

On Sappho 1: vv. 7–15 and *Rigveda* 1.118; an emendation in v. 18¹

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The literary image in Sappho 1.7–15 of a goddess ascending on and travelling by a chariot which is yoked to birds occurs also of the Daughter of the Sun in hymn 1.118 of the *Rigveda*. Apart from the image as such, the shared context of prayer in the two poems and certain features common to the identities of both goddesses suggest that the images share a common ancestor in Indo-European religious discourse.

In Sappho 1.18, the emendation *πείθην*, together with the understanding of the major ms. tradition in v. 19 as a crasis *κἀκάγην* < *καὶ ἐκάγην*, lets Aphrodite relate the wishes of Sappho in oblique speech, *θέλειε* being implied following *θέλω* in v. 17.

NB: In the discussion to follow, “Sappho” refers not only to the poet but also to the persona of “I, Sappho” represented in the poem.

I

Aphrodite has responded to Sappho’s prayers in the past:

πάτρος δὲ δόμον λίποισα
χρύσιον ἦλθεε

10 ἄρμ’ ὑπαεδούξαισα· κάλοι δέ σ’ ἄγον
ᾧκεεσ στροῦθοι περὶ γᾶε μελαίνας
πύκνα δίννεντεσ πτέρ’ ἀπ’ ὠράνωϊθε-
ρος διὰ μέεσσω·

15 αἶψα δ’ ἐξίκοντο· σὺ δ’, ᾧ μάκαιρα,
μειδιαίαισ’ ἀθανάτωι προσώπωι
ἦρε’ ὅττι δηῦτε πέπονθα . . .

*Having left your father's house you came, having yoked the golden chariot.
Beautiful, swift sparrows carried you over the black earth, frequently whirling their
wings, [3|4] from heaven through the midst of the sky. Soon they arrived. You,
blessed, smiling with your immortal face, asked me, what, again, I have suffered this
time...*

There is a Rigvedic parallel to this image which merits attention. In RV 1.118, a hymn to the *Aśvins*, the divine twins, their chariot is mounted by a goddess and conveyed by birds. Particularly close are verses 4–5:²

- 4a á vāṃ śyenāso aśvinā vahantu
b ráthe yuktāsa āśavaḥ patamgāḥ
c yé aptúro diviyāso ná gṛdhrā
d abhí práyo nāsatiyā váhanti
5a á vāṃ rátham yuvatís tiṣṭhad átra
b juṣṭví narā duhitā sūriyasya
c pári vāṃ ásvā vápuṣaḥ patamgā
d váyo³ vahantu aruṣā abhíke

- 4a May eagles, Aśvins, bring you hither,
b Yoked to the *rátha*, the swift ones, flying
 (Thomson, p. 36, n. 47)
4c Who, flowing/active, like divine griffins/vultures
d To the pleasure/banquet, Nastaytas, carry (you).
 (Martin Sand, Thomas Smitherman & Serena Danesi)
5a Joyfully the youthful daughter of the sun
b Ascends your *rátha*, heroes, here;
c Around are marvellous *ásvās* flying,⁴
d May the flame-coloured birds bring you to us.
 (Thomson, p. 35)

Myth and literary imagery lead relatively independent lives in relation to the real and supernatural phenomena and concepts that they may illustrate or symbolize; hence an identical or even related significance of these goddesses on bird-chariots is not a requisite for assuming them to have a common origin. However, in addition to the purely literary parallel, fragments of conceptual similarity do remain.

The structure of the prayer in *RV* 1.118 is similar to that of Sappho's prayer,⁵ beginning with an invocation (1–3b), followed by an epic catalogue of deeds enacted by the twin gods (3c–9) and the prayer itself in 10–11:

10 Such as ye are, O nobly born, O Heroes,
 we in our trouble call on you for succour.
 Accepting these our songs, for our wellbeing [4]5
 come to us on your chariot treasure-laden.

11 Come unto us combined in love, Nāsatyas
 come with the fresh swift vigour of the falcon.
 Bearing oblations I invoke you, Aśvins,
 at the first break of everlasting morning.
 (Griffith)

In Sappho's poem the invocation (1–4) is followed by an "epic" section (5–24) and the prayer itself (25–28), following the structure of *invocatio* (I), *pars epica* (II), and *preces ipsae* (III) outlined by Ausfeld (p. 515). This is the most common type of Greek prayer, and, as Page observes in his commentary on this piece, "the pattern of such prayers is immemorially old" (p. 17). Indeed, not only the structure, but also details of language and literary images of Greek and Indo-Aryan religious discourse are often inherited from common Indo-European sources.⁶ The present case would be in no way unique.

As for the Aśvins, in one of their aspects they may seem irrelevant to the present comparison, being related to the Greek Dioskouroi, heroic sons of Zeus and helpers of mankind. West (pp. 186–93) summarizes the similarities in his chapter on the Indo-European divine twins, where among other things the affiliation with horses and the championship of human causes are noted as similarities. The Aśvins never ride horses

though, but are invariably conveyed by chariot, and in the present case their chariot appears not to be drawn by horses but by birds, as Aphrodite's is. If Thomson is correct, even *áśva-* (5c) may not necessarily mean "horse" in Rigvedic, but perhaps properly something like "swift (conveyor-)animal", being related to *āśú*, "swift".⁷ According to MacDonell (p. 50), the car of the *Aśvins* is drawn by birds more often than by horses,⁸ and if Griffith's and Geldner's translations are to be trusted, it is explicitly without a horse in 1.112.12 (or is this another car?) and 1.120.10 ("ironic" according to Geldner).

The goddess is a secondary feature in the case of the *Rigveda*. She is called (*duhitā*) *Sūryasa*, "Daughter of *Sūrya*", that is Daughter of the Sun. She travels in the three-seated chariot of the *Aśvins* as a friend or spouse.⁹ West (pp. 217–37) distinguishes the Rigvedic Daughter of the Sun from *Uṣas*, Dawn, daughter of Heaven (*Dyaus*, *Zeus*) and etymological kin to Greek *Eos*. Such a distinction is proper, even if the language of *RV* 7.75.5 may equate the two and later Indic religious tradition apparently does so (*Brhaddevatā* 2.9–10, cited by West p. 234).¹⁰ In 7.75, a hymn to [5|6] Dawn, this goddess yokes a chariot and travels the sky in the same manner as Aphrodite and *Sūryasa*, although there seem to be no mention of birds in that case. As these instances show, however, the distinction between the two goddesses might easily be blurred, and it is not certain that even the poets of the *Rigveda* were always aware of it, not only with regard to 7.75.5, but since (1) the *Aśvins* are associated with *Uṣas* even more often than with the daughter of the Sun;¹¹ and (2) the Daughter of the Sun—who may properly represent the planet Venus (see below)—is associated with morning and dawn in 7.69.4–5.

A definite conceptual affinity with Sappho's Aphrodite thus appears, not only with regard to the planet Venus, but also as the Greek goddess Aphrodite is thought to have borrowed attributes from the Indo-European Dawn goddess: West (p. 221, text for n. 90) mentions Aphrodite's parentage as daughter of Zeus (Schmitt p. 171, cf. Hirt p. 127), her famous smile, and perhaps her epithet "golden" as possible inheritances from Indo-European Dawn. All of these features are mentioned in Sappho's poem, if we accept the colour of the chariot as a property of the goddess.¹²

Several scholars believe that the *Aśvins* too represent different aspects of the planet Venus in the form of evening and morning star, Vesper (*Hesperos*) and Lucifer

(Phōsphoros).¹³ There is a large number of passages in the Rigvedic hymns to the Aśvins that suggest as much, for instance 7.72:¹⁴

- 4 What time the Dawns break forth in light, O Aśvins,
 to you the poets offer their devotions.
 God Savitar hath sent aloft his splendour,
 and fires sing praises with the kindled fuel.
- 5 Come from the west, come from the east, Nāsatyas,
 come, Aśvins, from below and from above us.¹⁵
 (Griffith)

The “Oriental” (Dümmler, col. 2772) notion of Aphrodite as a star is not attested in Greek literary sources earlier than the Platonic *Epinomis* (987b), perhaps written by Philip of Opus (D.L. 3.37), and the Hellenistic ps.-Timaeus of Locri (97a St.; p. 214 Marg–Thesleff). This does not prove that it was not known to Sappho, however, and Gundel (col. 2029) argues by inference from “The Star of Hermes” in *Tim.* 38d and passages in Aristotle, etc., that the names of the entire series of planets Kronos, Zeus, Ares, Aphrodite and Hermes were known to Plato. [6|7]

On the other hand the star of Aphrodite would not have to be known to Sappho in order for the goddesses on the bird chariots to trace their origin back to a common source. While an image and even parts of its context remain, the meaning of that image and its context may be forgotten or changed. Indeed, a similar process could account for the frequent visual representations of Aphrodite accompanied by, or seated in a chariot conveyed by, two winged youths.¹⁶ These are usually understood as “erotes” (probably by the ancient painters as well), but a genetic relation to an Indo-European Venus–Vesper–Lucifer chariot, represented in the Rigvedic poems by Sūryasa and the Aśvins, is nevertheless possible (the Aśvins have wings as well: *RV* 4.43.3). On one Eretrian pyxis from around 400 B.C. (*LIMC* Aphrodite no. 1196), Aphrodite’s winged charioteers are called “Pothos” and “Hedylogos”. The latter of the two names is not attested elsewhere (although cf. Sappho 73a.4 ἀ]δύλογοι δ’ ἔρ[ωτες) and appears to us to be *ad hoc*, which suggests that their identity and origin were unclear to the artist.

As for the literary imagery, while the star twins are nowhere to be seen in Sappho's poem and the description of divine birds as beautiful and swift seems unremarkable, the fact that the birds are in both cases explicitly yoked to a wagon which a goddess ascends is more intriguing. Another marked feature of both passages is that the birds are described as *active*, "frequently whirling their wings" in the case of Sappho—marked, since as divine birds they could just as well have been majestic, gliding, unperturbed or the like. Less remarkable perhaps is the fact that Aphrodite's car is golden (according to Page p. 7, who takes v. 8 χρύσιον with ἄρμ(α) rather than with δόμον), as the Ásvins' is in other occurrences in the Rigvedic poems (although see above, text for n. 12).¹⁷

Ancient Indo-European religious formulas may lie at the bottom of this. I have already made it clear that I believe the image to be in its essence a version of the flight of a planetary chariot: not the Sun, who is male and drawn by horses (see, e.g., West pp. 203–7), but Venus, by far the brightest of stars and perhaps the only one conspicuous enough to receive a popular, as opposed to a learned or scholarly, mythological investment.¹⁸ In Sappho's poem the planetary associations have become lost altogether, though, and indeed perhaps forgotten, in which case the late classical association of Aphrodite with the planet Venus would be an innovation.

The bird-chariot is not unique as such in Greek or European myth and religion; Apollo for instance has one that is drawn by swans (Alc. fr. 307c [7]8 V.), as has Aphrodite herself in at least one painting from the Classical period.¹⁹ One might also compare a number of Bronze Age sculptures of so-called bird chariots with religious significance; examples in Goto (p. 222); Dechelette (pp. 421, 442, 445); Seligman (p. 155 = Hoernes p. 479). These are often abbreviated in representation, so that the bird is either placed on the chariot or is identical to the chariot itself, i.e. a bird on wheels, sometimes with a smaller bird on top. A possible instance of such an image occurring on the Aeolic mainland is reported by Theopomp.Hist. 267a J. (FGrH no. 115) = Antig. Mir. 15, describing "two ravens on a bronze chariot" depicted on official treatises as the emblem of the Thessalian town of Krannon.

Π

POxy. 2288 (Π), *D.H. Comp.* 23 (FP) + *epitom.* (e)²⁰

κὺ δ', ὦ μάκαιρα,

[...]

15 ἤ]ρε' ὅττ[ι δηῦτε πέπονθα κῶττι

δη]ῦτε κ[άλ]η[μμι

κ]ῶττι [μοι μάλιτα θέλω γένεσθαι

μ]αινόλαι [θύμωι· τίνα δηῦτε †πείθω

κ]ἀκάγην [ἐκ c̄αν φιλότατα; τίς c', ὦ

20 Ψά]πφ', [ἀδικήει;

18–19 πείθω | καὶ καγήνεccαν F e : πειθῶ e : πείθω|μαι P : |βαι P^{corr.} :]. C.A. ὸΓΗΝ Π : legerunt]ΨC vel]ΦC Lobel (1951), Page, Stanley, Hutchinson, Maehler :]ΑC Turner, Slings, Parca, van Bennekom (1975) :]ΑΙC olim Turner :]ΙC Heitsch, olim van Bennekom (1972) :]C van Bennekom (1975) :]ΑΙC Parca :]C dub. Koster scripserunt πείθωμαί c' (sc. coi) ἄγην Blass : πείθωμ' ἄψ c' (sc. coi) Burzacchini : Πείθω (Suadelam) | ἄψ c' (sc. coi, subaud. θέλειε) Kamerbeek : Πείθων (Suadelam) Ahrens : Πείθων | φᾶc Slings : Πείθων | αῖc' van Bennekom (1972, 1975) : ἀπείθην | μαῖc (vel μᾶic) Bergk : πείθω | καί c' ἄγην ἐκ Ϝαν Edmonds : ἄψ c' ἄγην ἐκ Ϝαν Lobel (1951) : ἄψ τάγην ἐκ c̄αν Page : ἄψ c' (sc. coi) ἄγην (intell. ἀγῆναι) Lobel teste Turner : εικάγην (intrans.) Heitsch : βαῖc' ἄγην Parca : πείθειε | ἄψ ἄγην Hutchinson : alii alia

[8|9]

(Translation given below.)

The papyrus, “from which much has been hoped and from which only frustration has come” (Turner, p. 21), exhibits enigmatic features in the very place we would have wished it to be clear and unambiguous, that is, in verse 19, where the indirect ms. tradition (*D.H. Comp.* 23) is thought to be defective.

Several scholars state, rather too authoritatively for our taste, looking at the photograph published online,²¹ that the remains of what must be a Φ or Ψ (preferably the latter) are visible in the papyrus at the beginning of v. 19: first Lobel (1951), most recently Maehler *teste* Burzacchini. Heitsch, Koster, van Bennekom, Parca, and Slings have argued that other readings are possible, as has the best and most in-depth palaeographical treatment of the papyrus offered, that of Eric Turner (pp. 21–27).

The most pessimistic inference from Turner’s seven-page study would be that we cannot be certain of anything at this point, what with the existence of “two layers”, the “presence of ink on the lower level”, and the “displacement of axis”. At the very least he seems to me to show that A and perhaps AI are possible readings, even if he dissociates himself from the second one. Even so, Parca (p. 48) supports the latter possibility, considering after van Bennekom (see below) that the controversial papyrus trace might be “the top of a circumflex accent written between the two vowels of a diphthong $\alpha\iota$ (cf. $\sigma\tau\rho\omega$ in line 10)”. Parca also (p. 47, n. 2) defends the possibility of Turner’s simple A on palaeographical grounds, as does Slings (p. 20), slightly irritated by the inflexibility of the Ψ -partisans. Heitsch (p. 386, text for n. 1) and van Bennekom (1972, p. 122) present palaeographical evidence in support of the possibility of an iota, although van Bennekom later (1975, p. 327), upon inspecting the papyrus, regards this as impossible; he now suggests, while not denying the possibility of A, Ψ , or Φ , a perispomenon (circumflex) accent.²²

Page (pp. 9–10) takes Ψ as given. Stanley (p. 314) and Hutchinson (p. 156) go almost as far, arguing against the possibility of circumflex or alpha, while not mentioning that of an iota. Hutchinson graciously and scrupulously allows that for the reading A] Ψ , “the space is somewhat large in relation to 20”, though. Maehler (p. 85) draws a picture of his own, in which the tall trace of what must be a Ψ or Φ is clearly visible.

Another possibility, ignored in all subsequent scholarly treatments as far as I can see, but welcome from our point of view, was suggested diffidently by Koster (p. 416: in fact he claims that he dare not suggest it), namely that [9|10] the trace might be the remains of a diacritical notation for crasis or elision,²³ perhaps related in some way to the mysterious dot between C and A.²⁴ Now if the trace could be the remains of an apostrophe indicating crasis above or following an A, this would support the suggestion we are about to make,

as would the simple A suggested by Turner, and possibly even the AI rejected by Turner and the I rejected by van Bennekom (not the circumflex, though).

I will not offer a new palaeographical assessment, but will instead work from the assumption that Turner's autopsy, supported by several scholars of which one (van Bennekom 1975) has seen the papyrus *in situ*, is to be trusted. I would also like to cite Turner on a matter of scholarly principle, which he calls a theory, namely that (p. 26) "if a fragmentary text could be interpreted as containing what the mediaeval manuscripts do, it *must* be so interpreted".

The καί of the greater ms. tradition has not received much in the way of support ("nonsensical" according to Parca). However, syntax aside, it is actually both what we need and would expect: "whom to persuade *and* bring home to your love", as simply as we would expect from Sappho. The same is true for Heitsch's εικάγην, although not in the intransitive use as he suggests (despite the parallels adduced by Andrisano).²⁵ Sappho and/or Aphrodite should play the active part, the beloved a passive one at this stage. We do still want both these words, and the mss. in fact have both, if we understand the paradosis of Π F e as a prodelision καὶ ῥικάγην or, better, crasis κὰρικάγην. The latter orthography, if we concede that there is no room for AI in the papyrus, produces the correct form of the crasis καὶ ἐc- in poetry (Smyth §68c; cf. Alc. 117b.27, Ar. Av. 949, frequent in Euripides). The long alpha resulting from this crasis might explain the seemingly pleonastic short-vowel sign above the alpha that is preserved, which would have been added in order to make sure that the different quantity of the two α:s was not overlooked or confused (cf. 22.17 ἄπᾶμα[I, Alc. 117b.27 C̄Ā K̄Ā[C). The dot between C and A, being "suspiciously low" (Hutchinson p. 156), could be interpreted as the remains of a hyphen or "sling", "which indicated that the reader should take the letters together as part of the same word" (Johnson p. 262, cf. Thompson p. 62)—a clarification that would have been welcome in the case of a compound verb combined in unusual crasis. The same reasoning suffices as an explanation of the presence of an acute accent. The normal Attic prose crasis of καὶ + εἰc is κεἰc [10|11] (Smyth §68c; according to Schwyzer p. 402 actually the elision κ'εἰc, whereas the crasis καὶ εἰc- would still be κὰc). An average Sappho reader in the second century AD presented with κακαγην would presumably have needed all the help he or she could get by way of diacritics.

I would like to stress that any restoration of sense to papyrus evidence of the present quality will be *hypothetical*. Turning to the question of syntax, we will consider the possibility that the ms. tradition is fairly sound in 19 (F e, apart from the word division and the *scriptio plena* of καὶ), but corrupt in 18. In a colometrically arranged text, the ending -ω might easily have intruded from the particle ᾧ̃ at the end the next line; and as Koster argues, the present tense deliberative subjunctive πείθω is unsatisfying. The parallel sometimes adduced in Ar. Av. 164 has the aorist middle: τί σοι πιθώμεθα; “in what should we obey you?”. To Koster’s arguments we may add that with this tense of the deliberative subjunctive, we usually get verbs that lack a perfective state (μένω, θέω, κίωπῶ, σκοπῶ) or questions involving “how” (πῶς σε θάπτω;).²⁶ Here, the imperfective aspect cannot help but suggest “*attempt to persuade*”, and this hardly seems appropriate, given that the goddess of love herself is speaking.

Therefore, the word has been taken as a noun: πειθῶ or Πειθῶ, “persuasion” (so the mss. of the *epitome*), which with Aeolic recessive accent would be πείθω (the proper accusative form however possibly being Πείθων: Ahrens p. 257).²⁷ Hutchinson (p. 157) diffidently suggests πείθειε together with deletion of the sigma after his preferred reading ᾧ̃ψ. Bergk, ingeniously, but hardly correctly, suggested ἀπειθήν, “disobedient”, “unwilling”, to be taken together with an unattested active form of the verb μάομαι, “which unwilling girl do you desire to bring to your love this time?”. Blass (p. 149) and Burzacchini (p. 88) propose that we read πείθωμαι or πείθωμ’ ᾧ̃ψ respectively, describing Aphrodite being persuaded to assist (the imperfective aspect would here be appropriate).²⁸

Let us consider δῆ (as in δῆ αὖτε). The main function of the particle δῆ with interrogatives, verbs in the second person, or generally when referring or answering to somebody’s wishes, commands, or statements, is not to stress a particular word in the sentence or convey a particular emotion, but to emphasise the existence of the second (sometimes third) person’s interest, will, or opinion. δῆ stresses, sometimes implies, “you say”, “he says”, “it is said”. Denniston’s category of “ironical” δῆ (pp. 229–36) is not entirely comprehensive in this respect, as the so-called “assentient” δῆ (p. 227) is of much the same kind and, as Denniston admits, “sometimes [11|12] there is little or no trace of irony or scepticism” even in the ironical category (p. 230). This is because irony is but

a secondary quality of this use of δή, whereas the reference to an external point of view is the primary sense. (Irony naturally occurs in the situation, and most certainly so in our case, together with loving condescension, coming from a goddess of love in relation to a patronized client.)

Accordingly, in v. 18, following from the previous two instances in 15 and 16, δή still implies λέγεις, κελεύεις, or, in this case, θέλεις, inferred from the previous clause in 17–18. Aphrodite still lingers in Sappho’s mind, which she of course in reality never leaves at all. I will therefore propose the oblique infinitive πείθην in 18.

Oblique speech here was suggested before by Kamerbeek (p. 97), who proposed a different reading (see the apparatus criticus above). The Greek use of the oblique infinitive is free and intuitive: see for Attic prose Cooper–Krüger II 1078–81 (§65.11.7–9), I 785–88 (for obvious reasons there are fewer examples in poetry but cf. *ibid.* IV 2707 for some Homeric instances). Syntactically, the simplest and probably correct way to understand oblique infinitives here is as dependent on θέλω in 17, which reverts from first to second person as the words are now represented as spoken by Aphrodite. This change of speaker is not felt until v. 19, where c̄αν will come as a surprise to the listener, who for the first time here understands that Aphrodite is the directly speaking subject, while the first infinitive will be felt as directly dependent of θέλω. Nevertheless, Sappho, not Aphrodite, is the subject of the infinitives,²⁹ and the imperfective aspect is acceptable because the verb refers to the action of Sappho, not Aphrodite.³⁰

For examples of oblique infinitives in second- and first-person interrogative discourse, compare *S. Ph.* 278:

 c̄υ δή, τέκνον, ποίαν μ’ ἀνάστασιν δοκεῖς
 αὐτῶν βεβῶτων ἐξ ὕπνου στήναι τότε;
 ποῖ’ ἐκδακρῦσαι, ποῖ’ ἀπομιῶσαι κακά;

and *Pl. Cri.* 51c:

 τί φήσομεν πρὸς ταῦτα, ὦ Κρίτων; ἀληθῆ λέγειν τοὺς νόμους ἢ οὐ;

In our case there is a sudden and total reversal of perspective. It is not Sappho now who refers Aphrodite's speech, but Aphrodite who refers Sappho's.

[12|13]

*You, blessed,
asked what I have suffered yet again and why
I call you yet again*

*and what I want the most to happen
with frenzied mind; who, again, to persuade
and bring home to your love? Who, o
Sappho, wrongs you?*

The conceit of letting Sappho first represent Aphrodite's speech in 15–18, the indirect questions being essentially a kind of oblique speech (Cooper–Krüger II 1038, § 65.1.0); then gradually transferring her from indirectly to directly speaking subject; and finally having her step forward and assert her power over the beloved girl in 21–24 (at which point the girl, in turn, enters into the poem as yet another animated subject a layer further down in the representation) is akin to the quasi-anacoluthic progression of Aphrodite's journey over the second and following strophes, from a subordinated condition to the exhortation in 5–7, “if you ever went”, to, by degrees, an increasingly vivid depiction of one imaginary visit, culminating in the amazing wish-fulfilling fantasy of the goddess doing Sappho's bidding. Aphrodite becomes ever more real as the verses unfold, but what is described is nevertheless not reality, nor an hallucination or pious ritualistic worship; but rather (I would maintain) an aristocratic fantasy following the logic of a dream or an unchained stream of consciousness. I side with the party of critics (e.g. Page, Burnett, Zellner) who hold that Sappho's relation to Aphrodite here should not be understood in an overly serious manner. Page characterized this poem as “a flight of fancy” (p. 18), and I believe that this is a correct assessment of its tone. But I was surprised also to find aspects of a Freudian interpretation of the poem that I could agree with.

Freud was applied to Sappho by Robert Bagg (pp. 70–74 on the present poem), following a theory of poetics outlined by Freudian psychoanalyst Hanns Sachs. While the serious guilt and shame complex of Freudian dream analysis may be less useful, Bagg’s understanding of this particular poem as a depiction of a *daydream* is attractive. Sappho may in fact be describing a prayer, which in a distracted mind loses track, turning into a daydream. Two typically wish-fulfilling daydream images appear. First *a love goddess doing Sappho’s bidding*—that this begins as a representation of the past is forgotten from vv. 16 to 24; then *a pursued object of desire [13|14] turning into desiring pursuer*, surely one of the most common daydream fantasies of all miserably in love of all times and places—the semantic detail that this image properly belongs to a representation of Aphrodite’s speech at an earlier occasion has at this stage evaporated entirely. There is no question that this is what Sappho (the “Sappho” of the poem) dreams about at the present moment. Only in v. 25 does she “remember” the original construction and returns to “reality” (Bagg p. 74) or to the *preces ipsae*, the prayer proper in Ausfeld’s language (p. 515), having turned the “epic” section (ibid.) into something very peculiar indeed.

I may add that the sacred imagery of Proto-Indo-European antiquity detected in the first part of this article is not in conflict with a less than solemn reading of Sappho’s encounter with divinity. In the slight subversion of venerably ancient religious imagery and patterns of discourse we might perhaps recognize the tone and character of certain passages from Homer, for instance the battle of Aphrodite in the fifth book of the *Iliad* (esp. vv. 370–430). There, for once, the joke was on the goddess, not on the humans.

[14|17]

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¹ I am indebted to Ms. Serena Danesi, Prof. Staffan Fogelmark, Mr. Martin Sand, Mr. Thomas Smitherman, Mrs. Valerie Smitherman, Dr. Gjert Vestheim, and the two anonymous referees of *Symbolae Osloenses* for help, advice and original contributions to this article.

² The Rigvedic text is cited after Thomson–Slocum. I am not a Sanskrit scholar or Indo-Europeanist but base the present comparison mainly on the translation and notes of Thomson (pp. 35–36) and on translations and syntactic analyses kindly offered me by Ms. Serena Danesi, Mr. Martin Sand and Mr. Thomas Smitherman of the University of Bergen. Other passages from the *Rigveda* are cited in the

translation of Griffith, sometimes collated with that of Geldner for differences that are relevant to the issue at hand.

³ Other texts have *váyah*, nom.pl. “birds”, according to Ms. Danesi. It seems this is implied by Thomson’s translation.

⁴ According to Ms. Danesi (and Griffith and Geldner), 5c and d consist of one clause only with the predicate “bring”. The “birds” stand in apposition to the *ásvās*.

⁵ I am grateful to one anonymous referee of *SO* for observing the obvious fact that was lost to me when I wrote the first version of this paper, namely that both images occur within the context of a prayer.

⁶ See examples in Schmitt (pp. 142–220), Watkins (pp. 197–240), and West (pp. 61, 63–68, 102–3, 323–25). [14|15]

⁷ Thomson (p. 36, text for n. 47), citing Franz Bopp *teste* Wackernagel–Debrunner (p. 870) and Hamp for the etymology; Mayrhofer (p. 140) also mentions Walde (p. 412). The relation of the word to the Indo-European root **(h₁)ek^huo-* has not been entirely uncontroversial even before Thomson (see Mayrhofer *ibid.* with refs.), although usually taken for granted (e.g., Beekes p. 37, Szemerényi p. 58). If there is a relation, an original general meaning of “swift (conveyor-)animal” would still be liable to be narrowed down into “horse” as soon as horses become the prevalent mode of swift travel. This semantic shift could well have occurred independently in different branches of IE language development.

⁸ MacDonell mentions 1.118.4, 4.45.4 (swans), 6.63.6–7, 8.5.7, 10.143.5, to which Griffith’s translation adds 1.119.4, 4.43.6, 5.73.5, 6.62.6. Some of these instances Geldner translates as “Vogelrosse” (4.43.6), “(Vogel)rosse” (5.73.5) or “Vogel(rosse)” (6.62.6, 6.63.6). An ass is mentioned as a possible conveyor of the *Aśvins*’ chariot in 1.34.9, 1.116.2, 8.74.7; a “porpoise and bull” in 1.116.18 (Griffith: “Stier und Krokodil” Geldner); bulls or buffaloes in 1.181.6, according to MacDonell also “5.73.7, 1.184.3 &c” (“Buckelochse”, “Buckeltiere” Geldner). Horses do appear, but we should be wary of them: see Thomson (pp. 36–37) on the tendency of translators of the *Rigveda* to find or add horses where none are present in the source text.

⁹ *RV* 1.34.5, 1.116.17, 1.117.13, 4.43.2, 4.43.6, 4.44.1, 5.73.5, 6.63.5, 7.69.4, 8.22.1, 10.85.14, 10.85.26.

¹⁰ On *RV* 7.75.5 see West p. 234, text for n. 129, and Geldner, translating *Uṣas*’ epithet there as “Maid des *Sūrya*”, with a reference to 7.69.4: “die Maid, die Tochter des *Sūrya*”. According to Griffith, *Uṣas* is the Spouse of *Sūrya* in 7.75.5, so that she may properly be the mother of *Sūrya*’s daughter.

¹¹ 1.46.14, 1.92.16–18, 1.181.9, 1.183.2, 3.58.1–2, 4.52.2–3, 5.75.9, 7.67.2, 8.5.1–2, 8.9.17–18, 8.35 *passim*, 10.39.12.

¹² For the syncretic mechanism, note also that in Greek tradition *Eos* is a daughter of the Sun (Schmitt pp. 172–73; cf. West p. 186). Regarding *Aphrodite*’s smile, we may compare to this the “joyful” ascendance on the chariot of the *Rigvedic* goddess, possibly in her case a metaphor for starlight. In *Dawn*’s case the smile might correspondingly be a poetical representation of the light at daybreak (see 1.123.10–11, cited by West *l.c.*). In *Sappho*’s poem the smile has an entirely different meaning, but it is worth noting that the language

retains a particularly sacral character here, being closely associated with Aphrodite's divinity in the formula $\mu\epsilon\iota\delta\iota\alpha\iota\sigma\iota\alpha\epsilon'$ ἄθανάτωι προσώπωι, that stretches over one entire line of verse.

¹³ Goto; Güntert (pp. 253–77); Oldenberg (pp. 207–15); von Schroeder (pp. 445–47); MacDonell (pp. 53–54). That the Ásvins are associated with the Dioskouroi does not prevent them from being linked to the planet Venus (cf. Oldenburg p. 213). Myth is not a heraldic system of set images with exclusive connotations but rather it is characterised by constant merging and disjoining, creation and disintegration of images, concepts, exoteric and esoteric meanings. It may be that in Indic tradition a heroic twin couple has merged with a more gently cruising planetary one before the composition of the Rigvedic poems, or that in Greek tradition an original warrior star couple has transformed into the earthly, robust Dioskouroi on the one hand and the [15|16] ethereal Phosphoros and Hesperos on the other (and perhaps into a third metastasis as Aphrodite's twin charioteer erotes: see below).

¹⁴ Cf. also (Griffith's translations) 1.46.14 "Dawn follows the brightness of your way", 1.47.7 "together with the sunbeams come", 4.44.2 "your bright appearing", 4.45.2 "Forth come your ... cars and horses at the flushing of the dawn, ... spreading through mid-air bright radiance like the Sun", 5.77.2 "Worship at dawn and instigate the Ásvins: nor is the worshipper at eve rejected" (*is* rejected according to Geldner and Oldenburg p. 210), 6.62.2 "they light the radiance of the car that bears them", 7.69.5 "this car of yours invested with rays of light", 7.71.4 "The chariot, Princes, that conveys you, moving at daylight" ("am Morgen ausfahrende" Geldner), 8.5.32 "O Ásvins, hither come to us, Nāsatyas, shining brilliantly", 8.8.2 "Come now, ye Ásvins, on your car decked with a sun-bright canopy", 8.8.7 "Even from the luminous sphere of heaven come to us, ye who find the light", 10.39.1 "your swiftly-rolling circumambient Car which he who worships must invoke at eve and dawn"; 1.22.1, 5.74.1, 5.76.3, 8.5.2, 8.9.18, 8.10 *passim*, 8.26.19, 8.35 *passim*, 10.40.1, 10.41.1. See also West pp. 233–34. I do not think that West's observation (following Hillebrandt pp. 60–61) that the evening and morning star do not occur at the same time "or even in the same month" (p. 234) is a sufficient argument against such an understanding of the Ásvins, as their entire chariot would be visible from Earth only as a single dot of light. Their duplicity would be symbolic rather than representative of the dual nature of the planet Venus, and while they are both present on the chariot, perhaps only one of them takes the reins at any given time. See also Goto's attempt to trace two different seminal versions of the travel of the Ásvins, one of Vesper at night by birds and one of Lucifer in daytime by horses or other terrestrial animals. West also cites (p. 234; after Rhesa pp. 220–22, Schleicher p. 216) one Lithuanian song in which the Morning Star is the daughter of the Sun, and (p. 189) some suggestive acts of the Baltic Sons of God, kin to the Ásvins and Dioskouroi, who ride to greet Dawn in the morning (*Latvju daiņas* 33977 Barons; Jonval no. 390) and prevent the Daughter of the Sun from falling into the sea (*Latvju daiņas* 33969 Barons; Jonval no. 402). These images, as well as many of the Rigvedic instances cited above, suggest the bright star Venus close to the horizon at daybreak or in the night, as a rider greeting dawn, or as Sun's daughter falling into the sea. Compare also the traditions, extant for both Ásvins and Dioskouroi, in which only one of the twins is divine (West p. 187), with the clear religious preference shown in the Rigvedic poems for the appearance of the Ásvins at dawn to their appearance in

the evening (Oldenburg pp. 207–12). Polydeukes, the Dioskouroi who is always divine, may be derived from *πολυλεύκης, “much-bright” (cf. Hsch. δευκέε: λαμπρόν), although this is uncertain (Janko and Càssola argue for another etymology).

¹⁵ “Von West, ihr Nāsatya’s, und von Ost, von Süd und von Nord kommet”, Geldner, but he translates the same phrase “von vorn, von hinten, von unten, von oben” in a different context in 7.104.19.

¹⁶ *LIMC* s.v. Aphrodite nos. 1166, 1168, 1186, 1190a, 1191–93, 1196, 1203, 1206, 1208, 1213–16, 1218 (II 1 pp. 114, 116–19, II 2 pp. 116–23). [16|17]

¹⁷ West (p. 188) cites 4.44.4–5, 5.77.3, 7.69.1, 8.5.35.

¹⁸ On nature myth and in particular skyscape myth, the reaction against them in the twentieth century, and the counter-reaction, see Kirk pp. 43–53, who has very little to say about stars, though. On Indo-European imagination concerning stars generally, see West pp. 351–53, who has nothing to say about planets.

¹⁹ *LIMC* s.v. Aphrodite, no. 1212, II 1 p.117, II 2 p. 122.

²⁰ The text is cited after Voigt, with some changes and altered priorities in text and apparatus. The brackets are placed as in Voigt and Lobel–Page. For another estimate of the papyrus evidence in 15 (here irrelevant) and 19 (here relevant), see the text of Hutchinson (p. 25).

²¹ *POxy.* 2288 at <http://www.papyrology.ox.ac.uk/POxy/>, accessed 7 March 2012.

²² Van Bennekom also presents some non-palaeographical arguments against the reading ἄψ.

²³ An apostrophe, attested for crasis καὶ ἔc- in a sixth-century parchment fragment of Sappho 3.3 (*PBerol.* 5006), and for elision and other purposes in papyri from the second century AD. Several examples are found in *POxy.* 1231, which contains Sappho 18–30 (the papyrus is owned by the Bodleian library and not available online for the general public at the time of writing). In 16.11 the synizesis -σθη ἄλ- is written CΘ’ΑΛ. See in general Thompson (p. 62) and Johnson (p. 262) on the use of the apostrophe in Greek papyri.

²⁴ Koster’s suggestion that μαίεαι ἄγην through elision, crasis, or synizesis could somehow attain the prosody – ̄ – has been rightly ignored, though. Other unattested variants of a verb of the same stem (see Bergk’s conjectures cited below and in the apparatus above), inferred by the reading of P, are rejected, probably rightly, by Page (p. 8).

²⁵ Herodotus uses the verb with γυναῖκα in the sense “to lead a wife into one’s house” (LSJ I 2).

²⁶ Examples from Kühner–Gerth I 221–22.

²⁷ For the accusative -ων of Aeolic oi-stems, see Hdn.Gr. II 370, 645, 755 Lentz; Choerob. I 310–12 Hilgard, and cf. Lobel (1925) ad loc., Hamm p. 160.

²⁸ The synapheia is exceptional but might be admissible in the latter case with reference to the elision of δ’ at the end of 31.9.

²⁹ For the syntactic argument in this section, I am partly indebted to advice from one of the journal’s anonymous reader reports.

³⁰ The subject of the infinitives might in fact be felt to be ambiguous after *càv*: formally, they could be taken as hypothetical imperatives by Sappho represented in indirect speech by Aphrodite (Cooper–Krüger II 1081, §65.11.9). I believe such an ambiguity is not to the detriment of the reading.