The Text and Author of Sapph. fr. 117 V.

Felix J. Meister  
Inst. für Altertumskunde, Universität zu Köln  
felix.meister@uni-koeln.de

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†χαίροιϲ ἂ νύμφα†, χαιρέτω δ’ ὁ γάμβροϲ

In the context of his discussion of the phenomenon of catalexis, Hephaestion, the sole source of Sapph. fr. 117,1 introduces this line with οἷον ἐπὶ ἰαμβικοῦ (4.2). These words leave little room for doubt that the version that he read of this line displayed a sequence of quantities compatible with the definition of iambic trimeter catalectic. Here, the term ἰαμβικόν can only refer to Hephaestion’s notion of an iambic genre, where periods consist of indefinite numbers of iambic prototype feet, as it is discussed in detail in the fifth chapter of the Enchiridion.2 Elsewhere in the discussion of catalexis, the same phrase οἷον ἐπὶ ἰαμβικοῦ also introduces two supposed iambic dimeters (4.3 = Alcm. fr. 174 PMGF, 4.4 = adesp. fr. 974 PMG), just as the phrase οἷον ἐπὶ δακτυλικοῦ introduces first a supposed dactylic tetrameter (4.1 = Alcm. fr. 27.1 PMGF) and later a trimeter (4.2 = Archil. fr. 182.2 IEG²). If Hephaestion’s terminology unequivocally calls for the prosodic sequence constituting an iambic trimeter catalectic, the text, as it is preserved in all manuscripts of the Enchiridion (χαίροιϲ ἂ νύμφα, χαιρέτω δ’ ὁ γάμβροϲ), cannot be correct. While the trimeter requires a short third syllable in each metron, the third syllable of the supposed first metron of this line (ἄ, or Lesbian ἄ) is long. Hephaestion himself is of course aware of this requirement,3 and it would be problematic to assume, with Gentili, that

1 All references to fragments of Sappho and Alcaeus are to the edition of Voigt 1971.
3 The definition of the iambic genre offered at Heph. 5.1 (τὸ ἰαμβικὸν δέχεται κατὰ μὲν τὰς περισσὰς χώρας [τουτέστι πρώτην, τρίτην, πέμπτην, del. Consbruch] ἰαμβον, τρίβραχον, καὶ σπονδεῖον, δάκτυλον, ἀνάπαυσιν, κατὰ δὲ τὰς ἀρτίους [τουτέστι δευτέραν, τετάρτην, ἐκτην, del. id.] ἰαμβον καὶ τρίβραχον καὶ ἀνάπαυσιν) effectively excludes a long third position within a given metron.
the metrician would have committed a ‘banale errore’ in scanning an originally long syllable as short. More likely, a corruption entered the text of the *Enchiridion* at some point between its composition in the second century AD and George Choeroboscus’ commentary in the early ninth century, which preserves the version χαίροιϲ ἁνύμφα (ἀνύμφα Vat. Graec. 14), χαιρέτω δ’ ὁ γαμβρόϲ (p. 220 Consbruch). The impression of a corruption is enhanced by the syntactical awkwardness resulting from the address in the nominative with the direct article instead of the vocative, which is in fact found in fr. 116 (χαῖρε, νύμφα, χαῖρε, τίμε γάμβρε, πόλλα).5

In light of these difficulties, a number of emendations have been proposed that meet the requirements of the supposed trimeter. A popular solution, supported by editors of both Hephaestion and Sappho from Turnèbe (1553) and Orsini (1568) to Consbruch (1906), is the reading χαίροιϲᾰ νύμφᾱ. This subtle change of the text gives rise to new concerns. A participle clause would have to either depend on the syntax of a lost preceding line or form an absolute construction. However, the argument of a preceding syntactical structure is confronted with the observation that Hephaestion tends to quote, in order to illustrate particular metres, predominantly the first lines of poems displaying these metres. An absolute participle would subordinate the phrase χαίροιϲα νύμφα to the phrase χαιρέτω δ’ ὁ γαμβρόϲ in a way comparable to a genitive absolute. This is rendered difficult by the presence of δέ, which normally indicates a coordination of two equivalent clauses and is hardly ever found to mark the transition from a participle clause to the finite verb. These concerns suggest that a finite form of the verb would be preferable. Fick 1891, 211 argues for interpreting the sequence ἄ νύμφα as interjection (ἄ) followed by the vocative. However, as it is now established that the interjection should be scanned as long (ἄ), this reading offers no solution to the metrical problem. Kaibel

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6 Tzamali 1996, 438.
7 Cf. the discussion in Snell 1944, 283-285; pace Kaibel 1892, 254 and Mangelsdorff 1913, 19, who assert that the fragment should have been at the end of a poem.
8 Kühner-Gerth §493.4; Havers 1928, 121-127.
9 According to Denniston *GP*, 181-182, apodotic δέ after a participle clause is rare and virtually confined to prose.
10 Loewe 1927, 141-142; Tzamali 1996, 438.