J. C. B. PETROPOULOS

SAPPHO THE SORCERESS – ANOTHER LOOK AT FR. 1 (LP)

SAPPHO THE SORCERESS - ANOTHER LOOK AT FR. 1 (LP)[*]

Sappho fr. 1 (LP)[1] is noteworthy largely for three reasons. The fragment appears to be Sappho's only poem that has survived complete: its twenty-eight verses are quoted by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (Comp. 173-179) and its first twenty-one lines are preserved in fragmentary form in POxy 2288 (A.D. ii). Second, the poetess includes her own name (v. 20) and refers to herself in the first person, suggesting that the poem was composed for a real-life situation and an actual person;[2] and, as in frr. 31 and 94 (LP) (in conjunction with Plu. Luc. 18.9), the situation in which the poetess finds herself constitutes unambiguous evidence that she was a "lesbian" *in sensu technico*.[3] Third, the composition *as a whole* has affinities with magical discourse: it is this magical orientation which I propose to treat in some detail. A.Cameron and others, by making use of later magical analogies, have detected incantatory overtones in the last strophe of Aphrodite's speech to Sappho (vv. 21-24).[4]

---

[*] This article is gratefully dedicated - χάλκεα ἀντὶ χρυςείων - to Sir Kenneth Dover. I wish to warmly thank Professors David Jordan and Peter Parsons for taking time to comment on an earlier draft of this article.

[1] Most abbreviations used in this paper are self-evident; those which may require explanation are as follows:

Audollent = A.Audollent, Defixionum tabellae... (Paris, 1904).

Betz = H.D.Betz (ed.), The Greek magical papyri in translation (Chicago, 1986).

Burnett = Anne Pippin Burnett, Three archaic poets, Archilochus, Alcaeus, Sappho (London, 1983).

Cameron = A.Cameron, "Sappho's prayer to Aphrodite", HTR, xxxii (1939), 1-17.

Dover = K.J.Dover, Greek homosexuality (London, 1978).

LP = Edgar Lobel, and Denys Page (eds.), Poetarum Lesbiorum fragmenta (Oxford, 1955).

Mag. Hiera = Christopher A.Faraone, and Dirk Obbink (eds.), Magika hiera, Ancient Greek magic and religion (New York and Oxford, 1991).

O'Keefe = Daniel O'Keefe, Stolen lightning, the social theory of magic (Oxford, 1982).

Petropoulos = J.C.B.Petropoulos, "The erotic magical papyri", in Basil G.Mandilaras (ed.), Proceedings of the XVIIIth International Congress of Papyrology, Athens 25-31 May 1986, i (Athens, 1988), pp. 215-222.

PGM = Karl Preisendanz (ed.), Papyri Graecae magicae, die griechischen Zauberpapyri, 2nd edn. rev. Albert Henrichs, i-ii (Samml. wisss. Comm., 1973-1974).

Suppl.Mag. i = Robert W.Daniel, and Franco Maltomini (eds.), Supplementum magicum, i (Papyrologica Coloniensia, xvi. 1, 1990).

Suppl.Mag. ii = id., Supplementum magicurn, ii (Papyrologica Coloniensia, xvi. 2, 1992).

Theoc. (Dover) = K.J.Dover (ed.), Theocritus, select poems (Basingstoke and London, 1971).

Winkler = John J.Winkler, The constraints of desire, the anthropology of sex and gender in ancient Greece (New York and London, 1990).

[2] Dover, p. 177.

[3] Discussion in Dover, esp. pp. 180-182.

[4] Cf esp. Cameron, 8-9; Charles Segal, "Eros and incantation: Sappho and oral poetry", Arethusa, vii. 2 (1974), esp. 148-150; Burnett, pp. 254f. As I have shown elsewhere (Petropoulos, pp. 217f.), the magical papyri, although they date mostly from the first centuries A.D., preserve elements of great antiquity and thus often shed illumination on the literary and archaeological evidence of magic in general. The oldest love charms recorded on papyrus are Suppl.Mag. ii. 71-72, both of the 1st cent. B.C.; there follows a group of papyrus spells, including PGM XVI, all of which date to the late 2nd or 3rd cent. A.D.: see D.R.Jordan, "A new reading of a papyrus love charm in the Louvre", ZPE, lxxiv (1988), 231-243, esp. 233.

Cameron in fact characterised the form of this sixth strophe as "less literary and schematic but more circumstantial" than that of the conventional cletic hymn on which the beginning and end of the poem and the description of the epiphany are apparently modelled.[5]

Here I wish to supplement some of the leading analyses of these "less literary" verses (especially the fifth and sixth strophes) and in the second part of this paper I shall pose - or rather reformulate - the question, what role does magical incantation play in the poem as a whole?[6]

For interpretations of fr. 1 (LP) I may refer the reader to the analyses to be found in Dover[7] pp. 176-177 and Burnett, pp. 243-258. Let us now turn to strophes 5 and 6 and examine the latter in particular:

> μειδιαίϲαιϲ’ ἀθανάτωι προϲώπωι
> ἦρε’ ὄττι δηὖτε πέπονθα κὤττι
> 16   δηὖτε κάλημμι,
> κὤττι μοι μάλιϲτα θέλω γένεϲθαι
> μαινόλαι θύμωι· τίνα δηὖτε πείθω
> ἄψ +ϲάγην+ ἐϲ ϲὰν φιλότατα; τίϲ ϲ’, ὦ
> 20   Ψάπφ’, ἀδικήει;
> κἀι γὰρ αἰ φεύγει, ταχέωϲ διώξει·
> αἰ δὲ δῶρα μὴ δέκετ’, ἀλλὰ δώϲει·
> αἰ δὲ μὴ φίλει, ταχέωϲ φιλήϲει
> 24   κωὐκ ἐθέλοιϲα.

With a smile on your immortal face you asked me what had happened to me this time, why I was calling on you this time, and what I most wished, with heart distracted, to be done for me (*or* "to obtain"). "Whom this time am I to persuade [then an unintelligible phrase][7] to your love? Who wrongs you, Sappho?[8] For even if she flees, soon she will pursue; and if she does not accept gifts, yet she will give; and if she does not love, soon she will love even unwilling".[9]

---

[5] According to Cameron and others, including Winkler, pp. 167f., Sappho's cletic hymn itself is modelled mainly on two passages from the Diomedeia, Il. 5.115-117 and 719-772. Such a hypothesis, however, begs the fundamental question whether Lesbian lyric was directly indebted to Homer, a question which some scholars are inclined to answer in the negative. Gregory Nagy, in Comparative studies in Greek and Indic meter (Harvard stud. in comp. lit., xxxiii, 1974), argues plausibly that not only the metre but also the phraseology of Sappho may have been inherited independently of Homer.

[6] Cf. Segal, loc. cit. above.

[7] Parca's restoration (infra, n. 49) will be considered in iv below.

[8] ἀδικήει ("wrongs") is an evaluative term (cf. Dover, p. 177 n. 11), no doubt used with some degree of exaggeration by Aphrodite. The hyperbole has a distinct colloquial ring, comparable to Thgn. 1283 ὦ παῖ, μή μ’ ἀδίκει (a lover's complaint to his *eromenos*) and to the non-amatory μῶν τί ϲε ἀδικεῖ Πρωταγόραϲ; at Pl. Prt. 310 d 3-4; cf. other parallels in Burnett, p. 254 n. 66. On the refusal to requite love as an "injustice", see Dover, p. 177 and Burnett, p. 256.

[9] This translation is by Dover, p.176.

(i) The implications of Aphrodite's speech will be examined shortly; for the time being, the pattern discernible, particularly in vv. 21-24, will here concern us: if she (i.e. the girl)[10] now does A (which itself has undesirable, or negative, consequences for Sappho), she will soon do the opposite of A, or -A (which presumably will have desirable, or positive, conseqences for Sappho);

<div align="center">

if...B,   then...-B;

if...C,   then...-C.

</div>

Now a series of provisions in the form of "if..., then..." is very probably a device of great antiquity and almost certainly stemmed from magical practice, as can be surmised from a comparison of the Theran ὅρκιον τῶν οἰκιστήρων included in a fourth-century B.C. inscription from Cyrene.[11] If this "shown agreement" of the founders of the colony at Cyrene actually preserves verbatim large sections of an authentic seventh-century decree, as A.J.Graham has argued,[12] this document must be the earliest witness of burning a waxen image in a magical manner.[13] Besides the ritual details, what is of especial interest here is that the text of the oath itself may even exemplify language which in respect of syntax echoes certain types of magical language: Αἰ μὲν δέ κα κατέχ[ων]τι τὰν οἰκιcίαν οἱ ἄποικοι + apodosis; Αἰ δέ κα μὴ κατ[έχ]ωντι τὰν οἰκιcίαν + two secondary if-clauses + apodosis (vv. 30-37).[14] That this wording resembles certain magical formulations is confirmed by consideration of a number of "magical" texts, including later curses.[15]

In the balanced, antithetical statements in Sappho (w. 21-24) we note a number of formal features, namely: a) the triple anaphoras of αἰ, the double repetition of δὲ and ταχέωc, the

---

[10] The resistant beloved is a girl, i.e. a (hypothetical) junior partner in a "lesbian" relationship; Dover, pp. 174-175.

[11] SEG 9.3; an emended text is printed in A.J.Graham, immed. below.

[12] "The authenticity of the OPKION TΩN OIKICTHPΩN of Cyrene", JHS, lxxx (1960), 94-111.

[13] Vv. 44-49 of the decree refer to burning a wax doll. A Hittite inscription, dating ca. 1400 B.C., includes a lengthy oath of loyalty: "Just as this wax melts, and just as the mutton fat dissolves - whoever breaks these oaths and shows disrespect to the King of the Hatti land, let him melt like wax, let him dissolve like mutton fat", Il. 3.297-301 is the earliest attestation in Greek of a "sympathetic" magical action; as a libation sealing a truce is poured, both parties declare: "Whichever side [ὁππότεροι] transgresses this oath, may their brains be poured on the ground like this wine!". (K.J.Dover, The Greeks [Oxford, 1982], p. 11 cites both of the preceding testimonia). On "persuasive analogy" in magic, cf. Christopher A.Faraone, JHS, cv (1985), 151 w. n. 5.

[14] The Hittite and Iliadic oaths just cited both exemplify conditional relative clauses with an indefinite antecedent; cf. also the Teian "dirae", Dittenberger i. 37-38 (after 479 B.C.).

[15] For series of straightforward "if ..., then ..." clauses, cf. the lead *defixio*, Dittenberger iii. 1175 (Piraeus, iv BC?): ... κὰι εἴ τι μέλλει⟨ε⟩ | ὑπὲρ Φίλωνος ῥῆμα μοχθηρὸν φθένγεcθαι, ἡ γλῶccα αὐτοῦ|μόλυβδος γένοιτο, etc. Peter Levi has also argued for the magical pedigree of certain aspects of legal language, but he has not directly connected the "if ..., then ..." construction with archaic magic. He suggests that the more flexible paratactic structures of the instructions in the magical papyri are in fact an improvement on the series of conditional clauses found in legal decrees. See Peter Levi, "The prose style of the magical papyri", Proceedings of the XIV International Congress of Papyrologists, Oxford 24-31 July 1974 (Greco-Roman Memoirs, lx, 1975), pp. 211-216, esp. 211-212.

repetitive *variatio* of δῶρα ... δώcει[16] and φίλει ... φιλήσει; b) the strong δ-sound in vv. 21-22; c) the near internal-rhyme of διώξει-δώcει and the assonance of the terminal verbs διώξει-δώcει-φιλήcει. The goddess's prediction of a reversal of Sappho's current predicament is couched, fittingly enough, in an antithetical arrangement, assisted by repetition, alliteration and assonance; all four features, separately or in various combinations, commonly characterise magical formulae: see Richardson's note on h.Cer. 228-230 (p. 229).[17] For repetition (and chiasmus) in magical formulae, cf. PGM I. 124-125 (discussed below); for magical formulae with antithetical repetition as in Sapph. loc. cit., cf. PGM IV.. 1511 [an ἀγωγή][18], εἰ κάθηται, μὴ καθήcθω, εἰ λαλεῖ πρός τινα, μὴ λαλείτω, etc. ('if she is sitting, may she not sit, if she is talking with someone, may she not talk, etc.'), and the charms of certain "primitive" peoples, e.g., the Eskimos.[19] Finally, cf. the antithetical structure in this modern Greek folk-song in which the singer describes the enchantment worked on him by the daughter of a witch: Cελλώνω τἄλογό μου, ξεcελλώνεται, / ζώνομαι τὸ cπαθί μου ξεζώνεται, / πιάνω γραφὴ νὰ γράψω καὶ ξεγράφεται[20] ('I saddle my horse and it becomes unsaddled,/ I gird my sword and it becomes ungirt,/ I try to write something and it becomes unwritten').

The "palindromic" effects of Aphrodite's promised intervention proceed in strict accordance with conventional theology, for the gods in their omnipotence were considered capable even of bringing about the downfall of the great and the rise of the small[21] and in general they were thought capable of doing either of two opposite things, depending on their whim.[22] Of especial relevance here is the observation at Il. 24.343f. that Hermes with his magical wand can charm people to sleep or alternatively rouse them: τῆι τ' ἀνδρῶν ὄμματα θέλγει / ὧν ἐθέλει, τοὺς δ' αὖτε καὶ ὑπνώοντας ἐγείρει ('with which he charms the eyes / of men whom he wishes [sc. to charm], while he rouses others even when they are asleep'). The notion that the gods have the power to produce reversals in human affairs conceivably gave rise to the idea that supernatural beings were also able to transpose the

---

[16] The implied statement δώcει (sc. δῶρα) in v. 24 is a pre-rhetorical *figura etymologica*.

[17] As Levi (supra, n. 15), esp. pp. 212-213 notes in regard mainly to the invocations and instructions in magical papyri, double and triple repetition of a word, esp. an imperative, and repetitive *variatio* in general, probably had a practical basis; reiterations of this kind precisely set out all eventualities and thus ensured against anything going awry (e.g., "Go, go, Master, to you heavens, to your own Kingdoms, to your own course"). For repetition with *variatio*, rhythm, and triple members (e.g., "house, life, body") in funerary curses (and adjurations), cf. J.H.M.Strubbe, in Mag. Hiera, pp. 41-42.

[18] Both cited ad loc. in Cameron, 8. An ἀγωγή ("spell of attraction") is supposed to draw the beloved to the practitioner; see Petropoulos, pp. 216f.

[19] C.M.Bowra, Primitive song (London, l962), pp. 82-83.

[20] Νικολάου Πολίτου, Ἐκλογαὶ ἀπὸ τὰ τραγούδια τοῦ ἑλληνικοῦ λαου² (Ἀθῆναι, 1925), p. 226, vv. 19-21.

[21] Cf. Hes. Op. 5-8 ῥέα μὲν γὰρ βριάει, ῥέα δὲ βριάοντα χαλέπτει, / ῥεῖα δ' ἀρίζηλον μινύθει καὶ ἄδηλον ἀέξει, / ῥεῖα δέ τ' ἰθύνει cκολιὸν καὶ ἀγήνορα κάρφει / Ζεὺc ὑψιβρεμέτηc, with West's excellent note, pp. 139 f.

[22] Cf. testimonia in West's note on Theogony 442-443 (p. 228).

general order of things,[23] even on a cosmic level; whence it was but a small step to the belief that reversals and other drastic changes in the course of animate and inanimate nature were a feat of magicians and witches: Hor. Carm. 1.12.9 (Orpheus;[24] cf. Verg. Ecl. 8.2-5, of the bewitching effect of the herdsmen's singing), Sen. Med. 754-769, Lucan 6.461-491 (Medea), V.Fl. 6.441-445 (Medea) and n. 40 below. Magical utterances preserved in the papyri bear out this quasi-theological, quasi-popular (?) view, as we shall soon note.

(ii) ταχέως, repeated twice, at vv. 21 and 23, and crucially after a caesura after the fifth syllable in each case, reflects the theological and magical principle that a divinity's sought-for intervention will be swift and effortless; see West on Erga 5f. (p. 139), to which add X. Anab. 3.2.10; the formula ἤδη ἤδη ταχὺ ταχύ[25] (or ἄρτι, ἄρτι, ταχὺ ταχύ) of the magical papyri; also the proviso τάχιστα μολοῦσαν which occurs in an ἀγωγή (PGM IV. 2907) and the indications ἄςχετος ("irrepressible"), referring to spells which take effect on the same day (e.g. PGM XXXVI. 361), and αὔθωρον (adj.), αὐθωρόν (adv.), of spells effective within an hour (e.g. PGM VII. 300ᵃ).[26] In relation to the victim of a magical operation, however, the swiftness of a deity's reponse may be violent even to the point of being deadly: see iii immediately helow. For other literary instances in which a love spell functions through prompt supernatural action, see Pi. P. 4.220 (under the influence of Jason's erotic incantations, Medea quickly complies with his plans: καὶ τάχα πείρατ' ἀέθλων δείκνυεν πατρωΐων, 'and quickly she showed him the way to achieve the tasks set by her father'),[27] Theoc. 2.29 (= 39 [Dover]) (ὣς τάκοιθ ὑπ' ἔρωτος ὁ Μύνδιος αὐτίκα Δέλφις, 'so may Delphis of Myndos melt straightaway with love'), ibid. 24-26, 48-51. In Sapph. fr. 1 (LP) Aphrodite's rapid descent on a sparrow-powered chariot (cf. vv. 9-13) correlates with the ease and alacrity with which she pledges to affect the girl's conduct.

(iii) κωὐκ ἐθέλοιςα (v. 24)[28] ("even unwilling") comes almost παρὰ προςδοκίαν, at last revealing, after the vague interrogative pronouns τίνα (v. 18) and τίς (v. 19), the sex of the beloved. Cf. Il. 6.165 οὐκ ἐθελούςῃ, [29]also of sexual reluctance and also at verse-end;

---

[23] On such transpositions also cf. Henderson on Ar. Lys. 772-773 (p. 168). (The notion of topsy-turviness is expressed, e.g., by Hdt. 3.3: "Αἰγύπτου τὰ μὲν ἄνω κάτω θήςω, τὰ δὲ κάτω ἄνω". Further testimonia in LSJ s.v. ἄνω II. 2.b, to which add Vita Aesop. G 54.13 [Perry, p. 53]). For reversals of nature, cf. the proverbial ἄνω ποταμῶν cited in Page, p. 103, ad E. Med. 410 and other comparable impossibilities in Nisbet and Hubbard, pp. 341f., on Hor. Carm. 1.29.10.

[24] On Orpheus the shaman and magician, cf. Fritz Graf, "Orpheus: a poet among men", in J.Bremmer (ed.), Interpretations of Greek mythology (N.J., 1986), pp. 80-106.

[25] Cited in Cameron, 9.

[26] Cf. Suppl.Mag. i. 48.13-15 (p. 188), a lead tablet of unknown provenance in Egypt (AD ii-iii?). Also cf. Psalm 142 Ταχὺ εἰςάκουςόν μου, Κύριε.

[27] Cited in Cameron above.

[28] The expanded form ἐθέλω presupposed here is as yet unattested in Lesbian dialect (although it does occur in Homer). The passage may therefore be corrupt.

[29] Cited by Burnett, p. 255 n. 72, the verse is part of Anteia's slander against Bellerophon (Il. 6.164-165): "τεθναίης, ὦ Προῖτ', ἢ κάκτανε Βελλεροφόντην, / ὅς μ' ἔθελεν φιλότητι μιγήμεναι οὐκ ἐθελούςῃ" (May you lie dead, Proitos, or [i.e. unless you] kill Bellerophon, / who wished to mingle with me

Od. 5.154-155 νύκτας μὲν ἰαύεσκεν καὶ ἀνάγκη / . . . παρ' οὐκ ἐθέλων ἐθελούσῃ ('he spent the night under duress / ...unwilling beside her, who was willing');[30] E.Hipp. 319 φίλος μ' ἀπόλλυς' οὐχ ἑκοῦσαν οὐχ ἑκών ('one who is a *philos* unwillingly destroys me, unwilling');[31] and the emphatic ὡς σὸν ἐν ἄστροις ἐς χορὸν οὐκ ἐθέλοντα ἦξας ἐπὶ λέκτρα μιγῆναι ('just as you led a man unwilling to mingle in your bed among the astral chorus'), which figures in the ὑπομνησία of an ἀγωγή.[32] The formulation of v. 24 evokes Aphrodite's irresistible and potentially lethal power, clearly demonstrated, e.g., at Il. 3.413f., when the goddess threatens Helen into joining Paris in bed. κωὐκ ἐθέλοισα also virtually serves as an *epexegesis* of the euphemistic τίνα . . . πείθω (v. 18), and it may be worth noting that πείθω (in effect, "induce") occurs in later magical spells in various contexts.[33] The paradoxical concept of "compulsory persuasiveness" exemplified in fr. 1 (LP) may be referred to the principle of coercion which underwrites magic in general and love spells in particular. Cf. Pi. P. 4.22: the deity Peitho, Aphrodite's accomplice and co-agent of Jason's love spell, lashes Medea's mind into submission; at A. Ag. 385f. βιᾶται δ' ἁ τάλαινα Πειθώ, / προβούλου παῖς ἄφερτος Ἄτας ('Force is used by relentless Peitho, / irresistible daughter of premeditating Atê'), Peitho has an unusual genealogy, but remains violent and irresistible;[34] cf. also the provision ἀνάγκασον . . . ἐρασθῆναι in a *defixio*, Suppl.Mag. i. 37 (p. 116 (Egypt, AD ii?).

The stipulation of "sexual unwillingness" probably carried social implications for Sappho's audience. In the context of a traditional society that set great store by external appearance, or "face",[35] a father's claim that his daughter had as a result of magic been compelled by a divine agent to commit a sexual act, reduced the degree of his family's disgrace.[36] This defence necessarily entailed the understanding that a daughter had a body of her own and would, unless hindered by parental surveillance, act upon its promptings.[37]

---

in love, though I did not wish to'). Verse 165 is of interest purely as a lexical (or formulaic) parallel; unlike the next three passages noted irnmed. below it does not illustrate a magical principle.

[30] Not in Cameron or Burnett. Also cf. n. 36 below. The verses in question refer to Odysseus' involuntary liaison with the divine Calypso.

[31] Not in Cameron or Burnett. This is Phaedra's cryptic reply to the nurse's apprehensive μῶν ἐξ ἐπακτοῦ πημονῆς ἐχθρῶν τινος; (318), which is at once a question and a guess.

[32] PGM IV.2934, noted by Cameron, 9 n. 42. In the papyrus spells the ὑπομνησία is a reminder of analogous deeds which the god or demon has performed in the past; cf. Petropoulos, p. 217.

[33] See Cameron, 9 n. 46. Also cf. PGM I.54, XII.26 (love spell).

[34] Peitho personified is variously Aphrodite's daughter (Sapph. fr. 90.7-8 [LP]), co-worker of Aphrodite and the Charites and later a cult title for an independent deity or for Aphrodite (or Artemis) herself: see R.G.A.Buxton, Persuasion in Greek tragedy, a study of Peitho (Cambridge, 1982), esp. pp. 36-45 (Peitho in early Greek literature), 31-36 (the erotic and "political" cults of Peitho).

[35] On "honour" and "shame" in antiquity, cf. K.J.Dover, Greek popular morality in the time of Plato and Aristotle (London, 1974), pp. 226-242.

[36] Cf. Persephone's own account of her abduction marriage to Hades, h.Cer. 411-413: she may well mean that she submitted to him only because he had worked a magical spell (possibly involving a circular motion) over the pomegranate seed which she ate. For this interpretation, cf. C.A.Faraone, "Aphrodite's κεστὸς and

(iv) In commenting on the magical rain dances of the Dinka tribe in the southern Sudan, Godfrey Lienhardt in Divinity and experience (Oxford, 1961), p. 280 (cited in O'Keefe, p. 66), remarks that a man who has performed magic "has produced a model of his desires". Sappho's object of desire (cf. the indirect question in v. 17 [sc. ἤρε'] κὤττι μοι μάλιστα θέλω γένεσθαι, which may mean "[you asked] what I most wish to obtain") becomes clear in the course of Aphrodite's direct speech. Although the goddess's words date to a past epiphany, in their specific context they gain the force of a pledge which anticipates the future.

Aphrodite's promise of a reversal is doubtless more than a mere *consolatio*. Formally, vv. 21-24 have the texture of a magical utterance, as has been noted; in this connection Aphrodite's words may be compared with a particular formulation attested in an ἀγωγή, namely the "reversal-formula", couched as an entreaty-command, which we noted earlier: εἰ κάθηται, μὴ καθήσθω, εἰ λαλεῖ πρός τινα, μὴ λαλείτω, etc. (PGM IV.1511).[38] In functional terms, these lines are the equivalent of a magical "power prescription", that is, a command which states the desired object and of itself serves to create a new state of affairs.[39] The "power prescription" in fr. 1 (LP) may also be correlated with certain formulations of the later papyrus spells in which the operator imposes an eccentric set of circumstances tantamount to a reversing of nature or social convention; such a reversal may in effect be an *adynaton*: cf. PGM I.125 ὁπόταν τε θέλῃς [τὰ θερ]μὰ ψυχρὰ ποιῆσαι καὶ τὰ ψυχρὰ ‖ θερμά, λύχνους ἀνά[ψει κ]αὶ κατασβέσει πάλιν ('and whenever you wish to turn warm things cold and cold things warm [sc. the aerial spirit will carry this out]; he will light lamps and put them out in turn');[40] also the absurd impossibilities known as "Democritos' table tricks" (Δημοκρίτου παίγνια, PGM VII.169f.);[41] the magical prayer

---

apples forAtalanta: Aphrodisiacs in early Greek myth and ritual", Phoenix xliv.3 (1990), 219-243, esp. 236-238. On moral responsibility (and its evasion) in archaic and classical society, see Dover (supra), pp. 133f., esp. 136, 144f.

[37] Cf. Dover (supra), pp. 101-102; Winkler, p. 97.

[38] The future indicative could conceivably be used instead of the imperative in a "power prescription". A love spell, PGM XV.2f., uses the 2nd person singular of the future in what amounts to a "power prescription": ἀλλὰ φιλήσεις με Καπετωλίναν . . . καὶ ἔσῃ μοι κατὰ πάντα ἀκόλουθος, etc. ('but [sc. on the contrary] you shall love me, Capitolina, ... and shall always follow me, etc.'). On the "tactful" use of the future in fr. 1 (LP) see below.

[39] Cf. O'Keefe, pp. 53f. for discussion and bibliography.

[40] Noted in Cameron, 8 n. 40. According to the historian Polyainos (A.D. ii), Autolykos, Hermes' son, was able to turn black cows into white ones (Polyain. 6.52). The witches Circe and her descendant Medea also dealt in reversals. Circe could render a man κακὸν καὶ ἀνήνορα (Od. 10.299), as well as rejuvenate him (ibid. 395). Medea was said to have rejuvenated her father-in-law Aeson through magical means: ὑπόθεσις Μηδείας (E. Med. [Page]), Ov. Met. 7.251-294, V. Fl. op.cit. On reversals as a poetic topos, cf. 23 above.

[41] Democritos' παίγνια are not cited in Cameron, loc.cit. above. Though these are games for entertainment, even so they arguably exemplify the reversals and *adynata* worked by serious magic: e.g., Τὰ χαλκᾶ χρυσᾶ ποιῆσαι φαίνεσθαι, etc., Φαγόντα σκόρδον μὴ ὄζειν, etc., Γραῦν μήτε πολλὰ λαλεῖν μήτε πολλὰ πίνειν, etc., Ψυχρὰ τρώγοντα κατακαίεσθαι, etc. ('How to make bronze objects look like

for controlling the winds (PGM XXIX.10) δὸc τὰ [ἄβ]ατα εὔβατα ('grant that the inaccessible shall be rendered accessible'); the rhythmic curse phrase μηδ' αὐτῷ γῆ βατὴ μηδὲ θάλαccα πλωτή ('may the sea be neither accessible nor navigable for him'), which is frequently found throughout the Greek world of the imperial period[42] and has early antecedents (with which Sappho was familiar?) in Asia Minor;[43] finally, cf. the elaborate proviso from a Cypriot funerary curse, which similarly echoes Anatolian, especially Phrygian models: καὶ γένοιτο αὐτῷ τὰ νοητὰ ἀνόητα, τὰ εὔπορα ἄπορα, τὰ πράξιμα ἄπρακτα, τὰ νόcτιμα ἄνοcτα, τὰ πλωτὰ ἄπλωτα, τὰ κάρπιμα ἄκαρπα, τὰ cπόριμα ἄcπορα, etc. ('May his mental acts become unintelligent, may actions easily done become difficult for him, may his feasible actions become unfeasible, may his abundant produce become scarce, may navigable passages become unnavigable for him, may his fruitful land become fruitless, may his sown land become unsown, etc.').[44] Love magic invariably aimed at undoing the social and moral constraints of family and intimates on an individual, and it usually did so by impairing the victim's "memory", i.e. his or her sense of priorities,[45] or even his or her sense of shame.[46] One ἀγωγὴ is practically an advertisement of the ability of erotic magic to rework the social code by inducing abnormal behaviour in virgins. PGM XXXVI.71 advertises that "there is none greater" than this spell, stressing

---

gold, etc., How not to smell of garlic after eating it, How to prevent an old hag from chattering or drinking too much, etc., How to burn a dinner guest with cold food, etc.').

[42] E.g. Robert, Hellenica vi.13-14, vv.8-9 (a funerary curse from Magnesia at Sipylos).

[43] Cf. André Parrot, Malédictions et violations de tombes (Paris, 1939), pp. 141-142 w. n. 9; Strubbe, in Mag. Hiera, pp. 33f.; and n. 44 immed. below. Probably the earliest Greek attestation of a reversal stipulation in the "magical" context of a curse occurs in the Amphictyonic oath, dating to the early sixth century B.C. (cited and discussed by Strubbe [supra], p. 37): καὶ ἐπεύχεται αὐτοῖc μήτε γῆν καρποὺc φέρειν, μήτε γυναῖκαc τέκνα τίκτειν γονεῦcιν ἐοικότα, ἀλλὰ τέρατα, μήτε βοcκήματα κατὰ φύcιν γονὰc ποιεῖcθαι ('The curse goes on: that their land bear no fruit; that their wives not bear children resembling those who begat them, but monsters; that their flocks not reproduce according to nature').

[44] BCH, li (1927), 148-149, vv. 20-30 (early Christian era). For an archaic antecedent of the motif καὶ γένοιτο αὐτῷ τὰ νοητὰ ἀνόητα ("may his mental acts become unintelligent"), cf. Od. 23.11-12 μάργην cε θεοὶ θέcαν, οἵ τε δύνανται / ἄφρονα ποιῆcαι καὶ ἐπίφρονα περ μάλ' ἐόντα ('the gods have made you mad, they who by their nature can render insane even one who is fully sane'). (Divine interference with mental processes is a Homeric and subsequent commonplace, on which consult E.R.Dodds, The Greeks and the irrational [Berkeley, 1951], passim, esp. p. 39.)

[45] This aspect of love incantations can be traced from the papyrus spells and the *defixiones* back to archaic sources: Petropoulos, pp. 218-220, to which may be added E. Med. 88 εἰ τούcδε γ' εὐνῆc οὔνεκ' οὐ cτέργει πατήρ ('seeing that their father does not cherish them on account of his love affair') (of Jason's indifference towards his sons; also cf. ibid. 76); Lys. 6.27 θεὸc λήθην ἔδωκεν ('god granted him forgetfulness'), and e.g., Audollent 266.15f. (Hadrumentum, A.D. iii?).

[46] Pi. P. 4.219 ὄφρα Μηδείαc τοκέων ἀφέλοιτ' αἰδῶ ('so that he might remove from Medea her sense of shame towards her parents') implies that one of the effects of Jason's love magic was to transform Medea from a virgin inhibited by shame to a "shameless" woman. Cf. the love spells at PGM IV.1759f. (ἀγωγή) ὁ τοὺc cώφροναc // λογιcμοὺc ἐπικαλύπτων καὶ cκοτεινὸν ἐμπνέων οἶcτρον ('you who cloud self-controlled thoughts and inspire sinister passion') and XVIIa.6f. ⟨ἀ⟩νάπαυcον αὐτὴν τῆc ὑπερηφανείαc καὶ τοῦ λογιcμοῦ καὶ τῆc αἰcχύνηc ('hinder her from her arrogance and reasonable thought and sense of shame').

that it not only draws men to women and women to men, but even makes virgins leave home for the sake of sexual intercourse with the practitioner of the spell (. . . καὶ παρθένους ἐκπηδᾶν οἴκοθεν ποιεῖ, '... and it prompts virgins to leap out of their houses'.[47] The sense in which the conditions foreseen in vv. 21-24 are an *adynaton* will be explained in a moment.

A performative utterance spoken by a goddess - or, as here, by a human agent impersonating a divinity - cannot but be inexorably efficacious. That is reason enough for Aphrodite's *oratio recta*, although other considerations may also explain this direct impersonation. The first is a conscious, negative reason. The impersonation is probably dictated, first of all, by a consummate tactfulness. The poetess avoids the imperative typical of most spells for fear of offending Aphrodite, and instead allows the goddess to utter the binding prescriptions herself in the future tense, almost as a polite reassurance. Now apparently unaffected by obsessional passion,[48] Sappho views her loves, past and present, *sub specie aeternitatis*, and predicts a favourable outcome for the immediate future. This shift in voice signals a shift in perspective: both changes are made possible through the poet's self-investiture with divine authority (and therefore omniscience). Sappho moves, albeit briefly, from subjective supplication towards transcendent mastery, from desperation to distance. Such "displacement" is also clear in Sappho's/Aphrodite's projection of eros onto the unwilling girl.[49]

So much for the less immediate motivation and the "therapeutic" effects of Aphrodite's direct speech. If we are again justified in using the magical papyri as a "control", we must suppose that in the case of fr. l (LP) the primary purpose of the magical pronouncements in the sixth strophe will be to attract the reluctant girl to Sappho. Parca, largely on paleographical and syntactical grounds, proposed the attractive restoration of v. 19 β]αῖc'.[50] If her reading is correct, vv. 18-20 must mean "whom this time I am to persuade, setting out to bring that person to your love?", and together with v. 23 ("and if she does not love, yet soon she will love [φιλήcει]". . .), these lines make perfect sense in view of the love spells of late antiquity.[51] The ἀγωγαὶ and other spells featured in the papyri always envisage precisely the sort of *dénouement* which Aphrodite offers to produce in these verses: invariably, the unresponsive beloved is to be drawn, often as if by force,[52] to the operator,

---

[47] Cf. Theoc. 2.136-138, with Dover's note on 136 (p. 110).

[48] Cf. n. 65 below.

[49] On transference, or 'displacement', employed in love spells, consult Winkler, pp. 87-90.

[50] ZPE, xlvi (1982}, 47f.

[51] Thus magical parallels instead of rather diffuse 'Homeric allusion' which Parca credits (op.cit., 49- 50) would appear to confirm her restoration of v. 19. (On the unlikelihood of Homeric allusion in Sappho cf. n. 5 above.)

[52] The technical terms employed are ἄγειν and ἕλκειν. On "sadism" and sexual mastery in the erotic papyri, cf.Petropoulos, p. 216, to which add the *defixiones* Suppl.Mag. i. 46.22f. (p. 176), 47.23f. (p. 182), 50.62-66 (pp. 207-208), all from ca. 3rd cent. A.D. Egypt, and Winkler, (pp. 91 (with n. 38), 94, esp. 96f.,

and in numerous instances, which may be diagnosed as efforts at "displacement",[53] the operator stipulates expressly that his (or her) beloved should fall madly in love with *him (or her)*: cf. PGM XV.2 ἀλλὰ φιλήςεις με Καπετωλίναν ('but [sc. on the contrary] you shall love me, Capitolina'), XIX a. 53f. ἐκπηδήςαςα [ἔλ]θῃ. . . ἐπὶ ἔρωτι καὶ φιλίᾳ, etc. ('[until] she leaps [out of her house] and comes with passion and love').[54]

Two implications, then, arise out of the comparison with the papyri. It may well be that ἐc cὰν φιλότατα in v. 19 (as restored by Parca) means "[sc. to bring] her love of *you*". And, second, Aphrodite's prescriptive words will have the selfsame effect as that of a generic "lesbian" ἀγωγή: ἄξαι καὶ καταδῆσαι Cαραπιάδα . . . ἐπ' αὐτὴν Ἡραείδαν, . . . ἄρτι, ἄρτι, ταχὺ ταχὺ. ἐξ [*sic*] ψυχῆς καὶ καρδίας ἄγε αὐτὴν τὴν Cαραπιάδα, etc. (PGM XXXII.2f.) ('draw and tie down Sarapias ... to Herais herself, ... now, now, quickly, quickly. From her soul and heart draw Sarapias herself, etc.'). What Aphrodite tactfully omits, it seems, is the provision that Sappho's new favourite will suffer the impediments of bodily and psychological functions and activities conventionally associated with love spells.[55]

An extraordinary ἀγωγή (Suppl.Mag. i. 42, pp. 133-141) preserved in a lead tablet from Hermoupolis Magna (A.D. iii/iv) shows that a woman (Sophia) might seek to attract another woman's (Gorgonia's) love by causing unceasing torments, physical and psychological alike:

καῦcον, ποίρωcον (for πύρ-), φλέξον τὴν ψυχήν, τὴν καρδίαν, τὸ ἧπαρ, τὸ πνεῦμα ἐπ' ἔρωτι Cοφία⟨c⟩, etc. · ἄξατε Γοργονία⟨ν⟩, etc., βαcανίcατε αὐτῆc τὸ cῶμα νυκτὸc καὶ ἡμαίραc (for ἡμέρ-), δαμάcαται (for -ατε) αὐτὴν ἐκπηδῆcῃ (for -cαι) ἐκ παντὸc τόπου καὶ πάcηc οἰκίαc φιλοῦcα⟨ν⟩ Cοφία<ν⟩ , etc. ('Burn, set on fire, inflame her soul, her heart, her liver, her spirit with love for Sophia, etc.; draw Gorgonia, etc., torture her body night and day, force her to leap from every place and every house with love for Sophia, etc.') op.cit., vv. 14-17, p. 134.

Once the girl falls in love and comes to Sappho, the poetess will be only too glad to accept her φιλότηc: so much can be gathered from comparison with the magical practice of later periods. Accordingly, the statement in v. 21 that the girl διώξει Sappho may mean no more

---

who remarks that the sadistic stipulations often reflect social expectations, not sexual practices. The unresponsiveness of the spell operator's beloved is a secure assumption; see below.

[53] Thus Winkler, pp. 87-88, as has already been noted.

[54] Some other examples: PGM XVII a.10 [ἐρ]ωτικῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ τηκομένην, ibid. 16f. ἕως ἂν . . . ἔλθῃ ποθοῦcά με; XIX a. 57; LXI.17 ἵνα με φιλῇ εἰc τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον, cf. ibid. 18,29, CI.7-9, 31f., 36f., 44f., 49, 51f. (Betz = Suppl.Mag. i. 45 [pp. 163-166]); also cf., e.g., the *defixiones* Suppl.Mag. i. 47.26f. (p. 182) and Suppl.Mag. i. 41 (pp. 129-130) (A.D. iii-iv?).

[55] The physical and mental torments - insomnia, thirst, "burning" sensation, madness - are the means by which the victim will be induced to come to the user of the spell: Petropoulos, p. 216; Winkler, p. 96 (with notes). To the papyri also add Suppl.Mag. i. 43 and 45 and parallels from the *defixiones*: Suppl.Mag. i. 46 and 47, already cited,48 (pp. 187-190), etc.

than that she will "try to attract Sappho".[56] This assurance and that of the next verse ("and if she does not accept gifts, yet she will give") imply "a marked degree of mutual eros", in as much as the girl is expected to do more than merely yield.[57] These lines suggest, moreover, that contrary to customary male homosexual practice, the paradigm of courtship in "lesbian" relationships did not ordinarily admit of distinctions between dominant and subordinate roles.[58]

Love spells, we noted, deal in reversals that amount in some serious sense to *adynata*. (As Winkler, p. 89 put it, "An *agoge*, too, is the kind of last-ditch therapy made necessary by a certain cultural conception of *eros*, and as such it is a therapy that not only proclaims its own extremity but even in a certain sense its own impossibility. For the implied message of the rite is that home-truth ... - there is no cure for eros - except the beloved herself/himself '.) If a high degree of mutuality was in fact sanctioned or even instituted in "lesbian" relationships - or at least in relationships that flourished in Sappho's counter-culture[59] - the novel situation ordained by Aphrodite probably represents a reversal and *adynaton* from the perspective of psychological plausibility. For the prayed-for μεταβολὴ will not so much overturn social reality as touch the inner reality of two persons in an almost spectacular way: the unrequited love of an older woman for a younger one will be transposed into reciprocal *eros*. This change only confirms the ποικίλος, i.e., "changeful, hence innately magic", moiety of Aphrodite. Perhaps it is even understood that the goddess will achieve this wondrous transformation with the help of magical flowers or drugs known as θρόνα (cf. the implications of v. 1 ποικιλόθρον').[60]

II. Conclusions - and a guess

One is tempted to interpret the fifth and especially the sixth strophe of Sapph. fr. 1 (LP) as a deliberate lapse into the discourse of magic. This conclusion at any rate seems probable if we compare the language and structure of Aphrodite's speech with those of certain later magical formulae. Sappho's inclusion of what must be magical formulae in her cletic hymn is a plausible means of strengthening its overall effectiveness.At the same time, however, the hymn diverges from magical convention in two important ways: first, Sappho has avoided uttering the binding words *in propria persona* (among other reasons) for fear of offending Aphrodite, and secondly, again out of a sense of delicacy, she has suppressed any mention

---

[56] Thus also Dover, p. 177. On the dynamics of pursuit and flight in male homosexual relationships, see Dover, pp. 81-91; in love poetry in general, Burnett, p. 255 n. 72; also cf. the earliest extant magical papyrus (dating to the late first century B.C.), published in ZPE, xxxiii (1979), 264, col. 2, v. 12: κατατρ[έ]χω, αὐτὸς δέ με φεύγει ('I pursue, whereas he flees from me').

[57] Thus Dover, p. 177.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Cf. Dover, p. 181.

[60] If θρόνα = "flowers" ποικιλόθρονος may mean, *inter alia*, "of elaborate flowers" or "of magical flowers", but θρόνα may mean "(magical) drugs". Either of the latter two senses would suit my interpretation. For a discussion of the ambiguous epithet, cf. Burnett, p. 250 (with notes).

of the βάϲανοι, physical and mental, normally invoked against the unresponsive beloved. (These torments, it should be remembered, are the primary components of the *eros* which she forthrightly projects onto the girl via Aphrodite's pledge; cf. n. 65 below).

Magic and religion in antiquity were two spheres which essentially differed only with respect to the intentions and the materials used:[61] it would be wrong, therefore, to regard magic and religion as two opposed and incompatible systems of belief and technology. Magic drew from and in turn supported the cognitive system of established religion, but it tended to be malevolent in its intentions and was carried out in secret. It scarcely seems improbable that an individual in seventh-century Lesbos might have resorted to a cletic hymn in a magical operation to advance a suit in love. As we are deprived of any external information about the setting of fr. 1 (LP) - e.g., did Sappho invoke Aphrodite in private? what, if any adjuncts were used during the performance of the poem? - it is pointless to press too strongly the argument that the poem presupposed an accompanying magical act; but it seems quite possible that Sappho at least *conceived* her poem formally as a kind of love spell. Perhaps Sappho appropriated the conventional form of the cletic hymn in order to evoke a covert, magical operation. Such formulaic recourse to magic undoubtedly was so well-known in her day that she could echo particular formulae in poetry in the conviction that her audience would recognise the allusions. If magical *praxis* does in fact underlie fr. 1. (LP) as a whole, Sappho's hymn may have been modelled on one of the types of prayer understood by Pindar's blanket designation λιτάϲ τ' ἐπαοιδάϲ (P. 4.217),[62] which refers to the love spells that Jason learned from Aphrodite.

This is of course a minimum inference. If, however, Hippon. fr. 115 (W) κύμ[ατι] πλα[ζόμ]ενοϲ · / κἀν Ϲαλμυδ[ηϲϲ]ῶι γυμνὸν εὐφρονε. [/Θρήϊκεϲ ἀκρό[κ]ομοι / λάβοιεν, etc. ('roaming on the surge of the sea; and at Salmydessus may top-knotted Thracians, in a most "gracious" spirit, take him naked, etc.') was an actual curse that "realised its primary function in actual life" as Fraenkel believed,[63] there is no positive reason why Sappho's poem should not correspondingly have been a real love spell. The poetess conceivably transcribed her spell and sent it to her girl friend as an invitation and a warning alike. In a predominantly oral culture such as Sappho's, written evidence of a spell may in itself have been psychologically "compelling" for the recipient. It seems in any case a tenable proposition that the poem closely follows magical convention. An analogy drawn from another culture and historical period may illustrate the ease with which magical prayer

---

[61] Cf. Robin Lane Fox, Pagans and Christians (London and New York, 1986), pp. 36-37 (with excellent bibliography, p. 686 n. 33). On the basis of a survey of papyrus prayers, Fritz Graf in Mag.Hiera, pp. 195-197 has more recently reached similar conclusions.

[62] = "supplicatory incantations". The magical papyri have hymnic traits: cf. Petropoulos, p. 217 (with n. 12).

[63] Horace (Oxford, 1957), p. 30; other comparable curse-poems are Hippon. fr. 25 (W) and Alc. fr. 129 (LP). (Burnett, pp. 101, 160-161 treats the curses in all these poems as literary affectations.)

can complement or even supplement respectable cultic prayer. Mary O'Neil[64] has brought to light the so-called *oratione di Santa Marta*, used by a prostitute who was tried by the Inquisition in sixteenth-century Modena. This was a love spell cast as an orthodox novena and enlisting the aid of a saint with the express purpose of leading someone into a relationship against his will. It was 'to be said kneeling and fasting for nine mornings with nine Pater Nosters, nine Ave Marias, etc'.[65] Alongside conventional religious language the novena features magical language which formulates requests in highly physical terms. What is of interest here is the formal and stylistic affinity of this novena with magical incantation.

Consideration of one final circumstantial item may fortify still more the impression that Sappho is invoking Aphrodite in a manner more characteristic of magic than public cult-song.

As we noticed earlier, the rehearsal of Aphrodite's more recent visitation, in particular, helps Sappho to address her obsessional passion.[66] A great range of affective states of varying degrees of intensity - "anxiety", terror, helplessness, frustration, etc. - is apt, *prima facie*, to motivate a magical operation; a magical act, as O'Keefe has remarked (p. 67), "provides the certainty of an authoritative definition of what is happening and what has happened. A sacred script will provide both collective *and* individual security in the face of confusion..."[67] Sappho's distress (ἀνία) and obsession may have impelled her to sorcery, no less plausibly than they impelled Theocritus' Simaetha, another unrequited lover; cf. Theoc. 2, esp. vv. 23 (Δέλφις ἔμ᾽ ἀνίαcεν), 34 (ἀνία), 55 (ἀνιαρέ), 56, 64-65, 95, 159f, 164.[68]

---

[64] In 'Magical healing, love magic and the Inquisition in late sixteenth-century Modena', in Stephen Haliczer (ed.), Inquisition and society in early modern Europe (London, 1987), pp. l0lf.

[65] Ibid., p. 102.

[66] If we take Sappho at her word, there can be no doubt that, from the first, she is, or pretends to be, in a state of emotional distress or discomfort (cf. Burnett, p. 252, n. 60 on the connotations of ἀνία and ἄcη [v. 3]; ibid., p. 253 n. 62 on the implications of δάμνα/θύμον [vv. 3f.]) because of unreciprocated homosexual love: cf. esp. ἀδικήει (v. 20), commonly used of a treacherous friend or a faithless ἐρώμενοc (Cameron, 12; Dover, p. 177); vv. 21-24 actually elaborate upon the ἀδικία (and humiliation) suffered by Sappho. What is more, the import of Aphrodite's speech is that Sappho's present condition, best encapsulated by μαινόλαι θύμωι (v. 18), is actually a reprise of her previous affective states (cf. the prominent δηὖτε at vv. 15 and 16). This clear implication and that of the poetess's closing entreaty χαλέπαν δὲ λῦcον / ἐκ μερίμναν (vv. 25-26, on which cf. Burnett, p. 257 n. 77) allow us to refine our "diagnosis", she is suffering from obsessional passion. Even if, with Burnett, p. 252 n. 61, we treat these expressions sceptically and categorise them as virtual clichés, it is difficult to deny that the narrator's distress and obsession are real, in the sense that Sappho would not have invoked Aphrodite unless she had experienced these states in the recent or remote past (cf. Dover, p. 179 on Sapph. fr. 31 [LP]).

[67] Also cf. O'Keefe, pp. 314f.

[68] In connection with the end of Sappho's prayer, vv. 26-27 ὄccα δέ μοι τέλεccαι / θῦμοc ἰμέρρει, τέλεcον (cf. also fr. 5.3-4 [LP]), it is worth noting an impressive parallel with magical spells, namely the alliterative phrases τέλει τελέαν ἐπαοιδήν, τέλεcόν μ[οι] τελέαν ἐπαοιδήν, etc., which form the conclusion of numerous spells: testimonia w. bibl. in Antonio Carlini (ed.), Papiri letterari greci della Bayerische Staatsbibliothek di Monaco di Baviera, ii (Nr. 19-44) (Stuttgart, 1986), p. 45 on vv. 5-6.

Our poetess has, then, endowed the cletic form with more than a few telling vestiges of magical incantation. Although the context of fr. 1 (LP) must remain a matter for conjecture, the cumulation of the circumstantial evidence elicited from the poem as a whole suffices to show the common ground between Sappho's λεγόμενα, on the one hand, and the theory and practice of ancient magic, on the other. It may in fact be reasonable to infer that these points of contact are not mere coincidences: fr. 1 (LP) may well be a literary version -or even a "transcript', - of a type of love spell that was based on the cletic, or supplicatory, hymn. However we categorise the fragment, the tact and technical subtlety with which Sappho fashioned her prayer to Aphrodite are beyond dispute.

Democritean University of Thrace   J.C.B.Petropoulos