

A)

Sappho 1.5-12

ἀλλὰ τυίδ' ἔλθ', αἵ ποτα κατέρωτα

τὰς ἔμας αὖδας αἰοῖσα πῆλοι

ἔκλυες, πάτρος δὲ δόμον λίποισα

χρῦσιον ἦλθες

Translation of lines 5-12

but come here, if ever before

when you heard my cries from afar

you listened, and leaving your father's

golden house you came

ἄρμ' ὑπασδεύαισα· κάλοι δέ σ' ἄγον

ῥέεες στρουθοὶ περὶ γᾶς μελαίνας

πύκνα δίνεντες πτέρ' ἀπ' ὠράνω αἶθε-

ρος διὰ μέσσω·

having harnessed a chariot; and beautiful

swift sparrows carried you above the black earth

swirling with fast- beating wings above and through the mid-air;

Summary

The given passage consists of the first 5 stanzas of Sappho's *Fragment 1*, which is also referred to as *Ode to Aphrodite*, and it is a prayer towards the goddess. Sappho, in the beginning of the poem, calls to Aphrodite to plead the goddess to help her. She praises Aphrodite and asks for her assistance – as she has done in the past- when it comes to matters of love. Thus, in the 1st stanza, Sappho is placing an invocation to the goddess to come and help her, followed by 5 stanzas, where she recalls how the goddess has helped her in the past and praising her. From the poem it is evident that Sappho feels a close proximity to the goddess, and that there is a bond between them as Aphrodite seems to respond to her calling and seems willing to offer her aid. Sappho mentions a recollection of Aphrodite's response to a previous request for help, which indicates that this is a recurring prayer, and that Aphrodite is often present in Sappho's life as a deity who listens to her and reassures her that she will receive what she has asked for. In the poem's final stanza, Sappho reverts the narration to the present time and once again asks Aphrodite to fulfil what her heart desires, concluding the poem in a rather circular notion.

Commentary Analysis

Sappho's *Fragment 1* has the typical structure of a prayer or hymn, which consists of an invocation to a deity, a praise of their virtues and authority and a recollection of their interactions in the past and it ends with a request for assistance. Therefore, Sappho starts this poem by addressing Aphrodite directly, using some epithets to describe certain aspects of her personality and status. The very first words of the poem are "ornate-throned" and "immortal", and they are used to describe the goddess' immortality and divine nature, as well as "daughter of Zeus", who is recognized as the greatest of the gods, which further emphasises her divine status. Thus, from the very first lines of the poem, it becomes evident that Aphrodite possesses powers which are beyond human passions and desires, she is immortal and is related to Zeus. However, Sappho uses another word to describe Aphrodite, as "weaver of schemes", which is a rather negative term for her personality. So, from the first two lines one can notice a contrast among the divine elements of Aphrodite and a negative characterisation,

which could be an indication of how gods are not always kind and helpful but at times they can be dangerous for humans. This specific word reminds one of the epic tradition, where gods often interfered with the lives of humans, schemed against them and caused them physical and emotional pain. It is quite interesting how this word has been placed in the end of Aphrodite's description and in the middle of the second line, right before Sappho's plea to her, adding emphasis to this specific aspect of her personality. It almost seems, as if Sappho wishes for the audience to remember that word and make the connection that as the goddess of love, Aphrodite, often deceits humans and causes trouble. This becomes even more emphatic with the alliteration of the -λ sounds in the second line of the poem, which create a flowy tone and are an aesthetically pleasing feature.

Line 3 begins with Sappho's plea to the goddess not to overpower her soul with bitterness and sorrow. What is interesting in those two final lines of the first stanza is how they begin with the words "do not", giving emphasis to the kinship among Aphrodite and Sappho, who seems to know what the goddess is capable of and who seems to understand the kind of suffering she can bestow upon humans. There is also a connection with the word "δολόπλοκε" in line 2, as it indicates how the goddess has caused her suffering in the past. It is important to note that Sappho does not ask for something specific from Aphrodite, but instead, she asks of her to not cause her pain. An interesting and aesthetically pleasing feature of line 3 is the position of the nouns in the phrase "μή μ' ἄσαισι μηδ' ὀνείασι", which seem to be conjoined together, creating a flow and a sense of balance, while possibly indicating oral performance. The words have the same ending and sound similar, and this creates a pleasing sound as the poem is being presented. Line 3 ends with the word "δάμνα", which is a word that conveys a military tone and could indicate how love can be a battle and how Aphrodite might force humans to fabricate certain feelings. This bares a resemblance to the general use of military vocabulary in lyric poetry to discuss love and refers to the common belief that love and the feelings it generates are quite similar to an internal battle, which affects both the body and the soul.

The 1st stanza ends with the word "soul", which is one of the main themes of the poem, and whose strategic position in the end of the stanza emphasises Sappho's focus on her own love related troubles and her personal relationship with Aphrodite as well. The word is repeated by Sappho later in the poem, in line 18, as well as in the final stanza of the poem. The 1st stanza of the poem begins with a praise to Aphrodite and ends with the focus on Sappho's own soul, making the poem more personal and emphasising the Sappho's personal experience.

Moving on to the 2nd stanza of the poem, one of the first things noticed is the use of the phrase "come here", which sounds like a command or like a forceful invitation. This is a common aspect of a prayer as humans are invoking a deity to come towards them and offer their assistance. Apart from the first three words, the rest of the stanza is focused on Sappho's previous meetings with Aphrodite. One of the most interesting details in this stanza is the use of participles to describe Aphrodite and emphasise a series of actions she does to respond to Sappho's calling. These three participles are in the aorist tense, and they escalate to show a row of actions that require different levels of energy to be performed. Aphrodite heard Sappho's cries, then left the house and then she rode the chariot towards her, so one can notice the stages she followed. It is also an element that gives movement to the narrative and is pleasant to the poem's visual aesthetic. Another interesting aspect is the mentioning of Zeus, which connects the 1st with the 2nd stanza and emphasises her position and powerful nature as well as her lineage, while also referring to epic poetry, as the image of a god descending in a chariot as if getting to battle is often seen in epic poetry. Hence, once again it becomes evident how lyric and epic poetry are connected to each other.

The poem's 3rd stanza follows the same thematic pattern as the 2nd one as it describes the goddess's journey towards the mortal world, where she is pictured being on a chariot, which is a term that again

resembles epic poetry and creates a war-like image of the goddess going to battle. The epic element continues on line 10, where Sappho uses the phrase "black earth", which is a recurring Homeric term in her poetry, as well as the imagery of the rapid swirling of the winds in the air, which is an image found on Homer. By employing those expressions Sappho intensifies the epic allusion in the poem and simultaneously creates a vibrant image of the goddess in her chariot. What stands out in the stanza, though, is the sparrows that carry it, which are a romantic element within the epic references. Sparrows are connected with Aphrodite as the goddess of love, and they emphasise the contrast among lyric and epic elements within the poem. The epithets that accompany the sparrows are beautiful and swift, which again show the contrast of lyric and epic vocabulary. Another interesting aspect of the stanza is the use of colours such as the golden house and the black earth, which make the image of Aphrodite descending particularly vivid. There is also a contrast between the black earth where humans reside and the skies where divinity exists. Additionally, the repetition of sounds such as -r and -o, offer a sense of speed and a flow to the verses of the poem, as well as intensifying Aphrodite's flight through the skies as an image. Furthermore, the use of such intense imagery conveys how clearly Sappho remembers the goddess's previous visits and connects the recollection with the present time in which the prayer is being performed.

In the 4th stanza, one of the very first things noted is the way line 13 is structured and cut in half by the punctuation mark. The first half of the line ("αἶψα δ' ἐξίκοντο") seems to be a bit foreign to the rest of the stanza and works as the connecting link in the narration, as well as highlighting once again the speed in which the goddess arrived. The first three words are a short and sharp sentence which contrasts the rest of the line, where the vocabulary becomes more lyric, and Sappho seems to slow down her rhythm and change her tone as she describes the goddess.

The poem up until this point is focused on Sappho's invocation and on the recollection of a previous encounter with Aphrodite, as well as the vivid description of the deity descending from the skies to the earth. It seems as if the memory becomes more and more intense and vigorous as Aphrodite arrives and the way the stanzas are structured, with the first lines being the connecting link to the previous stanzas, creates a flowy structure and a coherence to the poem.

In lines 13 and 14, Sappho uses the words "μάκαρ" and "ἀθανάτῳ" to describe Aphrodite, which reflect back to the 1st stanza where Aphrodite's immortality is being mentioned. Combined with the smile on Aphrodite's face, the divinity of the goddess is accentuated, even though the word "μειδίαίσαι" often conveys an expression containing some irony and not a genuine smile. The repetition of the word "again", as well as the narration of Aphrodite's questions in indirect speech enhance this irony from the goddess who seems to have had that conversation with Sappho multiple times in the past. Similarly, the fact that Sappho herself is the person who asks those questions about herself might indicate that she is aware of her situation and the irony it includes.

The 5th stanza of the poem begins with the word "κῶτι", which is a correlation to the previous lines and seems to continue the narration from the 4th stanza, where Sappho is the speaker. What is interesting is that in line 18, Sappho mentions her "maddened soul", which brings the attention back to the 4th line of the poem where she asks Aphrodite not to cause sorrows to her soul. Here it seems as if her soul has suffered in the past due to Aphrodite's divine power. It is also interesting the word "μαινόλαι" is used to describe Sappho's soul, which is related to the word "μαίνομαι", which translates to being in a frenzied state. Hence, one can notice how Aphrodite can cause pain in human souls and how love has two sides as well how Sappho is focused on her own internal world.

In line 18, the poem suddenly reaches a climax in Aphrodite's epiphany and there is a shift in the dynamic of the poetic persona, as the goddess addresses Sappho in her own voice in direct speech.

This happens in a quick and unexpected notion and the fact that it takes place in the middle of the line, further emphasises the closeness of Sappho with Aphrodite. What is interesting in lines 18-20, is that the syntax and structure in Aphrodite's questions have great resemblance to those of Sappho in the previous lines, which intensifies even more that closeness among them. What is also noticeable is that Aphrodite performs a complete epiphany, where she speaks to Sappho, which is something rather unusual for a prayer. Hence, Sappho seems to feel a certain level of intimacy with Aphrodite and feels as if she is by her side as a muse and a powerful ally in her difficult times. In line 18, Aphrodite uses the word "again" to emphasise how Sappho has asked for her help in the past, and it gives a slight irony to the poem as if she already knows what Sappho is going to ask for and how this prayer is not a one-time occurrence. In lines 18, Aphrodite uses the word "πείθω", which is a reminder of the power and even cruelty of Aphrodite, as she will force someone to reciprocate romantic feelings towards Sappho. Moreover, in line 19 the word "φιλότατα" is used to refer to Sappho, which is a lyric related word used to emphasise their close kinship and the affection of the goddess towards her. Similarly, in line 20, the goddess addresses Sappho using her name and asks her who has wronged her, which could be an indication of the goddess feeling protective of the woman, as well as the insertion of the poet's name within the poem. The later might have been done in order to establish a connection between Sappho and Aphrodite and compose a poem where their kinship is highlighted. Finally, it is a way to show just how present Sappho is in her own poetry and how her poetry is centred around her own personality and life.

D) Callimachus *Epigram 6*

ναυτίλος ὃς πελάγεσσιν ἐπέπλεον, εἰ μὲν
ἀῆται,

τείνας οἰκείων λαΐφος ἀπὸ προτόνων,

εἰ δὲ Γαληναίη, λιπαρὴ θεός, οὔλος ἐρέσσω

ποσσὶ νιν, ὥστ' ἔργῳ τοῦνομα συμφέρεται,

ἔστ' ἔπεσον παρὰ θῖνας Ἰουλίδας, ὄφρα
γένωμαι

σοὶ τὸ περίσκεπτον παίγνιον, Ἀρσινόη,

μηδέ μοι ἐν θαλάμησιν ἔθ' ὥς πάρος, εἰμὶ γὰρ
ἄπνους,

τίκτεται νοτερῆς ὤεον ἀλκυόνης.

Translation

I am a nautilus who used to sail in the sea, if
there was wind,

I stretched my sail on my own forestays,

if there is Calm, the bright goddess, I rapidly
row through her

with my legs, so that my action fits my name,
until I fell upon the shores of Iulis, so that I
become

your admirable toy, Arsinoe,

and in my chambers may no longer be laid as
before, for I am breathless,

the egg of the watery halcyon.

Commentary analysis

One of the very first things one notices upon looking at Callimachus' 6th *Epigram* is the size of the poem, as it is rather long in comparison to the usual length of texts of that genre, which cover the length of a few lines. Most epigrams, and *Epigram 52* accordingly, are usually shorter so that they can fit into a gravestone, a dedicatory or a sympotic item. So, by taking a glance on both epigrams one would notice how *Epigram 6* seems to be almost too big for an epigram and looks more like a short poem, in addition to *Epigram 52*, which is more realistic as an epigram lengthwise.

From the very first words of *Epigram 6*, it is evident that the narrator of the epigram is a nautilus shell and the placement of the phrase "Κόγχος ἐγώ" in the very beginning of the sentence is used to immediately create the impression that the epigram is inscribed on a nautilus shell, which is being personified and acquires a voice. The choice of the word "κόγχος" indicates the hollowness of the shell and it resembles the dry sound a shell produces when it is empty, which makes it a vessel for the epigram. The author of the epigram, in this case Callimachus, takes the persona of a nautilus shell, creating the illusion that the epigram is written on something as small as the shell of a nautilus. This is an unrealistic possibility as the shell would be far too small to be inscribed and far too delicate for the inscription tools to carve on it. Thus, from the beginning of the poem one comes across a statement that is a bit problematic, but at the same time applied to set the scene and create the image of a nautilus shell in the reader's imagination. The theme of self-awareness is quite important in this specific epigram as, throughout the poem, the nautilus speaks as if it is a living creature and yet in line 9 it clearly states that it is dead. Hence, it becomes evident that the nautilus is aware of its inanimate nature, but simultaneously it experiences the reality of a living breathing being, which is a paradox in the poem. Thus, one can conclude that the speaker of the epigram is not a shell, but Callimachus himself, mimicking an inanimate object, and constructing a fictional dedicatory epigram.

Therefore, it has been established that Callimachus' 6th *Epigram* is an offering from Seleniaia, as is apparent in line 2 ("Σεληναίης ἄνθεμα"), to Arsinoe Aphrodite, as is evident in lines 1,2 and 8, where different names of the deity are being used to refer to her. There is also a connection between the

nautilus shell and the deity, as Arsinoe Aphrodite is considered to be the patron goddess of the sailors and the one they pray to in hopes for a safe journey. It is worth noting that Callimachus is concealing the name of the goddess behind the names for Aphrodite and only reveals it at the end of the nautilus' journey, in line 8. Arsinoe is a recently deceased Ptolemaic queen, thus one of the aims of the epigram is to remove the veil among the mortal and divine world, by deifying the queen and granting her immortality. The lifeless nautilus in line 8, can be connected to the deceased Arsinoe, who, similarly to the nautilus, has achieved a greater purpose and immortality. The nautilus is a mussel-like creature, which shares an etymology with the words for sailor and ship, and throughout the poem it is being pictured travelling in the sea, which is fitting to the context of the poem and the deity it is dedicated to. Additionally to obtaining all those information from the first two lines, there is a contrast between the nautilus' prior existence as a living creature ("Κόγχος ἐγὼ παλαιότερος") and to its situation as a dedicatory item to the goddess ("ἄνθεμα πρῶτον ἔχεις"). Consequently, one can understand how the shell continues to be aware of its situation as an inanimate object that is being used for a dedication to a deity. This contrast becomes even more distinct by the wording "but now" in line 1, which shows that the shell's current state has in fact changed.

In lines 3-6, the nautilus describes its journey through the sea and what is interesting about this segment of the epigram is how Callimachus seems to be interested in the science behind this marine creature when it comes to the way it moves its tentacles and the way it travels in the water. The description is quite vivid, and it adds movement and dimension to the epigram constructing a rather humorous image in the mind of the reader. Therefore, it is quite stimulating and interesting for the audience to picture the nautilus travelling and at the same time narrating the epigram. The paradox of the shell being both the inanimate dedication object and the narrator at the same time, is evident by the terms used to describe its physical characteristics. In line 3, the word "ἐπέπλεον" is used to describe how the nautilus moved in the water, which is also used to describe the way a ship sails. The participle "προτόνων" is another technical term which is used in conjunction with the word "οἰκείων", to emphasise that the nautilus' shell functions as both its ship and home, which is a comical fact and adds a witty perception to the epigram. This is further enhanced by the phrase "so that my action fits my name", which is again joking around the way things are named due to the similarity of the terms nautilus, ship and sailor. There is the use of particles of "μεν../δε..", which refer to the different ways a ship sails depending on the weather and how the nautilus implements those practices on its own journey. Another interesting aspect of this particular section of the epigram is that Callimachus uses words with the sounds -λ, -σ and -ρ in them, which are sounds that resemble the sounds of the water or the splashing of the waves on the shore.

Moving on to lines 7-10, the nautilus continues the narration of its journey to the shores of Iulis to become Arsinoe's toy. What is interesting about those lines is the shift of the nautilus' emotions and the contrast between its former and current situation. Hence, in lines 3-6 the nautilus begins by describing its satisfactory life as a marine animal, there is emphatic sailing vocabulary and there is active movement and energy deriving from the living creature. In contrast, in the following 4 lines the nautilus has come to be a passive lifeless shell and seems to have been taken over by the sea and drifted to the shores for Arsinoe to find. The way the phrase "for I am breathless", has been strategically placed in the middle of the narrative as a way to emphasise its lack of life even more. A very interesting detail in those lines is the repetition of the -π, -θ and -φ sounds in the text, which add to the fact that the nautilus is now lifeless as they are softer and quieter when pronounced. This also creates a coherence and makes a subtle separation in the tone of the epigram. Furthermore, it is quite interesting that the word to describe the nautilus as a toy is "περίσκεπτον", since the etymology of the word suggest that it is something that can be seen and studied from all sides as if it has a certain type of clarity or transparency to it. This choice of word emphasises the value of the nautilus as an

offering to the goddess and this is furtherly highlighted by mentioning the semi-mythical bird halcyon and the fact that it can lay its eggs on the shell's chambers, which might be an alternative of the bird's nest. All those emphatic details are used to make evident the point that the nautilus, even if it is a humble and simple dedication to a deity is worth the honour and it is elevated in value.

Additionally, it is worth noting how Callimachus has selected rare epic words throughout this section of the epigram, such as "ἀλλὰ σὺ νῦν με", "ὄφρα", "περίσκεπτον" and "πάρος". Using Homeric phrases is quite common in Hellenistic poetry, and it demonstrates the author's relationship with earlier forms of literature, as well as their ability to utilise epic phrases and implement them to other composition styles. Moreover, the use of phrases from such a widely established poetic genre add a timeless quality both to the epigram, as well as keeping up with the wittiness and playful turn of thought in the text. In the final two lines, the epigram returns to its dedicatory tone and the word "but" from line 1 is being repeated in order to indicate that switch back to the epigram's purpose. The nautilus praises Selenia for her "good deeds", which is another Homeric phrase employed to fulfil the purpose of this epigram, as well as remind the reader that it is the nautilus who narrates the epigram and is simultaneously the vessel on which it is inscribed on.

Moving on to *Epigram 52*, the initial feature one can notice is how the size is much more fitting to the standard length of an epigram, which could be actually inscribed on an item. The epigram begins with the statement that there are four Graces, which is interesting because it is widely known that traditionally the Graces are three, they represent the deified definition of beauty, and they are connected to Aphrodite as her maids. Hence, such a statement is instantly capturing the attention of the reader and makes them wonder who the fourth Grace might be. Similarly with *Epigram 6*, this epigram is also referring to Aphrodite, which emphasises its lyrical tone and indicates that the person praised is one of a very high status. The epigram goes on to clarify that in the three Graces there has been the addition of a fourth one. In the 1st line there is also the repetition of the letter -τ, which is the first letter of four of the nine words in the line, whilst the first word of the epigram is the word four ("Τέσσαρες ... ταῖς τρισὶ τήναις"). This stylistic detail could be an indication of how well thought this epigram is and how it is all planned in order to emphasise the number four which is evident within the text. There are four lines in the poem, the first word is the number four and there is the alliteration of the -τ sound which is the first letter of the word for the number. Thus, we can witness an effort to establish that the number of the Charites has truly changed. This detail not only creates a sense of balance in the epigram, but it is also a quite aesthetic feature.

In line 2 it is very interesting the use of the word "ποτεπλάσθη", which indicates that a statue of some sort has been sculpted or formed. The sculpture must have been quite new as the particles "ἄρτι" and "κῆτι" indicate that it has been crafted a short time before the epigram was composed. This draws the conclusion that the item on which the epigram is supposedly inscribed upon is newly formed and is an addition to an existing monument or statue of the three Charites. This is furtherly enhanced by the phrase "μύροισι νοτεῖ", which is a vivid imagery of a statue being anointed with perfume. Thus, from the first two lines of the epigram it seems that a woman, who has yet to be named, becomes the fourth Charis, which means that she acquires a certain element of divinity, wealth and beauty.

Moving on to the 3rd line of the epigram, Berenice, the Ptolemaic queen, is being named as the fourth Charis and it is very interesting how the epigram is structured so that there is a delay until the name of Berenice is revealed. This delay creates a feeling of suspense as to whom it might refer to and as soon as it is revealed there is a release of this suspense. It is also worth noting that the word "ἄριζαλος" is used to describe her, which is a Doric form of the word. Thus, this is another example much like in *Epigram 6*, where Hellenistic poetry uses different kinds of dialects in a strategic rhetorical way to compliment certain people or deities and distinguish themselves from their peers. The 4th line of the

epigram is another use of Homeric vocabulary in order to emphasise Berenice's new place as a Grace. The word "Χάριτες" is repeated twice in the final line of the epigram, and in total three times within the poem. However, the name Berenice is the fourth name which is being mentioned, thus establishing her again as the fourth Grace. In addition, the last two lines of the poem resemble the structure of a prayer, but still there is no indication as to whom it refers.

What sparks interest is that throughout the epigram there are not any indications that this is in fact an epigram inscribed on an item or dedicated to a deity, because even if it is related to Aphrodite its purpose is to praise Berenice. Thus, it might be an epigram which was constructed to praise without pretending to be inscribed on an item, in addition to *Epigram 6* which maintains the illusion of being inscribed on an item. In *Epigram 52*, Berenice is being transformed into a statue, an inanimate object of art, which has no voice but is simultaneously deified and glorified. In contrast, *Epigram 6* is about a lifeless nautilus that acquires a voice and is both the narrator and the offering. Knowing how Callimachus was employed by the Ptolemaic court and the influential figures he might have been involved with it is possible to assume that he might have been commissioned to compose an epigram which would deify Berenice and grant her the highest praise. Similarly to *Epigram 6*, Callimachus is trying to lift the veil that separates divinity from the mortal world and blend the realms in order to deify Berenice and grant her a place among divinity. It seems likely impossible that a statue of Berenice as the fourth was actually built, but it is rather an object that exists in the realm of the reader's imagination as they read the epigram. Consequently, those epigrams are quite different from each other when it comes to their content, but they are still both attempting to blur the boundaries of reality and divinity, as well as deify a Ptolemaic queen. This is also an indication of how Callimachus, and the Hellenistic poetry as a genre, engaged with the gods and manipulated the genre to reinvent myth and relate it to real events.

Epigram 52 lacks the playful sentiment and the humorous tone of *Epigram 6*, and it seems more aimed at emphasising Berenice's deification, without trying to prove that it is an inscription on something other than a piece of papyrus. Even though throughout both poems there is a balance in the way the lines are structured and arithmetically constructed, in *Epigram 52* this seems to be a priority and every single detail of the poem refers to the number four and how Berenice is in fact the fourth Grace, in perfect union with the rest of the Charites. *Epigram 52* does not seem to be as self-reflective as *Epigram 6* or acknowledge itself as an inscription on papyrus or stone. It seems to be more focused on establishing a status quo of Berenice as an addition to the three Charites rather than try to create the illusion and convince the reader that the epigram is in fact real.