Université de Montréal

INNOVATION IN TRADITION: WOMEN'S VOICES IN HELLENISTIC LITERATURE

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Abstract

This study looks at poems about women written by Greek female poets, so that we can have a better comprehension of the image of women. Greek female poets are very few and the majority of them appear during the Hellenistic period. Their work is mostly written in the form of epigrams.

Anyte from Tegea, through her funerary epigrams about dead unmarried girls, draws attention to the relationship between daughter and parents. She depicts original scenes of mourning parents who find consolation in the memory of the qualities of their daughter, such as beauty and wisdom.

In the *Distaff*, Erinna offers us an authentic image of the strong bond between herself and her friend Baukis, and gives a new dimension to marriage, which is linked to death.

Nossis from Locri writes about feminine sexuality and creates a new image of a woman who openly praises the delights of *Eros*, yet she rejects the notion that sexuality should serve as a criterion for her honor and respectability.

Key words: epigrams, funerary, Hellenistic poetry, women poets, femininity.

Résumé

Cette étude examine des poèmes sur les femmes écrits par des poétesses grecques, afin d'avoir une meilleure compréhension de l'image que ces femmes ont d'elles-mêmes. Les poétesses grecques sont très peu nombreuses et la plupart apparaissent pendant la période hellénistique. Leur oeuvre est principalement écrite sous forme d'épigrammes.

Par ses épigrammes funéraires sur des filles mortes avant le mariage, Anytè de Tégée attire l'attention sur la relation entre filles et parents. Elle représente des scène originales de parents en deuil qui trouvent une consolation dans le souvenir des qualités de leur fille, comme la beauté et sagesse.

Dans le poème *La Quenouille*, Erinna nous offre une image authentique du lien puissant entre elle et son amie Baukis, et donne une nouvelle dimension au mariage, lié à la mort.

Nossis de Locri compose au sujet de la sexualité féminine et donne une nouvelle image d'une femme qui loue ouvertement les plaisirs d'Eros, mais refuse que la sexualité serve de critère pour son honneur et sa respectabilité.

Mots clés: épigrammes, funéraires, poésie hellénistique, femmes poètes, féminité

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Abbreviations:

AP= Palatine Anthology

fr.= Fragment

Il.= Iliad (Homer)

L.-P. = Lobel E., and Page, D. L., *Poetarum Lesbiorum Fragmenta* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963)

Od.= Odyssey (Homer)

Thuc.= Thucydides

Paus.= Pausanias, *Description of Greece*

Plut..= Plutarch

SH= Supplementum Hellenisticum (De Gruyter)

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τάσδε θεογλώσσους Ἑλικὼν ἔθρεψε γυναῖκας
ὕμνοις, καὶ Μακεδὼν Πιερίας σκόπελος,
Πρήξιλλαν, Μοιρώ, Ἀνύτης στόμα, θῆλυν Ὅμηρον,
Λεσβιάδων Σαπφὼ κόσμον ἐυπλοκάμων,
Ἤριννα, Τελέσιλλαν ἀγακλέα, καὶ σέ, Κόριννα,
θοῦριν Ἀθηναίης ἀσπίδα μελψαμέναν,
Νοσσίδα θηλύγλωσσον, ἰδὲ γλυκυαχέα Μύρτιν,
πάσας ἀενάων ἐργάτιδας σελίδων.
ἐννέα μὲν Μούσας μέγας Οὐρανός, ἐννέα δ᾽ αὐτὰς
γαῖα τέκεν, θνατοῖς ἄφθιτον εὐφροσύναν. (Antipater, *AP*. 9.26)

These are the divine-voiced women that Helicon fed with songs, and the rock of Macedonian Pieria:
Praxilla, Moero, and the mouth of Anyte, the female Homer,
Sappho, glory of the beautiful-haired Lesbian women,
Erinna, renowned Telesilla, and you, Korinna,
Who sang the onrushing shield of Athena,
female- tongued Nossis, and sweet-sounding Myrtis,
all craftswomen of eternal pages.
Great Ouranos gave birth to nine Muses, and these nine
Gaia bore, deathless delight to mortals.[1]

[1] Translation Bowman (2004): 1-27

Introduction

Patriarchal presentation of female voices

Female poets in ancient Greece have received surprisingly low attention in scholarship. While Sappho is undoubtedly the most famous and influential poetess of the ancient Greek world, little is known about the female poetic tradition of the Hellenistic period. By the term "poetic tradition" I mean a circle of poets, who share similar poetic identity, age, sex, culture, sources of inspiration, etc. By referring hence, to a female poetic tradition in the Hellenistic times, I mean a group of female poets with similar poetic features that emerged during that period. Indeed, it is during that period that for the first time such a group appears; Anyte, Nossis, and Erinna are among the first women (after Sappho) to intend to produce poetry for literary purposes and to succeed in becoming widely recognized as major poetic personages of that period.

We do not know many things about the relationships between women, and the scarce information that we have comes from male-oriented literature, like drama and the tragedies, where the male perspective of this relationship is depicted. The ways of transporting the original female voices and perspectives were limited; even in cases where women could perform publically in front of a female audience, like in female choruses, wedding songs, lamentations, their freedom of expression was curbed and many times, even unconsciously, influenced by the patriarchal values; Pericles encouraged, for example, women in his Funerary Oration to stay silent during their grieving, and reminded them of the values they had to respect in order to gain respectability (*Thuc*. 2.44.2).

Going back to what is known about the image of women in general, classical Athenian sources provide many examples of conflictual relationships, such as the hateful relationship of Electra with Clytemnaestra, or Helen's abandonment of Hermione. Hesiod in his *Theogony* (590-605) transmits a misogynist attitude:

> For from her is the race of women and female kind: of her is the deadly race and tribe of women who live amongst mortal men to their great trouble, no helpmeets in hateful poverty, but only in wealth […] even so Zeus who thunders on high made women to be an evil to mortal men, with a nature to do marriage and the sorrows that women cause, and will not wed, reaches deadly old age without anyone to tend his years, and though he at least has no lack of livelihood while he lives, yet, when he is dead, his kinsfolk divide his possessions amongst them.[2]

Hesiod, apart from advocating women's inferiority to men, portrays marriage as a test for their honor: the purpose of a good wife is to take care of her husband (while the poor men can never be certain of their wives' feelings and qualities). The story of Pandora proves the evil side of woman and the danger she entails to men's life. Helen of Troy is another example from literature that proves how disastrous a woman's beauty can be for humanity. Euripides' Medea proves the cruelty of a woman, who in her incontrollable madness does not hesitate to kill her kids and her husband's new wife.

To the Greeks, the separation between males and females was clear; they were actually separated in two worlds: the male world, where males would spend most of their time outside the *oikos* and enjoy the exclusiveness of political rights that belonged to the citizens of their *polis.* Participation in symposia and public events, like sport competitions or going to the theater, were also exclusive to men. Their utmost duty was to defend their *patria.* Classical and Archaic art would usually depict them nude in order to praise their muscular power and their superiority to barbarians.

Women on the other side would spend most of their time inside the *oikos,* as their participation in public events was more than limited. Their utmost duty was to be respectable wives, and bear children to their husbands. During the Archaic and Classical period, and when they were presented on vase pictures, they would be heavily dressed with their bodies largely covered.

Although all these stories come from poetry, they certainly include some piece of reality about how men used to perceive women. In any case, women were defined by their

[2] Translation Evelyn-White H. G. (1914)

relationships and their capacity to respect the values that were imposed on them by men. In several cases, men seem to have determined women's identity, or even their capacities. In Euripides' *Medea* (424-8), for example, the Corinthian chorus argues that Phoebus, the lord of poetry, did not grant to the female sex the charisma to produce lyric poetry, so that they could answer to the men's claims concerning the infidelity of women.[3] Indeed, so far we do not hear of many examples of women authors during the Classical period. West encounters sixty-four women poets that lived from antiquity up to the 5th cent. A.D. However, in many cases what survives today is merely their name in inscriptions or references to them by later authors. As West also explains, it was very hard for a woman in the Classical period to make her poetry known, given the fact that poetry was produced to entertain people (males) at public events, and women's participation in the public sphere was if not prohibited, at least limited.[4]

Innovation in Hellenistic period

The Hellenistic period brought substantial political, economic and social changes in the Greek world. Living in lands ruled by kings permitted people to leave behind the strict traditional values imposed by the small city-states. In the immense land, people, including women, had the opportunity to immigrate significantly more easily than before, while the cosmopolitan and diffuse culture of this period permitted social reforms to take place less painfully.

It was during this period that women's status changed considerably: more than in any previous period, women had increasing opportunities for education. Literacy among them increased, and enabled them to produce poetry.[5] However, if the production of poetry is a

[3] West (1977): 316
[4] Ibid.: 315-317
[5] Although it is not hard to believe that women could have produced oral poetry or songs that used to sing while at loom, or during their exclusive participation in religious ceremonies and festivals, the lack of evidence does not allow us to demonstrate that women had developed such a tradition. See Barnard (2004) for more. See Pomeroy (1995) for a detailed analysis about the life of women in the Hellenistic world. See also Fantham E. (1995).

very demanding process per se, one must comprehend the challenges for those women to write poetry and gain recognition in a world exclusively dominated by male poets. For although their purpose was clear (their poetry to be publically known), the means to achieve it were less direct: they intended to raise their feminine voice through their art, but they also had to respect, up to certain degree, the traditional poetic formulas established by the male poets. Hence, while crossing an unknown path, they used the necessary male guidelines to help them reach their destination. It is of no surprise thus, to realize that these women were well aware of the male poetic tradition, and that they inserted in their poetry characteristics that recall male poetry.[6]

The epigram, which originally consisted of few verses, written on the tombstones to commemorate the deceased, turned into a common literary practice during the Hellenistic period. During the 3rd century B.C. the concept of the epigram began to transform; it adopted a new literary dimension that promoted the very specific style and emotions that the individuality of each author was transmitting.[7]

In a new era of transition both in literature and in values, the epigram found great popularity; one good reason is because the Hellenistic poets no longer found satisfaction in imitating the glorious literature of the past, which was characterized by long poems, nor were they still inspired by the long established values of the classical period.

Instead, through epigrams they could express all their passion in an elegant yet impactful way. Instead of imitating their predecessors or reproducing similar literary genres, the Hellenistic poets chose to follow a new path by inventing new genres, by focusing on different types of personages, by breaking old forms of literature in general.

The epigrams of the Hellenistic period are inspired by the everyday life of simple individuals, by their close relationships with family and friends, by their values, their

[6] Notice, for example, that Alcaeus, an archaic and contemporary poet of Sappho's generation used to combine in his poetry many different meters, as Sappho did. See Brunett (1983).
[7] See Gutzwiller (1988): 52.

deities, etc. In such a cosmopolitan world, as the Hellenistic world was, the Hellenistic poets drew their attention to marginal and fragmented individuals, and exposed them just the way they were. By presenting the original life of their subjects, epigrams were also representations of the continuously transforming Hellenistic world.

Anyte, Erinna, and Nossis are poets that focused on marginal figures, like women, and other non-traditional subjects, like the everyday life and interpersonal relationships of modest people. For the first time, women gain a central role in poetry. We encounter hence epigrams that describe the mother's lament for the loss of her daughter, or epigrams that praise women's qualities, like beauty and wisdom (motifs, which were unknown during the Classical and Archaic period, where inscriptions would ususally address the death of a man and the suffering of a father). In addition, it is during the Hellenistic period that the poetry of women took for the first time a more private character, which means they produced poetry that was destined to be shared within a private circle of companions. As Calame observes:

> "… the Hellenistic associations acquired a marked private character, in contrast to the Archaic ones, and owed their success to the weaking of public life and official cult, whereas Archaic society revolved around these two points."[8]

Anyte is writing from a feminine perspective about dwelling in remote communities, away from the political and cultural centers, like her birthplace in Arcadia; Erinna provides us with invaluable information about young girls' life and women's occupations; Nossis represents the limitations she faced as a woman in her native Locri and publically praised the qualities of *Eros*.

This study will examine the poetry produced by these three female poets of this period: Anyte, Erinna, and Nossis. More specifically, it will analyze how these women expressed their femininity by introducing new poetic elements, and by inserting traditional characteristics at the same time. For although they imitated clearly traditional poetic personalities, like those of Sappho or Homer, this study will explore how these poetesses cultivate their own, individual poetic identities. More importantly, these poets transmit

[8] Calame (2001: 398

the image of a woman who is ambitious and self-confident. Although in certain cases they were asked to write a funerary or a dedicatory poem for a person, their poetic styles also testify their intention to produce poetry for literary reasons. Hence, they intended not only for their poetry to go public, but they were also demanding to obtain the attention they deserved as artists in the poetic community.

Finally, by shedding some light on the poetic innovations that Anyte, Erinna, and Nossis introduced, this study hopes to raise attention on how this poetry should be treated: traditionally, the work of these poetesses has not escaped being analyzed with a certain male point of view. Some scholars have tried to understand their poetry through their knowledge and perception of traditional poetry. I argue instead, that in order to better comprehend and appreciate such an "innovative" poetry, the reader should bear in mind that she/he is introduced to a wholly new world: a women's world that praises women's qualities, female love, and friendship. It is essential thus, that the reader enters this new world without prejudice and forgets the knowledge of women she/he had gained from the male tradition. For this kind of poetry will not only renew the images of women transmitted by men, but it will also introduce us to so far unknown aspects of the feminine world.

Chapter 1: Anyte from Tegea

Anyte from Tegea is probably the most influential woman poet of the Hellenistic period. The lack of biographical information about her makes it challenging to define an exact date of her *floruit*. Pausanias (2nd cent. A.D.) relates Anyte with the construction of a temple of Asklepius in Naupactos after healing the blindness of Phalysius; however, he provides with no specific date or any additional information about her life.[9] Today, scholars agree that her poetry influenced Nicias and Mnasacles,[10] who lived during the first half of the 3rd cent. B.C., and hence she must have lived around the early 3rd cent. B.C.[11]

A native of Arcadia, she wrote, among other things, four funerary epigrams about young unmarried girls, whose deaths seem to affect no one but their parents. Although writing about dead unmarried women was not something new,[12] one of Anyte's real innovations was to draw attention to the person grieving: of the four epigrams she wrote about these girls, two (*AP*. 7.486, 649) make reference to the mother of the dead girl, one (*AP*. 7. 646) represents a father's lament, and the last one is addressed to the young suitors (*AP*. 7.490). By placing the parents either at the end or the beginning of the line (the most important positions), Anyte gives particular attention to the grieving of the parents, who are left behind without their child.[13]

Scholars share different views regarding Anyte's poetry, and her contribution to forming a clearly feminine-oriented tradition in epigrams. Gutzwiller, for example, praises

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[9] Paus. 10.38.13
[10] See the similarities that their epigrams *AP*. 6.122 and *AP*.6.128 share with Anyte's *AP*. 6.123
[11] Reitzenstein (1893)
[12] Hansen (1983): see epigram for Phrasicleia in the 6th century B.C., and an epigram from Amorgos of the 5th century B.C.
[13] Notice, for example, *AP*. 7.486 that the mother's name (Kleina) is mentioned at the end of the first line of the epigram; in *AP*. 7.649 the "mother" is mentioned at the beginning of the second line; in *AP*. 7. 646 Erato addresses directly to her father on line 3.

Anyte's poetry arguing that she managed to transmit the female perspective and values, to shift the center of attention from males to females, and to create a well-established persona "defined by its opposition to that of the traditional male epigrammatist".[14] Wilamowitz, on the other side, finds "nothing at all personal, not even feminine" in her poetry, but rather sees it as a few conventional verses, even though composed by a woman poet.[15] Frederick Wright adopts exactly the opposite view as Gutzwiller;

> "Curiously enough the qualities of her verses are all of the kind that is usual to call masculine. Simple, vigorous, restrained, she has none of that somewhat florid exuberance which marks the inferior feminine in art".[16]

I tend to agree with Greene's more moderate point of view; whereas I do accept that Anyte brought some important innovations[17] in a male-dominated epigram tradition by shedding light on feminine values and perspectives as a counterpart to the patriarchal values and expectations, I disagree, however, with Gutzwiller's opinion that she neglected totally the well established male poetic traditions.[18] On the contrary, as Greene argues, "Anyte's art lies in her innovative use of conventional literary genres, her ability to blend the personal and domestic with the 'high' art of the heroic".[19] Particularly, Homer's strong influence on her poetry as well as the transposition of many Homeric phrases made Geoghegan reach the conclusion that the phrase θῆλυν Ὅμηρον ("female Homer") was justifiably attributed to her.[20]

While it is true that Anyte transmits the female experience of grieving by referring in four of her epigrams to the mothers of the young unmarried girls, and succeeds both in giving value to the lives of those girls, and in praising the relationship between mother and daughter, her poetry also borrows characteristics of masculine poetry, especially epic

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[14] Gutzwiller (1997): 74
[15] Wilamowitz (1924): 136
[16] Wright (1923): 328, also Snyder (1989): 77
[17] Particularly the innovations she introduced in her five pet epigrams (G- P10, *AP*. 7.208, 7.215, 7.202, 7.190) and in her bucolic poets (*AP*. 16.291, 16.231) significantly influenced later poets. See Gutwiller (1998) and Greene (2005).
[18] Gutzwiller (1998)
[19] Greene (2005): 139
[20] Geoghegan (1979)

Homeric poetry, where the dead man is praised for his distinguishing values, and his death is not lamented, but on contrary, is exalted and marked by the honors of a hero.

παρθένον Ἀντιβίαν κατοδύρομαι, ἅς ἐπὶ πολλοὶ
νυμφίοι ἱέμενοι πατρὸς ἵκοντο δόμον,
κάλλευς καὶ πινυτᾶτος ἀνὰ κλέος: ἀλλ᾽ ἐπὶ πάντων
ἐλπίδας οὐλομένα Μοῖρ᾽ ἐκύλισε πρόσω. (*AP*. 7.490)

I mourn the maiden Antibia, for whom many desiring young men
came to her father's house,
drawn by her reputation for beauty and wisdom.
But destructive Fate rolled away out of reach
The hopes of all of them.[21]

In this epigram, by using the first person, the poet gives the impression of addressing herself directly to Antibia. As Gutzwiller observes,

> "the speaker in this epigram is that 'anonymous first person mourner' once thought impossible in inscribed epigram, but known from two possibly early epigrams attributed to Simonides (36 FGE= *AP*. 13.26, 75 FGE= *AP*. 7. 511) […] the first person mourner merges of course with Anyte herself, whose sorrow for Antibia seems emblematic of the grief she feels for all the maidens lost to a premature death".[22]

Hence, through the transmission of her feminine approach, this invisible mourner may well respresent the suffering of any female individual from the dying person's circle: a mother, a sister, a best friend. Although the person that suffers the most in these cases is usually the mother of the dying maiden, Anyte's choice to represent an "invisible mourning voice" is perhaps justified by the fact that Antibia's sudden loss reflects a collective feminine mourning, including that of her mother's. According to Snyder, the

[21] Translation Snyder (1989): 68
[22] Gutzwiller (1998): 60.

expression in the first person "emphasizes the pathos of unfulfilled promise (her beauty and wisdom) and the frustration of unfulfilled hopes (the many suitors who were attracted by the girl's qualities)".[23]

The expected evolution of her life as a girl at a nubile age was to be married and bear children to her husband; this was a process that had already begun with the visit of *many desiring young men* to her father's house. The normal continuation of her life was, however, evilly disrupted by the Fates, who gave her Hades as a husband instead of one of the young men. By dying too young without being married and without bringing children to life, Antibia did not manage to accomplish her main role in life.

There is a clear juxtaposition here between marriage and death. According to Vernant and Vidal-Naquet,[24] the Greeks viewed warfare and marriage as the two poles that informed and differentiated male and female experience; "marriage is for the girl what warfare is for the boy". It is true that an Athenian girl, for example, achieved adult status through marriage and childbirth, while an Athenian male became an adult when he reached his majority and assumed various civic roles, including that of soldier. In most cases, marriages were not realized for reasons of love, but with the principal aim to have children. It was not uncommon for a woman not to be "accepted" as a real member of the family from her husband's side until she bore him children. Since her main responsibility towards the city (and her new family) was reproduction, by becoming a mother she would gain more status and become more important, especially if she bore male children; just as their husband's main responsibility was to fight during war, the women would give birth to the future warriors.

In that spectrum, we may well imagine the impact of all this stress that society's expectations had upon women, and also comprehend how unfortunate it was for a young woman to die before accomplishing her main responsibility in life and towards society. As Gardner writes:

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[23] Snyder (1989): 69
[24] Vernant and Vidal-Naquet (1988): 99

> "No sentiment is more often expressed in epitaphs, none more strongly affected the Greek heart, than the sadness of the fate of these young men and women to whom death came in the place of that marriage which was regarded as the consummation of earthly happiness."[25]

The art of Anyte's epigram is to lament the death of a young girl, which seems to be of no one's attention, but her mother's (or of her female inner circle). In comparison with the young men who died on the battlefield, and received *kleos* for their *θνήσκειν ὑπέρ πατρίδος* (*pro patria mors*), the deceased girl here is being honoured for her distinguishing and personal virtues:[26] her famous beauty and wisdom.[27] As Garland mentions: "in order to determine the status of the Greek dead we need to consider the significance of the epithets by which they are characteristically denoted."[28] Accordingly, Antibias's status is determined by the two substantives attributed to her by Anyte that best describe her virtues: *κάλλευς καί πινυτᾶτος;* two highly appreciated virtues for a woman: the first referring to her beauty, as an external feature of her appearance, and the second one praising her wisdom, as an invaluable aspect of her personality. The unique combination of those two highly appreciated features makes Antibia a perfect candidate for being a good wife, which in turn explains the reason why was Antibia so much desired by the *desiring young men.*

Once more, we can detect Anyte's influence from the Homeric poetry: the phrase *κάλλευς* καὶ πινυτᾶτος reminds us of the story of Pandareus in the *Odyssey* narrated by Penelope while praying to Artemis, according to which Pandareus' beautiful and wise daughters were given to the hateful Fates (ἔδοσαν στυγερῇσιν Ἐρινύσιν):

Ἥρη δ' αὐτῇσιν περὶ πασέων δῶκε γυναικῶν

[25] Gardner (1986): 115.
[26] The most common epithet, however, for men was makarios (blessed). Garland writes: "In early Greek makarios is an epithet which properly describes the condition of the gods in distinction to that of mortal man". Garland (1985): 9
[27] See women poets in ancient Greece and Rome: 144
[28] Garland (1985): 8

εἶδος καὶ πινυτήν, μῆκος δ' ἔπορ' Ἄρτεμις ἁγνή, (*Od*. 20.70-71)

Hera gave them beauty and wisdom above all women
And chaste Artemis gave them stature.[29]

Again, the maidens here are praised for their inner and outer qualities, which were not however able to prevent their dramatic loss. Similarly to the case of Antibia, their deaths are bitter and unjust, and the continuation of their lives has been dramatically paused by the evil Fates. Thus, the verb *καταδύρομαι* in the first line of the epigram reflects the suffering of the living for the unfair loss, and if we compare this open expression of women's feelings and their vivid participation in the process of lamenting the dead with the normally limited exposure of women in the public (*oikos* vs. *polis*), we realize that this particular attitude might be related as a reaction regarding the unjust treatment of a male-dominated society towards the female sex. It seems as if the pain they were feeling was giving them the "authority" to forget for a while the social limitations that were restricting them, and to express their feelings.

As Alexiou suggests, lament was not at all a spontaneous process, but rather a carefully controlled one. [30] As archaeological[31] and literary evidence shows, women's lament included vivid movement, cutting their hair, wailing and singing, whereas many times the intense lamenting could bring them into a "wild ecstacy". Women would also take care of the dead body before burial *(prothesis*), and would also probably prepare the perideipnon, the meal after the funeral.[32]

Thanks to Homeric literature, we can extract important information concerning mourning and lamentation in pre-Classical Greece. Briseis, for example (*Il*. 19. 287-300), tears her

[29] Translation Murray A. T. (1914)
[30] Alexiou (2002): 4
[31] Ahlberg (1971): 77 describes " the traditional formula of lamentation in Geometric art". On those vases women are represented by placing both hands to the head, and tearing their hair, while men maintain a more conservative attitude by holding only one hand to the head.
[32] Sourvinou-Inwood (1995): 33

breast, neck, and face, while singing the lament for Patroclus.[33] Similarly, in Andromache's lament for Hector (*Il*. 22. 413-18), she is leading the lament song with the thirty-three nymphs accompanying her, while beating their breasts and intensely mourning. Homeric poetry is full of scenes of women who are openly expressing their feelings: they lament their dead heroes, they lead the lament songs, they have a dominant role in funerary rituals. Alexiou explains that burial and lamenting are actually two different sides of the same coin, and that the neglect of any of these two processes may arise the wrath not only of the dead but of the god, too.[34] Let's remember, for example, Elpenor's last words to Odysseus, when he met him in the Underworld:

μή μ᾽ ἄκλαυτον ἄθαπτον ἰὼν ὄπιθεν καταλείπειν
νοσφισθείς, μή τοί τι θεῶν μήνιμα γένωμαι (*Od*.11.72-73)

Leave me not behind thee, unwept and unburied as thou goest thence,
And turn not away from me, lest haply I bring the wrath of gods upon thee.[35]

If we accept that Homeric poetry can transmit some of the real traditions of the Archaic period,[36] then we may conclude that intense lamenting and grieving was not only accepted, but rather demanded in order to satisfy and appease the dead.[37] Ironically enough, it seems that the death of a relative was one of the limited causes that could give women the chance not only to participate in an event taking place outside their *oikos,* as

[33] Easterling (1991)
[34] Alexiou (2002): 4
[35] Translation Murray A. T. (1919)
[36] Additionally, as I develop in Chapter 1.2, taking into account the fact that the Solons' laws, which were implemented during the Classical period, intended to avoid extravagant lamentation in funerals permits us to suppose that intense lamentation was indeed practiced during the Archaic period. Alexiou (2004) provides with an extensive research concerning lamemtations and their evolution through time.
[37] See Kamen (2013) for the importance of lamenting and providing funerary rituals to the deceased parents. In order for a son, for example, to be able to inherit his parents' heritage, he has to be able to prove that he provided them that he lamented him satisfactorily, and he was visiting the tomb frequently: 101

lamenting and funerary rituals were, but also to play a pivotal role in that public event, and raise their feminine voices while expressing the pain they were suffering from the loss.

1.1 *Kleos* for women?

However, one of Anyte's most stricking innovations is to add the world *kleos* in an epigram written for a young girl; Anyte has managed to equal these virtues with *kleos*. Geoghegan has interestingly observed Homer's influence on Anyte, especially in line 3 of this epigram: *κάλλευς* καὶ πινυτᾶτος ἀνὰ *κλέος* reminds us of *Iliad* 13.364 *πολέμοιο μετά κλέος*.[38] Just as in the Homeric model *kleos* is attributed to a brave soldier who gave his life defending his patria, Anyte manages to give Antibia a heroic dimension attributed to her by the *kleos* of her beauty and wisdom that made her so desirable to the young men. It is probably this very heroic dimension her death receives that makes it comparable to Homeric deaths, and thus makes her death not solely lamented, but also exalted, since one of *kleos*' most important features is its very capacity to alleviate the pain of the loss. This similarity can be more clearly seen if we add Farnell's definition of the Greek hero:

> "a person whose virtue, influence or personality was so powerful in his lifetime or through the peculiar circumstances of his death that his spirit after death is regarded as a supernormal power, claiming it to be reverenced and propitiated".[39]

Antibia's beauty and wisdom become comparable to heroic virtues, like bravery and excellence in fighting skills, that give her this supernormal power, which makes her death exalted. Anyte's innovation in praising Antibia's virtues becomes more interesting especially if we take into account the status of women in the Classical period, and the way they were expected to behave publically; as already mentioned, women, unlike men who were honoured through public performance and through exercising their obligations and rights as citizens, would gain *kleos* by doing just the opposite: they were expected to

[38] Geoghegan (1979): 73
[39] Farnell (1921): 343

refrain from the majority of public realms (except for religious ones), and devote their lives in household, raising their children.[40]

In summary, as Dean-Jones explains:

> "men were best suited to dealing with matters outside the home, the *polis*, and women with the concerns of the household, the *oikos*. The female role in managing the oikos was recognized as important, and a woman could gain satisfaction and respect from performing her tasks well."[41]

By avoiding giving particular attention to the bonds of parents-daughter that would inevitably make grief more intense, Anyte manages to alleviate the suffering that the verb *καταδύρομαι* in the first line of the epigram expresses by devoting the last two lines of the epigram to the invaluable virtues of Antibia that are able to attain her *kleos*, and thus provoke a mitigating effect to her unjust loss.

Anyte's high quality poetry has managed in just four lines to express and justify the cause of the infinite pain that Antibia's parents feel (in the first two lines of the epigram), but also to consolidate them by bringing their daughter's qualities to equal standards to those of a hero (in the last two lines of the epigram). As Greene observes,

> "While the speaker in Anyte's poem expresses personal grief (*καταδύρομαι*), she also takes on the impersonal voice of the (male) epic poet whose ability to confer *kleos*, assures the heroic stature of the deceased".[42]

1.2 Changes in lamentation during the classical period

Some scholars have reasonably argued that Anyte's choice to describe Antibia's death not with lament, but exaltation is justified with the fact that this would enable her both to relieve the pain and to avoid an exaggerated lamentation as those depicted by Homer. Her

[40] For more information regarding female and male status, see Kamen (2013).
[41] Dean-Jones (1991): 112
[42] Greene (2005): 147, Cavareli (1986)

choice might also well be related to the changes concerning the mourning of the dead that took place in classical Athens, and were imposed by the Solon's laws.[43]

The new legislation gave particular emphasis to controlling, and thus, limiting the behavior of the women during the funerary rituals. Some of the new laws' provisions included: to make the funerary ceremony a private affair, and restrict it in the private space instead of letting it take place outdoors; to restrict the number of women that could attend the ceremony, unless they were very close relatives of the deceased (the degree-limit was first cousins); to have finished with the funerary process before sunset. It becomes obvious that these legislations put an end to women's pivotal role in lamenting, and thus established new expectations concerning what was judged as an "appropriate attitude towards death"; extravagant and loud lamentations were replaced with self-control and a modest manner of lamenting.[44] Plutarch describes the provisions of the new legislation:

> Ἐπέστησε δὲ καὶ ταῖς ἐξόδοις τῶν γυναικῶν καὶ τοῖς πένθεσι καὶ ταῖς ἑορταῖς νόμον ἀπείργοντα τὸ ἄτακτον καὶ ἀκόλαστον... πρόσκειται δὲ τοῖς ἡμετέροις ζημιοῦσθαι τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα ποιοῦντας ὑπὸ τῶν γυναικονόμων, ὡς ἀνάνδροις καὶ γυναικώδεσι τοῖς περὶ τὰ πένθη πάθεσι καὶ ἁμαρτήμασιν ἐνεχομένους. (*Plut*. *Solon* 21.5, 21.7)
>
> He also subjected the public appearances of the women, their mourning and their festivals to a law, which did away with disorder and license…most of these practices are also forbidden by our laws, but ours contain the additional provision that such offerings shall be punished by the board of censors for women because they indulge in unmanly and effeminate extravagances of sorrow when they mourn.[45]

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[43] Although there is no sufficient information, to my knowledge, to confirm the strict implementation of the Solon's laws during the Hellenistic period, it is possible that they were still having some effect. This could probably justify Erinna's incapability to join the funeral of her friend, Baukis (since she was not a close relative of the latter-see Chapter 3), or Anyte's intention to provoke a mitigating effect for Antibia's death (*AP*. 7.490) in order to avoid a sentimental overaction of the parents of the deceased girl.

[44] Alexiou (2002), Holst-Warhaft (1991), Garland (1985)

[45] Translation Perrin (1914)

The new law had such an impact that in classical Athens excessive mourning and lamentations were attributed to a "womanish" behavior, and consequently "unmanly" behavior.

> θῆλυ γὰρ ὄντως καὶ ἀσθενὲς καὶ ἀγεννὲς τὸ πενθεῖν· γυναῖκες γὰρ ἀνδρῶν εἰσι φιλοπενθέστεραι καὶ οἱ βάρβαροι τῶν Ἑλλήνων καὶ οἱ χείρους ἄνδρες τῶν ἀμεινόνων, καὶ αὐτῶν δὲ τῶν βαρβάρων οὐχ οἱ γενναιότατοι (*Plut. Consolatio ad Apollonium*, 113a)

> Mourning is something feminine, weak, ignoble; women are more inclined to it than men,
> barbarians more than Greeks, commoners more than aristocrats.[46]

Pericles in his famous Funeral Oration reminds women that they will succed in attaining *kleos* by achieving not to be spoken among the men.[47]

> εἰ δέ με δεῖ καὶ γυναικείας τι ἀρετῆς, ὅσαι νῦν ἐν χηρείᾳ ἔσονται, μνησθῆναι, βραχείᾳ παραινέσει ἅπαν σημανῶ. τῆς τε γὰρ ὑπαρχούσης φύσεως μὴ χείροσι γενέσθαι ὑμῖν μεγάλη ἡ δόξα καὶ ἧς ἂν ἐπ' ἐλάχιστον ἀρετῆς πέρι ἢ ψόγου ἐν τοῖς ἄρσεσι **κλέος** ᾖ. (*Thuc*. 2.44.2)

> And since I must say something also of feminine virtue for you that are now widows, I shall express it in this short admonition. It will be much for your honour not to recede from your sex and to give as little occasion as **rumour** amongst the men, whether of good or evil, as you can.[48]

Although we cannot really prove whether this new tradition of lamenting derived from Solon's legislations is reflected on Anyte's poetry and her dealing with death, it is neither improbable, however, that up to a certain point these attitudes had an impact on her. Since her epigram was not dedicated to a warrior, whose *pro patria mors* guaranteed him a glorious death, Anyte had to borrow from masculine poetry what was necessary to make Antibia's death a glorious and a less painful one.

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[46] Translation Goodwin (1874)

[47] See Demand (1994): 3 for more information about the honour of women. "… their vulnerability made them a constant threat to the honour of the house and they had to be continually guarded and watched."

[48] Translation Hobbes (1840)

On the one hand, her talent to transmit the feminine experience of loss and the female perspectives, and on the other hand her capacity to use in her own interest aspects from the male poetry (like Homer) in order to praise the feminine virtues result in a unique blend of combining the "low" with the "high" art, the "domestic" with the "heroic", the "female" with the "male" avoiding being neither as feminine as Gutzwiller supports, nor as neutral and impersonal as Wilamowitz argues. Instead, as Greene points, "in this way, Anyte's poems go beyond traditionally feminine perspectives on death in the way they bring the ordinary lived experiences of women into dialogue with male heroic tradition."[49]

[49] Greene (2005): 145

Chapter 2: Erinna

Erinna is one of the most enigmatic female poets, probably even more than Sappho. Her *persona* becomes even more mysterious given the (almost complete) lack of evidence about her life. The scarce information we know about her comes either from her poetry or from poems that were written about her: an epigram that Asclepiades wrote about her (*AP*. 7.11) happens to be the oldest reference we dispose of her (4^{th}-3^{rd} cent. B.C.).

Although we possess only a sample of her poetry: three epigrams, two lines from an hexameter poem, and some remains (forty-six lines) of a longer poem known today as *"The Distaff"*, later poems that were written by other poets for her permit us to conclude that her poetry was praised and that she was a well established poetic persona. Thanks to an anonymous epigram, for example, we can extract valuable information about her life:

Λέσβιον Ἠρίννης τόδε κηρίον· εἰ δέ τι μικρόν,
ἀλλ' ὅλον ἐκ Μουσέων κιρνάμενον μέλιτι.
οἱ δὲ τριηκόσιοι ταύτης στίχοι ἶσοι Ὁμήρῳ,
τῆς καὶ παρθενικῆς ἐννεακαιδεκέτευς·
ἣ καὶ ἐπ' ἠλακάτῃ μητρὸς φόβῳ, ἣ καὶ ἐφ' ἱστῷ
ἑστήκει Μουσέων λάτρις ἐφαπτομένη.
Σαπφὼ δ' Ἠρίννης ὅσσον μελέεσσιν ἀμείνων,
Ἤριννα Σαπφοῦς τόσσον ἐν ἑξαμέτροις. (*AP*. 9.190)

This is the Lesbian honeycomb of Erinna.
Even though it is small, it is all flavored with the Muses' honey.
Her three-hundred lines are equal to Homer,
Though she was only a girl of nineteen.
Applying herself to her distaff out of fear of her mother,
And working at her loom, she stood as servant of the Muses.
Sappho is better than Erinna at lyric verse
by as much as Erinna is better then Sappho in hexameters.[50]

[50] Translation Snyder (1989): 87

This epigram confirms Erinna's reputation as a poet since not only it praises her poetry, but also compares it to Homer and to Sappho. The three-hundred lines consist obviously a reference to her most recognizable poem, *"The Distaff"*, which she wrote about the death of her friend Baukis.[51] If *"The Distaff"* gives us biographical information about Baukis' life and her untimely death, then this epigram assumes the same function by informing us about Erinna's occupation with weaving unwillingly (*out of fear of her mother*), and her early death at the age of nineteen. The same information concerning the age of her death is also confirmed by another poem, which Asclepiades wrote about her:

Ὸ γλυκὺς Ἠρίννης οὗτος πόνος, οὐχὶ πολὺς μέν,
ὡς ἂν παρθενικᾶς ἐννεακαιδεκέτευς,
ἀλλ' ἑτέρων πολλῶν δυνατώτερος· εἰ δ' Ἀίδας μοι
μὴ ταχὺς ἦλθε, τίς ἂν ταλίκον ἔσχ' ὄνομα; (*AP*. 7.11)

This is the sweet work of Erinna- not much, to be sure,
for it is the work of a girl of nineteen –
but more powerful than many other books. If Hades
Had not come early to me, who would have such a name?[52]

As already mentioned, her three-hundred lines poem, *"The Distaff"* is Erinna's most important poem and has gained the attention of many scholars. Arthur argues, for example, that Erinna's use of elements of the girls' everyday life "has a quality of self-consciousness, which is without parody, irony or contrivance."[53] West, particularly, has

[51] Although we have no concrete information concerning Erinna's personality, West's conclusion of *"The Distaff"*(her poem-signature) is interesting: "With the novel blend of Aeolic and Doric the author of the the Distaff is not discarding but taking up a special position in relation to it. The Doric element is meant to convey that she is an ordinary person, a homely little Talian maid…the Aeolic element is meant to echo Sappho and so emphasize the female sex of the writer. Both elements are intended to define the poetic persona more piquantly…" (1977): 117
[52] Translation Snyder (1989): 88
[53] Arthur (1980): 65

doubted that Erinna is the real author of this distinguished poem questioning how could it be possible that:

> "a girl brought up on an island, with no large town, in a household dominated by spinning and weaving, and forced to devote herself to it from dawn to dusk, and yet so versed in classical poetry as to be able to compose one of the most accomplished and original poems of the century".

Alternatively, he suggests that this poem was explicitly written in order to be widely renowned, and thus, was composed by a flourishing male poet.[54] I accept Pomeroy's argument about the increasing opportunities in education for women during that period, which gave the possibility for female poets to arise, and especially to Erinna who "showed her originality in using dactylic hexameter for a poem of lamentation, when tradition dictated the elegiac couplet or a choral meter".[55]

In any case, *"The Distaff"* is a state-of-the-art piece of Hellenistic poetry. It provides us with valuable information about women's lives, regarding the games the young girls were playing, their tasks as they grew older, the relationship between mother and daughter, the social and religious taboos that existed and how the latter affected their lives. Yet, we should always have in mind that the forty-six of the total three-hundred lines are very fragmented and our assumptions cannot be certain regarding the meaning or the symbolism of the context. In addition, the remaining three epigrams (of which two are concerned with the death of Baukis), and the two lines of a hexameter poem that survive from her poetry make our understanding of her corpus quite limited. As already mentioned, *"The Distaff"* has gained the attention of many scholars, while her epigrams have received significantly less attention. The aim of this section is, basing first on our developed knowledge and the information we extract from *"The Distaff",* to shed some light on Erinna's epigrams in order to obtain a more general perception of her poetic identity and then, to better comprehend her innovation as a female-centered poet. Thus, at first there is a parallelism between Erinna's poetry with the poetry of Sappho and

[54] West (1977): 117
[55] Pomeroy (1995): 137

Homer[56], and, secondly, the point where these similarities end mark the way for her literary innovation to arise and express an original feminine experience of grief.

One of Erinna's main themes is, like Anyte, marriage and death. It is interesting though, to notice the substantial difference that exists between these two poets in their attitudes towards marriage. As we saw in the previous chapter, in Anyte's poetry, marriage and death are clearly juxtaposed. Anyte treats the wedding as the normal continuation in a young girl's life, and when death comes first, it is considered as a dramatic misfortune. In Anyte's poetry marriage is never seen in a negative way, but instead it assumes a vital role in women's lives since it constitutes, if not the exclusive, the most important aim of a girl. Marriage is associated with life (because if the girls of her epigrams were not dead, they would be married), and the very lack of it means death (death came before their marriage). In all her epigrams, Anyte represents parents (more often the mother) who lament their daughter's untimely death, but she never expresses, for example, their sadness because of the departure of their newly wedded daughter to her new house.[57]

In Erinna's poetry, on the other hand, we are never left to understand that she was sharing the same positive view of marriage as Anyte was. On the contrary, she treated the marriage of her friend Baukis as a "loss" or even a "small death", which was later substituted by the "real" one. In that sense, Erinna seems to share more things in common

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[56] The reason why Sappho has been used as a point of reference derives from the general tendency to co-relate the work of the two female poets, as epigram (*AP*. 9.190) does. The comparison with the poetry of Homer, on the other hand, takes place because (1) Homer offers us some of the most original lamentation scenes in literature, and (2) Erinna's most famous poem: *"The Distaff"* is a lamenting poem written, like epic, in hexameter. In this way, we can better investigate up to which point has Erinna adopted traditional poetic formulas, and where exactly does her literary innovation begin.

[57] The "departure" from her parental house to the husband's house could be associated with the departure of the living girl to the world of the dead. Although in the first case, the girl is still alive and so, there was no reason to lament her, the marriage meant for her a transition from girlhood to womanhood; her departure from the safety provided in her parental *oikos* to the uncertainty of her new *oikos*; in some cases, on grounds of immigration, the girl would meet again her parents only after long time. Thus, because of the similarities in traditions between death and marriage, the very same wedding song could be easily turned into a funerary one. This paper will make later reference to *hymenaios*.

with Sappho than with her contemporary Anyte; as we already saw in an anonymous epigram (*AP*. 9.190), there was already a tendency to find common poetic features between Erinna and Sappho. Sappho, a clearly woman-centered poet, also expressed her sadness caused to her by the separation with her female friends. Particularly, her fr. 94 recalls many points from Erinna's *Distaff* concerning the life of young women, the happy moments they shared as friends in the past and then, the sad end of the story coming from the separation of their relationship. Bowra, who was among the first scholars to observe such similarities between the female poets, writes:

> " In this poem Erinna [*"The Distaff"*] moves quickly and naturally from one memory to another, and much of her success lies in the clarity and delicacy with which she recalls the past. Once at least Sappho [fr.94] did the same thing, when she recalled the happy times passed with her lost friend, its flowers, its feasts, its ceremonies."[58]

2.1 Erinna's Distaff (*Ἠλακάτη)*

Those are the remnants of Erinna's "Distaff"; undoubtedly her most famous and enigmatic poem. The text is so fragmented that some lines contain hardly a word:

Part I

[ ].ν̣[
[ ]εοι.[ ].
[ ]ε κώρας·
[ ].ι νύμφαι·
[ ] χελύνναν (5)
[ς]ελάννα·
[χε]λ̣ύννα·
[ ].ε̣λῆς[
[ ]ῳ̣.ει·
[ ].αφυλλοις[(10)
[ ].λασ̣σ̣ει·
[ ].ανν̣.ν·
[ ]νί.απέξα[
[ ].[..]υ̣ κυμα[ ]

[58] Bowra (1953): 167, cf. Rauk (1989): 101

Part II

..]υκᾶν μαινομεν̣[ ].σϙιναφ.[.]π̣.[(15)
αἰ]ᾳῖ ἐγώ, μέγ' ἄϋσα· φ[ ] χελύννα
..].ομένα μεγάλαϙ[ ] χορτίον αὐλᾶς·
τα]ῦτα τύ, Βαῦκι τάλᾳι[να]χεισα γόημ[ ]
τα]ῦτά μοι ἐν κρα[δ].΄..χνια κεῖται
θέρμ' ἔτι· την[ ].υ̣ρομες ἄνθρακες ἤδη· (20)
δαγύ[δ]ων τεχ[ ]ίδ̣ες ἐν θαλάμοισι
νυμ[φ]αι.[ ]έες· ἅ τε ποτ' ὄρθρον
μάτηρ αε[ ].ο̣ισιν ἐρείθ̣οις
̣τηνασηλθ[ ]̣να ἀμφ' ἁλιπαστον·
..μικραις.[ ]̣ν φόβον ἄγαγε Μορ[μ]ώ (25)
..].εν μὲν κ.[ ].ατα ποσσὶ δὲ φοιτῆι
.]..[.]σιν· ἐκ δ'[ ] μετεβάλλετ' ὀπωπάν·
ἀνίκα δ' ἐς [λ]έχο̣ϛ [ ]ό̣κα πάντ' ἐλέλασο
ἅσσ' ε.[ ]..ηπιας..τ.[ ] ματρὸς ἄκουσας,
Β̣αῦ̣κι φίλα· λαθα...ε.[ ]. Ἀφροδ̣ίτα· (30)
̣τῶ̃ τυ κατακλᾳ[ί]οισατα[ ].[ ]...ε λείπω [·]
ο̣ὐ [γ]άρ μοι πόδες ....[..].[ ]..ο δῶμα β̣έβαλοι·
οὐδ' ἐσιδῆν φαε.[ ]κυν οὐδ̣ὲ γοᾶσαι
γυμναῖσιν χαιταις.ν[ ].νικεος αἰδὼς

Part III

δρύπτει μ' ἀμφι..[(35)
α..[ ]δε π̣[ρ]οπάροιθ[εν
ἐννεᾳ[και]δέκατος .[
Ἠρι̣νν̣α[..]ε φίλαι π.[
ἀλαϰάταν ἐϙορε̣ι[
γνωθ' ὅτι τοικ[(40)
αμφ.̣ικ.ϛ.ε.[
ταῦτ' ᾳ̣ἰδώς μ.[
παρθε̣[ν]ίοις...[
δερκομένα δ' ε̣κ[
καὶ χαιτα.ᾳ̣ν.[
πραϋλόγοι πο̣[λιαί, ταὶ γήραος ἄνθεα θνατοῖς (45)
τῶ̃ τυ φίλα φ.[
Βαῦκι κατακλᾳ[
αν φλόγα μ̣ιν .[
ὠρυγᾶς ἀϊοις.ο[
ὦ̃ πολλὰν ὑμε̣ν[(50)
π]ολλὰ δ' ἐπιψαυ[
π]άνθ' ἑνός, ὦ̃ υμ[

αἰαῖ Βαῦκι τάλαιν[α[59]

"The Distaff"

…of a girl. . . maidens [or dolls?] . . . tortoise . . .
tortoise . . . wave . . . (1-14)
from white horses (15)
I shouted loudly. . . tortoise. . .
the yard of the great court . . .
wretched Baukis, I cry out this lament . . .
these games lie in my heart
still warm. But [those are] already ashes. (20)
of dolls . . . in the bed chambers . . .
maidens [or dolls] . . . once at dawn
Mother . . . to the wool-workers
. . . sprinkled with salt
little . . . Mormo brought fear. (25)
. . . she roamed on her four feet
and changed her visage from [one thing to another]
But when you went into the bed . . ., you forgot everything
which still in your innocence . . . having heard your mother,
dear Baukis. Forgetfulness . . . Aphrodite. (30)
Therefore you, weeping . . . but other things I leave;
for my feet are not permitted . . . from the house,
nor [am I able] to look upon a corpse, nor to lament
with uncovered hair . . . shame
tears me around my checks . . . (35)
nineteen . . . Erinna . . . distaff . . . shame . . .
maiden songs . . . looking . . . hair . . . dear Baukis . . .

[59] Ed. SH 401

flame . . . Hymenaios . . . Hymenaios . . . alas,
wretched Baukis . . .[60] (36- 54)

Sappho fr. 94

τεθνάκην δ' ἀδόλως θέλω·		"Honestly, I wish I were dead!"
<___>ἄ με ψισδομένα κατελίμπανεν		Weeping many tears she left me,
πόλλα καὶ τόδ' ἔειπ.[		saying this as well:
ὤιμ' ὡς δεῖνα πεπ[όνθ]αμεν,		"What dreadful things happened to us,
___Ψάπφ', ἦ μάν σ' ἀέκοισ' ἀπυλιμπάνω.	(5)	Sappho! I don't want to leave you!"
τὰν δ' ἔγω τάδ' ἀμειβόμαν·		I answered her:
χαίροισ' ἔρχεο κἄμεθεν		"Go with my blessings, and remember
___μέμναισ', οἶσθα γὰρ ὥς σε πεδήπομεν·		me for you know how we cherished you
αἰ δὲ μή, ἀλλά σ' ἔγω θέλω		"But if you have [forgotten], I want
ὄμναισαι[...$_{(\cdot)}$].[..$_{(\cdot)}$]..αι	(10)	to remind you. . .
___..[ ] καὶ κάλ' ἐπάσχομεν·		of the beautiful things that happened to us
πο[ ]οις ἴων		"Close by my side you put around
καὶ βρ[όδων]κίων τ' ὕμοι		yourself and [many wreaths] of violets
___κα..[ ] πὰρ ἔμοι περεθήκαο		and roses and saffron. . .
καὶ πό[λλαις ὑπα]θύμιδας	(15)	And many woven garlands
λέκ[ταις ἀμφ' ἀ]πάλαι δέραι. . .		made from flowers. . .
___ἀνθέων .[ ] πεποημμέναις		around your tender neck,
καὶ π.....[ ]. Μύρωι		"And. . . with costly royal
βρενθείωι.[ ]ρυ[..]ν		myrrh
<___>ἐξαλείψαο κα[ὶ βας]ιληίωι	(20)	you anointed. . . ,
καὶ στρώμν[αν ἐ]πὶ μολθάκαν		"And on a soft bed
ἀπάλαν πα.[ ]...ων		. . . tender. . .
___ἐξίης πόθο[ ].νίδων		you satisfied your desire. . .
κωὔτε τις[ ]..τι		"Nor was there any. . .
ἶρον οὐδυ[ ]	(25)	nor any holy. . .
<___>ἔπλετ' ὄππ[οθεν ἄμ]μες ἀπέσκομεν,		from which we were away,
οὐκ ἄλσος .[ ].ρος		
[ ]ψοφος		
<___>[ ]...οιδια[61]		. . . nor grove. . . "[62]

[60] Translation Snyder (1989): 93
[61] Ed. Lobel and Page (1955)
[62] Translation Snyder (1989): 24, 25

At first sight, as Bowra argues, there seems to be striking similarities between the two poems both in the scenes they depict and the theme they treat: the departure of a beloved female friend. No matter the reason of their departure (in Sappho it is not clearly mentioned, as it is in Erinna), they both bring back to memory happy moments from the past that they shared with their female friends, and they both ask not to be forgotten by them. Their intention however, as well as the use of memory, serves different purposes in the poetry of each poet.

Starting with Erinna, her poem, *"The Distaff"*, begins with a vivid narration of the two girls' lives: she describes the games they were playing when they were little girls (the dolls, the tortoise, etc.), then their responsibilities as younger women (to weave, to obey their mother's instructions, etc.) and the common fears they were sharing of Mormo,[63] related to the challenges the adult life includes (e.g. womanhood, marriage, childbirth).

All Erinna's early (both poetic and personal) life is surrounded by her common experiences with Baukis. Baukis becomes Erinna's Muse. Unlike Sappho, who wrote poems about several women, Erinna's whole surviving work, apart from one epigram, is dedicated to her unique beloved friend. The "forgetfulness" of Baukis in lines 28 and 30 seems to be the reason why Erinna is bringing back to memory the past. The poetess is blaming Aphrodite, the goddess of love, for Baukis' forgetfulness: since Baukis got married, she left behind her old life together with her old memories with Erinna. She links, thus, forgetfulness with marriage and mindfulness with the person who was not victim of Aphrodite. Unlike Baukis who departed, Erinna is left behind with her memories of the past, and is now trying to awake Baukis' memory. Erinna is addressing herself directly to her (e.g. "I shouted" in line 16, "I cry" in line 18), but Baukis is dead. Contrary to Sappho, who was known to have an audience with which she was sharing her

[63] Mormo is traditionally related to adulthood, and represents the risk of transition to womanhood. In other cases, the reference to her serves to frighten kids. I develop her image further later in this chapter.

poetry, Erinna does not have anyone to be the recipient of her poetry. In that context, "memory for Erinna produces a written record of the past, a memorial."[64]

Additionally, in Erinna's case the departure of Baukis has two dimensions: the departure of Baukis from her maiden house to the new house of her husband, and secondly, her departure from the world of girlhood. In that sense, Erinna experiences not only the physical departure of her childhood friend, but also a change in societal status: before marriage, Baukis and Erinna belonged to the same group of girlhood (they were both *parthenoi*). With Baukis's marriage, however, Erinna was left behind to the old group while Baukis was completing her transition to adulthood. With Baukis' death, Erinna is left alone and remains the only person to keep these memories alive. Contrary to the reciprocal memory of Sappho's fragment, Erinna does not share her memories with anyone.

Similarly, Sappho makes also reference to the joint past of the old friends. In her fragment, for example, she shares with us some of their common public and private moments, and reminds her friend of the flowers they cut together and the garlands they made (which were then used to decorate their necks), their private memories on the soft bed, etc. Unlike Erinna's monologue, Sappho develops a poetic dialogue with her friend (e.g. the imperatives in 7 "Go" and "remember", " I want to remind you" in line 9, and "us" in line 11). This happens obviously because Sappho's friend is not dead, and there is high chances that she will read her words. Sappho hence, initiates a twofold dialogue: a direct one between her and her friend and secondly, and a poetic one with her audience by sharing the previous one with them (in direct form).

Furthermore, separation for Sappho does not have to be permanent. Although we are not informed about the reason of the departure of her friends (although marriage is a very possible excuse, immigration to bigger cities or even exile could be the case as well), nothing prohibits that there will be a reunion in the future. Thus, the memory in Sappho's

[64] Rayor (2005): 60

poetry assumes a different function: a medium that can fight the sadness of separation and can convey happiness and gratitude for sharing happy moments.

Rauk argues that this fragment represents a farewell to a girl (χαίροισ' ἔρχεο κἄμεθεν μέμναισ', οἶσθα γὰρ ὤς σε πεδήπομεν·) who is leaving because she is being married, and thus, Sappho's recall of the past takes place in the context of a lament: " Sappho recalls the very things that she loses with the departure of her friend, things which, now that the friend is gone, cause her sorrow."[65] I do not share his view, but I rather find that this is exactly what Sappho is trying to avoid; although the poem begins with the dramatic scene of her friend who prefers death to separation and departure, I distinguish Sappho's intention to console her friend by reminding her of their sweet, old memories. Here the past appears in order to make departure easier and provokes feelings of gratitude for the moments they had the luck to experience (οἶσθα γὰρ ὤς σε πεδήπομεν; for you know how we cherished you; line 8).[66] As Burnett also suggests, the first melodramatic lines of the young who is leaving are followed by the calming words of a wise woman:
"The disconsolate girl thinks that parting is the end of life and love, but her wiser mistress commands her to go her way rejoicing. Memory can turn momentary pain into an enduring joy".[67]

Those feelings will not be forgotten or fade away in the future, but they will rather provide a point of reference for the common life the two friends shared. In that context, memory becomes reciprocal; it has a recipient and a sender (unlike Erinna, where there is only the latter) and since Sappho will share her poetry with her poetic circle, " the shared memory of the beloved provides for a continuing conversation among the women of the community."[68]

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[65] Rauk (1989): 110
[66] Wilamowitz (1931): 48 on the other side, suggests that Sappho recalls the past because of the woman's forgetfulness and lack of gratefulness for what Sappho offered to her. Rauk (1989): 110 relates memory and forgetfulness with separation by marriage. Although this motif is proved right in Erinna's *Distaff,* I believe that in Sappho's fragment we are not allowed to be sure about the reason of separation.
[67] Burnett (1979)
[68] Rayor (2005): 70

So far, comparing common poetic features between Erinna's *Distaff* and Sappho's fr.94, it seems that both poets used poetry in order to express their feelings of loss caused by the separation from their friends. The memory of the past, however, had a completely different meaning between them. The memory in Sappho could work as a consolation for her melancholia, and could also serve to keep the memory of her lost friend alive through sharing her poetry with the community. For Erinna, on the other hand, remembering the past was a wholly painful process. Even the joyful memories of childhood that she shared with Baukis have turned into a source of suffering knowing that they will no more constitute a common reference of the past between her and Baukis. Having no one to share it (the past) with her, not even her Muse, memory was for Erinna a tool that would enable her to turn her feelings into words. Instead of feelings of melancholia, Erinna was lamenting. Instead of sharing her poetry, she individualized her grief. Instead of being grateful for the happy moments of her past life, she focuses on the pain caused to her by the loss of her friend. While it is true that Erinna shares through her poetry intimate moments with her companion like Sappho does, nothing indicates that Sappho is lamenting the parting of her companions. For Erinna, instead, the sole wedding of Baukis was enough reason for her to lament.

2.2 Erinna's Epigrams

As mentioned in the introduction of Erinna's poems, *"The Distaff"* has undeniably gained the most attention because of its enigmatic and multi-symbolic character. This intensively female-oriented poem transmits us a genuine depiction of young women's lives and a female experience of grieving. Nevertheless, our appreciation of Erinna's poetry would be very limited if we only focused on this poem and ignored the rest of her work. We will now take a look at her epigrams as well in order to better identify her poetic personality.

Νύμφας Βαυκίδος εἰμί· πολυκλαύταν δὲ παρέρπων
στάλαν τῷ κατὰ γᾶς τοῦτο λέγοις Ἀίδᾳ·
"Βάσκανός ἐσσ', Ἀίδα." τὰ δέ τοι καλὰ σάμαθ' ὁρῶντι
ὠμοτάταν Βαυκοῦς ἀγγελέοντι τύχαν,

ὡς τὰν παῖδ', ὑμέναιος ἐφ' αἷς ἀείδετο πεύκαις,
ταῖσδ' ἐπὶ καδεστὰς ἔφλεγε πυρκαϊᾷ·
καὶ σὺ μέν, ὦ Ὑμέναιε, γάμων μολπαῖον ἀοιδὰν
ἐς θρήνων γοερὸν φθέγμα μεθαρμόσαο.[69] (*AP*. 7.712)

I am the tomb of the bride Baukis; passing by this much
lamented stele, say this to Hades beneath the earth:
"Hades, you are envious". But to you who see them,
these beautiful monuments will announce the cruel fate of Baukis:
How with the pine torches with which Hymenaios[70] was hymned
Her father-in law set the girl ablaze upon this pyre,
And you yourself, Hymenaios, changed the tuneful song of
marriage into the mournful sound of lamentation.[71]

In the very same epigram the world ὑμέναιος is repeated twice, but with different meaning: the first purpose of the ὑμέναιος, which was to be sung as a wedding song during the wedding ceremony, turned into a lamenting song, sung during Baukis' funeral. Instead of providing a cheerful melody (μολπαῖον ἀοιδὰν) that corresponds to a unique and happy event as marriage is, it ended up giving the most lamenting sound that corresponds to the most unjust and untimely death of a young bride (φθέγμα μεθαρμόσαο). The fact, however, that the very same song is suitable to both events that are so juxtaposed, the wedding and funeral, should be considered as part of the general similarities in traditions that take place both during the process of marriage and during

[69] This passage recalls a passage from Euripide's *Alcestis* (910-924): ὦ σχῆμα δόμων, πῶς εἰσέλθω,/πῶς δ' οἰκήσω, μεταπίπτοντος/δαίμονος; οἴμοι. πολὺ γὰρ τὸ μέσον:/τότε μὲν πεύκαις σὺν Πηλιάσιν/σύν θ' ὑμεναίοις ἔστειχον ἔσω/φιλίας ἀλόχου χέρα βαστάζων,/πολυάχητος δ' εἵπετο κῶμος/τήν τε θανοῦσαν κἄμ' ὀλβίζων/ὡς εὐπατρίδ αι κἀπ' ἀμφοτέρων/ὄντες ἀρίστων σύζυγες εἶμεν:/νῦν δ' ὑμεναίων γόος ἀντίπαλος/λευκῶν τε πέπλων μέλανες στολμοὶ/πέμπουσί μ' ἔσω/λέκτρων κοίτας ἐς ἐρήμους. "O sad image of my house, how am I to enter, how live in you with my fortune so changed? Alas! How great the difference! Once with pine-torches from Mount Pelion and bridal songs I entered, holding the hand of my dear wife, and a glamorous throng followed, praising the blessedness of my dead wife and me […] now groans of grief in answer to those songs and black robes in place of white escort me in". Translation Kovacs (1994).

[70] According to Pindar's *thrênos* (fr. 128c), Hymenaios was the god of marriage, who died the very day of his marriage. See Swift (2010) "The Hidden Chorus: Echoes of Genre in Tragic Lyric" for a study regarding the use of hymenaios in poetry and literarure.

[71] Translation Snyder (1989): 90.

the funerary rites.[72] Rehm, for example, based on archaeological and literary evidence notices:

> "A bride will offer a lock of hair before her marriage; mourners will offer the same when visiting a grave. Like the bride and the groom, the dead are ritually bathed, dressed and crowned, activities in which a woman plays a crucial role. The corpse is covered, the bride is veiled; the dead are laid out on a bed or a couch, the wedding leads to the nuptial bed. Both events involve a journey to the "new home", often taken by horse in a procession that includes torchbearers, family and friends, and where songs and dance mark the occasion. A *makarismos* blessing is used for the "happy" couple and the blessed dead. The bride receives gifts in her new home, corpses receive gifts in theirs, and both rites include a final banquet. The connection between weddings and funerals is made explicit for the young who die unmarried, for their graves are crowned with large stone *loutrophoroi* representing the ritual vessel for nuptial bathing. The points of shared activity between weddings and funerals find literal expression on epitaphs, which seek to evoke aspects of both rituals in those who read them."[73]

Alexiou's (2002) extensive work on the ritual lament in Greek tradition explains that these similarities in the songs do not arise from lack of creativity but, instead, they aim to express the same feelings that arise in both occasions. More specifically she points out: "Popular belief viewed death and marriage as fundamentally similar occasions, signaling

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[72] Although Hymenaios was normally sung as part of the wedding rituals (e.g. Plutarch's *Quaest. Conv*. 666f., Pindar's *Pithian* 3.17, *Il*. 18. 493), it was also sung as part of the funerary rituals of a young person (e.g. *Alcestis* 922: … νῦν δ' ὑμεναίων γόος ἀντίπαλος … now groans of grief in answer to those (wedding) songs, or *Prometheus Bound* (557-560), where the chorus contrasts the Hymenaios that was sung during the wedding with the present). Hymenaios took place during a crucial moment of transition, just as wedding for a woman is. However, it is important to take into account that the period of transition would not end at the day of marriage. As I already developed in Chapter 1, the ultimate objective for a woman was not only to be married, but also to bear children. The transition of a woman would hence end after the first childbirth. The fact that Hymenaios was sung during Baukis' funeral (shortly after she was married, but bore no children) might well be justified on the fact that her period of transition was not yet completed since she did not achieve her *telos*, which included her introduction to motherhood. In addition, the singing of Hymenaios gives an ironic touch to Baukis' wedding since she was so close to accomplish her *telos*, yet death came first. See also Rehm (1994) Marriage to Death for the similarities of the process of marriage and death in ancient Athenian tragedy (e.g. *Antigone*, *Hippolytus*, *Iphigenia*). See also Seaford (1987) The tragic wedding.

[73] Rehm (1994): 29

the transition from one stage in the cycle of human experience to another."[74] Even when the given occasion is marriage, those songs express the sad feelings of the bride's parents for the "loss" of their daughter; before marriage, the girl was her parents' child, sharing and taking care of their common house, which in turn, represented a safe shelter for the girl. By being married the girl was departing from her house, leaving her parents behind and starting her new journey as a wife, with her parents lamenting her as if she were dead. The girl, in turn, would express her sadness or even complaints about her departure as if she would never come back.

The transition though to adulthood and womanhood was not always an easy one nor was it taken for granted, but could entail some dangers. For this reason many rituals and festivals, like *Thesmophoria* took place in order to facilitate the girl's passage to womanhood. Since the main aim was to introduce successful wives, and more importantly, successful mothers that would bring into the world new citizens for the polis, those cults were often supported by the whole city as it was a common interest to bear healthy children.[75]

As laments show, however, the happiest moments could easily turn into the darkest ones. Thus, Oakley and Sinos observe that both the lighted torches and the songs served to keep the bad spirits away and to protect the couple during its transition to the new life.[76] This belief is closely associated with the reference to Μορμώ in line 25 of Erinna's *Distaff*. By Erinna's description of Μορμώ we understand that she was a fearful figure (...brought fear...), that could change shape (...changed her visage...) and that sometimes she could look like an animal (...she roamed on her four feet...).[77] Myth had it that Μορμώ was a woman from Corinth who once ate her own children, and since then the

[74] Alexiou (2002): 120
[75] Sourvinou-Inwood (1988), Dowden (1989)
[76] Oakley and Sinos (1993): 27
[77] See Johnson S.I (1999) Restless Dead: Encounters Between the Living and the Dead in Ancient Greece (especially Ch. 5 and 6) about the fearful figure of Mormo.

reference to her is used in order to frighten children.[78] Johnson suggests that this ghostly figure is closely associated with mortal women who did not manage either to bear children or raise them successfully, and that women's capacity to avoid any contact with Μορμώ depends on their reproductive accomplishments and their performance as succesful mothers.

Another danger that the transitional girl may face is angering or disappointing a goddess that is expected to protect her during the transitional period, as Hera or Artemis are. In Baukis' case, however, the god to be blamed for this unjust and untimely death is Hades himself: the phrase " Βάσκανός ἐσσ', Ἀίδα." appears in two similar occasions: one is in Erinna's first epigram for Baukis (cited above) where it expresses the god's jealousy-perhaps for Baukis' perfection, or even attractiveness. The second occurrence is in a poem by Leonidas or Meleager in order to blame Hades' jealousy for Erinna's own death:

Παρθενικὰν νεαοιδὸν ἐν ὑμνοπόλοισι μέλισσαν
Ἤρινναν Μουσῶν ἄνθεα δρεπτομέναν
Ἅιδας εἰς ὑμέναιον ἀνάρπασεν. ἦ ῥα τόδ' ἔμφρων
εἶπ' ἐτύμως ἁ παῖς· "Βάσκανός ἐσσ', Ἀίδα." (*AP*. 7.13)

While Erinna, the maiden honey-bee,[79] new singer among the minstrels,
was gathering the flower of the Muses, Hades snatched

[78] Theocritus in his Idyll.15.40 uses the same expression while Gorgo is trying to appease her son by reminding him the frightful Mormo: … Μορμώ, δάκνει ἵππος… (…the horse-figured Mormo bites…). In other cases, Mormo might also consist a danger during a crucial moment of transition: in our case, it might entail a danger for Baukis' introduction to adult and married life. See Callimachus'*Hymn to Delos* … ὅτ᾽ εὐήχης ὑμέναιος ἤθεα κουράων μορμύσσεται … (the sweet-sounded marriage hymn frightens the maiden's quarters) (*Hymn*. 4. 296). Pomeroy (1978): 21 observes that "… Callimachus … associates Mormo with the sexual aspect of marriage that would intimidate a young bride". See also Arthur (1980): especially p. 65.

[79] This expression is very similar to Meleager's reference to Erinna in his Garland: "καὶ γλυκὺν Ἠρίννης παρθενόχρωτα κρόκον" (*AP 4.1.12)*. The saffron colour is believed to be the colour of transition from girlhood to adulthood. See Sourvinou-Inwood (1988) regarding the use of saffron robes ornaments during wedding. See Stehle (2012) for the association of saffron colour with feminine sexuality and marriage.

her away to be his bride. A true word, indeed, the girl spoke
while she lived: "Hades you are envious".[80]

From this epigram, we extract important biographical information about Erinna. Most importantly, we know that Erinna, similarly to her beloved Baukis, suffered from an untimely death: at an age that she could be married (Παρθενικὰν). Both women instead of being married to a man equal to their qualities ended up being married to the god of death; they both became Bride of the Dead.[81] They both did not manage to fulfill their accomplishments to society; instead, they died so young they left behind no offspring. In addition, both poets of the epigrams express their willingness to name the cause (jealousy) that provoked the death of their beloved ones and their need to find a point of reference (in this case, Hades) to blame for the loss they are suffering.

The poet of this epigram (whether it is Meleager or Leonidas) seems to be familiar with Erinna's poetry since he manages to write an epigram about her that shares similar characteristics with the poem she wrote about the death of her friend Baukis. In that context, given the similarities between this poem and Erinna's *Distaff*, one might even consider the *Distaff* as a self-lament since by the time that Erinna was lamenting Baukis' unjust fate and untimely death, the evil Fates were planning her untime death as well. In that sense, Erinna was lamenting the misfortunes of her friend, which she would soon also suffer. As Levaniouk interestingly notices:
"Erinna, then, is a figure like Baukis, and this Erinna is certainly a product of the poem, a personification of her poetry."[82] Taking hence into account the similarity that both women share related to their tragic end of life, Erinna in her *Distaff* could express not only her suffering for Baukis' fate, but also hers.

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[80] Translation Snyder (1989): 88, 89
[81] Although Baukis indeed was married to a real man, her very earl death however, did not permit her to enjoy the life of a married woman. Furthermore, as already developed in this study, a woman would actually gain her status as a wife, once she had brought heirs to the worlds. In that strict sense, Baukis left the living world without completing the necessary for her status as a "wife". She thus, ended up being the Bride of the Dead.
[82] Levaniouk (2008)

The motif of "sharing the same fate" through lament alludes to Achilles' lament in *Iliad* for Patroclus' death; as Tsagalis explains: "the motif of sharing a common fate acquires an extratextual dimension, since *Iliad* makes Achilles foreshadow his future death, Patroclus-like, in Troy".[83] In the case of Baukis and Erinna, however, it is also interesting to notice that their similar fate does not only involve their early death, but also the fact that both women missed experiencing the positive moments that their young age had to offer: (1) neither of them had the opportunity to enjoy their wedding day; instead, they were offered funerary rituals equal to the wedding ones as part of the whole funerary process for the young, unmarried girls. (2) Neither of them managed to gain society's recognition by the status offered to those becoming good wives and successful mothers (and so, fight the evil spirit of *Mormo*). (3) Neither of them had the chance to experience the transition from girlhood to womanhood and administrate their own *oikos*.

In addition, the lament of Erinna in her *Distaff* can also be paralleled to those of the women in *Iliad*, and particularly to that of Andromache for Hektor.[84] Skinner, for example, observes some similarities that both cases include: direct address to the deceased; reference to the deceased by his name; reference to happy moments they shared in the past; the sense of loss for those who are left behind; regret that both victims did not die in their home; all these elements compose the *góos* which, unlike the *thrênos* that is expressed by professional mourners, is produced spontaneously by the kinswomen and develops a more individualized and personal grieving experience.[85]

There is, however, a striking difference between the two cases: unlike the lamenting Andromache in *Iliad* who has the right to attend the funeral as the wife of the deceased, Erinna misses that right due to the lack of family bond between her and Baukis (… nor [am I able] to look upon a corpse, nor to lament; line 33).[86] Additionally, contrary to

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[83] Tsagalis (2004): 147
[84] Skinner (1982)
[85] As Alexiou (2002): 13 suggests, the *góos* is an "improvisation inspired by the grief of the occasion, and…it is sung by the dead man's relations or close friends."
[86] Due to the lack of information we cannot be sure about the reason that prohibits Erinna's attendance to the funeral of Baukis. Some possible scenarios could be: (1)

Andromache's *góos*, which is in honour of a heroic man, Erinna's lament is devoted to another woman. In that case, *"The Distaff"* does not offer a traditional form of *góos*, but a rather developed literary form that derives from the feminine expression of grieving caused by the loss of a female figure (in that case: the death of Baukis). Erinna manages to transmit the intense feminine expressions of individualized lamenting like those we encounter in the Homeric poetry, but then she decides to establish her own poetic identity by giving us an innovative form of *góos*: a *góos* that does not come from a person of Baukis' close family, and more interestingly, a *góos* that is not destined for a male hero, but for a modest young woman, whose death does not take heroic dimensions.

The supposition that Erinna was indeed intending to form a personal poetic identity is also supported by the fact that the two epigrams she wrote about Baukis do not seem to have been intended for inscription.[87] More specifically, her second epigram about Baukis' death conveys traditional features of epitaphs that usually address the passerby of the tomb, and give some biographical information about the deceased:

Στᾶλαι καὶ Σειρῆνες ἐμαὶ καὶ πένθιμε κρωσσέ,
ὅστις ἔχεις Ἀίδα τὰν ὀλίγαν σποδιάν,
τοῖς ἐμὸν ἐρχομένοισι παρ' ἠρίον εἴπατε χαίρειν,
αἴτ' ἀστοὶ τελέθωντ' αἴθ' ἑτεροπτόλιες·
χὤτι με νύμφαν εὖσαν ἔχει τάφος, εἴπατε καὶ τό·
χὤτι πατήρ μ' ἐκάλει Βαυκίδα, χὤτι γένος
Τηλία, ὡς εἰδῶντι· καὶ ὅττι μοι ἁ συνεταιρὶς
Ἤρινν' ἐν τύμβῳ γράμμ' ἐχάραξε τόδε. (*AP*. 7.710)

O stele and Sirens and mournful urn of mine,
You who hold this small heap of ashes that belong to Hades.
Give greetings to those who pass by my grave,

Erinna was a priestess and thus, coming in contact with a corpse would cause her pollution (in line 32 she mentions: nor [am I able] to look upon a corpse, nor to lament…), (2) the impact of Solon's law, which restricted the attendance of a funeral only to close relatives, was still valid; (3) Baukis had immigrated to another place, and Erinna was informed about her death with delay.

[87] If, indeed, she meant to write an epigram with that purpose, then it would be hard to answer why she would have written two epigrams about Baukis, since only one would be sufficient in that case.

whether they are citizens, or visitors from other towns.
Say that this tomb holds me, who was a bride; say also this,
That my father called me Baukis, and that my family
was of Telos, so they may know, and that my companion
Erinna inscribed these words upon my tomb.[88]

This conventional epigram informs us of Baukis' origin from Telos, that she died while a bride and provides the name of the author of the epigram. However, unlike other epigrams that usually transmit the deceased's voice, the last two lines here permit Baukis to testify that it is Erinna who wrote these words. It emerges hence, a blending of two voices: Baukis in her very last words introduces a dialogue with Erinna, so that the reader might know the author of this epigram; Erinna, at the same time, "uses" Baukis' voice in order to identify herself with the author of the poem. As Rayor comments: "The dead cannot speak, the living cannot hear them, and the poet does not know who will read the poem."[89]

Erinna was undoubtedly familiar with the high poetry of Homer and Sappho. As already mentioned, during the Hellenistic period women had broader chances in education, and although they were spending most of their lives doing tasks at the *oikos*, they could nevertheless afford some time to dedicate to poetry.[90] Erinna borrowed important features of traditional poetry, but also managed to use them "her way"; she used, for example, the memory like Sappho, but unlike the latter who used it as a tool of communication with

[88] Translation Snyder (1989): 91
[89] Rayor (2005): 67
[90] This should be especially the case for women of superior social classes. However, unlike Nossis, for whom her epigrams *AP*. 6.25 and *AP* 6.132 permit us to make assumptions concerning her origin and her aristocratic descent (see Chapter 3), it is not possible to do the same with Erinna given the lack of information we have about both her personal and poetic life. On the other side, as I have already mentioned in the previous page, if we accept that Erinna was truly intending to form a personal poetic identity and share her poetry with an audience, then it becomes understandable that the appreciation of such a sophisticated poetry would require a perspicacious and an experienced in poetry audience, derived ususally from socially high classes, of which Erinna might have been part of. Nevertheless, this is merely a hypothesis about Erinna's class distinction, and cannot be truly confirmed. Pomeroy (1977) discusses extensively how was women's status developed during the Hellenistic period.

her companions, Erinna used it as a medium to express her grief in a lonely world. Like women in Homer's *Iliad*, she expressed her grief in a feminine and personalized way, but this time the *goos* was addressed to no male hero, but to a young modest girl.

Finally, and perhaps more importantly, she provides us with an authentic description of the fears that young girls faced concerning the complicating transition from girlhood to womanhood. Other epigrams dedicated to young unmarried girls made us realize the high expectations that women had towards marriage and childbirth. By putting marriage and childbirth as a priority in life, these girls entertained ideal standards of womanhood. Erinna, on the other hand, shows the other side of the same coin and focuses on the negative side of marriage. She seems to realize that this transition is far from being rosy, but rather entails risks which might even lead to death. Friendship here is highly appreciated and separation from your friend is treated as a "small death", which in case of Baukis was followed by the definite one.

Chapter 3: Nossis *Thelyglossos*

Nossis, a native of Locri in southern Italy, is probably the most "feminine" poetic voice of those discussed in this study. As was the case with Anyte and Erinna, we dispose of no information regarding her life. Two epigrams of her (*AP*. 6.265 and 6.132) permit us assume that she was from Locri, and was probably part of the aristocracy. As Gutzwiller explains, an epigram that she wrote for the death of Rhinton (*AP*.7.414), who died around 283/2, lead us to assume that her collection dates in 280s or 270s.[91] If this is true, then Nossis should have studied and been familiar with Anyte's work.

Antipater of Thessalonica invented and gave her the nickname "*thelyglossos*", which literally means "feminine tongue" (*AP*. 9. 26). Since it is the first time that this nickname was used, one might think that Antipater invented that epithet for her in order to describe the strong feminine orientation of her poetry. In fact, from her poetry twelve epigrams survive, only two of which refer to males, and the rest to women. The image of women in general, and more concretely, their lifestyle, their perspective on *Eros,* their visits and offerings to the temples, the relationship between them, etc. are themes, which are strongly reflected in her art. Nossis gives us a genuine kind of poetry that is made by women for women, and this might be in part what the epithet *thelyglossos* suggests. More importantly, from her surviving work (and also as this study will develop) it becomes clear that Nossis' primary intention was to publicize her work. Thus, although she wrote some verses for inscriptional reasons, her poetry has led many scholars to conclude that she was interested in publically sharing her art. Although we do not possess much information about her life, one of her epigrams confirms her origins, and her admiration for Sappho's poetry:

Ὦ ξεῖν', εἰ τύ γε πλεῖς ποτὶ καλλίχορον Μιτυλάναν
τᾶν Σαπφοῦς χαρίτων ἄνθος ἐναυσόμενος,

[91] Gutzwiller (1998): 74-75

εἰπεῖν, ὡς Μούσαισι φίλαν τήνα τε Λοκρὶς γᾶ
τίκτεν· ἴσαις δ' ὅτι μοι τοὔνομα Νοσσίς, ἴθι. (*AP*. 7.718)

Stranger, if you sail towards Mytilene of the beautiful dances
to be inspired by the flower of Sappho's charms,
say that the land of Locri gave birth to one dear to Muses,
and when you have learned that my name is Nossis, go your way.[92]

This funerary-style epigram is addressed to an imaginary traveller who sails to Mytilene, the native land of Sappho, and whom Nossis urges to diffuse her reputable poetry to the birthplace of the most influential woman poet in ancient Greece. To make her claim stronger and convince the invisible reader of the quality of her poetry, she first represents herself as dear to the Muses (Μούσαισι φίλαν).

Furthermore, by mentioning Sappho and her own poetry in the same poem, Nossis manages to give the impression that her art is very similar to the latter's. Hence, the person that travels to Mytilene driven by his inspiration of the charming flowers (ἄνθος ἐναυσόμενος) can be sure that he will also appreciate Nossis' poetry given the love that she has also received from the Muses.

In addition, the reference to Sappho foretells Nossis' admiration for her poetry, and already prepares the reader to encounter similar poetic features between her and the Lesbian poet since the latter has served as an artistic mentor for the former. Thus, the reader should expect highly to encounter erotic poetry, where *Eros* and sexuality are celebrated, and where women possess a central role in the poetess' artistic identity.

It becomes obvious, though, that there is a physical (apart from temporal) distance between the two artists: Sappho was born in Mytilene, and Nossis in Locri. No matter her admiration towards Sappho, Nossis is a proud native of Locri (her epigram *AP*. 6.132, as this study later develops, demonstrates her strong patriotism). Nevertheless, she also feels

[92] Translation Snyder (1989): 78

the desire for her poetry to "travel" to other places and gain the recognition she deserves, as the poetry of Sappho[93] has achieved; hence, even if she physically is not travelling away from her native land, she uses her poetry as a tool that can travel and expand her reputation further than her native Locri. As Reitzenstein comments:

> "Whereas Sappho could inspire Nossis, and so reach her over a gulf of time, the inspiration cannot get backwards; Nossis' poetry might become famous on Lesbos, but it cannot really engage in dialogue with Sappho's. Nossis can only ever *respond* to Sappho, although she may initiate a new dialogue with those prospective poets who wish also to place themselves in Sappho's tradition."[94]

Indeed, Nossis' main intention was to develop a poetic dialogue with her poetry being the continuation of a tradition already introduced by Sappho; apart from publicizing her work, it seems that she had her own audience with whom she was sharing her poetry. All these facts so far, permit us to conclude that Nossis was a self-confident poetess with a decisive and dynamic personality, who was taking her art seriously and wanted to enjoy the reputation she deserved as a poetess. The fact that she places herself next to Sappho does not denote only her admiration for her, but also the high expectations she has for her poetry to be presented as of high quality and to receive the same enthusiasm as Sappho's.

Interestingly, poetry for Nossis is turned not only into a tool that will bring her reputation as an artist, but also it serves as a ticket, that will guarantee her the entrance to the world of poetic immortality; Nossis does not only intend to be known for her poetry, she also wants to be remembered after her death: as Lesbos has been famous for giving birth to such an inspiring poetess, so did Locri –Nossis intends to demonstrate- gave birth to another favorite of the Muses.

Bowra has underlined the unconventionality of this epigram, since although it is funerary, it does not commemorate a dead person, who is usually accompanied by their qualities or

[93] See her fr. 55 and fr. 147, which testify Sappho's desire to gain recognition and be remembered through her poetry.
[94] Reitzenstein (1893): 132

their social or family roles (e.g. a mother, a wife, a daughter, etc.). Nossis instead, wanted to be remembered for her talent in poetry. As Bowra explains:

> "The reader expects to hear news of her death, not her talent, and if she is described as "dear" to anyone, it should be those expected to mourn her- her husband, parents, or children. Sappho and Mytilene have supplanted Nossis' blood-kin and physical birthplace; and the Muses have taken over the role of that other element expected in conventional epitaphs, the mourmers."[95]

Sappho was similarly interested in her poetic immortality; in fr. 55 she warns a woman of her audience about her decision to stop being part of her group. More precisely, she criticizes the woman not for her inability to produce poetry, but rather for her inability to appreciate it or comprehend it. It is her very lack of literary inspiration that will not permit her the entrance to the spring of Pieria, the sacred home of the Muses, but rather her literary ignorance will condemn her to live in the dark world of Hades.

κατθάνοισα δὲ κείσηι οὐδέ ποτα μναμοσύνα σέθεν
ἔσσετ' οὐδὲ †ποκ'†ὕστερον· οὐ γὰρ πεδέχηις βρόδων
τὼν ἐκ Πιερίας· ἀλλ' ἀφάνης κὰν Ἀίδα δόμωι
φοιτάσηις πεδ' ἀμαύρων νεκύων ἐκπεποταμένα.

You will die, nor will there be anyone
remembering you later; for you have no share
in the roses of Pieria, but will roam unseen
in the house of Hades, having flown off among dim corpses.[96]

As Prins observes:

> "Fragment 55 substitutes forgetting for remembering instead of recording a past memory, it records a forgotten future; instead of making an inscription, it marks

[95] Bowra (1998): 42
[96] Translation Snyder (1989): 34

> an erasure; instead of bringing the death to life, it finds the living dead. The irony of the epitaph is implicit in the very structure of address, as the poem is directed in the second person singular to a "you" whose death is the necessary condition for the utterance."[97]

Sappho instead, a master of poetry will be remembered after her death, and her poetry will still inspire the coming generations. In fr. 147 it is stated:

μνάσασθαί τινά φαιμι †καὶ ἔτερον† ἀμμέων

I say that even later someone will remember us.[98]

Although it is not clear whether these words were indeed written by Sappho herself, what is important here is that Sappho and her poetry managed indeed to reach immortality and serve as a source for literary inspiration through time. Nossis herself proves that by addressing a *xenos*, whose main motivation for his voyage to Mytilene is his inspiration from Sappho's charms. Accordingly, Nossis gives him the information he will need (such as her birthplace and her name) in order to visit her homeland in the future, once impressed by her poetry, of course. As Snyder also notices:

> "The message is clear: 'Locri has produced a second Sappho, and I am she.'"[99]

Hence, it seems that for both Sappho and Nossis, poetry was not just an opportunity to express themselves, or a way of entertainment with their companions. It was not only an apparatus to praise *Eros* or female beauty. More than a medium through which they could gain artistic recognition as poetesses, poetry for both of them turned into the remedy for the oblivion that a person suffers after his death; with their biggest fear being not to die, but to be forgotten in the future, they both treated poetry with existential dimensions that could guarantee them immortality in the sense that although physically dead, their poetry will never die with them and will give them a reason to be remembered through their literary impact on the next generations.

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[97] Prins (1999): 247
[98] Translation Snyder (1989): 34
[99] Snyder (1989): 79

This kind of poetry is an alternative to the qualities that *kleos* and the glorious death on the battlefield can give to the male warriors. Hence, what these women want to achieve is a reason to be commemorated through their words, just like men are by demonstrating bravery and defending their *patria*. Just like male warriors want to be praised after their death and turn into a source of admiration and imitation for the rest, or just like exceptional male poets are remembered for their creative work (e.g. Homer, Hesiod, Simonides, etc.), so Sappho and Nossis intend to receive praise also.

In that context, we can better understand Reitzenstein's observation above about Nossis' intention to initiate a dialogue with other prospective poets: physically, and perhaps also literarily, isolated from the rest of the world, Nossis realizes that she will need the help of a *xenos* to diffuse her poetry and let the world know that a poetess as good as Sappho exists in Locri.

3.1 The one side of Nossis:

Antipater of Thessalonica was not the only man to study and be familiar with Nossis' poetry. Meleager, while composing his *Garland,* wrote about her poetry:

σὺν δ᾽ ἀναμὶξ πλέξας μυρόπνουν εὐάνθεμον ἶριν
Νοσσίδος, ἧς δέλτοις κηρὸν ἔτηξεν Ἔρως (*AP*. 4.1.9)

Weaving in randomly the myrrh-breathing, well-blooming iris
of Nossis, for whose tablets Eros melted the wax.[100]

The carefully chosen words with highly sensual context that describe her poetry testify the reputation of Nossis as a love poet, and the centrality of *Eros* in her poetry. Hence, it is very possible that Nossis had written more erotic epigrams, like the one that follows, although we have only one epigram of hers that praises *Eros*:

[100] Translation Skinner (1991): 35

ἄδιον οὐδὲν ἔρωτος· ἃ δ᾽ ὄλβια, δεύτερα πάντα
ἐστίν· ἀπὸ στόματος δ᾽ ἔπτυσα καὶ τὸ μέλι.
τοῦτο λέγει Νοσσίς· τίνα δ᾽ ἁ Κύπρις οὐκ ἐφίλασεν,
οὐκ οἶδεν τήνα γ᾽, ἄνθεα ποῖα ῥόδα. (*AP*. 5.170)

Nothing is sweeter than love. Everything desirable
is second to it. I spit even honey from my mouth.
Nossis says this: The one who has never been loved by Aphrodite,
That woman does not know what sort of flowers roses are.[101]

This is probably Nossis' most erotic poem, which, according to some scholars,[102] also served as *sphragis*- the preface to her published work. Indeed, reading only this epigram of four lines, one may already form an impression of Nossis' poetic identity. The very beginning of the poem sends a very clear message, which is transmitted by a strong affirmation: *Nothing is sweeter than love.* An affirmation that expresses directly the poetess' opinion, and gives no place for doubt. With this statement of only three words, the reader comprehends immediately the importance that Nossis gives to *Eros*, and is invited to be introduced to a world of poetry, where *Eros*' role is central and second to none.

Quite simply, this determination is based on experience: contrary to those who have never been loved by Aphrodite, Nossis seems indeed to have been much loved by her, which permits her to appreciate the roses and to praise love. Conclusively, here comes her second statement: those who do not find *Eros* the sweetest thing in life didn't have yet a taste of it. Hence, once loved by Aphrodite they will be introduced to the world of the erotic delights, and then they will surely agree with her position.

[101] Translation Gutzwiller (1998): 76
[102] Reitzenstein (1893), Luck (1954)

Regarding her audience, the word τήνα (she) permits us to understand that she was addressing a circle composed by women. As a woman referring to other women, Nossis explores new worlds that unfold female sexuality; with confidence, she gives an alternative to masculine values promoted by poetry, and provides a new dimension to *Eros*: an *Eros* from the female perspective, which can include sexual delight for women, not only for men. In that way, by praising it as the sweetest and most delightful experience on earth, Nossis, without shame, represents herself as a woman who finds pleasure in sexual activity and develops new approaches concerning the "female nature" of *Eros*.

Apart from the obvious erotic enthusiasm and the dynamism of her statements, the poem seems to contain two separate voices: while the first two lines are cited directly by an unknown person, the last two lines take an impersonal form: *τοῦτο λέγει Νοσσίς.* As Skinner also observes: "a third-person *sphragis* [that] distances her psychologically from her earlier proclamation even as it endows that proclamation with objective authority."[103]

With that poetic strategy it seems as if Nossis was trying to make her statement stronger, and at the same time, by declaring that she herself states that, she is taking full responsibility for her words. But Nossis was not the only female poet to give *Eros* such a great importance; as other of her epigrams also demonstrate, Sappho had a significant literary influence on Nossis' work. More specifically, Nossis' epigram about *Eros* bears characteristics similar to Sappho's fr. 16:

o]ἰ μὲν ἰππήων στρότον οἰ δὲ πέσδων
οἰ δὲ νάων φαῖσ' ἐπ[ὶ] γᾶν μέλαι[ν]αν
ἔ]μμεναι κάλλιστον, ἔγω δὲ κῆν' ὅτ-
[__]τω τις ἔραται· (fr. 16.4)

Some say the most beautiful thing upon black earth

[103] Skinner (1991): 33

is an army of horsemen, others infantry,
and others ships, but I say it is whatever
someone loves.[104]

In this poem Sappho is also trying to explain what is the most beautiful thing on earth. Although she does not seem as absolute and direct as Nossis, she reaches the same conclusion as her: the most beautiful thing is related to love. Nevertheless, beside the similarities that they share, there is a difference of "substantial nature" concerning *Eros*. Sappho, for example, praises love and the delights of sexual intercourse; however, she is aware of the other side of the coin (not only the rosy one); *Eros* is highly desired as well, but she also acknowledges that she may fall victim to its great powers:

Ἔρος δηὖτέ μ' ὁ λυσιμέλης δόνει,
γλυκύπικρον ἀμάχανον ὄρπετον (L.-P. 130)

Eros, the loosener of limbs shakes me again-
bitter-sweet, untamable, crawling creature.[105]

The Sapphic *Eros* is a powerful, incontrollable (ἀμάχανον) creature that demands that its desires be fulfilled. It takes control of its victims (ὁ λυσιμέλης δόνει)[106] and makes them part of its game, where *Eros* is traditionally unbeatable (ἀμάχανον).[107] This *Eros* is

[104] Translation Plant (2004): 13
[105] Translation Snyder (1989): 27
[106] The very same word appears in an epigram of Archilochos (fr.196), who describes similarly the control that *Eros* might ask on one's body: ἀλλά μ' ὁ λυσιμελὴς ὦταῖρε δάμναται πόθος. "Oh comrade, the limb-loosener crushes me: desire." Translation: Carson (2014): 8
[107] An expression similar to the word ἀμάχανον, as well as the concept that *Eros* is undefeated in battle, are also encountered in Sophocle's *Antigone* in one of the most legendary phrases of the ancient Greek theater: Ἔρως ἀνίκατε μάχαν. Sophocles, like Nossis, praises *Eros*' powers and denotes the vanity in trying to resist (fr.789-790): κ α ί σ ' οὔτ' ἀθανάτων φύξιμος οὐδεὶς οὔθ' ἀμερίων σέ γ' ἀνθρώπων. ὁ δ' ἔχων μέμηνεν.

seductive and demanding; its savage nature gives no place for resistance; it can be sweet or bitter (*γλυκύπικρον*) at any time: this very quality that Sappho gives to love seems at first sight to be quite contradictory.

It raises questions about how *Eros* can have such opposite qualities, as sweetness and bitterness are. Obviously, there is an interchange of delight (*γλυκύ*) and pain (*πικρον*). As Carson observes: "she (Sappho) is sorting the possibilities chronologically… The pleasant aspect is named first, we presume, because it is less surprising."[108] As happens usually with a love story, Sappho reminds us that the lovers are excited by the desire of the other person. To a certain extent, *Eros* represents for a person something that he cannot possess, something that he misses, and he is thus guided by his desire to obtain what he wants to own; once he reaches his goal and satisfies his desire, then he enjoys the sweet delights (the greatest ones on earth) that *Eros* has to offer him. However, that person, even unconsciously, is still a victim of that savage creature that controls him both physically and emotionally, and can anytime turn those moments of delight into moments of pain and suffering.

In Nossis' poetry, however, we are only represented with one side of *Eros:* an *Eros* that is so sweet that even honey, famous for its sweet taste, appears tasteless in comparison to it (*ἔπτυσα καὶ τὸ μέλι).* Although praising the power of love and celebrating the qualities of *Eros* is not a rare phenomenon in literature, Nossis, however, provides a new approach of it: ignoring its negative side and the pain that it is able to provoke, Nossis is celebrating a perfect form of love; a love that offers only pleasure and delight; a love whose qualities deserve to be praised by all; a love that, once experienced, will be the sweetest thing on earth and second to none.

Interestingly, the fact that this poem was always intended to be shared with the public might permit us to suppose that her audience was not only well aware of Nossis' convictions, but also that the poetess received from them their support in promoting the

("Neither can any immortal escape you, nor any man whose life lasts for a day. He who has known you is driven to madness"). Translation Jebb (1891)

[108] Conan (2014): 4 Eros the Bittersweet

same ideas. In this new world that Nossis introduces to us, there is no shame for a woman in admitting that *Eros* is the sweetest of all things, neither is there any fear that such a claim will put under question her honour or her qualities as a woman. As Skinner also argues:

> "Apart from their literary merits, these texts are therefore of a considerable importance as cultural documents, for they raise provocative questions about the possible relaxation of rigid caste distinctions between respectable and non-respectable women in third-century B.C. in Locri."[109]

Nevertheless, and perhaps more importantly, Nossis with her determination about *Eros*' perfection publically presents herself as a woman who finds pleasure in sex. Actually, her three dedicatory epigrams that describe offerings from *hetaerae*[110] in combination with her openness of expression has been judged so astonishing that it has led scholars, like Reitzenstein, Gow and Page to assume that Nossis herself was a *hetaera*.[111]

Although it is not possible either to confirm or to reject this view given the lack of information we possess about her life, *Eros* was not the exclusive motif of her poetry. As a matter of fact, her poetry was also significantly inspired by images of women in general, and their visits to the temple of Hera and Aphrodite, more specifically.

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[109] Skinner (1991): 27

[110] In *AP*. 9.332 Polyarchis offers a statue of Aphrodite in the temple, which she was able to afford from the gains of her wonderful body. In *AP*. 6.275 Samytha also offers a headband to Aphrodite, with Nossis comparing this offer to the goddess' touching of Adonis (line 3 καί τήνα... "she also…"). The reference to oils and perfumes gives a sensual nuance and perhaps there is also an allusion to the celebration of the yearly Adonia. Finally, in *AP*. 9.605 Kallo makes an offering of her portrait to the goddess of love. The attention is called by the last line: οὔ τινα γὰρ μέμψιν ἔχει βιοτᾶς. ("For she has no blame of the life she conducts"). Although it is not clear what exactly this might imply, since generally *hetaerae* did not suffer from social discrimination on grounds of their profession, the main message of the poem is to praise Kallo's beauty and her resemblance to Aphrodite.

[111] Gow and Page (1965): 436, Reitzenstein (1893): 142

In her seven surviving dedicatory epigrams, Nossis celebrates the beauty of women, and their (both internal and external) qualities. Like Anyte is praising values related to *κάλλος καί πινύτας*, Nossis celebrates their sweetness and tenderness (*AP*. 9.605 ἀγανῶς ἔστακεν; 9.604 ἀγανοβλεφάρου; 6. 353 ἀγανὸν τὸ πρόσωπον), the beauty of their body (*AP*. 9.332 σώματος ἀγλαΐας), and their wisdom (*AP*. 6.354 τὰν πινυτὰν).

The following epigram describes not only Nossis' personal visit to the temple of Hera, but also gives us some valuable biographical information about her:

Ἥρα τιμάεσσα, Λακίνιον ἃ τὸ θυῶδες
πολλάκις οὐρανόθεν νεισομένα καθορῇς,
δέξαι βύσσινον εἶμα, τό τοι μετὰ παιδὸς ἀγαυᾶς
Νοσσίδος ὕφανεν Θευφιλὶς ἁ Κλεόχας. (*AP*. 6.265)

Honored Hera, you who often come down from heaven
and look with favor on your Lacinian temple fragrant
with incense,
Receive this linen cloak which Theophilis, daughter of
Kleocha, wove for you together with her noble child Nossis.[112]

In this poem, Hera is asked to accept the gift that the three women (Nossis, Theophilis, and Kleocha) made by themselves, during their visit to the Lacinian temple, which is known for its wealth.[113] The offer that the three ladies want to make is not just a simple, humble gift; instead, it is a linen cloak that they wove themselves for the goddess. As Skinner observes, "this robe is no ordinary piece of homespun: its imported material, linen, singles it out as a costly garment."[114] Indeed, this expensive gift probably reflects

[112] Translation Snyder (1989): 78 (slightly modified)
[113] Skinner (1991): 22
[114] Ibid

Nossis' aristocratic ancestry; the phrase *παιδὸς ἀγαυᾶς* (line 3), which is translated as *noble child*, implies her social rank superiority, which traces back two generations.[115]

This epigram is of particular interest because it demonstrates the bond between mother and daughter: here Nossis is not represented only as the person who makes an offering, but also as the (noble) daughter of Theophilis, who in turn, is represented as the daughter of Kleocha. The use of matronymics[116] has attracted scholars' attention with Oldfather (1925) and Skinner (1991) arguing that

> "it was common practice for Greek women in general to designate each other by their matronymics, rather than their patronymics, when speaking privately among themselves" and should not therefore, be considered as a poetic innovation introduced by Nossis."[117]

On the other hand, the epithet ἀγαυός is a word that is rarely found, except for in Homeric poetry, where this world is used to address heroes, like at *Iliad* 17.557 (Ἀχιλῆος ἀγαυοῦ), and 18.16 (ἀγαυοῦ Νέστορος υἱὸς). As Bowman writes, this form "is often found as a formulaic patronymic epithet, modifying parent rather than child."[118] However, the very combination of the noun παῖς with the epithet ἀγαυός is a case that is encountered only once in the *Odyssey* 11.492 (παιδὸς ἀγαυοῦ), where Achilles, after

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115 This kind of poetry, which transmits a romantic and harmonious presentation of women's relationship, is called by Arthur (1984): 43 as "aristocratic poetry". According to her, this poetry does not intend to claim social changes that will favor women's participation in the public sphere (which was probably not in the area of the direct interests of the authors), but rather they rather aim at "freedom to lead a more civilized and culture private life."

116 Polybius (XII. 5.6) claims that aristocracy in Locri depended on matrilineal descent: πρῶτον μὲν ὅτι πάντα τὰ διὰ προγόνων ἔνδοξα παρ' αὐτοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν γυναικῶν, οὐκ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἐστιν, οἷον εὐθέως εὐγενεῖς παρὰ σφίσι νομίζεσθαι τοὺς ἀπὸ τῶν ἑκατὸν οἰκιῶν λεγομένους.
In the first place, they stated that every ancestral distinction among them is traced by the female, not the male side. For instance, those are reckoned noble among them who belong to "the hundred families". Translation: Shuckburgh (1889). Here Nossis by presenting herself as daughter of Theophilis justifies the adjective "noble" attributed to her, which in turn testifies a superior social class.

117 Skinner (1991): 23

118 Bowman (1998): 579

meeting Odysseus in the Underworld, asks him about his son, Neoptolemus, and receives satisfaction by knowing that his son is well-respected. In the case of Nossis, by describing herself as a noble daughter, she wants to demonstrate that her mother should also feel proud of her child's achievements: just like Achilles was proud to hear that his son is a respected person, so should Nossis' mother feel given the fact that the result of the offering is of such a high quality. Respectively, Nossis is also proud for her ancestry; by keeping alive a tradition that started two generations ago, she pays tribute to her mother for teaching her to make such offerings.

The phrase *πολλάκις οὐρανόθεν* in line 2 implies that the women were often visiting the temple, a tradition that traces back to Nossis' grandmother, Kleocha. Furthermore, the fact that the offering was made on behalf of the three women, gives Nossis an auxiliary role concerning her contribution on the weaving of the cloak. Contrary to other epigrams, where women, like Callo (*AP*. 9.605), Samytha (*AP*. 6.275), or Thaumareta (*AP*. 9.604), are represented as the sole dedicators of an offering, Nossis in this epigram is sharing the offering with two more women. In that sense, her mother and her grandmother served as mentors for Nossis, with the latter following an old and well-established tradition. Putting her name in the beginning of the line 4, Nossis represents the present, and by referring to her mother and her grandmother in a chronological sequence, she demonstrates the beginning and the end of that tradition.

The strong bond between mother and daughter that Nossis transmits is also obvious in the following epigram:

Αὐτομέλιννα τέτυκται: ἴδ' ὡς ἀγανὸν τὸ πρόσωπον
ἁμὲ ποτοπτάζειν μειλιχίως δοκέει:
ὡς ἐτύμως θυγάτηρ τᾷ ματέρι πάντα ποτῴκει.
ἦ καλὸν ὅκκα πέλῃ τέκνα γονεῦσιν ἴσα. (*AP*. 6.353)

Melinna, her essence, is depicted. See how gentle her face.
She seems to gaze at us tenderly.

How truly the daughter resembles her mother in all.
How good when children are like their parents.[119]

This epigram stresses both the external and internal similarities between Melinna and her mother, and concludes with an interesting conclusion: *How good when children are like their parents*. In that way, Nossis insists on the beauty when children have their parents as mentors, and resemble to them. The importance on the resemblance between mother and daughter is an alternative to the importance that boys should look like their fathers when it comes to bravery, and warriors' skills.

Hence, while boys are expected to imitate their fathers in cases where the male ideals are developed, like the battlefield, so does Nossis stress the importance that girls are like their mothers in female-oriented affairs, like the domestic and religious activities are. Nossis, consequently, sheds some light on the importance of the role of a mother, who acts as a mentor or as a teacher to her daughter, and wishes to be proud of her, as fathers are for the achievements of their sons in male-dominated activities, like war.

3.2 The other side of Nossis:

Nossis had gained a reputation for qualities, like femininity and sexuality that she praised in her poems. However, there is another side of Nossis, a less known one: a side that sheds some light on the male population and praises virtues that were traditionally celebrated by the male-dominated poetic world. As mentioned in the introduction, from Nossis' surviving work we only possess two epigrams that are attributed to men. Although it might be surprising at first sight that such a female poet (*thelyglossos*), who made poetry by women for women, produced also literary work for the males, one should consider that Nossis was well aware of the poetic traditions, and as a serious artist she could experiment poetically in order to praise all the virtues she wanted to praise. In the following poem, for example, she praises values that are traditionally related to war, and hence usually addressed to the male's group:

[119] Translation Gutzwiller (1998): 81

Ἔντεα Βρέττιοι ἄνδρες ἀπ' αἰνομόρων βάλον ὤμων
θεινόμενοι Λοκρῶν χερσὶν ὕπ' ὠκυμάχων,
ὧν ἀρετὰν ὑμνεῦντα θεῶν ὑπ' ἀνάκτορα κεῖνται,
οὐδὲ ποθεῦντι κακῶν πάχεας, οὓς ἔλιπον. (*AP*. 6.132)

These shields the Bruttians cast from doomed shoulders
as they fell by the hands of the battle-swift Locrians.
Hung beneath temple roof, the shields praise the Locrians' valor
and do not long for the arms of the cowards they deserted.[120]

This is clearly a patriotic poem that praises the braveness of the Locrians, her compatriots, and describes with proudness that the shields of Bruttians (probably a tribe from Italy) have been won because the latter abandoned their arms while they were running away to survive the battle. Interestingly, the weapons are given lively characteristics and can express their feelings like humans: they *praise the Locrians' valor,* and they do not wish to go back to the hands of the coward Bruttians. The Bruttians are strongly criticized for their cowardice, which justifies the reason why the shields are repelled from them. Hence, there is a clear juxtaposition between the word *ὑμνεῦντα* in the third line with valor (*ἀρετὰν*) as an object, and the words *οὐδὲ ποθεῦντι* in the last line with cowards as object. In that context, the weapons share the same values as the male warriors: ready to fight anytime, they are characterized by values like bravery and patriotism; in those conditions, there is no place for cowardice nor for surrender, but a glorious death will find the warriors dead next to their arms on the battlefield (remember that the last words of the Spartan women to the warriors before the war were: "ἢ τὰν ἢ ἐπὶ τᾶς": either you come back with your shield, or upon it).[121] Meanwhile, the reference to Bruttians may be related to an Italian rooted word that describes runaway for slaves.[122]

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120 Translation Skinner (1991): 30
121 See Plutarch *Moralia,* fr. 241
122 See Skinner (1991): 31. See *Strabo* in his *Geography* describes the Brutti as barbarians and a non-reputable tribe (6.1. 4), while *Diodorus* writes: "…they formed a

Nossis, though, was not the only poetess to write an epigram transmitting masculine values during the wartime. Anyte, her predecessor, had also written an epigram with a similar context:

Ἔσταθι τᾶδε, κράνεια βροτοκτόνε, μηδ' ἔτι λυγρὸν
χάλκεον ἀμφ' ὄνυχα στάζε φόνον δαΐων·
ἀλλ' ἀνὰ μαρμάρεον δόμον ἠμένα αἰπὺν Ἀθάνας,
ἄγγελλ' ἀνορέαν Κρητὸς Ἐχεκρατίδα.[123] (*AP*. 6.123)

Stay here, murderous staff, and no longer drip
enemy blood around your baneful bronze cusp.
But rather, lying in the lofty marble house of Athena,
announce the manliness of the Cretan Echecratidas.[124]

It is noteworthy that Anyte, just like Nossis, gives human characteristics to the weapons: she treats them like human beings, she speaks to the "murderous staff", which is thirsty for blood and even gives him orders not to move. In this epigram Anyte also praises the valor of Echecratidas, who fought with bravery for the sake of his native land. The dedication of the warriors, their fighting skills, as well as their patriotism are values that are also highly praised by Anyte. Echecratidas' arms gave a glorious fight in the hands of their brave master and thus, deserve to be laid on the temple of Athena. Contrary to the weapons described by Nossis who felt no respect for their coward owners, the arms described by Anyte act as a symbol for Echecratidas' manliness and values.

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common government and were called Bruttians from the fact that most of them were slaves, for in the local dialect runaway slaves were called "bruttians"…" (16.15.2). Translation Oldfather (1989)

[123] Gutzwiller (1998): 57 observes that the name *Ἐχεκρατίδα* is also found in the same position in an epigram of Anacreon (*AP*. 6.142); she argues that Anyte was influenced by Anacreon regarding the dedicatory epigrams.

[124] Translation Gutzwiller (1998): 57

It is worth mentioning, however, that apart from the similarities in values that both poetesses promote, Anyte's epigram begins with a "more emotionally charged" approach; the first lines of her epigram that describe the weapons as *murderous staff* (*βροτοκτόνε*) as well as her command that they take no more action: *Stay here (Ἔσταθι τᾷδε)* demonstrate, according to Gutzwiller, "a womanly dislike of war through the command issued to the "murderous" weapon to retire from the active service".[125] Although this might be an interesting approach, it seems to be based on masculine points of view regarding the women's attitude on war that wanted them to be fearful and inexperienced, like Pausanias[126] describes the women's performance of Messene in the battle against the Lacedaemonians: ἀηθείᾳ τε πολέμου (unaccustomed to war).

However, even if it is true that women lacked experience in war or fighting skills, and although it is also true that war was a men's affair, this does not exclude necessarily the female involvement nor does it guarantee their dislike of war. Instead, sources prove that women have played an active role during conflicts; Pausanias, for example, describes later in the same passage that the participation of the Messenian women contributed significantly in the fight against Macedonians from Ithome, the latter demonstrating cowardice by escaping and *throwing away their arms*:

> ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ οἱ Μακεδόνες ὑπό τε ἀρετῆς καὶ ἐμπειρίας τὸ κατ᾽ ἀρχὰς ἠμύνοντο ἐρρωμένως· ἅτε δὲ ὁδοιπορίᾳ προαπειρηκότες καὶ ὁμοῦ τῶν τε ἀνδρῶν σφισινἐγκει μένων καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν γυναικῶν κεράμῳ καὶ λίθοις βαλλόμενοι, σὺν οὐδενὶ ἔφευγον κό σμῳ. καὶ τὸ μὲν πολὺ αὐτῶν ἀπώλετο ὠθούμενοι κατὰ τῶν κρημνῶν, ἀπότομοςγὰρ δὴ ταύτῃ μάλιστά ἐστιν ἡ Ἰθώμη· ὀλίγοι δέ τινες καὶ ῥίψαντες τὰ ὅπλα ἀπεσώθησαν .[127]

> "In like manner the Macedonians, brave and experienced troops, at first offered a firm resistance. But worn out by their march, attacked by the men and bombarded with tiles and stones by the women, they took to fight in disorder. The majority were pushed over the precipices and killed, for Ithome is very steep at this point. A few escaped by throwing away their arms."[128]

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[125] Gutzwiller (1998): 57
[126] Paus. 4. 21. 9.
[127] Paus. 4. 29. 5
[128] Translation Jones and Ormerod (1918)

Nevertheless, the group of women is the one who suffered the immediate consequences of war both in cases of victory and defeat. Defeat meant that they would have lost their husbands and sons on the battlefield, they would fall victims of rape, and they would rapidly turn into slaves. Victory meant that their native land and national pride were saved, but they would still have to suffer the losses of the male members of their family. Thus it is clear that war, no matter its results, brought tremendous consequences for them. In this context, it might be justified to understand Anyte's dislike of war not because of her femininity but because war almost always brought on a miserable fate to human beings, independently of their sex; the death of a warrior, for example, would not affect only his wife, but also his elder parents who experienced the death of their own child. Hence, war has always had far-reaching impacts, and not exclusively for women.[129] In that sense, Anyte's dislike of war does not represent only a feminine dislike, but may well represent the dislike of any person, female or male, that is susceptible to suffer the war's aftermath.

Furthermore, women's inexperience and their lack of fighting skills does not imply that they rejected war or that they would always vote for peace instead of war. Loman, for example, takes *Lysistrata* as a starting point to argue that the real reason behind the sex strike of the women was not the demand for peace *per se* but rather their desire to bring their husbands back home after a long time of war campaigning:

> "She, like her friends, missed her husband, felt lonely and unimportant, and most of all she was sexually unsatisfied. Indeed, such was the sexual desire amongst the women that when Lysistrata introduced the idea of blackmailing their husbands to bring about peace by abstaining from sex, a number of them initially refused, arguing that they preferred to let the war carry on than to become celibate."[130]

Of course, as Loman himself explains, Lysistrata herself and her girlfriends are fictitious personalities, and we cannot extract sure conclusions about reality from literature. Nevertheless, many times it has been proven that fiction includes certain doses of the real

[129] See Fabre-Serris and Keith (2015) for more information regarding women's attitude towards war.
[130] Loman (2004): 36

world. In any case, Anyte's dislike of war at the beginning of the epigram is followed by the praise of Echecratidas' manliness and valor, whose weapons lie proudly in the sacred temple; the very same weapon that she initially urges to stay inactive later becomes the demonstration of the warrior's fighting qualities and justifies Echecratidas' heroic reputation.

In conclusion, the selected epigrams demonstrate the poetic similarities between Nossis and Anyte: they both provide weapons with human characteristics; they both interact with them, and weapons here are represented as if they had feelings (they feel proud when they are used by brave masters, they feel no feelings for the cowards), or as if they could move on their own initiative and introduce a bloody conflict. Apart from those characteristics though, the main intention of both poetesses is to praise and celebrate traditional masculine values that are associated with war; other values such as patriotism and bravery are highly appreciated by both Nossis and Anyte; the capacity to fight bravely and to defend the native land is among the highest criteria that will form men's reputation. Interestingly, there is a deep convergence regarding the "right" attitudes toward war between men and women. Women like Nossis seem also to be very demanding when it comes to fighting skills, and any attempt to run away from the battlefield and abandon weapons is considered the utmost of cowardice. From the above, it seems that both poets were well aware of masculine expectations and points of view, and not only did they share the same values with men, but also they promoted them passionately through their art. Thus it should be no surprise that the first poet who gave lively characteristics to arms, and was later imitated by both poetesses, was Simonides:

Οὕτω τοι, μελία ταναά, ποτὶ κίονα μακρὸν
ἦσο, Πανομφαίῳ Ζηνὶ μένουσ' ἱερά·
ἤδη γὰρ χαλκός τε γέρων αὐτά τε τέτρυσαι
πυκνὰ κραδαινομένα δαΐῳ ἐν πολέμῳ. (*AP. 6.52*)

Rest, my long lance, thus against the high column,
and remain sacred to Panomphaean Zeus.

For now your point is old, and you are worn
by long brandishing in the battle.[131]

At once it becomes obvious that this poem shares similar characteristics and context with the epigrams of Nossis and Anyte. Conclusively, both poetesses were not only aware of traditional masculine values, but acknowledged also earlier poetic forms used by male poets, which in turn they reproduced in order to serve their literary purposes. As Gutzwiller correctly points: "[Anyte] illustrate[s] how a woman poet must be fluent in the conventional speech forms of her male-controlled society in order to find her own voice from within those forms."[132] In this case, both poetesses seem to have studied the traditional poetic forms from male-dominated poetry, and have adopted features that will both promote them as poetesses and contribute to their poetic identity by developing these features their own way.

Nossis was an ambitious poetess, a big admirer of Sappho's poetry, who desired her poetry to be widely recognized and give Locri a piece of *kleos* through her art. In her poetry for women, she treated a wide variety of women and their lives, although the motif of *Eros* is a dominant part of her poetry. Through her art, she gave us a genuine depiction of the women's lives that we so far had not experienced with the male poets, like the lives of the *hetaerae* and their valuable offerings to the temple of Aphrodite. Nossis succeeded in promoting a new image of women that does not fit necessarily within the groups of women established by men. She refuses to discriminate women according to their sexuality, but instead, thorough her poetry, she supports an image of women who can enjoy Aphrodite's games and be respectable at the same time. According to Nossis, *Eros* is the most delightful creature, and contrary to the bittersweet version of him in Sappho's poetry, she is convinced that only those who have not yet been in love cannot appreciate his qualities.

[131] Translation Paton (1916)
[132] Gutzwiller (1998): 58

Although she was apparently well-known for the femininity and sexuality that characterized her poetry, she chose not to address herself exclusively to women. Her epigram praising the bravery of her compatriots demonstrates that she also supported values that are usually represented by the male world, like patriotism, bravery, or high fighting skills. Hence, up to certain extent, Nossis was also interested in having men's approval of her poetry. This would probably facilitate her main intention, poetic immortality; having gained a wide reputation as a poetess, her art would be remembered after her death. Apparently, she succeeded in that as well.

In her paper "Nossis, Sappho and Hellenistic poetry", Bowman comments on Nossis' strategy of using her poetic similarity to Sappho, and explains how successful this strategy was. She argues that, contrary to Sappho, her poetry was not studied later by any important scholars, apart from Meleager and Antipater of Thessalonica; rather, her later reputation was based on sexually hungry images of women. This reputation comes from Herodas' Mimiamb IV, whose protagonist "Nossis daughter of Erinna" indulges in licentious sexual experiences. Based on that evidence, Bowman concludes:

> "… the later perception of Nossis' poetry can be used as evidence, at most, that she or her work was probably seen as intruding in some way in the (male) public sphere. What Nossis' later reception primarily tells us is that her poetic strategy failed. If she claimed an association with Sappho's work in order to increase the readership and credibility of her own, she did not gain her objective. Nossis wished to be recognized, like Sappho, as a poet, but seems to have been remembered, in the end, as a licentious woman and a figure of fun."[133]

I completely disagree with this statement. Actually, Marta González in her paper "Nosside de Locri y su obra" examines the poetic influence that Nossis had through time; she shows how later women poets were inspired by her art, and used Nossis' poetry as a model for their art. More precisely, she gives examples of recognized women poets, such as Renée Vivien (1877-1909), Hilda Doolittle (1886-1961), or Marguerite Yourcenar (1903-1987), who had not only studied Nossis' art, but also produced poetry under her

[133] Bowman (1998): 23.

name; Renée Vivien, for example, produced a poem, whose title is: *"Mon nom est Nossis…*"; Hilda Doolittle also produced a poem with the title "Nossis."[134]

Considering that Nossis lived around the 3rd cent. B.C. and that her literary legacy served as a source of inspiration for female poets of the 19th and 20th cent., what can this be called, if not a success and a fulfillment of her ultimate objective?

[134] See Marta González (2006) for a detailed analysis of Nossis' poetic influence, and her contribution to the formation of the poetic identity of some modern female poets.

Conclusion

The work of these poetesses is of high value since they transmit to us a genuine female voice through literature that we had not experienced until the Hellenistic period (except the poetry of Sappho). Although they brought significant literary innovations, they also looked up to the male poets as role models on their journey to produce poetry. It is of no surprise hence, to encounter in their poetry features that recall traditional masculine poetry.

Anyte, whom Antipater of Thessalonica called the female Homer (*AP*. 9.26), introduced important poetic innovation: she gave value to the lives of young, unmarried girls, and through her funerary epigrams, she expressed the suffering of the parents for the loss of their daughter. The image of the lamenting mother, who grieves for the unjust death of her daughter, especially, assumes a central role in Anyte's poetry. However, she also uses Homeric words, traditionally used to praise heroes while she is producing an epitaph for a young, unmarried girl. Like Homer, she makes use of emotionally rich words, like *kleos*, that serve as a consolation to the parents of the deceased girl. In that way, she gives heroic dimensions to the girl's qualities, and she succeeds in making her death exalted through the alleviation of pain that *kleos* brings.

Erinna has drawn much attention for her lamentation on her separation from her friend Baukis and her subsequent death in her *Distaff.* Apart from offering a genuine experience of female grieving, *"The Distaff"* is of high value for it transmits to us important information about the lives of the young girls. Having Sappho as a poetic role model, Erinna uses her memories as source of inspiration to produce poetry. Unlike Sappho, however, who shares her memories with her audience in order to praise the joyful moments of the past, the process of memory for Erinna turns into a wholly painful experience. While memory for Sappho is a way to comfort her friend of their separation, Erinna individualizes her suffering and grieves in the memory of the happy moments she shared with Baukis that will never come back again.

Nossis, whose nickname was female-tongued, by describing the visits of *hetaerae* to the temple of Aphrodite and their offerings, transmitted images of women that we had not traditionally encountered. Through her astonishing confirmation of the qualities of *Eros,* she provided us with an alternative image of woman who finds no shame in accepting publically that she finds pleasure in love, yet can be respectable.

As this study has shown, these women succeeded in a diplomatic way to be recognized by the male population for their artistic qualties. Quite diplomatically, they chose to adopt traditional literary formulas in their art, yet they developed them in a way that made their poetry more personal and individualized. However, as this study suggested, in order to fully enjoy this kind of poetry, it is important that their work be treated without basing ourselves on the prejudices tramnsmitted by male poetry. For this poetry is so genuine and demands a new, original approach from the reader.

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