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978-1-107-02359-8 - Sappho: A New Translation of the Complete Works

Diane J. Rayor and André Lardinois

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Sappho

Sappho, the earliest and most famous Greek woman poet, sang her songs around 600 BCE on the island of Lesbos. Of the little that survives from the approximately nine papyrus scrolls collected in antiquity, all is translated here: substantial poems, fragments, single words – and, notably, two new poems that came to light in 2014. Also included are two more small fragments and additions to five fragments from this latest discovery, as well as a nearly complete poem discovered in 2004. Yet the power of Sappho's poetry – her direct style, rich imagery, and passion – is apparent even in these remnants. Diane Rayor's translations of Greek poetry are graceful and poetic, modern in diction yet faithful to the originals. The full range of Sappho's voice is heard in these poems about desire, friendship, rivalry, family, and "passion for the light of life." In the introduction and notes, internationally respected Sappho scholar André Lardinois presents plausible reconstructions of Sappho's life and work, the importance of the recent discovery in understanding the performance of her songs, and the story of how these fragments survived.

DIANE J. RAYOR is Professor of Classics at Grand Valley State University, Michigan. In 2011, she received the university's most prestigious faculty award, the Glenn A. Niemeyer Outstanding Faculty Award for excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service, and in 2014, the Women's Commission Women's Impact Award. In 2010, Colorado College awarded Rayor the Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*. Rayor has published five book translations of ancient Greek poetry and drama: *Euripides' "Medea": A New Translation* (2013); *Sophocles' "Antigone": A New Translation* (2011); *Homeric Hymns: A Translation, with Introduction and Notes* (2004); *Sappho's Lyre: Archaic Lyric and Women Poets of Ancient Greece* (1991); and *Callimachus* (with S. Lombardo, 1988). She is coeditor of *Latin Lyric and Elegiac Poetry* (1995). Her translations appear in numerous anthologies, including *Greek Poets: Homer to the Present* (2009), which contains sixteen of her translations.

ANDRÉ LARDINOIS is Professor of Greek Language and Literature at Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, and the Academic Director of OIKOS, the national Dutch research school in classical studies. He has published extensively on Sappho and other Greek poetry. He is coauthor of *Tragic Ambiguity: Philosophy and Sophocles' "Antigone"* (1987) and coeditor of *Making Silence Speak: Women's Voices in Greek Literature and Society* (2001), *Solon of Athens: New Historical and Philological Approaches* (2005), and *Sacred Words: Orality, Literacy and Religion* (2011).

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For the beloved women in my life.

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Acknowledgments

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D. R.

I would like to thank my teacher who set me on the path to Sappho's songs twenty-seven years ago: Jan N. Bremmer. I also wish to express

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A. L.