Sappho fr. 31.9

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The purpose of this note is to demonstrate that, in all probability, ἀλλ' ἀκαν μὲν γλῶσσα πέπαγε is the correct text of Sappho fr. 31.9 (Lobel-Page=Voigt). At the moment the established vulgate is καὶ μὲν ... ἑκεῖ, “my tongue is utterly broken.” Various objections had once been made against this reading, but it seems that they have been overcome. Page objected to the sense, thinking that γλῶσσα could not be used to mean ‘power of speech’, and that κατάγνυμι could not be
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used metaphorically; the first argument was answered by L. E. Woodbury, the second by B. B. Ford and E. Christian Kopff. The hiatus, to which many had objected, was defended by supposing influence of Ionic or Aeolic epic, or by supposing that Sappho aimed for onomatopoeic effect. The case for εαγε was strengthened by reference to Lucretius 3.155, infringi linguam, in a passage evidently imitating this one of Sappho. One text available in the first century B.C., therefore, read εαγε; although many of the most serious corruptions in our texts occurred at an early date, this evidence must be given due weight in the absence of an earlier recoverable text.

Scholars have not said much about another possible objection against the vulgate: the tmesis of καμ . . . εαγε. In his edition of Sappho, Lobel reports Cobet’s conjecture καμ . . . πεπαγε and remarks, “probabiliter, si abesse καμ.” Since I can see no objection to the sense of καπεπαγε, I assume Lobel was objecting to the tmesis, as, indeed, M. Treu and G. Privitera assumed. The facts with regard to tmesis in the Lesbians are these. In Sappho, there are only three examples, all conforming to the pattern preverb-postpositive (δε)–verb (fr.42.2, 48.2, and 168 B.3 Voigt, the last being a poem of doubtful ascription; I exclude the adverbial use of εν at fr.2.5, 9). This is a very easy type of tmesis, possibly even surviving in colloquial Attic of the fifth century, long after all others had become obsolete. In Alcaeus the situation is different: in addition to numerous examples of the kind found in Sappho (fr.115.11, 15; 130.18; 338.5f; 346.2; 362.3; 367.2; see also Inc. Auct. 30.5 Voigt=Alc. fr.255.5 L.-P.), he

3 Homer gives κατα θ’ δεματα δξω, II. 8.403, and εξ αυχεβα δξη, 5.161; Hesiod provides an exact parallel with ει νυτα εαγε, Op. 534. See R. Hiersche, “Zu Sappho 2,9 D.,” Glotta 44 (1966) 1–5; Ford and Kopff (supra n.2); A. M. Bowie, The Poetic Dialect of Sappho and Alcaeus (New York 1981) 85. Ford and Kopff show that it is not permissible to speak of lingering influence of the digamma; linguistically, a phoneme is either in a dialect or it is not. However, Bowie’s formulation is acceptable: “One might . . . say that it is merely a [Aeolic] poetic form preserved after the loss of the digamma in the spoken language by the same process that led to such hiatus in [Ionic] epic.”
5 E. Lobel, Σαπφοι μελη (Oxford 1925) xxxii, 17.
7 J. Wackernagel, Vorlesungen über Syntax II (Basel 1928) 172f; but see also G. C. Horrocks, FCPS 206 (1980) 1–11.
affords others of a kind familiar from epic: frs.10.4, ἐπὶ γὰρ πᾶρος
<ἀ>ντικ ἐ<ἀνε>ι; 129.3f, ἐν δὲ βάρμοις ... ἔθηκαν; 208.6, πέρ μὲν γὰρ
ἄνελος ιασπέδαν ἐξει; 298.26f, ἐκ δὲ αφάντων ἐξαπίνας ἐκύκ θυέλλας;
376, ἐκ δὲ ποτήριον πώμης; 377, ἐκ μ’ ἐλασάς ἀλγεῖν. Another possible
example is found at fr.336, where Voigt prints πάμπαν δὲ τύφως ἐκ ἔ
ἐλετο φρένας, while Lobel-Page print πάμπαν δ’ ἐτύφωσ’ ἐκ δ’ ἐλετο
φρένας. Since we have no true example of tmesis in Sappho, not even
in fr.44, tmesis is highly suspect in fr.31.9.

The reading πέπαγε (or, more precisely, πέπηγε) was first proposed
by Joshua Barnes, as reported by C. Blomfield. Blomfield himself
wrote μέραγε. C. G. Cobet, Mnemosyne 2 (1873) 362, again suggested
πέπαγε, referring to Catullus’ translation in poem 51, which gives
lingua sed torpet. Both Blomfield and Cobet continued to read καῖμ at
the beginning of the verse. D. L. Page (supra n.1: 25) reports Lobel’s
observation that codex P of Longinus in fact gives us not ἀλάκαμ as
the cursus litterarum but ἀλάκανων, which should probably be articu­
lated ἀλα’ ἄκαν. Noting that this could go well with πέπαγε to mean
“my tongue is fixed in silence,” Page states pessimistically that “the
available ms. evidence does not suffice for a certain restoration,” and
decides further argument. More recently, G. Devereux found that
πέπαγε well suited his psychoanalytical treatment of the poem, and
gave his support to the conjecture mainly for that reason.

There is, in fact, good evidence that suggests the existence of a text
reading πέπαγε contemporary with or earlier than Lucretius’ text with
ἐγαγε. I do not mean Catullus, who, as Page observes, is too free with
other details of his translation to be relied on for this one. There is,
however, at least a loose resemblance between his torpet and our
πέπαγε; if other testimony suggested the latter, Catullus’ testimony
could be added to theirs. In other words, it does not have independent
value, but it can have complementary value. This testimony is found
in Theocritus and Apollonius, in two passages imitating Sappho fr.31.
In the first, the resemblance has long been noted, but so far as I know,
only one person has used it to draw inferences about the text of

8 The situation with respect to tmesis is similar to that with respect to epicisms
generally, at least as Lobel established it: in Sappho, epicisms are (speaking simply)
confined to a few poems, whereas in Alcaeus they are scattered evenly throughout his
oeuvre. The works of A. M. Bowie (supra n.3) and R. Janko, Homer, Hesiod and the
Hymns (Cambridge 1982), have done much to challenge Lobel’s conclusions, but the
matter is not yet settled.

9 “Sapphois Fragmenta,” Museum Criticum (Cambridge Classical Researches) I

Sappho's ninth verse, and then only with diffidence. In the second, the parallel is occasionally noticed in apparatuses, but only one scholar has said more than that, and he was interested in literary, not textual, applications. To take Theocritus first, in *Idyll* 2.104–11 he describes the moment when Simaetha first sees Delphis entering her house:

\[ \text{ἐγώ δὲ νῦν ὡς ἐνόησα} \\
\text{ἀρτι θύρας ὑπὲρ οὐδὲν ἀμειβόμενον ποδὶ κούφων—} \\
\text{φράζεο μεν τὸν ἐρωθ' ὅθεν ἵκετο, πότνα Σελάνα—} \\
\text{πᾶσα μὲν ἐψύχθην χύμος πλέον, ἐκ δὲ μετὰ πώ} \\
\text{idρῶς μὲν κοχύδεσκεν ἱσον νοτίαισιν ἐφέρας,} \\
\text{οὐδὲ τί φωνὴσαι δυνάμαι, οὐδ' ὅσον ἐν ὑπνωι} \\
\text{κυνζεύτατα φωνεύτα φίλαν ποτὶ ματέρα τέκνα,} \\
\text{ἄλλ' ἐπάγην δαγύδι καλὸν χρόα πάντοθεν ἴσα.} \]

The passage has much in common with Sappho's: the moment of seeing the object of erotic interest is highly dramatized; the list of symptoms is extensive and is presented in paratactic style; certain items in this list are shared by both authors; and the helplessness of the victim is stressed. There is no doubt that Theocritus had Sappho in mind when composing this passage. When we inquire just what presence Sappho's poem has in Theocritus' final composition, the answer is interesting. The underlined portions indicate how key ideas have been borrowed from Sappho (ἐνόησα has been substituted for ἱσον, κοχύδεσκεν for κακχέται, and δυνάμαι for εἴκει); the non-underlined portions indicate how they have been elaborated. I do not suppose that Theocritus actually composed in so mechanical a manner, but this is the end result; nor is it less interesting for being susceptible of such articulation. In fact, understood in this way, the passage presents a delightful counterpoint as Sappho's simpler expressions are one by one answered by Theocritus' inventive variations. Particularly exquisite is the addition of the doll, which wonderfully retains a suggestion of Sappho's muteness.

11 Devereux (*supra* n.10). He notes in passing Theocritus' ἐπάγην, but is uncertain about its implications for Sappho's text. He offers no opinion on the first words of the line.
12 Privitera (*supra* n.6) 72 (=*La rete* 123).
If this analysis is correct, it has implications for Sappho’s text. Note in particular the sequence oude ti phwnhsgai dunamai . . . all’ epagnv, corresponding to ws me phwnh’ oud’ ev e’ eikei, all’ . . . p'apaye. The intransitive present perfect has been changed to an intransitive second aorist, since Theocritus’ narrative is set in the past; otherwise it is a quotation.

It is possible, of course, that Theocritus’ variation extends to include p'apaye. One scholar has suggested that the detail is an elegant example of oppositio in imitando, opposed, that is, to trpomos;14 another, noting the sequence oude(v) . . . all’ as I have done, thinks that p'apaye may have been suggested to Theocritus by the sound of evage.15 Neither one considers an alternative reading in Sappho. To my judgment, what is argued above strongly suggests that Sappho’s text had p'apaye; but I admit that these other suggestions are still possible. Let us then turn to Apollonius 3.962–65, describing the first meeting of Jason and Medea:

ēk d’ ēra oi kradí stthēwv pēsev, ômmata d’ autwos
h'lhνan, thrmôn d’ parhîdas eîlen erhôs:
γôvnata d’ ou’ ou’ ôpîsw oûte proprôîthev âeiâi
ēôtenev, all’ ūpêmeretha pâghn pódas.

The relationship with Sappho is less close than it was in the case of Theocritus, but there is a relationship nonetheless: we have the same general situation, and stress on the moment of sight; we have the same paratactic list of symptoms; we have the same stress on love’s overwhelming impact on the victim’s faculties. A skeptic might contend that by this time the pathology of love was conventional, and that any poet setting out to describe such situations would compose passages like these. But this account would not do justice to the extent of the

15 V. Di Benedetto (supra 433) 154 n.27.
similarity, nor to the intimate knowledge of classical texts possessed by Apollonius.

In this light it is highly suggestive that Apollonius uses the verb πάγη in line 964, even if the application is different. He also has the Sapphic sequence οὐ τε ... ἐσθενεν (ὧδε ἐτ' ἐκεῖν-お互δε δυνάμαν), ἀλλ' ... πάγη. I only say that these items are suggestive, particularly since Homeric influence is strong in lines 964f; they may be inspired entirely by that author. But let us now recall Catullus. Whatever one may think about the precise relations of Homer, Sappho, Theocritus, Apollonius, and Catullus, the last three do allude with varying degrees of closeness to Sappho, and Catullus and Theocritus had their eyes directly on her text; Catullus has torpet, Theocritus has ἔπαγη. Apollonius has πάγη, which, depending on how one understands the genesis of these lines, may or may not be relevant. Theocritus and Catullus together are really enough to tip the balance in favour of πέπαγε, but Apollonius' lines are most curious in the light of their agreement. Given that we have also found a new reason to object to ἕγε (tmesis), the chances are very good that πέπαγε is right. It seems, in fact, to have been the reading of the text in the Alexandrian library of the third century B.C. and is therefore preferable to Lucretius' version.

We still have the beginning of the line to consider; καταπέπαγε is unobjectionable in sense, as I have said, but the tmesis continues to offend. ἀλλ' ἄκατ is, however, practically given to us by the archetype of pseudo-Longinus, and gives good sense. Accounting for the cor-

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16 Parallels in M. Campbell, *Echoes and Imitation of Early Epic in Apollonius Rhodius* (=Mnemosyne Suppl. 72 [Leiden 1981]) 57; note particularly II. 10.94f for line 962, 22.452f for 964f.

17 I am bound to mention the curious occurrence of the (corrupt) expression στηθέων τάγη κέαρ at line 954 of Apollonius, very shortly before the passage here under discussion. If τάγη is really there, its presence seems to be purely coincidental, unless we suppose that the Alexandrian text had the variant τάγη in it (perhaps written above the line): Apollonius in that case would be sitting on a philological fence by alluding to both readings. I have assumed throughout that the variant is attested by Lucretius, but it should be noted that the context in his poem is different, and some authorities have doubted Sappho's influence: see E. J. Kenney's note *ad* 154–56 in his commentary (Cambridge 1971). For the typically Alexandrian allusiveness I assume in Apollonius (and for the way in which obscure textual variants can be incorporated into poems) see e.g. G. Giangrande, “'Arte Allusiva' and Alexandrian Epic Poetry,” *CQ* n.s. 17 (1967) 85–97 (=Scripta Minora Alexandrina I [Amsterdam 1980] 11–23), and “Hellenistic Poetry and Homer,” *AC* 39 (1970) 46–77 (=33–64); E. Livrea, “Una tecnica allusiva apolloniana alla luce dell’esegesi omerica alessandrina,” *StIt* 44 (1972) 231–43. I owe these references to C. G. Brown, who also points out that H. Fränkel detected a further allusion to Sappho fr.47 at 3.972, shortly after our passage: Noten zu den Argonautika des Apollonios (Munich 1968) 409.

18 Privitera (*supra* n.6) 41 (=La rete 89) calls ἄκατ a “zeppa” or filler, but epic finds
ruption does not seem an urgent requirement; the fragment itself, which is generally in a wretched state, offers other corruptions that have arisen from omission of letters and syllables. ἂλλ᾽ ἀκαυ μὲν γλῶσσα πέπαγε is the oldest recoverable text; it is unobjectionable in sense, syntax, dialect, and metre; it should be printed.

We may take it, then, that the text of fr. 31.9, having been broken, is now fixed.¹⁹

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¹⁹ Professor C. G. Brown provided valuable criticism of the draft of this paper, for which I thank him.