

SAPPHO FR. 94: A FURTHER NOTE

EMMET ROBBINS

IN MY ARTICLE "Who's Dying in Sappho Fr. 94?" in *Phoenix* 44.2 (1990) 111–121 I outlined three possibilities for construing the crucial passage from the first to the second stanza of what survives of the poem, pointing out that the *πόλλα* of line 3 is of particular importance for our interpretation. My own preference was, and remains, the third possibility—to punctuate at the end of line 2 and to take *πόλλα* with what follows, reading *πόλλα καὶ τόδε* as a unit—"she said much and this (in particular)." But I now realise that the explanatory example that I adduced is unsatisfactory: the Homeric phrase *πολλὰ καὶ ἐσθλά* is not analogous, for in this phrase the two neuter adjectives are exactly parallel: they refer to the same thing and the word *καὶ* could be eliminated without damaging the sense. It would have been more helpful to point to the use of *καί* explained by J. D. Denniston (*The Greek Particles*² [Oxford 1959]) 291 (6): *καί* with a sense of climax (= *καὶ δῆ, καὶ δὴ καί*; cf. LSJ s.v. A. 2).

If this is correct, *πόλλα* will be a comprehensive reference to what the girl said. The bulk of it is played down by a dismissive *πόλλα* in order to allow Sappho to concentrate on what follows the *τόδε*, i.e., on what she will rebut at length. The first surviving line of the poem is not an instance of the *πόλλα*, alluded to retrospectively—this would, in my opinion, be otiose and inelegant. *πόλλα* is, rather, a reference to the many things glanced at without elaboration and mentioned collectively inasmuch as the inclusive mention gives point to the one actual quotation singled out and emphasised. Anticipatory examples of the girl's speech would weaken the force both of the succinct *πόλλα* and of the subsequent quotation.

One further point. If *πόλλα* is taken in enjambment with *ψισδομένα*, as perhaps the majority of critics wish, there is simply a reference to much *weeping* along with the utterance. Neither *πόλλα* nor *ψισδομένα* (Hsch. *ψιζομένη· κλαίουσα*) is a reference to articulate sound, much less a reference to earlier speech, and the normal Greek distinction between intelligible utterance and wailing would be observed in this case too: cf., e.g., the Homeric *ὥς ἔφατο κλαίουσα* (*Il.* 24.746).

ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
TORONTO, ONTARIO M5S 1J4

I am especially grateful to Robert Fowler for lively debate and criticism. His assistance should not, however, be taken as indication of his agreement with my interpretation.