

There is little doubt that for Sappho and her audience poetry is public communication. As was the case with Greek archaic poetry in general, Sappho's poems were read aloud. But modern audiences have been conditioned to experience literature through the eyes rather than through the ears. Investigating the aural aspects of Sappho's poetry, however, cannot be separated from an awareness of the performative and communal context in which Sappho's poetry was heard and sung. Indeed, one of the most contested areas of inquiry in Sappho scholarship during the last two decades has been the relationship between Sappho's expression of personal passions and the public, social function of her art (Hallett 1979, Stehle 1981, Winkler 1990, Lardinois, 1994, Greene 2009) . It is difficult to reconcile Sappho's participation in a communal cultural discourse with her distinct, highly individuated voice--a voice that seems to articulate "private" feelings so compellingly. Many recent scholars have contested the strict division between choral lyric and monody, and argue that, although Sappho speaks in the first person, the "I" cannot possibly denote merely private consciousness, but rather suggests an embodiment of the shared or communal (Parker 2005). By exploring the links between orality and *aurality* in Sappho's poems, I think we can come to a better understanding of the relationship between the poet and her audience and of the social function Sappho's poems may have had.

Despite an incredible diversity of approaches in Sappho studies, there has been little exploration of the aural features of Sappho's poetry. In the past 25 years or so, classical scholars have developed a theory of Greek prosody that reconstructs the sounds and intonation of classical Greek speech. From crosslinguistic evidence and experimental phonetic and psycholinguistic data, scholars have been able to reconstruct the syllable structure, rhythm, accent, and phrasing of ancient Greek. But so far this work has largely remained a narrow subspeciality of classics devoted to highly technical linguistic studies. In this paper, I shall examine the close association of sound and meaning in Sappho's poetry and the special relevance of that association to the erotic content of her poems. Taking fragment 94 as a focal point, this paper explores how Sappho's verbal repetitions, alliterative rhythms, and melodic tonal patterns not only embody the magical effects of *eros* (Segal 1974), but are also the instruments of seduction for the Sapphic lover. I will argue that through the recurring sounds and rhythms in the ritualized responson of the two lovers confronted with separation, Sappho draws the lovers together under the hypnotic effect of love's *thelxis*, the word denoting the dynamic, "quasi-magical compulsions" of erotic desire. Moreover, I will show that the speaker's erotic vocabulary creates a song of seduction that enacts the mesmerizing spell of desire and suggests the power of the poet's voice to suspend time, drawing the poem's audiences into what Dolores O'Higgins (1990) calls "the dangerous felicity of listening."