

13th Conference of the FIEC (Fédération Internationale des Associations d'Etudes Classiques)

Abstract

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b) Preferred panel: “The Powers of Persuasion”

c) Title of the paper

***“Sappho (Fr. 1 Voigt) and Ibycus (Fr. 288 Davies):
erotic persuasion as a verb, a goddess and a nourishment”.***

d) Length of the paper: 20 minutes

e) Outline of the content, max. 300 words

In ancient Greece, especially throughout the archaic and classical periods, persuasion – peitho – was perceived as an action, a technique and a goddess. Its wide range encompassed distinct dimensions of everyday life, notably in politics, justice, and seduction, the latter being the central one in this paper on Sappho's and Ibycus's erotic poetry. In a commentary on Sappho's songs, an anonymous scholiast says that the Lesbian poet considered Peitho to be Aphrodite's daughter, a genealogical connection which deeply differs from the previous genealogies found in Hesiod (*Theogony*, 349) and Alcman (Fr. 64 Davies), but one that will be repeated later in Aeschylus (*The suppliant maidens*, 1034-42). In Sappho's first and most famous Fr. 1 Voigt, the "Hymn to Aphrodite", peitho – to persuade – is a verb again related to Aphrodite who proffers it in an unmistakably erotic context. Later, in Ibycus's Fr. 288 Dav., a fragment with hymnal overtones from a love-song dedicated to a beautiful boy (pais kalos), Peitho is once more coupled with Aphrodite and both play the same role: they are kourotrophoi goddesses that nurse Euryalus, the desired boy, and that "sprout" (thalos) from the Charites – the divine Graces. Therefore, this paper centers on Peitho, an erotic goddess, and on erotic persuasion, that is theme of these two poets who sing it in different manners.