



VINTAGE

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# THE SAPPHO COMPANION

MARGARET REYNOLDS

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## About the Book

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Born around 630 BC on the Greek island of Lesbos, Sappho is now regarded as the greatest lyric poet of ancient Greece, ironic and passionate, capturing the troubled depths of love. Her work survives only in fragments, yet her influence extends throughout Western literature, fuelled by the speculation and romances which have gathered around her name, her story and her sexuality.

This remarkable anthology brilliantly displays the way different periods have taken up Sappho's haunting story, bringing together many different kinds of work. We see her image change, re-created in Ovid's poetry and Boccaccio's tales, in translations by Pope, Rossetti, Swinburne and Baudelaire, and in the modern versions of Eavan Boland, Ruth Padel and Jeanette Winterson.

## About the Author

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Margaret Reynolds is a writer, academic, critic and broadcaster. Her 1992 edition of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* won the British Academy's Rose Mary Crawshay Prize. Her other books include the acclaimed *Victorian Women Poets: An Anthology*. She lives in Gloucestershire and is Senior Research Fellow at Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London, and was formerly a Visiting Fellow at Clare Hall, Cambridge.

For Jeanette Winterson,  
with love

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# THE SAPPHO

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## COMPANION

EDITED AND INTRODUCED BY  
Margaret Reynolds

VINTAGE BOOKS  
London

come, my sacred tortoiseshell lyre  
speak, and let my music  
give you voice

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Sappho, Fragment 118

... Orpheus, son of Apollo, was the most famous musician the world has ever known. Animals crowded round to hear his song and even the lion lay down tamely at his feet. Mountains would heave their rocky foundations and move towards the sound; trees would bend and pull up their roots to follow his music.

When his wife Eurydice died, Orpheus pursued her into Hades and so charmed the god of death with the music of his lyre that his prayer was granted and Eurydice was restored to life. But Orpheus forgot the one condition – that he should not look back as they made their way up and out of the underworld. With Eurydice now lost to him for a second time, the music of Orpheus' lyre was so sad that it broke the hearer's heart. Alone on the mountainside Orpheus mourned, and day after day the people who lived nearby wept to hear his wailing song. Then one day the sound was heard no more. Some said that the gods, unable to bear the sounds of his lamentation, had struck him with lightning; others that Orpheus had been torn apart by wild beasts, tormented by the pain of his song, or by the Maenads, half-crazed women who wandered over the mountains.

However that may be, Orpheus' lyre floated down the River Hebrus and out into the wide sea, playing all the while, and its sweet music echoed across the water. At length the lyre was cast up high on the shores of the island of Lesbos, where it lay neglected until it was overgrown with vines and half-buried under falling leaves. But the winds of the island are known for their melodies, and the nightingales of Lesbos are said to sing more sweetly than those of any other place in the world ...



At the beginning of the twentieth century an American visitor to the island of Lesbos said that every family on the island had a daughter named Sappho. Today, although you can meet Iphigenias in Greece, Electras and Cassandras, and even Jocastas, you hardly ever meet a Sappho. It is not a name that features in the dictionaries scoured by new parents in any country.

I did once know a girl called Sappho – not in Greece, but in Oxford. It was in the early 1970s and she was an American, a renegade hippie who had run away from her respectable family, worked in a circus and done the drug scene, and who now wanted to settle into domesticity with her undergraduate boyfriend. Her real name was Sue. Another Sappho that I know of was Sappho Durrell, the daughter of Lawrence Durrell (who figures in this book) and herself a writer. Sadly, though she made the ancient Sappho one of her literary models, her personal history all too closely resembled that of her namesake for she led a difficult and unhappy life and ended by committing suicide in January 1985 at the age of thirty-four.

Other than that, I can think of the Ladies of Llangollen (Lady Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby) who were celebrated in the early nineteenth century for their romantic friendship and whose dog was called Sappho. Radclyffe Hall had a parrot called Sappho in 1926, but it bit her and ended up being sent to the zoo. More recently Kate Flint, an academic colleague, once had a cat named Sappho. She liked to sleep high up on top of the kitchen cupboards, from where she would take a flying leap on to the floor. I never did find out if this was how she got to be called Sappho, or whether the practice began after she had acquired the name, but I do know that Kate's other cat was called Mrs Pankhurst.

So even in this very small sample of Sapphos, the name conjures up allusions to an activist, a feminist, to a Sapphist or a romantic friend, to a writer and a suicide, to a non-conformist free spirit and to an illustrious woman whose name was venerated by the inhabitants of her native island. In this book you will find other examples of all these kinds of Sapphos, and you will meet many more.

The real Sappho, if not the first Sappho, was a poet. And her name was not 'Sappho' – as we pronounce it – at all. Today, in English, she is all soft sibilants and faded f's, but in fact she is ψάπφω 'Psappho'. In ancient Greek – and, indeed, even in modern Greek – if you hear a native speaker say her name, she comes across spitting and popping hard p's. Ppppsappoppo. We have eased off her name, made her docile and sliding, where she is really difficult, diffuse, many-syllabled, many-minded, vigorous and hard.

Psappho lived on the island of Lesbos, off the coast of what is now Turkey, at the end of the seventh and the beginning of the sixth centuries BC. Beyond these bare facts, we know very little about her poetry, hardly anything about her life, not much more about her society, nothing to speak of about her character and nothing whatsoever about her personal appearance. But this lack of facts has not stopped people – virtually from that day to this – making up stories about her. Quite the contrary. As you will see in reading this anthology, 'Sappho' is not a name, much less a person. It is, rather, a space. A space for filling in the gaps, joining up the dots, making something out of nothing.

This applies as much to Sappho's poetry as to her story. Because Sappho's poetry survives only in fragments, haphazardly quoted or remembered or dug up in garbled versions from rubbish heaps, her work has always been a site of invention for the poets who came after her. The first section of this book, 'The Fragments of Sappho', tells how her literary remains were handed down through history. It gives such versions of the Greek as can be construed from the ancient sources, side by side with later invented poems that are based on that already-fake Sappho.

When it comes to the life, or rather, the legends, then the connections to a real Sappho become,

anything, still more tenuous. Even in her lifetime Sappho was a name that conjured up a story, and the fabrications that built up around her are set out in the second section, 'The Tenth Muse'. In putting together documents that tell the tales of her later incarnations, I have tried to trace the various phenomena of Sapphic fashions as they unfolded at particular times and, sometimes, in particular places. For instance, during the Middle Ages, Sappho was a name for 'The Learned Lady', but during the eighteenth century 'Sappho' meant, for some, the kind of woman who was likely to be caught performing a 'Wanton Sapphoic'; and, during the nineteenth century, her reputation in certain circles sank so low that she became a 'Daughter of de Sade'. Sometimes entirely contradictory images of Sappho run simultaneously, as she becomes caught up in particular cultural movements. So in the eighteenth century you will also find her featuring in sections on 'The Sapphic Sublime' and 'Hellenism and Heroes', while in the nineteenth century she was, at two different stages, a literary role-model in 'The Lady with the Lyre' and a politicised feminist heroine in 'The New Woman'.

In all these different times and manifestations there is a fairly consistent cast of characters – both real and imaginary. Like Sappho herself, they appear in different forms, but it is worth introducing these supporting roles.

*Aphrodite*: The Greek goddess of love, who also appears under her Roman name of Venus, and under the name of *Cypris*, 'the Cyprian', because she is supposed to have been born on Cyprus. She is Sappho's presiding deity – sometimes her ally, sometimes her rival, occasionally her enemy.

*Pittacus*: The lord or ruler of Lesbos (c. 645–570 BC), who may actually have been in charge during Sappho's lifetime. Sometimes he is a benevolent despot, sometimes a cruel tyrant.

*Phaon*: Another name for Adonis, one of Aphrodite's lovers, for whose death Sappho wrote some poems of lamentation. One legend says that Phaon was an old ferryman, who rowed Aphrodite across a river and was rewarded with the choice of any gift he desired. When his request for renewed youth was granted, his beauty and vigour became the admiration of all. In many Sappho stories Phaon figures as her beloved, with or without the above prelude. In most of them he is not actually interested in Sappho and scorns her love, which is why she decides to kill herself.

*Alcaeus*: An ancient Greek lyric poet; also a native of Lesbos and historically Sappho's contemporary. As with Sappho's own poetry, his work survives only in fragments, but there are more substantial remains. He appears in the legends variously as Sappho's friend, her fellow poet, her lover or her rival.

*Anacreon*: Another ancient Greek lyric poet, whose chief subjects were wine, women and boys and song. Sappho's poems were often published in editions alongside Anacreon's. He flourished about 532 BC, so at least half a century later than Sappho, although some writers believed that he was her contemporary, so he too occasionally appears as her friend, her fellow poet, her lover or her rival.

*Bion*: A Greek poet from Smyrna, who wrote pastorals and lived in about 145 BC.

*Theocritus*: A Greek poet, who flourished in about 282 BC and lived in Syracuse, Sicily.

*Archilochus*: A Greek poet, writer of elegies, odes and epigrams, most of which are now lost. A native of Paros, he lived in about 685 BC.

*Erinna*: A Greek poet who wrote hexameter and elegiac poetry and lived in the late fourth century BC. Sometimes she appears as one of Sappho's pupils or companions. Other early women poets occasionally crop up in Sappho's story, although they were not her contemporaries, and include Corinna, Telesilla, Praxilla, Anyte and Nossis.

*Atthis*: One of Sappho's companions, pupils, girlfriends or novitiates, depending upon which story you are reading. Her name is actually mentioned in what we have of Sappho's Fragments 49, 96 and

*Abanthis, Anaktoria, Andromeda, Dica, Gongyla, Gorgo, Gyrinno, Irana, Megara, Mikanthos, Mnasicidica*: Other companions. Again, all these names are actually mentioned in the Fragments.

*Climene, Cydno, Damophyla, Philaenis, Pyrrhine, Theseyle, Telesippa*: Yet more companions along with various other invented names for Sappho's girls. Sometimes one or another of these might appear as a younger rival in love.

*Cleis*: Sappho's daughter, named in Fragment 132. Cleis is also supposed to have been the name of Sappho's mother.

*Charaxus, Larichus, Erigyius*: Sappho's brothers. Larichus was said to have poured wine in the civil ceremonies of Lesbos, a duty reserved only for the sons of noble families. Charaxus may have been a wine merchant.

*Doricha*: Sometimes also called Rhodope. A courtesan with whom Sappho's brother Charaxus was said to have had a liaison of which his sister did not approve. Fragment 5 is said to be about this.

*Alcandro, Stesichore*: Two of the names (along with many others) for Sappho's supposed father. He tends to appear most often in the fictions of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

*Cercylas from Andros*: Said to be the name of Sappho's husband. However, as it means 'Pricer from the Island of Man', it may be the invention of later comic writers.

The main sites of Sappho's story can be mapped out thus. On Lesbos the chief town is Mytilene but there is also a smaller town on the other side of the island called Eresus, and in some legends especially once the story of 'the two Sapphos' takes hold – Sappho is supposed to be a native of Eresus. Lydia, a country occupying the centre of the western part of Asia Minor, or Turkey, was the dominant empire in Sappho's time and sometimes figures in her stories. Its capital was Sardis, a city that she mentions in her Fragments. The story of Sappho's exile means that Sicily also appears. Other stories take her to mainland Greece, to Athens and to Mount Olympus, the legendary home of the gods. The other key place is Leucas, or Leucadia, an island in the Ionian sea now known as St Maurice, where Sappho is supposed to have thrown herself to her death. The name derives from *leuko*, meaning white, because of the white cliffs of the island. It was also the site of a cult of Apollo, the sun god, which may have included this human sacrifice in its rituals.

As there is an ever-changing cast of characters and a shifting *mise-en-scène* for Sappho's story, so there is a range of props associated with her, and these symbols figure both in her literary and visual representations. Chief among them is the lyre, either four- or seven-stringed and invented, according to legend, by Apollo (the sun god, and the god of music and poetry), and then inherited by Orpheus (son of Apollo, or Oeager, by Calliope, the muse of eloquence and heroic poetry). The ancient *kithara* was a heavy instrument giving a more solemn tone, and was preferred by professional singers and poets, while the *lyra*, fashioned from a tortoiseshell, was lighter. Sometimes Sappho plays another instrument altogether, depending on the fashion of the day; so, a harp or a lute in the Middle Ages, a lyre-guitar in the early nineteenth century. If Sappho is bemoaning her lot, or on the point of ending her life, then the strings of her lyre are untuned, symbolically snapped or the whole instrument may even be broken into fragments. Sometimes her lyre is much more than a musical instrument, also depending on the fashion of the day. It is certainly used suggestively by Algernon Swinburne, by Alphonse Daudet in his novel *Sappho* and by the French painter Barrias.

Second among Sappho's essential kit of props is the laurel wreath, emblem of Apollo and the reward of the victor in both the ancient Greek games and the poetry contest. If the Sappho being presented is upright and in full control, the laurel wreath sits squarely on her head. (Indeed, the moment of her crowning came to represent the height of achievement for a whole generation

women writers who followed the history of Madame de Staël's Sappho-persona in her 1807 novel *Corinne*.) If, on the other hand, Sappho is distraught = with passion, with pain = then her laurel wreath falls unregarded to the ground.

In pictures, poems and stories until the middle of the eighteenth century Sappho generally wore contemporary garments of the period: wimples and a pointed headdress in the Middle Ages, corset and lawn in the sixteenth century. Then, in the eighteenth century, muslin came in, along with the fashion for Greek simplicity, and thereafter Sappho was almost always associated with tunics and drapery, or the classical *chiton*, until she managed to get into jeans in the late twentieth century. Around the middle of the eighteenth century she also acquired a full set of furniture: tripod lamp, *klismos* chairs, columns, candlesticks, various Pompeian-inspired room sets, and mirrors of burnished bronze or silver. She also began to appear, both in pictures and in certain plays and poems, with one important piece of furniture, in the shape of a bed, or a couch, or a classical-style sofa, and that too stayed with her until the twentieth century. To go with this there was often a pair of cooing doves, to represent lasciviousness. And, for a brief but spectacular period from about 1760 to 1825, she was regularly depicted in the shadow of Vesuvius – the erupting volcano indicating at once Sappho's volatile passions, her literary grandeur and the unknowable chasms of the woman's body.

These variously inventive ways of imagining Sappho indicate how regularly she has been updated and re-interpreted for a contemporary audience. What is it about her work, about her story, that makes Sappho so attractive; that makes her appeal last for 2,000 years and more; and that still speaks to us across that waste of time?

Partly it is the sense of her being there at the beginning of world literature, unknown, strange and yet dimly recognisable, faintly imaginable – a real person whose relics we may yet be able to recover. For many of the poets included here, Tennyson and Baudelaire among them, she was a poetic mother (Baudelaire's poem 'Lesbos' actually begins '*Mère des jeux latins et des voluptés grecques, / Lesbos*') and in returning to her body, to her nurturing body-of-work, they fantasise about their own origin. The fact that that body is mutilated, in pieces – both actually, in terms of the fragmented works, and metaphorically, in terms of her legendary death, broken on the rocks of the sea – makes Sappho all the more seductive. Like the battered torso of the *Venus de Milo*, her injuries repel, and yet the idealised perfection of the imagined whole inspires a nostalgia and a longing that are greater than those directed towards any other object of desire that is present, intact and accessible. Like the enigmatic smile of the *Mona Lisa*, Sappho seems known to us, familiar, capable of being translated into our everyday lives. Yet still she remains utterly remote – if anything, all the more insinuating and full of meaning because she is, and always will be, absent. Just as thousands of tourists came to stare at the blank space on the walls of the Louvre when the *Mona Lisa* was stolen during the early part of the twentieth century, so we still make up stories about the emptiness that is S—o.

Because of this, Sappho functions as an attractive metaphor. Her work is in fragments, just as her body is broken, and since the eighteenth century our culture has entertained a pervading fascination with anything imperfect, destroyed, failed, lost. At the same time what we have of the work, and what others have made up about her life, suggests different qualities, much admired since the time of the Romantics: enthusiasm, passion, commitment. (These same ingredients made the film *Titanic* into a late twentieth-century blockbuster.) As far as we can tell from the Fragments, Sappho was a dedicated poet; a wordsmith who could craft emotion and experience. She seduces still, and is used to seduce still, in fictions both heterosexual and homosexual.

Then there is Sappho's death, or her supposed death. On the one hand, her leap into space represents a sublime moment of will, of self-glorification in a starry sky, and it is no accident that Sappho's leap became her most popular scene in the late eighteenth century, just after the

Enlightenment and with the rise of the Romantics. On the other hand, the fall into the abyss suggests human failure – ~~the mind rises up, while the body sinks down~~ – and so Sappho became associated with ‘the fallen woman’, the sexually suspect carrier of disease and social disruption, during the nineteenth century. Everywhere the many bodies of Sappho express her contradictions. In Tennyson’s *The Princess* (1846) her works are ‘jewels five-words-long / That on the stretched forefinger of all Time Sparkle for ever’ (II, 355–7). Yet, at the same time, her words are ‘burning’, her life is hot with lust and love, and – if you are of a censorious frame of mind – her works are worthy of burning, just as she, like a pagan witch, is ripe for condemnation and the punishment of the stake.

The details of Sappho’s story make her various and adaptable, depending on the concerns of the historical moment. At particular times the role of the artist was clichéd into the picture of a suffering solitary life, punished for the aspirations of vision by the pains of loss or failure. Sappho conveniently fits this mould. At other times, for women especially, the conflict between the calls of art and the comforts of love became the particular tension, and here too Sappho fitted. And yet – needing glorious role-models and finding so few – women artists everywhere have invoked the name of Sappho, however problematic it may be. In the eighteenth century there was ‘the Swedish Sappho’, Hedvig Charlotte Nordenflycht, author of ‘Ode to a Hyacinth’; in England Mary Robinson, among many others, was the ‘British Sappho’. The ‘Russian Sappho’ was Sophia Parnock; Anna Karshin was the ‘German Sappho’; there was an ‘Italian Sappho’; and so on.

Re-incarnated, revived, resuscitated, recalled, remembered, reinvented. One way or another Sappho lives on, in new places, in new mediums, in new ways.

This collection represents a sample of the incarnations of Sappho over the last 2,500 years. There are many more. But in recent times, especially during the past ten years, Sappho has been enjoying a revival. As far as the classical poet is concerned, this revival is partly due to modern scholarship on ancient Greek, as three major new editions appeared in the second half of the twentieth century: Edgall Lobel and Denys Page, *Poetarum Lesbiorum Fragmenta* (1955); Eva-Maria Voigt, *Sappho et Alcaeus Fragmenta* (1971); and David A. Campbell, *Greek Lyric 1: Sappho and Alcaeus* (for the Loeb Classical Library, 1982). Many new translations, both in prose and verse, have also been published. Then there have been five major critical books on the classical Sappho, by Margaret Williams (1995), Page DuBois (1995), Lyn Hatherly Wilson (1996), Jane McIntosh Snyder (1997) and edited by Ellen Greene (1996). Any number of scholarly articles on Sappho’s Fragments have also appeared. But the biggest growth area of Sappho studies in the last few years has concerned the reception of Sappho’s poetry and the cultural transmission of her legends. This anthology, and my forthcoming book on the critical history of Sappho’s reception from the Romantic period to the Modern, form part of this work. It began with a suggestive essay, ‘Sapphistries’ by Susan Gubar (published in *Signs* in the autumn of 1984) and continued with Joan DeJean’s monumental work on the tradition in France (1989). Other important recent books include *Victorian Sappho* by Yopie Prins (1999) and those by Ruth Vanita (1996) and edited by Ellen Greene (1996). All of these books are listed in the Selected Bibliography.

At the same time, Sappho maintains her double life. On the one hand, she is a scholar’s resource; on the other, she is a popular heroine (or demon). Many people think of her as a poet, but it is probably true to say that today Sappho is equally – or even more? – famous for being a lesbian. That is how her name is used in the titles of two recent collections; Kay Turner’s *Dear Sappho: A Legacy of Lesbian Love Letters* (1996) and Emma Donoghue’s *What Sappho Would Have Said: Four Centuries of Love Poems Between Women* (1997). Even when she is not named, she is there, for both Gillian Spraggs’ anthology *Love Shook My Senses: Lesbian Love Poems* (1998) and Karen McCarthy Brown’s *Bittersweet: Contemporary Black Women’s Poetry* (1998) take their titles from Sappho (Fragment 4).

and Fragment 130 respectively).

Sappho remains, like her own epithet for Aphrodite, 'many-coloured', or 'many minded'. In 1997 the *Independent* headlined an article with 'I can't get no sapphic action' and went on to state: 'Well now you can. In cinema and living room, lesbians are big on screen this spring', advertising a season of the film fashion for 'lesbian chic'. And yet, at almost the same time, in 1998 the poet Eavan Boland recalled how she had always known Sappho's lines to her daughter Cleis, because she could remember her own mother reciting them to her as a child.

Lesbian, mother, poet, artist, lover, suicide, warning, icon: Sappho.

Who is she? Everyone and no one. Where is she? Everywhere and ... on Lesbos.

Strangely enough, the name that still clings to her, with one sense, and which is the most entirely remote from the real Sappho of antiquity, is also the name – in a different sense – that brings us closest to her. For Sappho may or may not have been a lesbian. But she certainly was a Lesbian. And there she is still to be found.

When Lady Mary Wortley Montagu sailed among the Greek islands in 1717, she peered into the past and saw Sappho on Lesbos:

... 'tis impossible to imagine anything more agreeable than this journey would have been between two and three thousand years since, when, after drinking a dish of tea with Sappho, I might have gone the same evening to visit the temple of Homer in Chios, and have passed the voyage in taking plans of magnificent temples, delineating the miracles of statuaries, and conversing with the most polite and most gay of human kind. Alas! art is extinct here; the wonders of nature alone remain.

Like Lady Mary, when the American scholar Mary Mills Patrick went to the island in 1910 she saw what Sappho had seen: the abundant wild flowers, the indented coastline with its sandy coves lined with luxuriant green, the olive groves, the dusty white roads, the wide blue sea, the even wider sky. She saw the hollowed-out place where the acropolis once stood; she could make out the circle of the ancient theatre. She bought tiny bronze coins of ancient Mitylene, with a lyre on one side and the head of Sappho on the other. She was shown two columns built into the portico of the Greek church *Therapon* and taken, so it was said, from the entrance to Sappho's school, the House of the Poet. 'Lovers of Greek poetry,' she said, 'should visit Lesbos while the charm of the ancient scenes and customs remains unchanged. The island will always be beautiful, but the old Greek atmosphere which one finds there now will pass away with the onward march of Western civilisation.'

She was right, and she was wrong. When the Greek writer Stratis Myrivilis, a native of Lesbos, wrote his bestselling novel *The Schoolmistress with the Golden Eyes* in 1954, he might have felt bitterly about Patrick's 'onward march of Western civilisation' as he described his hero returning to Lesbos from the horrors of a war that set Greek against Turk and took the cities of the Aegean coast back to the times of barbarian atrocities exchanged between island and mainland. Yet even that state of affairs would have been recognisable to Sappho, just as the flowers and the inlets, the sea and the sky, in Myrivilis' novel would look the same to her eyes.

Now another half-century has passed. The columns are still there, though no coins are to be had in the souvenir shops. Instead, you have to make do with T-shirts, plaster casts of a naked woman bearing the legend 'You have put a torch to my heart' (not a Fragment I recognise), glass pendants and sets of Sappho-with-her-lyre coasters (choice of green or white background). The house rented by Renée Vivien in 1904 can still be seen, and although the 1970s' campsite for lesbians on Lesbos has disappeared, there is still a gay scene in the town of Eressou where, as the *Rough Guide* puts

Sappho's acolytes can be found 'paying homage' at the 'clothing-optional zone of the beach west of the river mouth', or disporting themselves at the single-sex hotel *Antiopi* or at a bar called *Dheka Mousa*, 'The Tenth Muse'. A modern mural of 'Sappho and Alcaeus' by the Greek artist Theophilus has appeared on the wall of a former *kafeneion*, now a private house, showing Sappho in gold with a green scarf across her shoulders, listening to Alcaeus playing his golden lyre. The south harbour of Mytilene looks like that on any Greek island, and the new, yet already shabby, half-finished concrete houses are just the same as they are on Paros or Naxos or Mykonos. But there are hotels called the 'Sappho', and a taverna advertising 'Aphrodite Home Cooking'; and on the quayside stands a large-than-lifesize statue of Sappho in white Pentelic marble by the Lesbian sculptor Nassos Limnaios. The base is inscribed: 'Come now, delicate Graces and beautiful-haired Muses'. She stands, looking out to sea, her lyre held against her left shoulder, her right hand open and extended and her head erect, as if she is just about to begin a performance.

The quayside statue has only been there since 1965, and the harbour is not the place where you will find Sappho's real presence on Lesbos. But go out from the town, along the white roads and, even after 2,600 years, you will find the flowers and the green valleys, and the winds blowing warm into the island coves, just as they did when Sappho called across the sea to her goddess:

Hither to me from Crete, to this holy temple  
here to your grove of appletrees, come, to the altars  
smoking with incense, while the cool water  
sifts through

the apple branches; and everywhere  
is shaded with roses, while from the shimmering  
leaves, an enchanted drowsiness descends  
into the meadow

where horses graze and the spring flowers  
blossom, and the winds  
blow gently ...

...

There ... gracious Cypris  
take up the offering, and pour gracefully  
into golden cups the nectar that consecrates  
in our festivities ...

Fragment 2

All the Greek texts quoted for Sappho's Fragments 1–168B in the first section of this book are taken with permission, from Eva-Maria Voigt, *Sappho et Alceaus: Fragmenta* (1971).

The Fragments are numbered according to Voigt's edition. The same numbering is used in Lobel and Page's edition (1955) and in David A. Campbell's Loeb Classical Library edition (1992). The only exception is Fragment 130 where Voigt links two Fragments, – that is those given as Fragment 130 and Fragment 131 in Lobel and Page, and in Campbell – believing them to be parts of the same poem (Earlier editions, such as Bergk and Wharton, used a different numbering system.)

In the case of Fragment 49 I have included only Wharton's nineteenth century translation although all the modern editors – Voigt, Lobel and Page, and Campbell – agree that the Fragment continues with

μικρα μοι παῖς ἔμμεν' ἐφαίνεο κᾶχαρις

'You seemed to me a small graceless child ...'.

The Fragments of Sappho that survive, especially those reconstructed from papyrus texts, are often damaged, and the brackets and other editorial marks that appear in the edited Greek texts indicate omissions or tentative readings.

Translations that are not attributed are my own.

The source from which each extract in the later sections of the anthology is taken is noted at the end of the piece, unless it has already been given as the title. Full titles are given in the [Complete List of Poems and Extracts](#).



## *The Fragments of Sappho*



A mutilated papyrus dating from the 3rd century A.D. found at Oxyrhynchus (now called Behnasa) in Egypt at the beginning of the 20th century. The text is Sappho's Fragment 5 'To the Nereids' and the ghost of the shape of the Sapphic stanza (three long lines, one short) tantalisingly suggests a framework for all the missing words of the poem. The British Museum.

Sappho's poems, composed 2,600 years ago, are with us still. Her images, her vocabulary, her subjects, her style have influenced the work of poets from her own day until now. But even people who have never read a line of the Classics will recognise Sappho, because the phrases and images that she first used have become so widely popular, so familiar and apparently instinctive that they are used by almost everyone who wishes to speak about the beauty of nature, the pain of love or the evanescence of a changing world. She was in the 1920s' hit parade with:

By the light,  
Of the silvery moon,  
I want to spoon,  
To my honey I'll croon love's tune

(Fragment 34 'the stars and the shining moon ...'); she is in a jazz song from the 1950s by Carmen McCrae called 'You Took Advantage of Me', which goes:

I'm just an apple on the bough  
I knew you'd shake me down

(Fragment 105A 'the sweet apple ...'); she is in Diana Ross's hit 'Where Did Our Love Go?':

You came into my heart, so tenderly,

(Fragments 130 ‘Love once again ... limb-loosening ... bitter sweet ...’ and Fragment 146 ‘neither honey nor bee ...’). And she is even in Madonna’s controversial single ‘Like a Virgin’ (Fragment 114 ‘where are you, virginity?’).

None of these performers would have worried about borrowing from Sappho, or even realised that they were doing so, but from the time of the Roman poets on, Sappho’s verse has been imitated, plagiarised, re-invented. In English this process did not begin until the end of the sixteenth century, but once it did, Sappho acquired many new voices. Or, rather, many latterday writers acquired her, ventriloquised her, spoke for her.

In fact, Sappho has no authentic voice in any language, even her own. The Greek given here for each Fragment, taken from the scholarly work of a modern edition, is also a reconstruction, but it reminds us that Sappho and her work should be thought of as something strange, foreign and remote, something that is ultimately unrecoverable, in spite of all the many layers of invention by later writers.

One reason why Sappho must remain so remote is that none of her work was ever written down. She lived at a time when the early civilised world around the Mediterranean was going through a period of transition from an oral tradition to a literate one. Sappho herself would have performed her poems to music, and they would have been either memorised or improvised. But a classical Greek alphabet originated from Miletus not long after her death, and in Egypt and other places it had long been known that papyrus reeds could be made into a material like paper and used for writing on.

There is some argument for suggesting that Sappho’s likely knowledge of the new possibilities of literacy contributed to her character as a self-aware poet, recognising in the development the consequences for the survival of her work beyond her own lifetime, and even beyond the lifetimes of those who memorised her verses. That poetry could have a long life was something already within her own experience, for she certainly seems to have known the work of her great predecessor Homer, who had lived some 200 years earlier. There are two epigrams from the *Palatine Anthology* that have been attributed to Sappho and, if they are hers, then they do suggest that she was a writer who believed in the power of writing to memorialise and celebrate what is lost, to make it survive through poetry. The first is on the death of Timas, here in a version by J. A. Symonds (1883), and the second on Pelagon, the fisherman, here in a version by Michael Field (1889):

This is the dust of Timas, whom, unwed,  
Persephone locked in her darksome bed:  
For her, the maids who were her fellows shore  
Their curls and to her tomb this tribute bore.

Above a fisher’s tomb  
Were set his withy-basket and his oar,  
The tokens of his doom,  
Of how in life his labour had been sore:  
A father put them up above his son,  
Meniscus over luckless Pelagon.

The most authoritative sources for Sappho’s verses are the earliest – that is, papyri fragments, most

from about the second or third centuries AD – which record her work. But these were written long after Sappho's death, so they are quotations, or memories of memories of her compositions. These papyrus fragments were found at the turn of the last century on rubbish heaps and many of them were badly damaged, some even torn into strips to make bandages for mummies or recycled as useful papyrus (while the poetry written on them was considered pretty useless). The challenge for scholars reconstructing Sappho's work can readily be imagined. In her book *Sappho's Immortal Daughter* (1995), Margaret Williamson gives an amusing account of what it means, by showing what could happen if a scholar had to attempt to recover Shakespeare's speech from *Hamlet*, 'To be or not to be' when all he had was a torn scrap of papyrus with a few random legible words. Add to this the fact that in early writing practice no punctuation was used and, worse still, no gaps between words, and you can see how difficult it was to decipher these early texts.

We do, however, know that Sappho's poems were written down comparatively soon after she died and that there were a great many of them. By the end of the fifth century BC (about 150 years after Sappho died) there was an established trade in manuscript production and a brisk market among rich persons who collected private libraries. Sappho was one author whose works were collected, written down on long papyrus rolls, which were then wrapped around two 'holders' so that you read by feeding the manuscript from one roll to the other. In the early third century BC a library, or museum (House of the Muses), was founded in the Egyptian city of Alexandria, where scholars collected books (or rather papyrus rolls) and developed the systems of comparison and collation that are the staple methods of textual editors even today. At this time Sappho was canonised as one of the great lyric poets and her work ran to Nine Books of verse. One whole book contained her *epithalamia*, songs composed for weddings; another was said to have run to as much as 1,320 lines. Today only just over 200 Fragments survive, most of them only two or three lines long.

So what happened? In the legends, the wholesale destruction of Sappho's oeuvre is attributed to some dramatic event: the earliest stories grew out of the repeated sacking of the library at Alexandria by barbarian hordes. The truth is rather more prosaic and more complicated. As long as manuscripts of Sappho and other Greek lyric poets were treasured, it was worth while for dealers and enthusiasts to go on with the laborious process of making manuscript copies, and undoubtedly there were many copies of Sappho in the wealthiest libraries of the ancient world. In the first century BC there was a great fashion for the Greek lyric poets, which is why the Roman poets Catullus and later Horace knew Sappho and were able to imitate her work. But fashions change, and technologies change too. Gradually it became the custom to cite the language of Athens, Attic, as the true classical Greek, and Sappho's Aeolic dialect was considered provincial. Then, when the book trade improved its materials and switched from papyrus rolls to the more durable parchment codex, it seems that scribes and their employers thought Sappho an arcane taste, not worth the labour of retranscription. Gradually all her Nine Books disappeared.

However, during the years when those manuscripts were copied and recopied, many writers consulted them. And because Sappho was much admired as a stylist, her works were quoted, and those quotations survived from antiquity. From the Middle Ages right up until the end of the nineteenth century Sappho was known only from the snippets quoted by others. Her two most famous fragments, Fragment 1, the so-called 'Ode to Aphrodite', and Fragment 31, 'That man seems to me ...' were handed down in this way. Fragment 1 was quoted in its entirety in a book entitled *On Literary Composition* by Dionysius of Halicarnassus written in about 30 BC, and Fragment 31 was quoted in part by Longinus in his treatise *On the Sublime*, which was written during the first century AD. (The works by Longinus and Dionysius of Halicarnassus are themselves available today only because they happened to survive another major change in the technology of book production, the invention of the

printing press in the sixteenth century, when once again printers made decisions about what they would, and would not, bother to copy from manuscript into type.)

From the Renaissance on, a different kind of development meant that the works of ancient authors were revalued. Once books became a practicable form and comparatively cheap to make and acquire, scholars could begin to collect them and to write yet more books about books. Humanist scholars valued the Greek lyric poets and their status remained high right up to the nineteenth century, when the study of Greek and Latin, 'Greats', was the core of the syllabus at Oxford and Cambridge universities. Sappho's work, in particular, enjoyed a huge revival from the beginning of the eighteenth century, and many new translations and then editions were published, which combed the works of ancient authors for any stray quotation that could be added to the meagre collection of Fragments. In this way the size of her oeuvre increased steadily, if very slowly. Then something happened that radically changed the state of Sappho scholarship.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century farmers in Egypt began to turn up pieces of papyrus as they ploughed new fields. Gradually news of this filtered through to the West, and Germany, France and Britain, in particular, began to send out teams of excavators to see what they might find. In 1897 Bernard Grenfell and Arthur Hunt, two young men from Queen's College, Oxford, set out for Egypt with financial backing from the Egypt Exploration Fund. They settled on a site at a small town about 120 miles south of Cairo, Oxyrhynchus (now called Behnasa). On the outskirts of the town was a group of low mounds. Almost as soon as they began to dig, Grenfell and Hunt realised that it was the huge rubbish dump of a once-thriving town dating from the period of Hellenistic Egypt. The rubbish had been thrown out in about the fifth century AD, but quite a lot of it was much older, often dating from the second to third centuries AD. For months they lived in tents, quarrelled with the cohorts of local workers, piled tiny scraps of torn papyrus into reed baskets, then sifted and deciphered, before packing them up into Huntley and Palmer's biscuit tins and sending them back to Oxford. In the end there were crates and crates of such fragments, and the process of dealing with them goes on to this day. The Egypt Exploration Society began, slowly, to edit and publish the finds. Despite having reached their sixty-sixth volume in the series, the findings are still being published, and the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford still holds crates of fragments in their basement.

Most of the fragments are dross: bills and receipts, IOUs, invitations, inventories, tickets, laundry lists. But one page seemed to record some of the sayings of Jesus. And another tiny scrap, dating from the third century AD, was a copy of a poem by Sappho – a new poem, previously unknown. It is included here as Fragment 5, 'To the Nereids'.

As the work at Oxyrhynchus went on, other Sappho fragments were recovered, including some of the most substantial, such as Fragment 16, 'Some say a host of cavalry ...', Fragment 44, 'Hector and Andromache ...', and Fragment 58 '[fleeing?] ... [was bitten ...?] ... love has got for me the brightness and beauty of the sun'. Altogether the body of Sappho's known work increased considerably. Some of the finds are now in the British Museum, London; others in the Ashmolean and in Berlin. It had been the fantasy of the ages to recover the precious lost Nine Books of Sappho and here, in a shabby, dusty Egyptian town, that overdue dream seemed to be coming true. Excavation continued at Oxyrhynchus into the twentieth century, although irrigation has now destroyed anything that may be left. Other sites in Egypt are still being excavated and some Sappho scholars go on hoping that new finds might turn up one day.

Of the 213 Fragments that are currently known, I have selected thirty, designed to give some indication of the flavour of Sappho's work, her themes and subjects, as well as some sense of the world for which her poetry was created.

We know very little about the actual circumstances in which Sappho's poetry was composed, and

many of the wilder guesses are included in the later sections of this anthology. But modern scholarship places Sappho in a privileged and aristocratic world, where she took part in rituals dedicated to the cult of Aphrodite. This does not make her a priestess, but perhaps a leader of young noble women, probably training in the arts and being groomed for an advantageous marriage. The group of young girls (*parthenoi*, virgins, as opposed to *gynaikos*, adult women) figures in many Sappho's fragments, including Fragment 41, Fragment 57 and Fragment 96.

Fragment 1, the so-called 'Ode to Aphrodite' and the only complete poem of hers to survive from antiquity, would have been written for public performance for this female audience, within the context of the cult of Aphrodite, goddess of love. However, the fact that Sappho names herself in the fifth stanza ('who wrongs you, Sappho?'), combined with the urgent tone of the poem, means that it has often been read like a latterday lyrical effusion, both private and personal. This is also one of the poems that helps to give rise to questions about Sappho's sexuality, because the phrase translated as 'even against her will' in the sixth stanza is feminine in the Greek. As you will see, this does not stop Sappho's earliest translators into English from turning the lover she desires into a man (a 'coy Youth' in John Addison's 1735 version), or even from giving her beloved a name, 'Phaon' (as Francis Fawkes did in 1760).

The next almost-complete poem is Fragment 31, 'That man seems to me ...' This is probably the most influential of all Sappho's extant verse, partly because it was known relatively early on and partly because it has been translated and interpreted so many times. When Longinus quoted it in the first century AD he cited it as an example of 'love's madness':

... are you not amazed how at one and the same moment she seeks out soul, body, hearing, tongue, sight, complexion as though they had all left her and were external, and how contradiction she both freezes and burns, is irrational and sane, is afraid and nearly dead, so that we observe in her not one single emotion but a concourse of emotions? All this of course happens to people in love ...

D. A. Campbell, Loeb translation, 1982

Sappho's catalogue of symptoms, as relayed to us by Longinus, has since become the conventional description of the physical effects of desire, repeated in cultures high and low, from pop songs to Roland Barthes (who quoted Longinus and Sappho in his *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments* of 1977). Certainly Sappho seems to have been an original inventor of the language of sexual desire. Fragment 31 is also important within Western culture because it evokes the psychic geometry of a love triangle which has since become a commonplace. Sappho looks at, and desires, a girl who is unavailable because she favours a man, who therefore seems, to Sappho, 'equal to the Gods'. Again, this poem contains a crux much discussed by those who argue over Sappho's sexuality. *Chlorotera*, 'I am greener', in stanza four has a feminine ending. (The 'green' adjective has also been a trial to scholars: it might refer to feeling sick or being pale; it may be to do with restored youth, freshness and innocence; or it may be connected to an Homeric image that describes the warrior's fear as 'green'). So the speaker of the poem is definitely female and, as is clear, her desire is inflamed by the girl, and not the man, in the poem. Translators who are determined to make Sappho into a poet of heterosexual love have gone to great lengths to arrange the poem to suit their view. The simplest method is to make the speaker male, as Catullus did in his imitation of Fragment 31, and as most of the early English translations do. But if a translator had Greek, he (usually he) would have known the sleight of hand Sappho was practising, and it is interesting to note that in 1735 John Addison made it absolutely clear that the speaker was female.

Like the 'Ode to Aphrodite', and perhaps even more so, Fragment 31 has almost always been read as an expression of personal feeling. Recently, however, some critics have put this poem back into Sappho's social context and have suggested that it is an *epithalamium*, a wedding poem, designed to be sung during the celebration of a marriage. In this case the whole work could be read as an elaborate compliment to the bridegroom who has just acquired such a desirable bride. It is certainly clear that many of Sappho's poems were composed for performance at wedding celebrations, and among these would be Fragments 44, 'Hector and Andromache ...', and 114 'where are you, virginity?', which Mary Barnard's 1958 translation makes into a whole wedding carol.

Fragments 1 and 31 have been consistently quoted and revised in English since the late sixteenth century, but other poems have gone in and out of fashion. Fragment 2, 'Hither to me from Crete ...', an invocation, a prayer for the presence of Aphrodite, but it is the evocation of the natural beauty of Sappho's island world that makes it seductive, and this too was one of Sappho's key themes. Until the twentieth century only a few lines from the middle section of Fragment 2 were known (handed down because they were quoted by the ancient writer Hermogenes in his *Kinds of Style*). Percy Osborn's 1909 translation and Douglas Young's 1943 Scots version are both based on those few lines. Josephine Balmer's 1984 translation, however, is based on the longer four-stanza version, which has become the accepted reading of the poem. Scholars were able to extend this fragment because one of the most unusual finds made at Oxyrhynchus, by the Italian papyrologist Medea Norsa, was an *ostrakon*, a broken piece of terracotta pottery dating from the third century BC, which had this poem inscribed on it, clearly identifiable as Sappho's because of the few lines already known. This piece of terracotta is now kept in a velvet case in the Biblioteca Laurenziana in Florence.

Fragment 16, 'Some say a host of cavalry ...', and Fragment 44, 'Hector and Andromache ...' were both papyri found at Oxyrhynchus. These too also seem to be nearly complete, and they are particularly important because they suggest Sappho's knowledge, and rewriting, of Homer's epic poem *The Iliad*.

It has been important to many modern commentators to place Sappho in relation to the works of classical Greece conventionally regarded as 'mainstream' in order to get her away from the categorisation of 'women's poetry' from which she has suffered in the past, and which is inclined to make her work seem flowery and pretty. In fact, it is neither, and some of the more recent translations, especially those by Mary Barnard, David Constantine and Josephine Balmer, attempt to convey the cool and yet impassioned tone, the concrete imagery and the spikiness of style of Sappho's original Greek. Critics have also tried to make Sappho's poems less personal and more political by pointing out, for instance, the realities of Sappho's own time that stood behind poems such as Fragment 16 and Fragment 132, 'I have a golden child ...' In the late seventh to early sixth centuries BC Lesbos was a vulnerable island, threatened all the time by the immense military capabilities of the province of Lydia (now part of mainland Turkey). So when Sappho speaks of the impressive sight of Lydia's chariots, or prefers her own child to the wealth of Lydia, she is talking about something that would have been all too painfully apparent to her contemporary audiences.

For readers and translators today the comparatively new longer poems, which give an insight into Sappho's time and her literary antecedents, are often the most intriguing. But in the past other fragments attracted attention. Fragment 55, 'Dead, you shall lie there ...', has caught the imagination of many translators and has lent itself to numerous different interpretations, from the Countess Winchelsea's condemnation of 'an insipid beauty' to Richard O'Connell's modern scholar's gripping Fragment 102, 'Truly sweet mother I cannot weave my web ...', enjoyed a great fashion in the second part of the eighteenth century, perhaps because at the time many women were failing to weave their webs and were taking up the pen instead, citing Sappho as their model. Fragment 104, 'On the Evening

Star', on the other hand, has always been a favourite while Fragment 105A and B, 'the sweet apple and the hyacinth ...', by contrast, did not become really popular with translators until the 1800s, and it is tempting to see in that a connection to the invention of modern notions of sexuality during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I have included one verse, Fragment 168B, 'The moon is seen and the Pleiades', which is not now thought to have been composed by Sappho, because it has been so popular across the centuries. The evocation of the night, the delicate suggestiveness of the enveloping dark and the wistful lustfulness of Sappho's 'lying alone' have found their way into many works by English poets, and have been partly responsible for one enduring image of Sappho as a voluptuary.

One of the peculiarities of Sappho translations is that sometimes a writer or a poet will be attracted to just one fragment, while others take on the whole cycle. Until the nineteenth century there was no reliable Greek text to use: John Addison and Francis Fawkes both translated what was then available in their 1735 and 1760 editions of Greek lyric poets. The Greek scholar John Addington Symonds made translations of most of the Fragments then known, for inclusion in H. T. Wharton's important book *Sappho: Memoir, Text, Selected Renderings and a Literal Translation* (1885). With the growth of interest after the Egyptian excavations came the complete-cycle versions of Percy Bysshe Shelley in 1809, Edward Storer in 1915 and Edwin Marion Cox (an influential early editor of Sappho) in 1925. More recent translators who have attempted all, or almost all, the Fragments include Mary Barnard, Guy Davenport, Richard O'Connell, Diane Rayor, Robert Chandler, Josephine Balmer and Jim Powell.

For convenience, I have called all of the versions that follow 'translations'. So they are, in that they carry Sappho to us across the space of thousands of years, across miles of sea and land, from the world of Lesbos in another culture, another way of thinking. It may be that it is not possible to translate Sappho at all. You can attempt to convey her technical devices, the use of the Sapphic stanza (essentially three long lines, followed by one short) or her distinctive method of *enjambement* (carrying the thought across from one stanza to the next, as in Fragment 1, where the 'whirring wings of the sparrows that drive Aphrodite's chariot carry her down to earth across stanzas three to four). But sometimes the vocabulary remains intractable or doubtful. Even Sappho's very first word, the beginning of her Fragment 1, 'Ode to Aphrodite', is the subject of dispute. Is it *poikilotron*, 'many-coloured throne', or *poikilophron*, 'many-minded'? As with any translation, the question that faces the writer is whether to naturalise the language and make Sappho into a native – which is what most early versions do – or make the English strange and let Sappho stay foreign – which is what many more recent versions do.

Added to that is Sappho's special problem: she is in tatters. If the writer who follows 'after Sappho' is brave enough, her empty spaces can become dynamic and her translations suggestive, playing between the Greek fragments of the past and the English of the present, suggesting that other larger space that will always stretch between us and Sappho, even if we were to hold all those Nine Books in our hands.

In the end, translations date, where original texts do not. And it is new literary texts that many of the writers included here have made. Guy Davenport created a song from Sappho's ravaged Fragment 58, and out of virtually nothing at all Mary Barnard made a memorable poem from Sappho's elusive Fragment 37:

Pain penetrates

Me drop  
by drop

Sappho's poetry haunts us still, 2,600 years after her death. [Ruth Padel's new poem](#), written special for this anthology, uses Sappho's Fragment 96 as a starting point. This Fragment is a poem about love and loss, about the memory of desire and about the poet who sings of all these things. Padel's poem proves that what was true for the ancient writer Dioscorides in the third century BC is still true for us today:

O Sappho, sweetest support of young love  
and surely now residing with the Muses ...

Greetings to you, lady, wherever you are, greetings as to a god:  
for your songs are with us still, your immortal daughters.

#### FRAGMENT 1

⊗ Ποικιλόθροιν' ἀθανάτ' Αφρόδιτα,  
παῖΔίος δολόπλοκε, λίσσομαί σε,  
μή μ' ἄσαισι μηδ' ὀνίαισι δάμνα,  
πότνια, θυμόν,  
ἀλλὰ τνίδ' ἔλθ', αἴ ποτα κατέρωτα  
τάς ἔμας αὔδας αἰοῖσα πῆλοι  
ἔκλυες, πάτρος δὲ δόμον λίποισα  
χρύσιον ἤλθες  
ἄρ μ' ὑπασδε ὑξαισα· κάλοι δέ σ' ἄγον  
ὤκεες ετροῦθοι περί γὰς μελαίνας  
πύκνα δίνεντες πτέρ' ἀπ' ὠράνω αἴθε-  
ρος δια μέσσω·  
αἴψα δ' ἐξίκοντο· σὺ δ', ὦ μάκαιρα,  
μειδιαίλαισ' ἀθανάτωι προσώπωι  
ἦρε' ὅτι δηῦτε πέπονθα κῶττι  
δηῦτε κἀλήμμι  
κῶττι μοι μάλιστα θέλω γένεσθαι  
μαινόλαι θυμοι· τίνα δηῦτε πείθω  
...ζάγην ἔς σάν φιλότατα; τίς σ', ὦ  
φάπφ', ἀδίκησι;  
καί γάρ αἰ φεύγει, ταχέως διώξει,  
αἰ δὲ δῶρα μὴ δέκετ', ἀλλὰ δώσει,  
αἰ δὲ μὴ φίλει, ταχέως φιλήσει  
κῶκ ἐθέλοισα.  
ἔλθε μοι καὶ νῦν, χαλέπαν δὲ λυσον  
ἐκ μερίμναν, ὅσσα δέ μοι τέλεσσαι  
θυμός ἰμέρρει, τέλεσον, σὺ δ' αὐτα  
σύμμαχος ἔσσο. ⊗

#### AN HYMN TO VENUS

O Venus, Beauty of the Skies,  
To whom a thousand Temples rise,  
Gayly false in gentle Smiles,  
Full of Love-perplexing Wiles;  
O Goddess! from my Heart remove



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