that the rival is feminine. Alkiphrōn reads backwards onto classical Athens a kind of queer female sexuality—μιγήσομαι shows that Glaukippē's intentions are sexual—that resembles the speaking character's desire in Sappho's erotic lyrics. Although of a much later vintage, Alkiphrōn's subtle appreciation for female-subject queer longing corresponds closely with the attitudes expressed in Athenian literature.

This is consistent with the *Sappho* comedies and other Sapphic allusions on the comic stage. If we look at all references to Sappho in all surviving comic texts, Attic comedy celebrates her erotic poetry without ever directly describing its lesbian content. Among the plays called *Sappho,* Diphilos' comedy places her in a heterosexual love triangle with two iambic poets; the other *Sappho* comedies do not mention a strong sexual preference either towards men or women, or indeed place her in any erotic situations at all. In fact, the only fragment of a *Sappho* comedy to include the titular character—for that matter, the only one which mentions any female character at all—is Antiphanēs fr. 194, and we only know that Sappho is on stage because Athēnaios reports that she is one of the speaking characters. As we have seen, this is a playful scene, not explicitly erotic, but her riddle certainly plays with women's sexual and reproductive roles when it talks about children hiding ὑπὸ κόλποις ("in her lap" or "under her clothes"; fr. 194.1), the same intimate place where Sappho's bride hides a violet in fr. 30. Based on the company she keeps, it does not appear that Epikratēs has Sappho's object-choice or orientation in mind when he references her erotic songs. In this way, Epikratēs' interaction with Sappho's poetry resembles that of his contemporary, Plato. As we saw in the introduction, Plato incorporates themes from Sappho's poetry when he talks about love, and pairs her with Anakreōn as an authority on *eros*, one of "the ancient and wise men and women who spoke and wrote on the topic" (παλαιοὶ γὰρ καὶ σοφοὶ ἄνδρες τε καὶ γυναῖκες περὶ αὐτῶν εἰρηκότες καὶ γεγραφότες; *Phaedr.* 235b). Significantly, when Plato and Epikratēs place Sappho alongside

[130] Scullion, "Festivals," 196.

male erotic poets and invoke her erotic authority, they tacitly embrace the queer eroticism in her poetry and recognize her lesbian desire as the same type of emotion as a man's, further underscoring that lesbian sexuality was not taboo, even if it was rarely discussed.

Even while they quietly accept Sappho's queerness, these sources reveal how male Athenian culture, including comedy, is not interested in Sappho as the woman who loves *women,* but simply as the woman who *loves.* While we have scattered reference to other female poets from classical and pre-classical Greece, such as Aristophanes' references to Praxilla and Kharixenē, no other Archaic woman was known as a writer of erotica. Just as Aristophanes finds humour in Kalonikē's immense sexual appetite rather than a particular sexual orientation, there is no reason to believe that a male writer in the fourth century would take the obviously homoerotic content of most of Sappho's love songs to mean that the writer was an exclusive homosexual. Instead, we should reread the ostensibly heterosexual love triangle in Diphilos' *Sappho* and Sappho's suicidal expression of love for Phaōn in Menander's *Leukadia.* The comedians represent Sappho as sexual *tout court,* a position that does not preclude queer desire. It is therefore untenable to interpret the apparent absence of explicit homoerotic content in the comedies about Sappho as an unambiguous repudiation of the homoerotic content in her poetry, and still less to interpret such an absence as evidence of a general hostility towards female-female erotics in male Athenian discourse.

Chapter 3 - Sappho the *Hetaira*

Now that we have dispensed with the old theory that Attic comedy concerned itself greatly with Sappho's sexual orientation, we return to the question of the *hetaira*, which I addressed shallowly in the first chapter. There, I argued that a few comedians—definitely Antiphanēs, probably Ephippos, Timoklēs, and Diphilos—set their *Sappho* comedies in fourth-century Athens and cast Sappho as a contemporary *hetaira*. In this chapter, I contend that the *Sappho* comedies, as well as telling us about how literate male Athenians received Sappho's poetry, also reveal their attitudes towards real, flesh-and-blood women in contemporary Athens, especially those labeled as *hetairai* and related marginal women, most of whom were non-Athenian in origin. Working with Kate Gilhully's recent research on Athens' erotic geographies and Rebecca Futo Kennedy's deconstructing the anti-immigrant rhetoric in Athenian *hetaira* discourse, I reread how comedy sexualized Sappho in relation to her ethnicity. By putting aside the lesbian content in her poetry, we can consider how her Lesbian ethnicity plays a stronger role in shaping her sexual reputation in classical Athens. When the comedians talk about Sappho's sexuality, they are also talking about her non-Athenian ethnicity.

A rumour that Sappho had been a *hetaira* or some other kind of sex worker circulated in antiquity (Nymphodor. *FGrH* 572f6 = Athen. 13.596e; Seneca *Ep.* 87.37–8; Ael. *Var. Hist.* 12.19 Hercher). As with Sappho's husband, scholars have looked to comedy to account for this rumour. Smyth calls the comedians' Sappho "a courtesan."[131] A paper from the 1940s states simply in passing that "Sappho in comedy had the double role of *hetaira* and setter of riddles," referring especially to Diphilos and Antiphanēs.[132] With a little more subtlety, Wilamowitz says that Hellenistic Sappho fans created a "homonymous *hetaira* [*homonymen Hetaere*]" to rescue her legacy from comedy's scandalous insinuations.[133] These interpretations both beg the question of who exactly the *hetaira* was. Sappho's reconfiguration as a *hetaira* offers a unique opportunity to consider the intersections between a canonical female poetic voice and historical female symposium performers, especially in light of the sympotic performance patterns that underlie her reception in comedy. I therefore propose to turn the gaze away from Sappho herself in this chapter. The sympotic undercurrents in Sappho's comic reception illustrates the important

[131] Smyth, *Greek Melic Poets,* 227.
[132] Webster, "South Italic Vases and Attic Drama," 24.
[133] Wilamowitz, *Sappho und Simonides*, 24.

role that female performers and *hetairai* (read: educated, but marginalized, immigrant women) played in shaping Athens' poetic landscape.

We proceed in three acts. First, we will discuss classical Athenian citizenship and its discontents. Athens was a city of immigrants, but the small citizen minority jealously guarded its privileges. Second, we must consider the *hetaira* in Athenian life and literature, especially on the comic stage and in the law courts. Third, we turn back to Sappho herself and her depiction in comedy. The image here is fractured by the fragmentary evidence, but we may be able to tentatively make things out once we have explored the Athenian context more clearly. Like shards of glass, the fragmented texts refract the image so that not every characteristic that we might associate with the classical *hetaira*—sexual availability, symposium attendance, and foreign origin—is visible in each. It is also not a given that each play had the same plot or characterized the titular character in exactly the same way. I argue, however, that these comedies emerge from a shared cultural milieu in which women who present themselves the way that Sappho does in her poems would customarily earn the title of *hetaira*.

The Rhetoric of Citizenship in Athens

Athenian ethnic diversity extended across all classes of society and all periods of history. Archaic Greek aristocrats were highly mobile. Their outlook favoured their aristocratic class over individual *polis* loyalty and their political machinations often resulted in periods of exile. We see this shared elite culture also in symposium culture, which united aristocratic men around the Greek-speaking world in opposition to social inferiors, while simultaneously encouraging a luxurious cosmopolitan aesthetic that drew on non-Greek culture. Under this shared cultural dynamic, intermarriage between the elites of different *poleis* was common. To take one prominent example, Kleisthenēs, the highborn revolutionary who set up Athenian democracy in 508, was born in Sicyōn to an exiled Athenian father and a Sicyōnian mother (Her. 6.131). Kleisthenēs' democratic reforms are key in understanding Athenian conceptions of ethnicity, as they negotiated the expansion of old aristocratic privileges to a broader swath of the population. His reforms divided the Athenian population into ten new tribes, each named after a native Attic hero, separating them from their traditional Ionian *ethnos*, which Kennedy calls "a watershed

moment in Athenian identity."[134] This newly-expanded citizen population shared a defined Attic ethnic identity that united rich and poor against non-Athenians. Democratic state ideology encouraged myths of autochthony, literal birth from the Attic soil in the deep mythic past.[135] Accounts differ slightly, but Athenian myth tells of many earth-born founder-heroes: Ōgygos, Aktaios, Kekrops, Kranaos, and Erikhthonios.[136] Starting from the first half of the fifth century, democratic ideology emphasized autochthony as an equalizing force, crediting it in myth to the early king Erekhtheus, identified with Erikhthonios. Erekhtheus appears in the Homeric narratives as Athens' earth-born king and Athena's favourite (*Il.* 2.546–51; *Od.* 7.81). Erekhtheus/Erikhthonios was born from the earth itself when Hephaestus, sexually assaulting his half-sister, ejaculated on Athena's thigh and the semen fell to the ground (Plut. *Vit. Dec.* 835e5; Σ in Eur. *Med.* 825). Erekhtheus' hero-cult persisted through the Roman period, when Pausanias tells us that the Athenians of his day still offered sacrifice to this primordial king alongside Zeus in a temple called the Erekhtheum (1.26.5 Spiro). Modern archeology identifies the temple on the north side of the Acropolis, built in the last two decades of the fifth century (*IG* i^3 474), as the Erekhtheum. Its late date of construction shows that the unifying mythology of autochthony continued even as Athens' democracy came under threat in the later part of the Peloponnesian War. While a sense of shared Greek identity undergirt collective struggles against the Persian Empire in 480 and under Macedonian hegemony at the end of the fourth century, democratic ideology in Athens emphasized Athenian ethnic difference from other Hellēnes and non-Greeks alike.

Citizenship laws changed over time.[137] Early in the Athenian democracy, citizenship passed along the patrilineal line, from father to son. In the heady days between the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars, Pericles pushed through a law in 451 reserving citizenship for the sons of two citizen-class parents. This law was rescinded sometime after 429, then reintroduced in 403 with the return of the democracy. While continuing to reserve the privileges of democratic enfranchisement exclusively to men, the stricter citizenship laws of 451 and 403 set a quasi-citizen status for Athenian women as the mothers of male citizens. We refer to a child born of a

[134] Kennedy, *Immigrant Women in Athens*, 5.
[135] See Rosivach, "Autochthony and the Athenians."
[136] Blok, "Gentrifying Genealogy," 258.
[137] Kennedy, *Immigrant Women in Athens*, 4–7.

citizen father and a non-citizen mother as a *mētroxenos* (μητρόξενος, from μήτηρ 'mother' + ξένος 'foreigner'), a term that only appears in later sources, where it is taken as a more specific synonym for *nothos* (νόθος 'bastard'; Poll. 3.21 Bethe; Hsch. μ 404 Hansen–Cunningham). *Mētroxenoi* were common in the early democracy as aristocratic men continued to find wives of similar status in other cities. They were grandfathered into citizenship under the 451 law, which only applied to children born from the time of its passage, but their partial non-citizen heritage drew suspicion as Athenian citizenship became more exclusive. Kennedy argues that the 403 law, firmly establishing citizenship by dual descent, presaged a fourth century in which Athenian xenophobia solidified, marriage between citizen men and non-citizen women changed from uncommon and impractical to strictly forbidden, fewer new immigrants arrived, and yet non-citizens made their biggest contributions to the Athenian economy.[138]

These laws reflected an anxiety about ethnic purity as a cohesive force in the democratic citizen body. Kennedy follows the work of Susan Lape, who argues that "Athenian ideology fostered extrinsic racism by emphasizing that only Athenians with the proper birth and ancestry were worthy to share in democratic citizenship and its privileges."[139] Lape points to Euripides' *Iōn* as a key text negotiating the transmission of Athenian racial purity from its origins in mythic autochthony to the last two decades of the fifth century, when the play was first performed.[140] The eponymous character was conceived through Apollo's assault on the last Erekhtheid, the teenage Kreousa, who exposes infant Iōn out of shame. The drama follows grown-up Iōn reuniting with his mother and her husband, Xouthos, through a series of tragi-comic prophecies and recognitions. The play illustrates the transition from Kreousa's autochthony to Iōn's generational heredity, allowing the divine Erekhtheid line to spread and become the complete Athenian race.[141] Euripides illustrates the political importance of this myth when Iōn, who does not yet know his full parentage, but knows Xouthos as his (step-)father, cites then-contemporary citizenship mores:

> εἰ μὴ γὰρ ἥτις μ' ἔτεκεν εὑρήσω, πάτερ,
> ἀβίωτον ἡμῖν. εἰ δ' ἐπεύξασθαι χρεών, 670
> ἐκ τῶν Ἀθηνῶν μ' ἡ τεκοῦσ' εἴη γυνή,

[138] Kennedy, *Immigrant Women in Athens*, 7.
[139] Lape, *Race and Citizen Identity*, 33.
[140] *Ibid*., 95–136.
[141] On women's roles in Athenian autochthony myths, see Calame, "Myth and Performance on the Athenian Stage."

ὥς μοι γένηται μητρόθεν παρρησία.
καθαρὰν γὰρ ἤν τις ἐς πόλιν πέσηι ξένος,
κἂν τοῖς λόγοισιν ἀστὸς ᾖι, τό γε στόμα
δοῦλον πέπαται κοὐκ ἔχει παρρησίαν. (*Ion.* 669–75)

If I don't find the woman who gave birth to me, father,
it would be intolerable. I must pray that
the woman who bore me was from Athens,
so that freedom of speech (*parrhēsia*) falls to me matrilineally.
For someone who happens to be a foreigner in a free city,
even if he becomes a citizen by words, has earned
a slavish mouth and has no freedom of speech.

Under Athenian rhetoric, *parrhesia*, the right to free speech, was a key marker of democratic citizenship (Is. 2.3, 8.14 Roussel; E. *Hipp.* 422; cf. Hdt. 5.78). The Athenian racial citizenship ideology that Ion turns on himself also finds expression in comedy and oratory, where it is a useful invective rhetoric with which to discredit opponents. Aristophanes makes ethnic jokes of a leading citizen like Kleōn, whom he mocks vociferously as a Paphlagonian in the *Knights*; one of Kleōn's female ancestors seems to have come from Paphlagonia, although contemporary sources do not corroborate Aristophanes' joke. Similarly, in the fourth century, Demosthenes' Scythian matrilineal line provides invective fodder for his opponents (Aeschin. 3.171–3). Lape draws attention to the exact epithet Aiskhinēs applies to Demosthenes: "Greek-speaking barbarian" (βάρβαρος ἑλληνίζων τῇ φωνῇ; 3.172).[142] This turn of phrase underlines that ethnic bloodline trumps language and acculturation in the rhetoric of fourth-century Athenian citizenship, just as citizenship by dual descent trumps citizenship by decree for Euripides. According to Aiskhinēs, a single Scythian grandparent renders Demosthenes unfit for full democratic citizenship.

Under the democratic regime, grants of citizenship were rare, but political, economic, and military realities sometimes forced further integration. The assembly occasionally voted to naturalize individuals or sometimes whole groups under extreme circumstances. Sadokos, the princely son of a Thracian ally, was granted Athenian citizenship during the Peloponnesian War (Thuc. 2.29.5 Jones).[143] The Plataian refugees arriving in Athens in 428 received citizenship *en masse* ([D.] 59.104), as did the Athenian slaves and non-citizens pressed into service for the

[142] Lape, *Race and Citizen Identity*, 26; 83.
[143] Diplomatic gifts of citizenship to overseas allies who did not take up residence in Attica would be "primarily honorific" (Deene, "Naturalized Citizens and Social Mobility in Classical Athens," 163).

Arginousai relief fleet in 406 (Ar. *Ra.* 33, 190–1, 693–4; D.S. 13.97.1).[144] After the war, Apollodōros, who brought the famous case against Neaira, was himself descended from a newly-enfranchised family. His father, Pasiōn, probably Phoenician by origin, raised himself and his descendants from slavery to citizenship through a successful career in banking, his generous donations to the Athenian state greasing the way ([D.] 59.2).[145] At the same time, Athenian citizenship was not contingent on Attic residence, so that in the middle of the fourth century, "almost a third of all adult male citizens of Athens lived on Samos" as cleruchs.[146]

Even as they were excluded from citizenship on racial grounds, many non-Athenians lived in Athens. The large population of slaves in Attica contained Thracians, Egyptians, Scythians, a variety of ethnicities imported from the Persian empire, and Greeks from cities other than Athens.[147] Epigraphic evidence shows that slaves in Athens usually bore ethnonymic names reflecting their diverse origins.[148] There was also a significant population of free non-citizens who lived in Athens as metics (μέτοικοι), a distinct legal status under Athenian law between the early fifth century and sometime in the early second.[149] The defining feature of metic status was the *metoikion* poll tax: twelve drachmas *per annum* for metic men and six for unmarried metic women. Paying the *metoikion* was the public declaration of the metic's status in the city. To administer this tax, metics were obliged to register with their deme of residence under the loose protection of a *prostatēs,* a citizen sponsor who would stand up for their ward in court, from which metics were barred. Similarly, metics could not own land, vote, or hold public office. Like slaves, metics had a variety of ethnic identities, both Greek and non-Greek. Slave and metic identity were somewhat coterminous, since manumitted slaves became metics if they remained in the city. Visitors to the city had to pay the *metoikion* after a short time in Athens, likely in the magnitude of days or weeks, not months or years, although we are not exactly sure. The Athenian state policed metic status aggressively. A foreigner who did not pay the *metoikion* or

[144] Hunt, "The Slaves and the Generals of Arginusae," 359–70.
[145] Deene, "Naturalized Citizens and Social Mobility in Classical Athens," 164–5.
[146] Habicht, "Athens, Samos, and Alexander the Great," 402.
[147] Kennedy, *Immigrant Women in Athens,* 3.
[148] Robertson, "The Slave–Names of IG i^3 1032."
[149] Whitehead, *The Ideology of the Athenian Metic.*

register with the city could be sold into slavery under the *graphē apostasiou*. Under the *graphē xenias*, one who pretended to be a citizen could be put to death.[150]

Despite the restrictions placed on them, metic status had its appeal. It clearly offered more freedom than slavery and Athens' economic boom after the Persian Wars, mediated through the expansion of Peiraieus, encouraged immigration.[151] Inscriptions detailing pay structures for the construction of the Erekhtheum, our most detailed record of public employment in the fifth century, show that metic, slave, and citizen workers received the same wage (*IG* i^3 476–9, ii^2 1654).[152] As we have seen, individuals such as the banker Pasiōn also show that some metics grew very rich and integrated themselves into civic society. Occasionally, the Athenian assembly would vote to limit the restrictions imposed on a group of metics or even an individual: a mid-fourth century Athenian inscription records an agreement between Athens and Sidon that Sidonians were exempt from the *metoikion* if they kept up their citizenship in their home city.[153] Metics contributed to the city's cultural life, like comedians Diphilos and Antiphanēs. Aristotle lived in Athens for many years as a metic before retiring to Khalkis in 323 after Alexander's death. Anti-Macedonian sentiments, "copiously attested" in this period (D. 9.31: ὀλέθρου Μακεδόνος, ὅθεν οὐδ' ἀνδράποδον σπουδαῖον οὐδὲν ἦν πρότερον πρίασθαι; "a vicious Macedonian, from a country where you couldn't even buy a good slave"), probably contributed to his departure, but not a specific anti-metic attitude, Whitehead contends.[154] Aristotle's case shows the vicissitudes of Attic ethnic prejudice and the limited protection of metic status. *Metoikia* as an institution allowed immigrants to integrate into the city's cultural, intellectual, and economic life, but marked the immigrant perpetually as foreign and did not protect them from ethnic bigotry.

Independent women lived in Athens as metics for all the same reason that men did. Manumitted female slaves paid the *metoikion*, as did female economic migrants. Like the mixed-status male workers at the Erekhtheum, female metics worked alongside slaves and working-

[150] Kennedy, *Immigrant Women in Athens,* 3.
[151] Kasimis, *Perpetual Immigrant,* 5.
[152] Leasing slave labour was a "large-scale practice" and a slave's owner retained their wages (Ismard, "Renting Slaves in Classical Athens: Anatomy of a Legal Form," 421).
[153] Whitehead, *The Ideology of the Athenian Metic,* 8–9.
[154] Whitehead, "Aristotle the Metic," 97.

class female citizens as woolworkers, nurses, priestesses, and possibly educators.[155] In fact, Satyra, a metic woman, is listed as a material supplier on the Erekhtheum workers' list, although a lacuna obscures her exact trade (*IG* ii^2 1654). In the eyes of the law, female metics occupied a position in Athenian society distinct from either their male peers or women of another social class. As I mention above, women who led their own household paid the *metoikion* at half the rate of a male metic, setting them apart from their male peers. Paying the *metoikion* bought these independent metic women a position in Athenian society without the same restrictions placed on Athens' other female denizens. Citizen-class women and girls (and slave women, to a certain extent) were integrated into civic life through the protection of a male guardian. For citizen women, this guardian was called the *kyrios*: her father or another male relative until marriage, her husband after. Metic women who paid the *metoikion* for themselves uniquely were their own *kyriai* ([D.] 59.46; Men. *Pc.* 497); their citizen *prostatēs* did not fill the same role or offer the same protection. While standing as their own *kyrios* offered greater economic freedom to non-citizen women, having no one else to fill the *kyrios*' role in the marriage process limited a metic woman's opportunities to integrate into civic life. The Neaira case shows that an out-and-out ban on marriage between a citizen man and a non-citizen woman was passed "sometime between 390 and 371."[156] This case shares the invective rhetoric of 'Paphlagonian' Kleōn and 'Scythian' Demosthenes, showing that non-citizen women's integration into the Athenian citizen body particularly enflamed racist anti-immigrant sentiments. The difference is that Apollodōros makes Neaira herself his primary target, and he has a specific term for the kind of sexual, threatening woman that she is: *hetaira*.

<u>*Hetaira* Discourse</u>

Ethnic anxiety shaped Athenian sexual discourse. The *moichos* (adulterer) haunts the plots of such disparate texts as Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazousai* and Lysias' *On the Death of Eratosthenēs*. He threatens his place in the Athenian citizenship class through his 'barbaric' immoderation—an adulterer caught *in flagrante* lost the male citizen's right to bodily inviolability—and threatens the Athenian citizen body itself by calling lines of paternity into

[155] Kennedy, *Immigrant Women in Athens*, 123–53.
[156] *Ibid*., 20.

question.[157] Discourse around the *hetaira* also deals in ethnic anxieties, both in classical Athens and as reconstructed today. In *Immigrant Women in Athens*, Kennedy's point of departure is a bias that she identifies in both ancient literature and modern criticism to presume that many or perhaps all foreign women in Athens engaged in sex work. The racial dynamics that I outline in the previous section underlie Athenian rhetoric about non-citizen women, and Kennedy establishes how, especially in comedy and legal rhetoric, Athenian literature attacks non-citizen women as sex workers. She traces the origin of the *hetaira* archetype to these dynamics. However, she is clear that these literary texts do not precisely reflect women's lived experiences in Athens, and moreover that the same bodies of literature show a great deal of variation in how terms like *hetaira* get used. Her research suggests that the term ἑταίρα did not name a neatly-defined profession. Modern translations of *hetaira* as 'courtesan' or 'prostitute' project backwards onto Athenian life an ahistorical definition that we find primarily in Roman-era authors. Kennedy describes how:

> … there were a group of women in sixth- and fifth-century Athens who were called *hetairai*, who had foreign associations, were wealthy, educated, and distinguished or famous, and associated with modeling and performance at times, but they were not prostitutes or even courtesans. Nor … was the term *hetaira* ever synonymous with a class of prostitute in the classical period except among a small class of individuals who considered any woman of a lower status available for sex and who used the term to denote women who were "the kind you don't take home to mother."[158]

The "small class of individuals" who used *hetaira* in this way overlapped the small cadre of Athenian men well-placed to realize their political or literary aspirations. The writings these men produce are not rigidly accurate anthropological studies. Their prejudices blinker modern scholarship—consider how words like 'courtesan' or '*hetaira*' regularly appear in collection catalogues for ancient images of women, especially nude women, and make it difficult for viewers to reconsider this designation.[159] In this section, I draw on Kennedy's research to redefine *hetaira* and show the shifting rhetoric around this figure, which we can then use to look more critically at the Sappho comedies.

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[157] Carey, "Rape and Adultery," 416.
[158] Kennedy, *Immigrant Women in Athens,* 69.
[159] Sorkin Rabinowitz, "Excavating Women's Homoeroticism," 107–8.

No archaic author uses the term ἑταίρα to indicate a sexually available woman. Homer uses ἑταίρα three times, all without a sexual connotation (*Il.* 4.441; 9.2; *Od.* 17.271). Archaic lyric, including Sappho's, uses ἑταίρα simply to mean 'female friend' among women of similar status (of Lētō and Niobē, Sapph. fr. 142; of her audience, Sapph. fr. 160; Pind. *Pyth.* 3.18; 9.19). Pindar's *hetairai* are companions in ritualized contexts, a wedding and dinners respectively, both festive occasions where mixed-gender groups sat together. The first author to use ἑταίρα as a sexual euphemism is Herodotus, well into the fifth century. Herodotus uses it for Dōrikha, a Naukratian woman who becomes romantically entangled with Sappho's brother, Kharaxos (Hdt. 2.135). This is the only passage in the *Histories* that mentions Sappho, as well as the earliest discussion of her biography outside her own poetry. It is also only the only section of the *Histories* to call anyone a *hetaira*. The ambiguity between these two definitions persisted until Roman times, since Athēnaios tells us, in the passage in which he cites Sappho frr. 142 and 160, that "free women and girls still call their friends and acquaintances *hetairai*" (13.571c–d). Speaking of this passage, Lidov says that while "Athēnaios cites Sappho (13.571d) to illustrate the innocent use of the term, his subsequent quotations in that passage make it clear that playing the two meanings off against each other was a feature of at least Middle and New Comedy."[160] As mentioned in Chapter 1, Book 13 of the *Deipnosophistai* describes a debate about the status of *hetairai*. Many of the examples cited on both sides of the debate come from comedy and other Athenian sources. It is clear that Athēnaios and his characters take this literature at face value and accept that these women behaved exactly as the comedians describe them, showing that the category of the *hetaira* has become fixed in the literary imagination by the time Athēnaios is writing. The Attic comedians whom Athēnaios cites are not dispassionate observers of male-female relations. The tension that we see in the sexual and non-sexual use of ἑταίρα in comedy and other contemporary sources—a tension that these fourth-century authors inherit from the archaic poetry they so admire—shows that the comedians were at least somewhat aware of the indeterminacies inherent to the literary discourse in which they participated.

Scholarly debates about the *hetaira's* origins reflect the ambiguities in the meaning of the word to which Athēnaios testifies. Leslie Kurke argues that archaic aristocrats created the *hetaira* category—by analogy with the male *hetairos*—to differentiate the women who provided sexual

[160] Lidov, "Sappho, Herodotus, and the Hetaira," 228.

services at elite symposia from the low-status *pornai* (an invective label similar to English 'whores') who took pay from anyone, either on the street or in brothels.[161] She identifies an ideological difference between the aristocratic elite, who idealized their ultimately transactional sexual relationships as a free exchange of gifts, and a growing mercantile middling class, whom the elite disdained for their commercialism. As we have seen, archaic literature uses ἑταίρα to mean 'female friend,' not 'courtesan,' and there is a great deal of evidence to suggest that women attended symposia, especially outside Athens. Kennedy agrees with Kurke that the *hetaira* archetype emerges from sympotic culture in the archaic period, but disagrees that ἑταίρα was simply an elite euphemism for a sex worker, overly-strict ideas about archaic female propriety. There is no clear evidence that elite women of the archaic period did not drink with their male peers, especially outside Athens, nor that elite young women who engaged with cosmopolitan symposium culture would have their reputations entirely ruined through pre-marital sex. Rather, she offers that:

> the association of women known as *hetairai* with the symposium derives from the social habits of elite women, many of them either foreign wives or *mētroxenai* (daughters of foreign mothers), who shared a common luxury culture with their male counterparts. These women frequently had 'bad' reputations in Athens, but they were, by most standards, established as 'respectable' citizen wives.[162]

That is to say, the *hetaira* figure emerged from the shifting ethnic politics of late-seventh- and early-sixth-century Athenian citizenship. Kennedy argues that the foreign-born wives and daughters of Athenian citizens would have had different values around sexual practice and mixed-gender drinking than their new Athenian neighbours, saying that "the foreign women who most frequently married into the Athenian elite were from regions like Miletus, Eretria, and Thrace, … where the elite women were more generally integrated into social activities like dining and drinking."[163] Within the tensions of Athenian ethnic citizenship, this culture clash created a fertile ground in which new stereotypes could grow. While these foreign-born wives and *mētroxenai* had access to citizenship, we see through examples like Aristophanes' attack on Kleōn as a Paphlagonian *mētroxenos* that their presence in the city provoked long-lasting

[161] Kurke, "Inventing the 'Hetaira.'"
[162] Kennedy, "Elite Citizen Women," 64.
[163] Kennedy, *Immigrant Women in Athens*, 72.

anxiety. Foreign women who married into the upper classes provoked particular anxiety, Kennedy argues, because their position gave them access to the political elite. Neatly transitioning between Sappho's use of *hetaira* and Herodotus' use, Kennedy's argument shows how the language these women used to describe one another could be turned against them as a sexualized stereotype. The evidence of Pind. *Pyth.* 9.19, where women call each other *hetairai* over dinner, is especially evocative as it provides a very clear parallel between the female *hetaira* and the male sympotic *hetairos*.

As I mentioned in the introduction, formal Athenian etiquette demanded women not drink with men or attend symposia, but actual practice did not live up to this ideal. We have copious evidence that women drank wine—comedy has a stereotype of alcoholic old women who sometimes go about with men (Ar. *N.* 555; *Pl.* 973–4)—as well as a smaller amount that shows women engaging in specifically sympotic activities. Kratinos fr. 299 features a drunken woman calling for sex and playing *kottabos*, the popular symposium game of flinging your dregs at a target, showing that women participating in all parts of the symposium was at least imaginable. Kennedy argues that some sixth- and early-fifth-century vase paintings that show groups of women dining together or engaged in sympotic activities depict the sort of female homosocial event where attendees would call each other *hetairai* in the way that Sappho uses the word.[164] She also points to two potsherds discovered in the Athenian Agora that bear *kalos* inscriptions written in a female voice, both from the first half of the fifth century:[165]

> Λυκόμαχ[ος καλὸς]
> [δ]οκεῖ Ἰανθίδ[(Agora 21 C10)
>
> Lykomakhos seems
> beautiful to Ianthis
>
> Ἀλ<λ>καῖος καλὸς
> τὸ δοκεῖ Μέλιτι (Agora 21 C19 a)
>
> Alkaios seems
> beautiful to Melis

These inscriptions show women projecting their desire onto men they know well, not cloistered at home. The *kalos* formula is associated especially with sympotic pederasty, so Kennedy argues

[164] *Ibid.*, 69–71.
[165] Kennedy, "Elite Citizen Women," 65.

that Melis and Ianthis were "elite women" participating in the "elite discourse" of the symposium.[166]

Women like Melis and Ianthis remain largely obscure to history. Kennedy offers a few better-remembered examples of fifth-century 'proto-*hetairai*,' women of foreign origin who earned bad reputations in Athens.[167] The first is Elpinikē, the *mētroxene* daughter of a Thracian mother and the Athenian general Miltiadēs (Hdt. 6.41.2 notes their marriage). She was born through her paternal line into the Athenian political elite and married well, to Kallias, a wealthy veteran of Marathon. Gossip accuses her of gross sexual impropriety: pre-marital incest with her brother Kimōn (Eupolis fr. 221; D.S. 31.1.1; Plu. *Cim.* 4.8–9), offering Pericles sex for Kimōn's safe return from exile, (Athen. 13.589e–f; cf. Stēsimbrotos *FrGH* 107f5 = Plu. *Cim*. 14.5; *Per.* 10.5–6), and an affair with the painter Polygnōtos after she married Kallias (Plu. *Cim.* 4.6–7). Only the last and least scandalous of these affairs seems likely to have occurred, as Elpinikē's name was previously visible on a vase attributed to Polygnōtos (Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. 81398).[168] An ostracon mentioning her alongside Kimōn shows that her sexual and political reputations mingled together: "Kimōn, son of Miltiadēs, take Elpinikē and go" (ΚΙΜΩΝ ΜΙΛΤΙΑΔΟΥ ΕΛΠΙΝΙΚΗΝ ΛΑΒΩΝ ΙΤΩ; Kerameikos O 6874).[169] The second woman is Koisyra, whom we also know from comedy and a handful of ostraca. Kennedy provides a clear photograph of a previously unpublished ostracon: "Megaklēs, son of Hippokratēs and Koisyra" ([ΜΕ]ΓΑΚΛΗΣ [ΗΙ]ΠΠΟΚΡΑΤΩΣ [Κ]ΑΙ ΚΟΙΣΥΡΑΣ).[170] While we have no stories about her sexuality, Aristophanes turns Koisyra's name into a by-word for decadent luxury (*N.* 48; 799–800; cf. *Ach.* 614–7). The scholia on *Clouds* 48 say that Koisyra was of Eretrian aristocratic descent and Pericles' mother Agaristē was "probably" her daughter.[171] Note that the ostraca disparage Elpinikē and Koisyra to attack their male relatives—if anyone was ostracized, it was the men. Despite their bad reputations, there is no indication that either woman lost their status as respectable, politically-connected elite women. "'Respected'

[166] *Ibid.*, 66.
[167] Kennedy, *Immigrant Women in Athens*, 78–85; "Elite Citizen Women," 67–71.
[168] Kennedy, "Elite Citizen Women," 69.
[169] I cite the Greek and translation from Kennedy, "Elite Citizen Women," 68, which also has a very clear photograph of the ostracon.
[170] Kennedy, "Elite Citizen Women," 70.
[171] *Ibid.*, 71.

and 'respectable' are not quite the same thing," as Kennedy astutely puts it.[172] She draws a close comparison between these fifth-century noblewomen and the women that Kurke identifies as high-class sex workers in archaic sympotic poetry, quipping that Elpinikē is a "real 'Thracian filly,'" an allusion to the Thracian woman in Anakreōn fr. 417 *PMG* whom Kurke reads as a prototypical archaic *hetaira*.[173] Neither Anakreōn's fictive woman nor Elpinikē is ever explicitly called a *hetaira*; we cannot conclude anything about a fictive woman's profession, just as we cannot say that elite women like Elpinikē ever sold sex, despite their scandalous reputations.

Kennedy highlights Aspasia, partner of Koisyra's grandson Pericles, as a "pivotal figure" between women like Koisyra and Elpinikē, and the archetypal *hetaira* of later literature.[174] The comparison between Aspasia and these woman of previous generations has precedent—Athēnaios' juxtaposes the story of Elpinikē's sexual deal with Pericles with stories about his lust for Aspasia (13.589d–f). Unlike with the earlier proto-*hetairai*, some sources tell us explicitly that Aspasia engaged in the sex trade. However, Madeleine Henry, Aspasia's most thorough modern biographer, rejects such stories as slander.[175] Henry and Kennedy both tentatively accept a version of Aspasia's life sketched out by Peter Bicknell in the 1980s.[176] Based especially on a funeral stele with an unusually serendipitous collection of names (*IG* ii^2 7394), he proposes that Aspasia was born in Milētos after 470, that her older sister married Alcibiades the elder when he was in exile there in the 460s, and that she then accompanied her brother-in-law back to Athens around 450, meeting Pericles while she was still quite young. Her sister's children with Alcibiades received Athenian citizenship at birth, but Aspasia's son by Pericles, Pericles Junior, fell victim to his father's xenophobic citizenship law of 451 and received a special exemption in 430, a year before his father's death in the great Athenian plague.

Aspasia has a better-developed biographical tradition than any Greek woman except Sappho. The most detailed treatment of her life comes from Plutarch's *Pericles* (24.1–32.5), which records her mixed reputation. One stream in Aspasia's *bios* portrays her as a teacher and public intellectual. In the *Menexenus*, Socrates quotes a long funeral oration purportedly by

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[172] *Ibid.*, 72.
[173] Kennedy, "Elite Citizen Women," 68; Kurke, "Inventing the 'Hetaira,'" 113-4.
[174] Kennedy, *Immigrant Women in Athens,* 68.
[175] Henry, *Prisoner of History*.
[176] Bicknell, "Axiochos Alkibiadou, Aspasia and Aspasios"; Henry, *Prisoner of History,* 10–1; Kennedy, *Immigrant Women in Athens,* 76–7.

Aspasia and calls her his "teacher" (διδάσκαλος; 236c). Another stream depicts her as a vicious, manipulative *hetaira*. The term is only used for her once, by Athēnaios, who cites Herakleidēs of Pontus, a fourth-century philosopher active in Athens (12.533c = Herakleidēs fr. 59 Wehrli). A mistake about Aspasia's origin—Athēnaios says she is from Megara, not Milētos—undercuts this account's authority. Likely the mistake comes from a misunderstanding of this passage from Aristophanes, which blames Aspasia for the Peloponnesian War:[177]

> πόρνην δὲ Σιμαίθαν ἰόντες Μεγαράδε
> νεανίαι 'κκλέπτουσι μεθυσοκόττα βοι·
> κᾆθ' οἱ Μεγαρῆς ὀδύναις πεφυσιγγωμένοι
> ἀντεξέκλεψαν Ἀσπασίας πόρνα δύο·
> κἀντεῦθεν ἀρχὴ τοῦ πολέμου κατερράγη
> Ἕλλησι πᾶσιν ἐκ τριῶν λαικαστριῶν.
> ἐντεῦθεν ὀργῇ Περικλέης οὐλύμπιος
> ἤστραπτ', ἐβρόντα, ξυνεκύκα τὴν Ἑλλάδα
>
> (*Ach.* 524–31)

> Young men, drunk on *kottabos*, went to Megara
> and stole the whore Simaitha,
> so the Megarians got all garlicked up with pain
> and stole *two* whores from Aspasia as payback,
> thus the opening of the war burst upon
> all Greece duo to three cocksuckers.
> Then, Olympian Pericles, full of rage,
> tossed his lightning, thundered, and set Greece on fire

Plutarch concurs that Aspasia was a madam, managing a house of "little *hetairai* darlings" (παιδίσκας ἑταιρούσας; *Per.* 24.5–6). Aristophanes' mythological parody recurs in other comedies. In *Chirons*, Kratinos sends up Pericles as a "head-gathering tyrant" (τύραννον … κεφαληγερέταν; fr. 258.3–4), parodying Zeus' Homeric epithet "cloud-gathering" (νεφεληγερέτα). Aspasia plays Hera to Pericles' Zeus:

> Ἥραν τέ οἱ Ἀσπασίαν τίκτει Καταπυγοσύνη
> παλλακὴν κυνώπιδα (Kratinos fr. 269)
>
> Promiscuity gave bore to him Hera and Aspasia,
> the dog-eyed concubine

[177] Bicknell, "Axiochos Alkibiadou, Aspasia and Aspasios," 243, n. 30; Kennedy, *Immigrant Women in Athens*, 75.

Personifying "Promiscuity" as Aspasia's mother drives home that her ancestry, in conjunction with Pericles' supposedly tyrannical political aspirations, represents a threat to Athenian civilization. Kratinos also emphasizes that she is a "concubine," not a legitimate wife. We cannot understate the political function of this rhetoric, but Kratinos' mythic burlesque reminds us that he exaggerates their crimes for parodic effect. There are precedents for his exaggerations in the attacks on women like Koisyra, also associated with foreign tyranny. Just as Pericles did not actually attack and dethrone the gods, insinuations about her sexuality follow an established pattern of broadly fictional invective against politicians' foreign-born lovers and female relations.

The citizenship law of 403 solidified foreigners' second-class status in Athens and created new impetus for attacks against them. Correspondingly, a more solidified *hetaira* rhetoric took form starting in the last decades of the fifth century across all kinds of literature. Comedy and oratory conspire to conflate the *hetaira* and the *porne*, to the extent that verbs meaning 'to behave like a *hetaira*' (ἑταιρέω, ἑταιρεύομαι, ἑταιρίζω) was used for male sex workers (Ar. *Pax* 11; And. *Myst.* 100 Dalmeyda; D. 22.61). The only complete satyr play talks about over-sexed *hetairai* (Eur. *Cyc*. 495–502). Aristotle says their company was an expensive habit (*Pol*. 1314b). The orators slander purportedly foreign-born women in cases of citizenship or inheritance (D. 43; Is. 6 Roussel) and happily identify women who transgress such boundaries as *hetairai* (Is. 3 Roussel; cf. Anaxilas fr. 22.1).[178] Apollodōros' speech *Against Neaira* picks through a detailed list of behaviours that, the speaker believes, mark Neaira as a foreign, sexual threat.[179] He proposes a typology of women based on their sexual relationships to men:

> τὰς μὲν γὰρ ἑταίρας ἡδονῆς ἕνεκ' ἔχομεν, τὰς δὲ παλλακὰς τῆς καθ' ἡμέραν θεραπείας τοῦ σώματος, τὰς δὲ γυναῖκας τοῦ παιδοποιεῖσθαι γνησίως καὶ τῶν ἔνδον φύλακα πιστὴν ἔχειν.
>
> ([D.] 59.112)

> We have *hetairai* for pleasure, concubines (*pallakēs*) for the everyday care of our body, and wives for bearing legitimate children and to be a trusty guardian of household affairs.

[178] Kennedy, *Immigrant Women in Athens*, 97–103. Glazebrook accepts too quickly that there was a class of "prostitute" called '*hetairai*,' but otherwise has a good overview of their place in rhetoric ("Bad Girls of Athens").
[179] Kennedy, *Immigrant Women in Athens*, 103–6.

Apollodōros expects his audience to recognize these distinctions. The charge in this case is that the citizen Stephanus violated this typology and lived with the foreign-born former sex worker Neaira as if she were his legal wife (59.14). Apollodōros tells us that a freedwoman purchased Neaira from overseas as a young girl and raised her to be a slave-prostitute (59.18–23). He allows that she was horrifically abused (59.33–7), but expects his audience to treat her past as further proof of her ignobility. Sexual invectives form the tip of the spear, but Apollodōros also situates her in a longstanding tradition of decadent foreign women marked especially by symposium attendance: "this Neaira drank and ate dinner in the company of many, as if she were a *hetaira*" (συνέπινεν καὶ συνεδείπνει ἐναντίον πολλῶν Νέαιρα αὐτηὶ ὡς ἂν ἑταίρα οὖσα; 59.24).

The comedians' *hetairai* are greedy, libidinous, boozy, and numerous. In the opening scene of *Wealth,* the slave, Karion, reports a general consensus that *hetairai* are materialistic and obscenely sexual, throwing themselves at rich men:

> καὶ τάς γ' ἑταίρας φασὶ τὰς Κορινθίας,
> ὅταν μὲν αὐτάς τις πένης πειρῶν τύχῃ,
> οὐδὲ προσέχειν τὸν νοῦν, ἐὰν δὲ πλούσιος,
> τὸν πρωκτὸν αὐτὰς εὐθὺς ὡς τοῦτον τρέπειν. (*Pl.* 149–52)
>
> And they say that the Corinthian *hetairai*
> pay no mind when some poor man
> happens to approach them, but if he is rich,
> then they turn their assholes straight towards him.

Importantly, while he criticizes these women's lewd greed, he does not outline the *hetaira* as a distinct professional class. Most of Aristophanes' *hetairai* follow this mould (*Pax* 439–40; fr. 148), but he also uses *hetaira* in the way that Sappho does, calling Nikē "the Graces' companion" (Χαρίτων … ἑταίρα; *Eq.* 589). The leader of the women's chorus in *Lysistrata* plays on the tension between the sexual and nonsexual meanings of *hetaira*:

> ὥστε κἀχθὲς θἠκάτῃ ποιοῦσα παιγνίαν ἐγὼ
> ταῖσι παισὶ τὴν ἑταίραν ἐκάλεσ' ἐκ τῶν γειτόνων,
> παῖδα χρηστὴν κἀγαπητὴν ἐκ Βοιωτῶν ἔγχελυν· (*Lys.* 700–3)
>
> Yesterday, to have a game for Hēkatē for the girls,
> I called the *hetaira* from the neighbours,
> a good and dear girl, an eel from Boiōtia.

As is common in Aristophanes, this humorous aside presents a comically heightened version of a quotidian interaction. When the chorus leader calls her neighbour a *hetaira,* nothing in the

passage so far sexualizes this woman. The punchline about Boiōtian eels changes the tone, underlining the girl next door as a foreign-born sex object, since Aristophanes often uses seafood metaphors to make a sexual point.[180]

Note that both these examples from Aristophanes highlight these *hetairai* as foreign-born. Although Andokidēs, writing near the end of the fifth century, talks about "*hetairai,* both slave and free" (ἑταίρας, καὶ δούλας καὶ ἐλευθέρας; *Against Aristophanes* 14.4), only one passage in classical Athenian literature labels a woman of citizen status as a *hetaira,* a fragment of Antiphanēs' *Hydria*:

οὗτος δ᾽ ὃν λέγω
ἐν γειτόνων αὐτῷ κατοικούσης τινὸς
ἰδὼν ἑταίρας εἰς ἔρωτ᾽ ἀφίκετο,
ἀστῆς, ἐρήμου δ᾽ ἐπιτρόπου καὶ συγγενῶν,
ἦθός τι χρυσοῦν πρὸς ἀρετὴν κεκτημένης,
ὄντως ἑταίρας· αἱ μὲν ἄλλαι τοὔνομα
βλάπτουσι τοῖς τρόποις γὰρ ὄντως ὃν καλόν (fr. 210)

This man whom I speak of,
upon seeing a certain *hetaira* living at his neighbour's,
fell in love with her,
a citizen woman, but without guardian or relations,
who had a certain habit towards golden virtue:
Truly a *hetaira*! Other women harm that name,
which is so beautiful, with their behaviours.

The idea of a '*hetaira* next door' mimics the passage from Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* (700–3) that I mention above, except that here Antiphanēs names the woman as an ἀστῆς ("citizen-woman"), whereas Aristophanes names the girl next door as a Boiōtian. This unique case illustrates the mechanism by which foreign women were particularly, but not exclusively, vulnerable to the label of *hetaira.* The qualifier that Antiphanēs adds is key: "citizen-woman, but without guardian or relations." Kennedy writes that, regardless of ethnic origin, women in fourth-century Athens "without dowry or *kurios* … were considered unmarriageable and, as such, could only be the

[180] Wilkins, *The Boastful Chef,* 36–8; Shaw, "'Genitalia of the Sea,'" 558–9. See also Shaw's note that "Antiphanes refers to courtesans with a number of different seafood appellations: κάραβος ('crayfish'), μαινίδες ('sprats'), τρίγλαι ('red mullets'), γόγγρος ('eel')" (570). This joke plays with the same comic juxtaposition of Boiōtia's gastronomic fecundity and Boiōtian women's sexual availability as we saw at the beginning of the play when Callonice and Lysistrata manhandle their guests (*Lys.* 85–9).

'companions' or 'girlfriends' of men."[181] Athens' sexual imagination usually cast foreign or metic women as *hetairai* because immigrant and other non-citizen women lacked the kinship bonds that marked them for a different kind of sexual relationship: marriage into another citizen family in order to bear more citizen sons. When they are isolated from their protective kinship bonds, citizen women become akin to metic women and are more liable to be labeled as *hetairai.* In this passage from the *Hydria,* Antiphanēs finds it important to emphasise that this nameless woman, despite the roof over her head, does not have any male family to protect her in the conventional way. In fact, taking up residence in another man's house reflects her unmoored social position; it is exactly the sort of unsavoury behaviour that could earn her the title of *hetaira,* just like Apollodōros frames the primary charge against Neaira as illegal cohabitation (συνοικεῖ Στεφάνῳ; [D.] 59.14).

And so we end this section returning to the brief definition of '*hetaira*' that I furnish in Chapter 1. Some women named as *hetairai* may have worked in the sex trade, but we cannot fully trust sources that make such insinuations. Rather than a clearly-defined profession, the *hetaira* personifies a certain polyvalent Athenian discourse. References to the *hetaira* in oratory, comedy, and elsewhere hearken back to aristocratic female immigrants associated with prominent politicians of the early democracy. In this discourse, the *hetaira's* natural home is in the symposium. At best, she has a dubious claim on citizenship, usually because she has foreign ancestry. She invites male sexual attention through her beauty, her charm, and her own high sex drive, but her reproductive capacity provokes anxiety because her children's ethnic citizenship would be compromised. Athenian audiences can hear the dogwhistle and recognize her even when the word '*hetaira*' is not used. Recognizing this discursive style prepares us to reconsider Sappho's role in comedy.

Sappho the Immigrant

Were Sappho alive in the mid-fourth century to see one of the comedies that poked fun at her, she would have traveled to Athens as a visitor and would have been obliged to register as a metic if she stayed in the city for more than a few weeks. As I show in Chapter 1, the *Sappho* comedies represent Sappho as a sophisticated *hetaira,* at home at the symposium and available

[181] Kennedy, "Elite Citizen Women," 63.

sexually to her male compatriots. Diphilos shows her being pursued by other poets whose songs would have been performed with hers at symposium. Antiphanēs has her telling slightly flirtatious riddles. While no surviving fragment of the *Sappho* comedies mention Sappho's ethnicity, by assimilating her to the figure of the *hetaira,* the comedians emphasize that she is an 'immigrant' in Athens. Here we see the *hetaira* discourse softened somewhat to make sense of a well-appreciated, long-dead poet who does not play a role in day-to-day Athenian politics. Stripped of a straightforward political message, the comedians treat Sappho more gently than they do Aspasia or Neaira. In this section, we will see how the comedies about Sappho allow us to sidestep the veneer of pejorative discourse and look at women's participation in the propagation of Sappho's songs.

Although many stories about her are dubious, we cannot doubt that Sappho came from Lesbos. The ancients occasionally identify her simply as "the Lesbian" rather than use her name (Max. Tyr. 18.9 Trapp; Luc. *Im.* 18.3 Macleod). If we want to discuss Sappho's assimilation to non-Athenian women, we have to understand Athens' ideas about Lesbos, which, from as far back as we can tell, sits on the edge of the Hellenic world. At *Il.* 24.544–6, Homer includes it in Priam's domain and the island suffers a terrible Achaean raid just prior to the events of the *Iliad.* Female slaves captured in that raid are a high-value prize, particularly skilled in handicrafts (*Il.* 9.128–30, 9.270–2, 19.245–56). Hittite sources tell of purple-dye tribute coming from the island of Lazpa, which most readers now comfortably identify as Lesbos. These records further suggest that there were Greek-speaking settlers there from the fifteenth century BCE and that Achaean and non-Greek kings had contested claims of sovereignty over the island.[182] The tribute flowing from Lazpa inland to Hatti shows that these Greek-speaking Lesbians found themselves in a liminal space between the Achaean and Hittite political spheres. A review of early Lesbian archeology from the mid-90s paints a picture of an island "which in some respects is noticeably un-Greek in the Bronze Age and the early historical period," pointing especially to metalwork and pottery forms that resemble Anatolian equivalents more than those from the Greek mainland.[183] Sappho's poetry confirms Anatolian influence on Lesbian language and material culture. A recent study suggests that an obscure term in Sappho 101, which discusses purple clothing from Phacaea on the Ionian coast, could be an Anatolian technical term from the dying

[182] Teffeteller, "Singers of Lazpa," 571–2.
[183] Spencer, "Early Lesbos Between East and West," 271.

industry.[184] Perhaps more evocatively, etymologies that trace the name Sappho to an Anatolian root date back to at least the 1950s.[185] Brown proposes that Sappho's name derives from an Anatolian root expressed variously as *šhap, šhav, šhab*, all meaning 'god' and known from Hittite and Luwian personal names.[186] Versions of Sappho's name with an initial psi (Ψάφω) or double sigma (Σσάφφω), which we see occasionally in the manuscripts, reflect the earlier, aspirated pronunciation of the initial consonant.[187] The penetration of Anatolian language into the naming conventions of Sappho's aristocratic milieu suggests close, deeply-seeded interaction between Lesbos and inland Anatolia.

Sappho herself identifies with Anatolian, especially Lydian, culture.[188] None of Sappho's surviving poems mention locations on the Greek mainland or further west.[189] As her island's cultural links to the region would suggest, her view is usually east to coastal Asia (fr. 35; fr. 44), into Lydia (fr. 16.19; fr. 39.3; fr. 96.6; fr. 132.3), or, when she praises the island of Aphrodite's birth, south towards Cyprus (fr. 35; fr. 134). At fr. 16.19–20, she says that she prefers her beloved's beauty to the glory of "the Lydians' chariots and foot-soldiers with their arms" (τὰ Λύδων ἄρματα κὰν ὄπλοισι / πεσδομάχεντας), implying that some of her contemporaries greatly admire Lydia's military prowess. Notice also the focus on "chariots" and "arms" instead of simply on charioteers or soldiers—Sappho admires the beauty of Lydian craftsmanship. This aligns with our understanding of Lesbian material culture in the archaic period when Sappho lived, which shows increasing Hellenization as compared to the Bronze age, but with ongoing connection to the Anatolian hinterland and a conservative attachment to Bronze age forms, especially in ceramics.[190] The clothing that Sappho mentions is always of a Lydian style, like the

[184] Dale, "Venus in Furs."
[185] Zuntz, "On the Etymology of the Name Sappho." Nagy's more recent theory that connects 'Sappho' with the Greek ἄπφα 'sister' is altogether too speculative; he dismisses Zuntz's theory on the same grounds, but does not seem to know Brown's paper ("Poetics of Sisterly Affect," 489–92).
[186] Brown, "Sappho the 'Numinous,'" 62.
[187] *Ibid.*, 61.
[188] On the importance of Asia in Sappho's poetry, see DuBois, *Sappho is Burning*, 176–94.
[189] DuBois, *Sappho is Burning*, 185. I exclude references to Olympus, likely a mythic, more than literal, place in Sappho's writing; if she refers to a real mountain, it is more likely to be the Olympus in Lesbos than the Olympus in Macedonia. See Nagy, "Olympus as Mountain and Olympia as Venue."
[190] Spencer, "Early Lesbos Between East and West," 293–303.

"multi-coloured *mitra* from Sardis" (μ]ιτράναν … ποικίλαν ἀπὺ Σαρδίω; fr. 98a.9–10).[191] The young Lesbian woman with embroidered sandals in Anakreōn shows that her earliest receptors associated Lesbos with sophisticated dress. The early Attic pots that depict Sappho show her adorned in the fancy dress she describes. On the Wuppertal *kalyx-kratēr,* both she and the girl she pursues wear a flowing *himation* and a jaunty peaked *sakkos,* a headdress of Semitic origin related to the Lydian *mitra.*[192] This suggests that singing her songs would call this non-Greek culture to mind in Athens.

Literary sources confirm that the Athenians thought of Lesbos as deeply foreign. In Plato's *Protagoras,* the sympathetic sophist Prodicus says that the Lesbians speak "in a barbarian dialect" (ἐν φωνῇ βαρβάρῳ; 341c). This throwaway comment carries all the xenophobia built into the rhetoric of 'barbarism' and reflects the cultural gulf between Lesbos and the everyday Athenian; Socrates confirms that the Lesbians cannot understand Athenian speech, even as he defends Pittakos of Mytilēnē as one of the Seven Sages in the same passage (343a). As we might expect, comedy picks up and reinforces this ethnic prejudice. On three occasions, Aristophanes references Lesbos to make disparaging, sexually-charged jokes about a female figure in scenes that deal with the art of poetry. Since these themes tends to cluster together, I already mentioned two of these scenes in the first chapter. In one, the scene from *Assemblywomen* where Kharixenē is mentioned, an older woman and a younger woman (perhaps sex workers) are competing for male attention by singing songs. Their songs are ostensibly alluring, but actually focus on insulting each other's desirability as much as building up their own, and their acerbic back-and-forth exchange mirrors the structure and tone of the sympotic *skolia* game. At one point, the older woman mocks her younger compatriot for singing in a distasteful foreign style, which reveals that she has perverse sexual interests:

> ἤδη τὸν ἀπ' Ἰωνίας
> τρόπον, τάλαινα, κνησιᾷς·
> δοκεῖς δέ μοι καὶ λάβδα κατὰ τοὺς Λεσβίους. (*Eccl.* 919–20)
>
> Already in the Ionian
> style, wretched girl, you try to scratch your itch.
> You even seem like a lambda like the Lesbians!

[191] Compare Sappho fr. 101, 39; Alkaios fr. 130b.18; Alkman fr. 1.67–8 Calame.
[192] On the *sakkos* and related *mitra,* see Lee, *Body, Dress and Identity,* 159.

The connection of Ionic music and Lesbian sexuality is key. Calling someone 'Lesbian' in Athenian comedy signified both "polymorphously perverse" and "making music in a Lesbian style," Gilhuly argues.[193] She roots this rhetoric in a broader contempt for Eastern music styles, citing Plato, who singles out the Lydian and mixed-Lydian modes as decadently feminine when banning music from his utopia (*R.* 398e–399a).[194] The fourth-century Peripatetic Aristoxenos credits the mixed-Lydian mode to Sappho (fr. 81 Wehrli). Plato's criticism of the New Music, which we also see reflected in comedy, touches on Sappho's recognizably non-Athenian songs. The addition of a sexual stereotype follows naturally, both from the erotic content of Sapphic lyric and from Athenian dynamics that credit foreigners with sexual deviance.

The two other jokes that Aristophanes makes about Lesbians also play into the musical/sexual stereotype matrix. For both jokes, he concocts ethnic verbs, λεσβιάζειν (*Ra.* 1308) and λεσβίζειν (*V.* 1346), that use the conventional -ιζειν ending to mean 'behave like someone from Lesbos.'[195] We see λεσβίζειν in *Wasps* shortly after Philokleōn has taught his father the *skolia* we discussed in Chapter 1. Once the practice session is complete, father and son leave for a proper symposium that happens offstage. Afterwards, Philokleōn returns without his son, but not alone. He has dragged an *aulētris* named Dardanis home with him and aggressively demands sexual gratification in a way that seems very distasteful to a modern reader:

> ἀνάβαινε δεῦρο, χρυσομηλολόνθιον,
> τῇ χειρὶ τουδὶ λαβομένη τοῦ σχοινίου.
> ἔχου· φυλάττου δ', ὡς σαπρὸν τὸ σχοινίον·
> ὅμως γε μέντοι τριβόμενον οὐκ ἄχθεται.
> ὁρᾷς ἐγώ σ' ὡς δεξιῶς ὑφειλόμην
> μέλλουσαν ἤδη λεσβιεῖν τοὺς ξυμπότας·
> ὧν οὕνεκ' ἀπόδος τῷ πέει τῳδὶ χάριν. (*V.* 1341–8)
>
> Come up here, my little gold cockchafer,
> and take this little rope in your hand.
> Hold it. Be careful, the rope is grimy!
> All the same, it doesn't care that it's well–worn.
> You see how I fortunately stole you away
> as you were about to lesbianize the symposiasts—
> on their account, show some favour to this here cock!

[193] Gilhuly, *Erotic Geographies*, 95.
[194] *Ibid.*, 96.
[195] Ethnic verbs of this type are a main focus for Gilhuly, *Erotic Geographies*. Yatromanolakis provides a neat summary of such verbs (*Sappho in the Making*, 188, n. 98). Compare also ἀλωπεκίζειν, 'to behave like a fox,' in the anonymous *skolion* from *V.* 1241.

There is a clear double-entendre between her skill as a flautist and the symposiasts' sexual expectations. In *Frogs,* the verb's sexual meaning is more ambiguous, but it still has a pejorative implication:

> (Αι.) οὗτος δ' ἀπὸ πάντων μεταφέρει, πορνῳδιῶν,
> σκολίων Μελήτου, Καρικῶν αὐλημάτων,
> θρήνων, χορειῶν. τάχα δὲ δηλωθήσεται.
> ἐνεγκάτω τις τὸ λύριον. καίτοι τί δεῖ
> λύρας ἐπὶ τοῦτο; ποῦ 'στιν ἡ τοῖς ὀστράκοις
> αὕτη κροτοῦσα; δεῦρο, Μοῦσ' Εὐριπίδου,
> πρὸς ἥνπερ ἐπιτήδεια ταῦτ' ᾄδειν μέλη.
> (Δι.) αὕτη ποθ' ἡ Μοῦσ' οὐκ ἐλεσβίαζεν, οὔ. (*Ra.* 1301-8)
>
> (Aesch.) This guy takes a bit from everywhere: whore-songs,
> Melētos' *skolia*, Karian flute-songs,
> dirges, dances. Quickly, it will be revealed.
> Someone bring me a lyre. Why do we need
> a lyre for this? Where is the woman playing
> the potsherds? Here, Muse of Euripides,
> to whom these songs are suitable to sing!
> (Dion.) *This* Muse never lesbianized, no!

The negatives attached to ἐλεσβίαζεν confuse the verb's meaning in this context.[196] Both verbs, clearly slight variations of each other, are usually translated 'to fellate' (LSJ gives "*do like the Lesbian women*, Lat. *fellare*"). Although this definition lends a further sexual undertone to the Muse's "Karian flute-songs," only later authors who adopt the term from Aristophanes clearly articulate this meaning. Galen uses λεσβιάζειν for fellatio, in contrast to φοινικίζειν ('to behave like a Phoenician') for cunnilingus (*On Simple Drugs,* 12.249 Kühn).[197] Although no other classical Athenian author uses the verb, the Pherekratēs calls Lesbian women "cocksuckers" (λαικαστρίας; fr. 159.2). However, the Atticist lexicographic tradition euphemistically defines λεσβιάζειν as "to defile the mouth" (μολῦναι τὸ στόμα; Suda λ 306) While acknowledging the *communis opinio* that the term refers to oral sex, Gilhuly suggests that Aristophanes' use of λεσβιάζειν in the *Frogs* primarily refers to the Muse's poor singing, using a term usually reserved for oral sex to drive home the joke.[198] She points to Aeschylus' long list of "trivial,

[196] See De Simone, who reads the double-negative as sarcastic ("The 'Lesbian' Muse in Tragedy," 485-7).
[197] Petit, "Naming Sexual Perversion," 100–2.
[198] Gilhuly, *Erotic Geographies*, 98.

erotic, sympotic, emotional, and pathetic" sources of inspiration to conclude that the verb primarily refers to song, not sex, in the *Frogs*.[199] The "whore-songs" (πορνῳδιῶν), "*skolia*," and "Karian flute-songs" and return us to a nexus of signification that connects sex work, the symposium, and Eastern musical styles. This nexus leads us to believe that ἐλεσβίαζεν links these three *topoi* together. Connecting "Karian flute-songs" to Lesbos is especially evocative, as it suggests that Lesbos' longstanding links with the Anatolian mainland were legible to an Athenian audience and that Sappho's invocation of Lydian culture would resonant when Athenians sang her songs. Looking at this passage, De Simone also recalls Epikratēs fr. 4, which pairs Melētos with Sappho as a writer of authoritative erotica.[200] Epikratēs' testimony confirms that Sappho's poetry fits the model of frivolous, exotic music that Aristophanes paints.

One key detail in all three of Aristophanes' Lesbos-jokes is that the stereotyped poetic performers in each case are women. These women recall the skilled Lesbian craftswomen of the *Iliad* and form the third point on a triangle with Sappho and the archetypal *hetairai.* I do not intend to rehash the argument I made in the first chapter regarding comedy's construction of Sappho as a *hetaira*. Rather, establishing the stereotypes Athenian authors have about Lesbian culture allows us to bring Kennedy's restoration of the *hetaira* to bear on these fragmentary texts. Comedy situates Sappho at the same nexus between poetic creativity and sexuality that they associate with Lesbians in general.

The *hetaira* occupies a similar nexus. Kennedy rescues fifth-century immigrant women like Koisyra and Aspasia from the slander of the *hetaira* label and shows that they participated in Athenian social life alongside their peers. As we have discussed, women like Ianthis and Melis left written record of their participation in symposium culture. My conjecture is that such women would have also participated as active, creative agents in other symposium entertainments, like the *skolia* game which reshaped Lesbian lyric. Their migration into Athens, largely from the eastern side of the Aegean, may well have borne East Greek poetic forms into the Athenian vernacular. Yatromanolakis notes that Sappho's wedding songs probably traveled first to Asia Minor before they came to the Greek mainland around the end of the sixth century.[201]

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[199] *Ibid*.
[200] De Simone, "The 'Lesbian' Muse in Tragedy," 489. See also Yatromanolakis, *Sappho in the Making*, 291.
[201] Yatromanolakis, *Sappho in the Making*, 211–2.

Aristocratic weddings between Athenian men and East Greek women might have eased the last leg of that transmission. Once these women arrived in Athens, they likely attended *symposia* as full participants, singing songs and drinking wine with men. Male-authored Athenian literature reduces these women to prattling *hetairai* and *aulētrides* like Dardanis, a victim of sexual violence in a play where the male characters sing songs that these women might have had a hand in shaping.

While there is no evidence that they were ever perfectly synonymous, the *hetaira* and the *aulētris* share a cultural space as sexualized symposium attendees, with many authors pairing them together (Metagenes fr. 4; Aeschin. 1.42, 1.75).[202] There are tentative suggestions that *aulētrides* might have sung Sappho's songs, including the *aulos*-bag hanging from Sappho's *barbitos* on the Wuppertal *kalyx-kratēr*.[203] The polyvalent association of Sappho with *aulētrides* as well as *hetairai* proper likely also influenced her position in comedy and broadens the conclusions we can draw. Recognising her creative contributions even as he mocks her, Aristophanes' disparaging joke about her familiar style acknowledges the *aultētris* Kharixenē as a songwriter as well as a performer. When Plato's symposiasts ask the *aulētris* to leave their party, they suggest that she go pipe for the women in their quarters (*Smp*. 176e). Near the end of the dialogue, a flute song signals the arrival of Alcibiades' public *kōmos* in the private sympotic space and he comes in leaning on a different *aulētris* (212c–d). The two *aulētrides*' passage in and out of the symposium space shows how female performers moved between different performance cultures—male and female, public and private—just as the female immigrant bridged Athenian and non-Athenian culture. By associating Sappho with women who perform in *symposia*, I suggest that the comedians testify to these women's significant, but tacit, contributions in carrying musical forms between different contexts, including canonical lyric like Sappho's.

In this light, consider the one sympotic performance game that the comedians show Sappho playing. In the first chapter, I considered the possibility that Antiphanēs' riddling Sappho could be a benign, philosophically-inclined riddler like Plutarch's Kleoboulinē. In the Athenian

[202] Goldman, "Associating the Auletris."
[203] Contra the standard reading of the fragmented text, Tsantsanoglou tentatively reconstructs a reference to *aulos* song in the Cologne Sappho papyrus: "I sing reed songs" (τὰν καλάμοισ' ἀείδω; *Studies in Sappho and Alcaeus,* 6).

cultural context, this seems like a distant possibility. As fun as riddles are, riddling speech draws suspicion and Greek literature distrusts riddling foreign women, right down to the great riddler of mythology, the Theban Sphinx. Comedy plays up the Sphinx's femininity and connects her to the figure of the *hetaira*—in a misogynistic screed from his play *Neottis,* the Sphinx is one of many feminine beasts that Anaxilas invokes to illustrate the danger of cavorting with *hetairai* (Anaxilas fr. 22.5). Anaxilas did not create this connection between the *hetaira* and the Sphinx out of thin air. It appears that the Sphinx's sexuality was an ancient and important part of her myth. The earliest form of her name, Φίξ (Hes. *Th.* 326), belies the traditional etymology based on σφίγγω 'tear asunder,' since the nasal is missing. Katz has convincingly provided an alternative etymology that connects Φίξ and φίκτις, an obscure word which means 'hip, buttock, anus' and which probably appears in a sexualized reinterpretation of the Sphinx's riddle from P.Oxy. 4502.[204] This etymology shows a deep-seeded connection between riddles (especially women's riddles) and sexuality (especially women's sexuality). Although Antiphanēs only lightly plays up Sappho's sexuality, by putting a riddle in her mouth he places her in the same cultural nexus of untrustworthy, sexual women as the Sphinx and the foreign *hetaira* that Anaxilas attacks.

I began this chapter quoting some older scholarship that blames the comedians for ruining Sappho's reputation. Although I agree that comedy constructed a version of Sappho who was a *hetaira,* I do not believe that the comedians who parody her are villains, merely writers working from a certain cultural perspective. They maintain an affection for Sappho even as they participate in discourses we now recognize as xenophobic. Just as Kennedy rescues the immigrant women who were targeted as *hetairai,* Sappho maintains her dignity under this comic assault. Sappho comes off a lot better in comedy than politically-connected women like Aspasia or fourth-century celebrities like Neottis. My research does, however, further elucidate the culture under which these comedies were produced by showing that the unique intersection of Sappho's canonical poetry and comedy's obsession with *hetairai* reveals foreign women's influence on the transmission of well-remembered Greek lyric.

[204] Katz, "The Riddle of the sp(h)ij-," 158–9, 177–185.

Conclusion

As I show in my final chapter, Attic comedians' reimagining of Sappho as a *hetaira*—already recognized, but not fully explored, in the nineteenth century—testifies to the creative contributions that low-status women made in Athenian poetic life, an under-excavated topic. In her well-cited book on gendered performance, Stehle asserts unequivocally that, in the symposium, "men were the only performers, or better, the only performers whose discourse counted, for women (usually slave women) might be present as entertainers."[205] She mistakes hegemonic ideals for historical practice and, in the chapter on symposium performance that follows this proclamation, never addresses the performance role played by the marginalized female "entertainers" that she barely deigns to acknowledge—she privileges men's sympotic *text* over mixed-gender *performance* in a book ostensibly about the latter. Recent efforts to resurrect non-citizen experiences in Athens, like Kennedy's, have shown that these marginal voices leave echoes in male-authored literature, but these researchers have not yet returned to Sappho's reception in comedy, letting older assumptions about her role on the comic stage stand unquestioned. This thesis has, I hope, filled that gap.

The suggestion that these female performers could spend the evening singing Sappho's songs at symposia, as comedy indicates, then get up the next morning to sing the same songs at their weaving, as Poseidippos 55 suggests, poses exciting new research questions on the interplay between male and female poetic traditions.[206] While Nagy reads Poseidippos' weaving women, who sing Sappho's songs in "relay," in parallel with her sympotic performance, he too ignores the possibility that these women could have attended symposia themselves or learned sympotic performance patterns from other women.[207] As I mentioned in the introduction, one of Nagy's papers on Sappho's Athenian reception, which I encountered as an undergraduate around the same time that I learned about the *Sappho* comedies, inspired the early research which grew into this thesis. In this paper, he also references the relay performance of Sappho's songs in Poseidippos 55, but does not mention that the singers in that poem are female.[208] Instead, he asserts the sympotic parallel to argue for Sappho's relay performance by male symposiasts,

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[205] Stehle, *Performance and Gender*, 213.
[206] See Introduction, p. 7.
[207] Nagy, "Echoes of Sappho in Two Epigrams of Posidippus," §3.
[208] Nagy, "Athenian Reception of Sappho," 187.

taking female choral performance of Sappho on Lesbos as a given at the beginning of the essay and ignoring women's role at the end.[209] This gap points to the absence of comedy from his analysis. Diphilos fr. 70 clearly associates Sappho with ritual elements of the symposium, while Antiphanēs fr. 194 shows her participating in one common form of sympotic discourse, the riddle game. Taking these fragments along with Poseidippos allows us to explore the interplay between Sappho's performance in sympotic and private female spaces. Nagy's conclusions are ultimately sound, but he leaves significant nuances unconsidered. His research explores textual variation in Sappho's songs as a product of repeated performance, so eliding marginalized women's participation in that process ignores their likely contributions in shaping the Sapphic corpus as it stands today.

Just as I hope my research animates careful attention to female performers and their influence, I also hope that the second chapter of my thesis encourages subtler interactions with queer content in Athenian literature. Dover's longstanding assertion that Athenian men avoided mentioning love between women does not stand. Comedy's silence on Sappho's queerness certainly cannot be taken as evidence for such a taboo and, conversely, we cannot blame a taboo that we do not see elsewhere for that same silence. By clarifying Athenian attitudes towards women's erotic lives, my research demonstrates the contributions that the fragmentary *Sappho* comedies can make to conversations about more than just Sappho.

At the end of his 2014 paper on love between women, Dover expresses an important caveat: "Better acquaintance with [the *Sappho* comedies] would do much to clarify the attitude of classical Athens to lesbianism."[210] While I have demonstrated that comedy probably had little to say about Sappho's queer erotics, Dover's basic sentiment holds true: if we had more data, then we would know more. A complete playscript for one of the fragmentary *Sappho* comedies might emerge on a new papyrus someday to give us more information. Until then, I hope that we can put aside simple assumptions about what these comedies might or might not say and reconsider the extant fragments critically. This thesis demonstrates that even the small number of surviving lines, when placed alongside significant references to Sappho in Aristophanes and Menander, are a credible witness to both Sappho's reception in fifth- and fourth-century Athens and broader patterns of Athenian cultural life.

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[209] *Ibid*., 178.
[210] Dover, "Two Women of Samos," 227. See also Dover, *Greek Homosexuality,* 174.

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