

Sappho fr.31.9

Robert L. Fowler

Φαίνεται μοι κῆνος ἴσος θεοῖσιν
ἔμμεν' ὤνηρ, ὅττις ἐναντίός τοι
ἰσδάνει καὶ πλάσιον ἄδου φωνεί-
σας ὑπακούει
καὶ γελαίσας ἰμέροεν, τό μ' ἦ μὰν
καρδίαν ἐν στήθεσιν ἐπτόαισεν·
ὡς γὰρ <ἔς> σ' ἴδω βρόχε' ὡς με φώνη-
σ' οὐδὲν ἔτ' εἴκει,
ἀλλὰ †καν† μὲν γλώσσα †εαγε†, λέπτου
δ' αὐτίκα χρωῖ πῦρ ὑπαδεδρόμακεν,
ὀππάτεσσι δ' οὐδὲν ὄρημμ', ἐπιβρό-
μεισι δ' ἄκουαι,
ἀ δέ μ' ἰδρῶς κακχέεται, τρόμος δὲ
παῖσαν ἄγρει, χλωροτέρα δὲ ποίας
ἔμμι, τεθνάκην δ' ὀλίγω 'πιδεύης
φαίνομ' ἔμ' αὐτ[αι].
ἀλλὰ πὰν τόλματον, ἐπεὶ †και πενητα†

1–8 vide app. crit. apud ed. Voigt. 9 ἀλλὰ κᾶν cod. P ps.-Longini 10; ἀλλὰ κὰμ codd. apogr., recc.; ἀλλὰ κατὰ Plut. *Mor.* 81D; κατὰ *Anecd. Par.* I 399.27 Cramer. γλώσσα ἔαγε λέπτου δ' Long.; γλώσσά γε λέπτου Plut.; γλώσσαν γελοπ *Anecd. Par.* 10–12 vide Voigt. 13 ἀδεμ' ἰδρῶς κακὸς χέεται Epimer. *Hom. ap. Anecd. Ox.* I 208.15 Cramer (fonte nimirum Herodiano, ut viderunt Lentz, al.); ἔκαδε μ' (ἐκ δέ μ' apogr.) ἰδρῶς ψυχρὸς κ' ἀκχέεται Longin.: textum hic et olim receptum, ab edd. recc. tamen sprellum, vindicat Di Benedetto, *Hermes* 113 (1985) 151–53.

The purpose of this note is to demonstrate that, in all probability, ἀλλ' ἄκαν μὲν γλώσσα πέπαγε is the correct text of Sappho fr.31.9 (Lobel-Page=Voigt). At the moment the established vulgate is κὰμ μὲν . . . ἔαγε, “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 γλώσσα could not be used to mean ‘power of speech’, and that κατάγνυμι could not be

used metaphorically;¹ the first argument was answered by L. E. Woodbury, the second by B. B. Ford and E. Christian Kopff.² The hiatus, to which many had objected, was defended by supposing influence of Ionic or Aeolic epic,³ or by supposing that Sappho aimed for onomatopoeic effect.⁴ The case for ἔαγε 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 ἔαγε; 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 κὰμ . . . ἔαγε. In his edition of Sappho, Lobel reports Cobet's conjecture κὰμ . . . πέπαγε and remarks, "probabiliter, si abesset κὰμ."⁵ Since I can see no objection to the sense of καταπέπαγε, I assume Lobel was objecting to the tmesis, as, indeed, M. Treu and G. Privitera assumed.⁶ 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 (δέ)–verb (frr.42.2, 48.2, and 168B.3 Voigt, the last being a poem of doubtful ascription; I exclude the adverbial use of ἐν 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.⁷ In Alcaeus the situation is different: in addition to numerous examples of the kind found in Sappho (frr.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

¹ D. L. Page, *Sappho and Alcaeus* (Oxford 1955) 24.

² L. E. Woodbury, *TAPA* 86 (1955) 36; B. B. Ford and E. Christian Kopff, "Sappho fr.31.9: A Defense of the Hiatus," *Glotta* 54 (1976) 52–56.

³ Homer gives κατά θ' ἄρματα ἄξω, *Il.* 8.403, and ἐξ ἀνχένα ἄξῃ, 5.161; Hesiod provides an exact parallel with ἐπὶ νῶτα ἔαγε, *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."

⁴ Ford and Kopff (*supra* n.2); G. Nagy, *Comparative Studies in Greek and Indic Meter* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1974) 45.

⁵ E. Lobel, *Σαπφῶς μέλη* (Oxford 1925) xxxii, 17.

⁶ M. Treu, *Sappho*⁴ (Munich 1968) 178; G. A. Privitera, *QUCC* 8 (1969) 40 (= *La rete di Afrodite* [Palermo 1974] 89).

⁷ J. Wackernagel, *Vorlesungen über Syntax II*² (Basel 1928) 172f; but see also G. C. Horrocks, *PCPS* 206 (1980) 1–11.

affords others of a kind familiar from epic: fr.10.4, ἐπὶ γὰρ πᾶρος <ἀ>νίατον ἰκ<άνει>; 129.3f, ἐν δὲ βώμοις . . . ἔθηκαν; 208.6, πὲρ μὲν γὰρ ἄντλος ἰστοπέδαν ἔχει; 298.26f, ἐκ δ' ἀφάντοις ἐξαπίνας ἐκύκα θυέλλαις; 376, ἐκ δὲ ποτήριον πώνηις; 377, ἐκ μ' ἔλασας ἀλγέων. Another possible example is found at fr.336, where Voigt prints πάμπαν δὲ τύφως ἔκ φ' ἔλετο φρένας, while Lobel-Page print πάμπαν δ' ἐτύφωσ' ἐκ δ' ἔλετο φρένας. Since we have no true example of tmesis in Sappho, not even in fr.44, tmesis is highly suspect in fr.31.9.⁸

The reading πέπαγε (or, more precisely, πέπηγε) was first proposed by Joshua Barnes, as reported by C. Blomfield.⁹ Blomfield himself wrote φέφαγε. 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 καμ 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 αλλακαμ as the *cursus litterarum* but αλλακαν, which should probably be articulated ἀλλ' 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 declines 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.¹⁰

There is, in fact, good evidence that suggests the existence of a text reading πέπαγε contemporary with or earlier than Lucretius' text with ἔαγε. 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 "Sapphonis Fragmenta," *Museum Criticum* (*Cambridge Classical Researches*) I (1813, repr. 1826) 9 (=T. Gaisford, *Poetae Minores Graeci* III² [1823] 295).

¹⁰ G. Devereux, *CQ* n.s. 20 (1970) 24.

Sappho's ninth verse, and then only with diffidence.¹¹ 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.¹² To take Theocritus first, in *Idyll* 2.104–11 he describes the moment when Simaetha first sees Delphis entering her house:

ἐγὼ δέ νιν ὡς ἐνόησα
 ἄρτι θύρας ὑπὲρ οὐδὸν ἀμειβόμενον ποδὶ κούφῳ—
 φράζέο μιν τὸν ἔρωθ' ὅθεν ἴκετο, πότνα Σελάνα—
 πᾶσα μὲν ἐψύχθην χιόνος πλέον, ἐκ δὲ μετώπῳ
 ἰδρώς μιν κοχύδεσκειν ἴσον νοτιάισιν ἔέρσαις,
οὐδέ τι φωνῆσαι δυνάμαν, οὐδ' ὅσσον ἐν ὕπνῳ
κνυζέονται φωνέοντα φίλαν ποτὶ ματέρα τέκνα,
ἀλλ' ἐπάγην δαγῦδι καλὸν χροῶ 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 *ἴδον*, *κοχύδεσκειν* for *κακχέεται*, and *δυνάμαν* 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.¹³

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).

¹³ Line 105 contains an allusion to Aesch. *Ag.* 408f, which some have thought imitates Sappho fr.16.12f (W. M. Calder III, "An Echo of Sappho Fragment 16 L-P at Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 403–419?" *Apophoreta philologica Emmanuelli Fernandez-Galiano a sodalibus oblata*, edd. L. Gil, R. M. Aguilar, I [Madrid 1984] 215–18; B. Marzullo, *Museum Criticum* 13–14 [1978/79] 108). Line 107 might contain an allusion to a text containing the word *ψῦχος* in line 13. The detail is suggestive, but perhaps cannot be pressed with respect to the true reading in Sappho; it is true,

If this analysis is correct, it has implications for Sappho's text. Note in particular the sequence οὐδέ τι φωνῆσαι δυνάμαν . . . ἀλλ' ἐπάγην, corresponding to ὡς με φώνησ' οὐδέν' ἔτ' εἴκει, ἀλλὰ . . . πέπαγε. 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 πέπαγε. One scholar has suggested that the detail is an elegant example of *oppositio in imitando*, opposed, that is, to τρόμος;¹⁴ another, noting the sequence οὐδὲ(ν) . . . ἀλλὰ as I have done, thinks that πέπαγε may have been suggested to Theocritus by the sound of ἔαγε.¹⁵ Neither one considers an alternative reading in Sappho. To my judgment, what is argued above strongly suggests that Sappho's text had πέπαγε; 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:

ἐκ δ' ἄρα οἱ κραδίη στήθεων πέσεν, ὄμματα δ' αὐτῶς
ἤχλυσαν, θερμὸν δὲ παρηίδας εἶλεν ἔρευθος·
γούνατα δ' οὔτ' ὀπίσω οὔτε προπάροιθεν ἀεῖραι
ἔσθενεν, ἀλλ' ὑπένερθε πάγη πόδας.

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

though, that Di Benedetto's explanation for the occurrence of ψυχρός in some testimonia is the weakest part of his case (he assumes it is a gloss on κακός, which was itself extracted from κακχέεται). Yet other texts must assume a process of corruption more complicated than his, and he is right to stress the value of Herodian's testimony. Unlikely though ψυχρός may seem as a gloss for κακός, in this context κακός is obviously impossible, while 'cold' is a very probable adjective; perhaps instead of 'gloss' we should speak of 'conjecture'. If Theocritus' text of Sappho read something like ἀ δέ μ' ἴδρωσ ψυχρός / κακ/χέεται, unmetrical though that is, we should say that he expanded the line into two statements about cold and sweat respectively, with extra details for each; in this case, πᾶσα μὲν ἐψύχθην ought also to be underlined above. My argument regarding πέπαγε remains unaffected in any case.

¹⁴ R. Pretagostini, "Teocrito e Saffo: forme allusive e contenuti nuovi," *QUCC* 24 (1977) 107–18.

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 *οὔτ(ε) . . . ἔσθενεν* (~οὐδὲν ἔτ' εἴκει~οὐδὲ δύναμαν), 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.¹⁶ 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 *ἐπάγην*. 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.¹⁷ Given that we have also found a new reason to object to *ἔαγε* (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' ἄκαν is, however, practically given to us by the archetype of pseudo-Longinus, and gives good sense.¹⁸ Accounting for the cor-

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

¹⁷ I am bound to mention the curious occurrence of the (corrupt) expression *στηθέων ἔαγη κέαρ* at line 954 of Apollonius, very shortly before the passage here under discussion. If *ἔαγη* is really there, its presence seems to be purely coincidental, unless we suppose that the Alexandrian text had the variant *ἔαγε* 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 ἄκαν 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. ἀλλ' ἄκαν 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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ἀκῆν ἐγένοντο σιωπῆ a perfectly acceptable formula (e.g. *Il.* 3.95, 7.92); indeed, Sappho may have had just this expression in mind, since it is used “plerumque de iis qui affectu aliquo perturbati obmutuerunt” (H. Ebeling, *Lexicon Homericum s.v. ἀκῆν*): a good description of Sappho herself. C. del Grande, *Antologia della lirica greca*² (Naples 1959) 116, cites Hor. *Carm.* 4.1.35f (*parum decoro . . . cadit lingua silentio*) as a parallel for ἄκαν, although the stress laid on *silentio* by the adjectival phrase *parum decoro* renders the parallel imperfect (*silentio* strikes the modern ear as less of a “zeppa”).

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