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SUFFERINGS WHICH APHRODITE SUSTAINS: A NEW RECONSTRUCTION
OF THE FIRST STROPHE OF SAPPHO'S KYPRIS POEM

Thanks to the join that Simon Burris (2017) discovered between P. GC inv. 105 fr. 4 and P. Sapph. Obbink, we now know not only how the second strophe of Sappho's Kypris poem begins, but also how the first one ends: with a full stop or question after *ὀνέχηθα* in line 4. A new sentence begins in line 5, as Franco Ferrari and Luca Benelli already suspected.¹ This allows for a fresh look at the reconstruction of this first strophe. The main questions that have to be answered are how the lacunae at the end of lines 2 and 3 and the beginnings of lines 3 and 4 have to be restored and if the strophe consisted of one or two sentences. I will review the best answers to these questions and propose a new supplement in line 4 that helps to clarify the structure of the whole strophe.²

Benelli (2015) has suggested that the strophe contains two sentences: one question ending after *δέσποινα*' in line 2: *πῶς κε δὴ τις οὐ θαμέως ἄσαιτο, / Κύπρι, δέσποινα*; ("How can someone not repeatedly feel overwhelmed, Kypris, my mistress?") and a declarative statement starting with *ὅτινα* in line 2 and ending with *ὀνέχηθα* at the end of line 4: *ὅτινα [δ]ὴ φίλη[η] / [καὶ] θέλοι μάλιστα πάθος καλ[ύπτ]ην / [οὐκ] ὀνέχηθα* ("whomever you really love, even if s/he most wishes to conceal his/her passion, you do not restrain").³ Scholars have rightly objected to Benelli's restoration of *καὶ* (*καί* + *αἰ*) at the beginning of line 3: this crasis is unparalleled in the Lesbian poets and the space is too wide for the letters *KAI*.⁴ This could be remedied by restoring Martin West's *κῶς*⁵ instead: "even when (*κῶς*) s/he most wishes to conceal his/her passion", but there remain problems with this reading even so. First the meaning: I will argue below that a person whom Aphrodite loves (i.e. favours), does not have to be restrained or conceal his or her passion, because (s)he experiences a positive and fulfilling kind of love. Secondly, the lack of a connecting particle between the two sentences is hard to explain given the switch of subject (one feels overwhelmed, Kypris // you do not restrain the one whom you love).⁶ Finally, the opening question ("How can someone not repeatedly feel overwhelmed, Kypris, my mistress?") needs a further explanation about the kind of person or the kind of feeling that is at stake. Almost all other commentators therefore have added the relative clause starting with *ὅτινα* to the opening statement and continued the opening question at least till the end of line 3.⁷ We now know, however, that this sentence, and presumably the question, must extend to the end of line 4, because a new sentence begins in line 5 and line 4 is too short to have contained an independent clause.

The possibilities for the reconstruction of the relative clause at the end of line 2 are many: 1) "whom-ever you do not love" (*ὅτινα [μ]ὴ φίλη[η]θη*),⁸ 2) "whomever you indeed love" (*ὅτινα [δ]ὴ φίλη[η]θη*),⁹

¹ Ferrari (2014) 13, Benelli (2015).

² The whole poem is printed with a useful critical apparatus in Obbink 2016, which is updated in Obbink forthcoming.

³ Benelli does not provide a translation, making it hard to know how exactly he wants his reconstructed text to be understood, but I assume he attaches to *ὀνέχηθα* the same meaning as West (2014) 10 and Ferrari (2014) 14, that of "hold back, restrain" (LSJ *ἀνέχω* A II), the only meaning of the verb that takes a person as object, apart from the literal meaning "hold up" or "lift up", which does not fit. Cf. Obbink (2016) 27 ap. crit. ad lines 4–5 and Bierl (2016) 346.

⁴ West (2014) 10, Lidov (2016) 95–96 n. 64, Obbink (2016) 27. See note 27 below.

⁵ West (2014) 10.

⁶ Note that in Benelli's reading we would have three asyndetically connected sentences following one another: a question (1–2a), a statement (2b–4) and then again a question (5ff.). Two asyndetically connected rhetorical questions (1–4 and 5ff.) is easier to accept.

⁷ E.g. West (2014) 12, Obbink (2016) 26.

⁸ Ferrari (2014) 13, West (2014) 10, who argue that *φίληθη* should be taken here in the sense of "you favour" (cf. Hom. *Il.* 3.415, Hes. *Th.* 96–97, *Op.* 299–300).

⁹ Benelli (2015) 9.

or 3) “whomever one indeed loves” (ὅττινα [δ]ῆ φίλ[ησι]).¹⁰ All three readings have their problems. In the first two reconstructions the relative indefinite pronoun ὅττινα is made dependent on another relative pronoun (τις), which Ancient Greek only allows in exceptional cases.¹¹ Instead, one would have expected a construction like the one in Sappho frs. 16.3–4 (κῆν’ ὅττω τις ἔραται) or 31.1–2 (κῆνος ... ὅττις). If ὅττινα [δ]ῆ or [μ]ῆ φίλ[ησι] is connected to the previous clause, it can only do so very loosely, as a kind of afterthought: “How can someone not repeatedly feel overwhelmed, Kypris, my mistress? – (I mean) whomever you indeed do (or do not) love.” In that case ὅττινα [μ]ῆ φίλ[ησι], in the sense of “whomever you do not favour” (see note 8 above), makes the better sense. The favour of Aphrodite can ensure that you can feel love without being overwhelmed and without the sufferings from which you would rather be relieved (see below).¹² This assumes, however, that this loosely connected afterthought can be limiting or restrictive (not just anyone feels overwhelmed, but only those whom Kypris does not love), which I find hard to accept. I would like to see parallels for this.

If one would want to read ὅττινα [δ]ῆ φίλ[ησι], loosely connected to the preceding clause, it is hard to see what it could mean. If one takes the verb φιλέω (Lesbian φίλημα) in the meaning of “to favour” (see note 8), it would mean that only persons whom Aphrodite favours (“whomever you indeed favour”) experience heavy emotions of love, but that is counterintuitive, as was argued above. The verb φιλέω / φίλημα in its usual meaning (“to love”) makes the phrase even more problematic: in that case the suggestion would be that it is the love of Aphrodite that causes someone to be overwhelmed, but that is of course not the case: one suffers because one loves another person, not because Aphrodite loves you. One could also try to understand “whomever you [= Kypris] indeed love” as a shorthand for “whomever is in love”, but whereas such an allegorical reading can be expected from a Hellenistic poet,¹³ I doubt Sappho would use the phrase in this way. Finally, this option meets the same syntactical objection as ὅττινα [μ]ῆ φίλ[ησι], namely that this loosely connected afterthought would have to be read as limiting or restrictive (not just anyone feels overwhelmed, but only those whom Kypris loves).

In the third option (ὅττινα [δ]ῆ φίλ[ησι]) the implied antecedent is the person who elicits the overwhelming feelings: “whomever one indeed loves”. Joel Lidov explains this second reading as a parenthetical or appended general conditional relative clause, which allows for a translation “if one loves someone”, but admits that “in all examples I have found there is some noun in the sentence which can function as the antecedent, a hook from which the appended clause hangs”.¹⁴ He explains the more loose construction here as “conform[ing] to the general style of the passage as an abrupt burst of thought”. This abrupt style, which the unusual word order of the opening phrase, the repetition of δῆ in lines 1–2, and the asyndeton in

¹⁰ Obbink (2016) 26. Alternatively one may read the optative φιλέ[ειη] (Burriss in Obbink 2014, 47), but see note 14 below. Both West (2014) 10 and Ferrari (2014) 14 object against the resulting repetition of δῆ in lines 1 and 2, but this is not unparalleled in Sappho (Obbink 2015, 4) and is perhaps meant to signal the emotional state of the first person speaker, similar to the asyndeton in line 5 (see note 6 above) and the unusual word order of the opening phrase πῶς κε δῆ τις οὐ (Obbink 2014, 46).

¹¹ These cases are sentences like “Is there someone who?” or “There is one who”, and future clauses of purpose. See Benelli (2015) 10 and Lidov (2016) 95, who rightly remarks “one hardly expects an indefinite to define an indefinite: one of them is otiose”.

¹² Schlesier’s objection (2016, 381; cf. Benelli 2015) that “a statement saying that a loving person is NOT loved by Aphrodite would be in harsh contrast to all we know from Sappho’s poetry about her idea of love and particularly her own relationship to the goddess” is besides the point. A person who is feeling overwhelmed and experiences sufferings that she would rather avoid is not just “a loving person” but a person who suffers from unrequited love. This is where the favour of Aphrodite can help, a favour Sappho prays for in fragment 1 and probably later in this poem as well. Schlesier adds “love, in Sappho as in other archaic poets, is not considered as something that excludes pain by definition”. This is true, but that is exactly why they turn to the gods for help (Sappho fr. 1, Anacreon fr. 357).

¹³ Nossis *Ep.* 1 G.-P – AP 5.170 seems to use the phrase τίνα δ’ ἂ Κύπρις οὐκ ἐφίλησεν in this way, although this is probably also a deliberate rewriting of Hesiod’s ὄντινα Μοῦσαι / φίλωνται (*Th.* 96–97), in which case the meaning “whom you do not favour” is invoked as well: see Gutzwiller (1998) 76.

¹⁴ Lidov (2016) 95 with reference to Smyth (1984) 579 and Kühner–Gerth (1904) section 558.6. Such general conditional relative clauses usually take the indicative which is why φίλ[ησι] is preferable to the optative φιλέ[ειη] (Burriss in Obbink 2014, 47), if one adopts this reading.

line 5 also evidence,¹⁵ could explain the loose connection that all three reconstructions require, but only in the case of ὅτινα [δ]ῆ φίλ[ησι] does the loosely connected, indefinite relative statement not have to be restrictive: it applies to anyone who feels overwhelmed, whomever they love. It provides us, furthermore, exactly with the information we are expecting after the opening address to *Kypris*: who is the someone who is repeatedly overwhelmed and /or when does one feel this? It is someone who is in love and feels this whenever (s)he loves someone (ὅτινα [δ]ῆ φίλ[ησι]). I therefore side with those who restore this option in the second half of line 2.¹⁶ I propose, however, to place a dash before it in the translation of the line in order to indicate that this clause is only loosely connected to the previous one: πῶς κε δὴ τις οὐ θαμέως ἄσαιτο, / Κύπρι, δέσποιν', ὅτινα [δ]ῆ φίλ[ησι]; (“How can someone not repeatedly feel overwhelmed, / *Kypris*, mistress, – whomever one indeed loves?”).

How is this opening question subsequently connected to the following clause, which starts with [...] θέλοι μάλιτα (line 3a)? The lacuna before θέλοι is rather spacious and therefore allows for only two of the suggested supplements: either κῶν, first proposed by Enrico Prodi and adopted by Dirk Obbink (2016) 26, or κῶς proposed by West (2014) 10. Of these two options κῶν is to be preferred, because it creates two neatly symmetrical clauses in lines 1–2 and 3–4: “How can someone not repeatedly feel overwhelmed, / *Kypris*, my mistress, ... / and (how can one) not (κῶν) want most of all [to hide one’s passion or to get rid of this pain: see below]?” The construction with κῶς is ambiguous: it can introduce a second subclause (“even when s/he wants”), which is how Renate Schlesier takes it,¹⁷ or start a second main clause with a subclause (“and when she would most wish ... / you do (not) ...”), which is what West proposes.¹⁸ Given the finite verb θέλοι a Greek listener would probably first try the second option,¹⁹ but this does not lead to a satisfactory meaning of the sentence, now that we know that the sentence must end with line 4: “and when s/he wants most of all to hide her passion (or get respite from sufferings: see below), / you do (or do not) hold back / lift up / hold up (?)”

We therefore need to determine how the end of line 3 is to be reconstructed and how line 4 connects with it. For the reconstruction of the end of line 3 basically two plausible solutions have been offered so far: either ... θέλοι μάλιτα πάθος καλ[ύπτην] (“and not] want most of all to hide one’s passion”),²⁰ or ... θέλοι μάλιτα πάθων χάλ[ατται] (“and not] want most of all to get respite from sufferings”).²¹ The second option makes the better sense. It is in general not the case, and especially not in Sappho,²² that lovers want to hide their passion: they want to see it satisfied (frs. 1.17–24, 16.17–18, 94.23) or otherwise to be released from its concomitant sufferings (fr. 1.3 and 25). The latter is expressed by [κῶν] θέλοι μάλιτα πάθων χάλ[ατται]. This option provides us, furthermore, as we will see, with the possibility of connecting line 4 with line 3, as required by Burris’ discovery that a new sentence begins in line 5.

In line 4 we find either the second person indicative ὀνέχησθα or ἔχησθα. If ἔχησθα is read the only conceivable supplement that I have found is ὅσσοι ἔχησθα (“as much as you can”), given that we now know that the sentence must end at line 4.²³ But this makes little sense: “How can someone not repeatedly feel

¹⁵ See note 10 above.

¹⁶ Obbink (2016) 26, Lidov (2016) 95, Boehringer and Calame (2016) 355, Rayor (2016) 402, Schlesier (2016) 355.

¹⁷ Schlesier (2016) 390.

¹⁸ West (2014) 12.

¹⁹ κῶν ἐθέλοια in fr. 1.24 is different, because here the contracted form with καί is followed by a participle, forcing the reader / listener to understand its meaning to be “even not” or “also not”.

²⁰ West (2014) 10, Benelli (2015). Alternatively κάλ[υπται] (Ferrari 2014, 14) and πάθων, accusative of the noun πάθος / πάθη, instead of πάθος (cf. Lidov 2016, 95) can be read. Older reconstructions with πάλιν proved incorrect when multi-spectral imaging revealed that the letter after ΠΑ was a theta, not a lambda.

²¹ Lidov (2016) 96, Obbink (2016) 26. Schlesier (2016) 385 wants to read [κῶς] θέλοι μάλιτα πάθων κάλ[ετται] (“even when one would most want to call to experience”). In this reading neither the object of πάθων (i.e. “love” according to Schlesier) nor κάλετται (i.e. “the person whomever one loves” according to Schlesier) is expressed, which is not in keeping with the direct style of Sappho. This reconstruction further relies on the problematic reading of κῶς as “even when”, discussed above, and it is unclear how the sentence would come to its end in line 4.

²² Lidov (2016) 96, Bierl (2016) 344, Schlesier (2016) 382.

²³ A suggestion of Lidov, reported by Obbink (2016) 27 in the critical apparatus ad lines 4–5 and adopted in Obbink (2017).

overwhelmed, Kypris, ... and not want to be released from sufferings, as much as you can?" This would imply that there is a limit to the amount of relief Aphrodite can provide in the domain in which she is supposed to be all-powerful. Therefore, "the compound *ὀνέχηθα* seems more promising".²⁴ But the verb *ὀνέχω* (Lesbian *ὀνέχω*), from which this form is derived, can have many different meanings: in the active transitive it can mean 1) to hold up, lift up (literally) 2) to uphold, maintain (metaphorically), 3) to put forth, or 4) to hold back; in the active intransitive it can denote 5) to rise up, emerge (from below), 6) to appear, show itself, 7) to keep doing (with participle), or 8) to hold up, cease.²⁵ Many of these can be dismissed. The intransitive meanings would require a conjunction in the lacuna at the beginning of line 4 (e.g. *θῶc* [= Attic *ἔωc*]), but none of them provides us with a satisfactory reading.²⁶

We therefore should look at one of the transitive usages of the verb. This could be connected through a relative pronoun to the preceding clause. I suggest restoring *ταῖc* (the accusative plural of the feminine relative pronoun in the Lesbian dialect) in the lacuna with *πάθων* (genitive plural) in the preceding line as antecedent and to adopt the metaphorical reading (2) of the verb: "[sufferings] which you sustain". The lacuna at the beginning of the line is broad enough to fit these four letters;²⁷ the same form TAIC (although here a dative plural according to the accentuation of the papyrus) is found in a similar metrical position in Alcaeus fr. 6.20; a close syntactical parallel is Sappho fr. 16.4, where the adonean also consists of a relative clause; and the metaphorical use of the verb is already attested in Homer *Od.* 19.111 (*βασιλῆος ἀμύμονος, ὅc ... / εὐδικίας ὀνέχησι*). The sufferings that Aphrodite upholds are causing the overwhelming feelings in line 1 and are further specified in lines 5 and following.²⁸ This would produce the following reconstructed text of the first strophe:

πῶc κε δὴ τις οὐ θαμέωc ἄσαιτο,
 Κύπρι, δέσποιν', ὅττινα [δ]ῆ φίλ[ησι,]
 [κωὺ] θέλοι μάλιστα πάθων χάλ[αccαι]
 [ταῖc] ὀνέχηθα;

How can someone not repeatedly feel overwhelmed,
 Kypris, mistress, – whomever one indeed loves,
 and not most of all want to get respite from the sufferings
 that you sustain?

I have little to add to the reconstructions of the second strophe proposed by Burris (2017) and Obbink (forthcoming), except to point out that Homer uses the verb *ἀνείρω*, from which the Lesbian forms *ὀνέρχ[θ]αι* (Burris 2017) or *ὀνέρξαι* (Obbink *fc.*) in line 8 are derived, always in a military context: to hold back the battle lines (*ἀνέργε φάλαγγαc*) or the war (*μάχαν ὀνέργων*).²⁹ In line 8 of the Kypris poem it looks like the middle is used, so I suggest translating "to hold oneself back in the fight". It is another example of Sappho using martial language from Homer to describe the onslaught of love.³⁰

²⁴ West (2014) 10.

²⁵ See LSJ ad *ὀνέχω*.

²⁶ "when (vel sim.) you appear" would theoretically be possible, but *ὀνέχω* in this meaning is not used for persons, let alone gods.

²⁷ The space is wide enough for just three letters, but the iota after alpha nestles into the same letter-space in the hand of this papyrus, as also shown by the spacing of ΠΑΙΒ at the beginning of line 5.

²⁸ Obbink (forthcoming) suggests that *πάθαc χάλ[αccαι] / [τὰν] ὀνέχηθα* ("to get respite from the suffering [sg.] that you sustain") could also be restored, but I prefer the plural, because of the parallel in Sappho fr. 1.25–26 (*χαλέπαν δὲ λῦcov / ἐκ μερίμνων*) and because the speaker in line 1 refers to repeatedly being overwhelmed and in lines 5–6 describes more than one kind of suffering that she undergoes.

²⁹ Hom. *Il.* 3.77, 7.55 and 17.752.

³⁰ See, e.g., Rissman (1983) and Bierl (2016) 347, 350. Compare *βάλοισά μ' ... δαίτδ[ηc]* in lines 5–6 of the Kypris song. I would like to thank Joel Lidov and Dirk Obbink, as well as Ronald Blankenborg, with whom I discussed the various possible restorations of the Kypris song in detail. I am pleased to report that they now consider *ταῖc* to be the most likely reconstruction in line 4 as well.

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