

## Wedding Celebration through Sappho's Epithalamic Verses (fr. 104-117V)

Modern critics have not been too impressed by the fragments of Sappho that are securely read as epithalamia (fr. 104V-117V). Page (1955, 126) sees this corpus as “for the most part trivial in subject and style”, while Kirkwood (1974, 139), as “not very distinguished poetry”. Bowra (1961, 216) calls its humor “a bit primitive”, and considers that the poems are connected to “rustic” weddings (Bowra 1961, 216; 218), at odds, therefore, with Sappho's refulgent poetry. All of these fragments, however, have been preserved through quotations. That is, they preserve for the most part, beyond Sappho's production *ipsa verba*, the judgment of those who have quoted her. Based on such a reception, as well as the later ancient critics who have endeavored in the genre of the wedding song, this paper aims at discussing how the critical vocabulary used to describe Sappho's epithalamic verses reveals a (faint, of course) sense of the performative reality of the poet at Lesbos in the 6<sup>th</sup> C. BCE. Furthermore, when this context is set next to the fragments, both present a glimpse into the *topoi* of the genre, the social expectations that surround these weddings, and the emotional landscape of their participants. Through this discussion, it is possible to approach the epithalamium more deeply, devising a poetry that is particularly engaged to the moment of performance, that uses comparisons to the natural world above all, that is open to playfulness and humor, and that praises the participants of the ceremony in order to entice and introduce bride to groom, while focusing on the terrifying and life changing experience the girl is about to endure, being pushed to womanhood, and learning such trajectory through the songs surrounding her.

## Bibliography

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