

DAVID KONSTAN : **Sappho 16 and the Sense of Beauty**

It is argued that Sappho, in fr. 16, affirms that whereas some regard cavalry, infantry, or a fleet as the finest thing (this is the sense of κάλλιστον), she herself maintains that what is finest is that which one loves, i.e., that which one finds most beautiful (i.e., possessing κάλλος). Desire for the beautiful is contrasted with appreciation for other things, which however are not said to be beautiful or to inspire erotic desire. The key to interpreting the poem is the contrast between κάλλος meaning “beauty” and καλός meaning “fine” or “excellent”; only the former is closely associated with ἔρωσ.

Mots-clés :

beauty – κάλλος – καλός, desire – love – ἔρωσ – ἔρος