

Cambridge University Press & Assessment  
 978-1-108-83168-0 — Sappho. 2nd Edition  
 Edited and translated by Diane J. Rayor ,  
 Edited with Introduction and Notes by André Lardinois  
 Frontmatter  
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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 what survives from the approximately nine papyrus scrolls collected in antiquity, all is translated here: substantial poems and fragments including three poems discovered in the last two decades. 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, modern in diction yet faithful to the originals. Sappho's voice is heard in these poems about love, friendship, rivalry, and family. In the introduction and notes, André Lardinois plausibly reconstructs Sappho's life and work, the performance of her songs, and how these fragments survived. This second edition incorporates thirty-two more fragments, primarily based on Camillo Neri's 2021 Greek edition, and revisions of over seventy fragments. Professional recordings by Kate Reading of all the poems are freely available at [www.cambridge.org/sappho](http://www.cambridge.org/sappho).

**DIANE J. RAYOR** is Professor Emerita of Classics at Grand Valley State University (GVSU), Michigan, where she received the Niemeyer Outstanding Faculty Award for excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service, and the Women's Impact Award. She was granted the Loeb Classical Library Foundation Fellowship for translating Euripides' *Helen* and served as the University of Colorado's Roe Green Visiting Theatre Artist for Euripides' *Hecuba*. Her published translations include Euripides' *"Medea"* (2013); Sophocles' *"Antigone"* (2011); *Homeric Hymns* (2nd ed. 2014); *Sappho's Lyre: Archaic Lyric and Women Poets of Ancient Greece* (1991); and *Callimachus* (with S. Lombardo, 1988). She is co-editor of *Latin Lyric and Elegiac Poetry* (2nd ed. 2018). In her thirtieth year of teaching at GVSU she retired from the Classics Department that she co-founded.

**ANDRÉ LARDINOIS** is Professor of Greek Language and Literature at Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen. He has published extensively on Sappho and other Greek poetry. He is co-author of *Tragic Ambiguity: Philosophy and Sophocles' "Antigone"* (1987) and co-editor of *Making Silence Speak: Women's Voices in Greek Literature and Society* (2001); *Solon of Athens: New Historical and Philological Approaches* (2005); *Sacred Words: Orality, Literacy and Religion* (2011); *The Look of Lyric: Greek Song and the Visual*; and *The Newest Sappho: P. Sapph. Obbink and P. GC inv. 105, frs. 1–4* (2016).

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## PRAISE FOR THE FIRST EDITION

“Even the tiniest scraps can be potent, as Rayor’s lucid and comprehensive translation makes clear. ... Diane J. Rayor captures the distinctively plain-spoken quality of Sappho’s Greek, which, for all the poet’s naked emotionality and love of luxe, is never overwrought or baroque.”

Daniel Mendelsohn, *The New Yorker*

“For readers who want a complete, up-to-date collection of all Sappho’s extant oeuvre in faithful and cautious English translation, this new edition, by two acclaimed classical scholars, is currently the sole satisfactory option. ... Almost everything an undergraduate or interested lay reader requires to embark on a first voyage into Sappho’s world can be found within this elegant volume.”

Edith Hall, *The New York Review of Books*

“Rayor’s translations allow the poetry of Sappho to shine. Every piece of what remains of Sappho’s songs is reproduced here, including the most recent discoveries, thereby providing the reader with the most comprehensive English collection available. A wonderful and inspiring work.”

Marguerite Johnson, University of Newcastle, Australia

“This book joins an eloquent translation of Sappho’s wide range of expression with a judicious guide to problems of text and interpretation. The combination provides a reliable and enjoyable introduction to Sappho’s poetry and a firm basis for discussion of the many responses it has evoked.”

Joel Lidov, City University of New York

“Diane Rayor’s translation captures the quality of Sappho’s poetry: seemingly simple, but luminous, with unexpected shifts of perspective that change the meaning. Neither too literal nor too free, her lucid, musical rendering of Sappho’s Greek is a delight to read, and to read aloud.”

Eva Stehle, University of Maryland

“With lovely translations and lucid commentary, Rayor and Lardinois re-create the Sapphic fragments (including several rediscovered in our own century) in subtle colors, presenting Sappho like Aphrodite on her ‘throne of many hues.’ This volume is a welcome addition to the long tradition of translating Sappho; ideal for students and teachers, and a delight to all readers eager to read Sappho anew.”

Yopie Prins, University of Michigan

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“This is the best version of Sappho in English.”

Thomas L. Cooksey, *Library Journal*

“This excellent new translation of Sappho by Rayor ... will appeal to the general public as well as scholars of Sappho and classicists. ... Rayor offers versions of all the poems known today, including two fragments published as recently as 2014. The excellent introduction to Sappho’s times and opus by Lardinois provides the necessary background in clear, elegant, jargon-free language; the notes are concise but informative. Highly recommended.”

P. Nieto, *Choice*

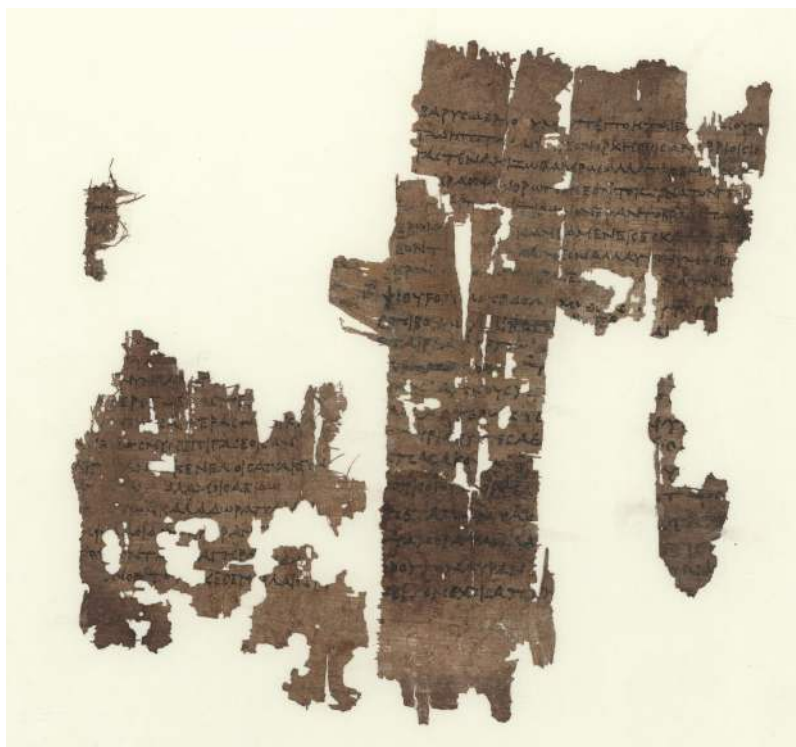
“Anyone with an interest in Sappho will want to add this to their library: It includes a thorough scholarly introduction, copious notes, all extant fragments, an appendix on the new poem, and unvarnished translations that hew dutifully to the originals. Usefully, the authors have set forth the fragments in ‘order,’ rather than grouping them by subject, making it easier to track down a specific fragment.”

*The Weekly Standard*

“This beautiful book offers exactly what it says on its cover: a new translation of the complete works of Sappho. The fullness and quality of the work make it a wonderful resource for the Greekless, and it will be of considerable value to students of classical literature too. Cambridge University Press deserves our thanks for producing such an accurate and attractive volume at such a reasonable price.”

*Bryn Mawr Classical Review*

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Sappho poem (fr. 58) discovered in 2004 on Cologne papyrus inv. 21351+21376.  
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# *Sappho*

*A New Translation of the Complete Works  
Second Edition*

Translations by

**DIANE J. RAYOR**

*Grand Valley State University, Michigan*

Introduction and Notes by

**ANDRÉ LARDINOIS**

*Radboud University Nijmegen*



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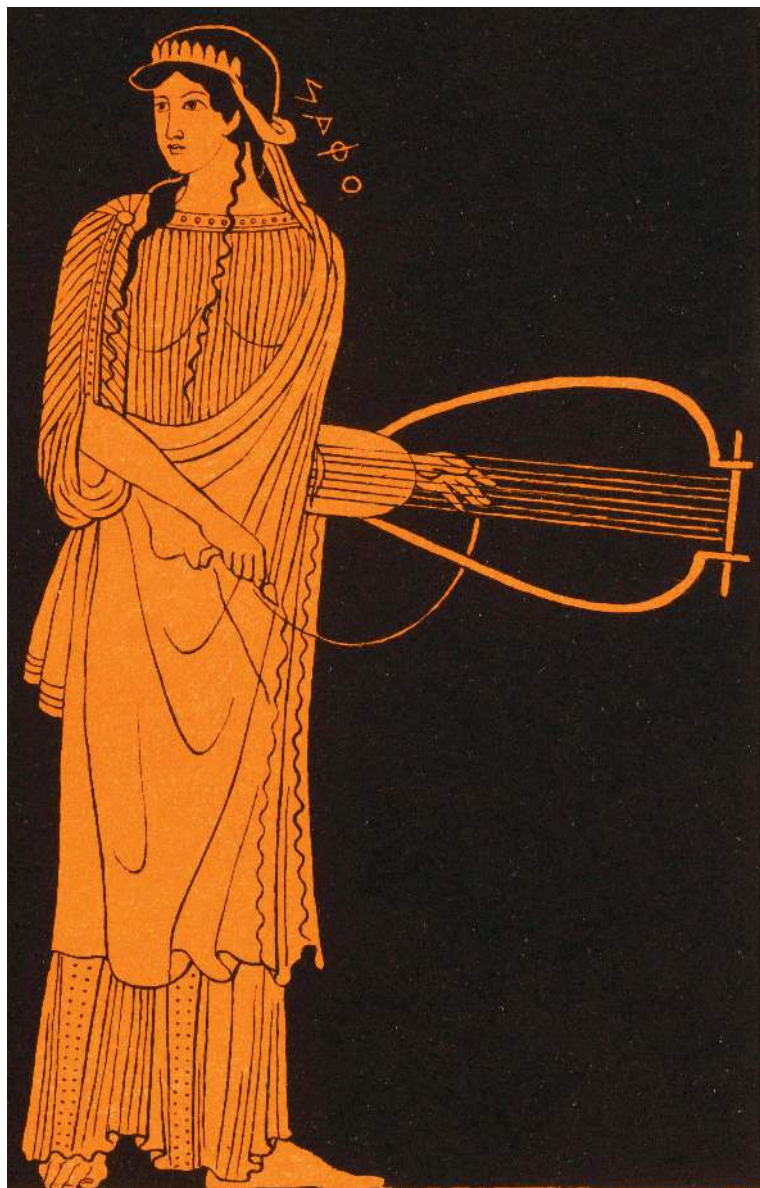
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Detail of Sappho with lyre, from an Athenian red-figure kalathos of the Brygos Painter, c. 475 BCE, found in Sicily. Munich, Staatliche Antikensammlungen (#204129). Photo: Chronicle / Alamy Stock Photo.



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## *Acknowledgments*

As I have worked with Sappho for more than forty years, many professors, colleagues, and students have helped me on the way to this book; thank you to the many who encouraged me to produce a complete and solo Sappho. It is difficult to express the depths of my gratitude to Marcia Dobson (Colorado College) for initiating my life with Sappho's poetry. I am especially grateful to Elizabeth Rosa Horan (poet, translator, scholar) for her meticulous critique of these translations. Once again, Connie Rayor (editor, mother) and Janet Rayor (singer, performer) came to my aid. I thank David Hast for not letting me change too much. The participatory readings of my students in *Classical World* (2012) were very helpful, as was Allie Pohler's research project (2016). I deeply appreciate Beatrice Rehl's and Michael Sharp's encouragement, and the thoughtful care of their team at Cambridge University Press. The three anonymous referees provided valuable critiques – thank you, each. André and I both heartily thank Camillo Neri for the pre-publication use of his 2021 Greek edition. As always, the final translations (including errors and willful choices) are my own.

D. R.

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

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my gratitude to the many colleagues and friends with whom I have had the chance to debate Sappho's poetry over the years, especially the members of the Network for the Study of Archaic and Classical Greek Songs and of OIKOS (Onderzoeksinstituut Klassieke Oudheidstudiën), the Dutch research school of classical studies. Diane and I both thank Joel Lidov with whom we discussed the new fragments, and Mark de Kreij for sharing two of his forthcoming articles with us. I finally would like to thank my students, especially those in my classes on the Greek women poets, who disagreed with my interpretations of Sappho's songs more vigorously and convincingly than some of my learned friends.

A. L.

## *Note on the 2014 Papyri*

Since the first publication of this book, serious doubts have been raised about the provenance of the Sappho papyri published in 2014 (P. Sapph. Obbink and P. GC 105). In the summer of 2020, the Green Collection (in the Museum of the Bible) released a statement that their fragments (P. GC 105) were acquired from a Turkish dealer on January 7, 2012, without proper documentation proving their provenance. In the absence of documentation establishing their legality, the assumption is that the papyri were looted. Mr. Green has transferred control of approximately 5,000 papyri, including P. GC 105, to the US government, which intends to return them to Egypt.

P. Sapph. Obbink appears to have been part of the same bookroll to which P. GC 105 belonged. In an article published in 2017, Simon Burris showed that a fragment found among those of the Green Collection physically joined with P. Sapph. Obbink (Burris 2017). This evidence suggests that P. Sapph. Obbink also came from the same source as P. GC 105. More recently, Michael Sampson questioned the published accounts of the provenance of P. Sapph. Obbink (Sampson 2020). Brent Hyland has revealed details about the acquisition of P. GC 105 and the associated “invented provenance stories” (*Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 118 [2021] 1–16).

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The status of P. Sapph. Obbink remains problematic because its provenance is unknown. Among other crimes, the process of illegally collecting papyri destroys knowledge. In addition, the papyrus, which is the main testimony of the Brothers (fr. 10) and the Kypris (fr. 26) poems, is inaccessible, its location unknown. We sincerely hope that it will be made available to the academic community soon and its acquisition fully explained. Despite the tainted circumstances, we have not seen any evidence to suggest that P. GC 105 or P. Sapph. Obbink are not authentic.