NOTES/KORT BYDRAES

Sappho 31. 2s. . . . ὀντὶς ἐνάντιός τοι / ἰσδένει

Denys Page, *Sappho and Alcaeus*, p. 28, remarks in connection with the person described as sitting opposite the girl: 'The greatest obstacle to an understanding of the whole is indeed our ignorance of the relation of this man to the girl and to Sappho.' Now it is a well-known fact, that the language of Sappho is deeply influenced by Homeric poetry, and so it is to be anticipated that findings about the relationship between persons mentioned by Homer in similar situations, could throw light on the mysterious man Sappho is talking about.

There are 10 (11) passages in Homer which tell of people seating themselves opposite a certain person. Four (five) times both the seated are owners of the house (or to be regarded as such):

1. 190—Patroclus and Achilles, in their camp
   ἔστη Πάτροκλος δὲ οἱ οἰκοὶ ἐναντίος ἦσον σωπῆ

2. 96—Penelope and Telemachus with his guest (ρ 84) and most faithful companion (ο 540 s.) Piraeus, the meeting taking place in Odysseus' palace—
   μῆτηρ δ' ἀντίον ἦε
   ψ 89, 165—Penelope and Odysseus at their own hearth
   ψ 89 ἔστε (Πενελόπη) ἔπειτ' Ὀδυσσῆος ἐναντίη
   165 ὑψὶ δ' αὐτίς κατ' ἄρ' ἔστε ἐπὶ θρόνου, ἐνθεν ἄνέστη, ἀντίον ἦς ὀλάχου

Γ 423 Zenodotus reads as follows, in place of the traditional lines 423–426: αὐτή (Ἐλένη) δ' ἀντίον ἦεν Ἀλεξάνδρῳ ἀνακτός—again said of a married couple in their home.

In five passages the pair consists of a host and his guest:

1. 218—Achilles takes in Odysseus and Nestor, having greeted them with the words (ib. 197): χαίρετον; ἡ ἔλξοι ἄνδρες ἰκάνετον—and takes his seat opposite Odysseus;

ε 198—Calypso, while entertaining Odysseus and Hermes, is sitting opposite Odysseus (whom she wishes to stay with her, ib. 208s.);

ξ 79, π 53—the swineherd Eumaeus welcomes Odysseus in his cabin, without recognizing him, longing, however, for his master’s return with the same intensity as Penelope, Laertes and Telemachus (ξ 172 s.)

ξ 79 αὐτός (Εὖμαιος) δ' ἀντίον ἦε

π 53 αὐτός (Εὖμαιος) δ' ἀντίον ἦεν Ὀδυσσηὸς δείοιο

ρ 330–335—Telemachus sees Eumaeus entering, and signals the latter to join him, whereupon the swineherd sits down opposite the youth. For a better understanding of the passage in its present context, we should consider the functions of the two persons involved, and the kind of relationship there is between them: Telemachus, no longer a child (α 297), has made it clear that he is

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now in control of the house (α 346 sqq.); and Eumaeus, the faithful slave, loves Telemachus as a father does his child (π 17).

Thus we have noted on every occasion, that at least one of the persons concerned is the master of the house, and, at that, subject of the verb 'to sit' (the situation being reversed in 1 190 and ρ 334 only)—and further that 'sitting opposite' implies a relationship with which the term φίλος is implicitly or explicitly connected.

Lines ρ 255 sqq. may serve as additional proof:

αὐτῷ ὅ (Μελάνθιος) βῆ, μάλα δ’ ὡκα δόμους ἵκανεν ἄνακτος.
αὐτίκα δ’ εἶσαν ἕν, μετὰ δὲ μυηστήρα καθίζεν
ἀντίον Εὐρυμάχου τὸν γὰρ φιλέσακε μάλιστα

The only motive for Melanthius picking out Eurymachus could be his fondness of the latter.

It transpires that two persons choosing to sit face to face are 'inalienabiles' to one another (cf. H. B. Rosén, Strukturalgrammatische Beiträge zum Verständnis Homers, I2 sqq.—das Funktionsfeld vom homerischen φίλος).

It is noteworthy that of all phrases containing ἐνάντιος, 'sitting opposite' alone implies the concept of φίλος—as can be shown by the following passages:

Ε 497 . . . ἐνάντιοι ἑσταν (Τρώης) Ἀχαϊῶν
Λ 67 . . . ἂς τ’ ἄμηστρες ἐναντίοιοι ἀλλῆλοιοι / ὡμον ἐκαύνωσιν
Ο 88 . . . πρώτῃ γὰρ ἐναντίῃ ἥλθε θέουσα (Θέμις Ἡρώς)—not to mention the battle-situations (ἐναντίοιοι μάχεσθαι c. a.).

By applying the above findings to the lines of Sapph. 31, the following conclusion offers itself: ὅτις ἐνάντιος . . . ιδώνει and the girl behind τοι appears to be φίλοι to one another, and the subject of ιδώνει—the master of the house. Thus the two persons facing each other are apparently man and wife, and in her passionate poem Sappho indicates the husband of a dearly beloved friend.

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1. May I express my thanks to Prof. H. L. Gonin for his suggestion to add this important detail.
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