

Sappho of Lesbos [born c. 612 B.C.]

Know the following people, places, and terms:

Aphrodite (=Kypris [refers to her sanctuary on Cyprus],
=Cytherea [refers to her sanctuary on Cythera])
Eros, Aphrodite's son (sometimes known as Boy, Love or Cupid)
Helen, wife of Menelaus, abducted by Paris to Troy
Artemis, sister of Phoebus Apollo, goddess of the hunt
Hector, greatest of the Trojan warriors, son of King Priam
Andromache, Hector's wife
Sardis, a town in Lydia, the area of Asia Minor across from Lesbos

choriamb: - ∪ ∪ -

Sapphic meter:

three hendecasyllabic lines

- ∪ - x | - ∪ ∪ - | ∪ - -

followed by an Adonean

- ∪ ∪ - | -

1. What is Sappho's world like? With whom does she associate and care for? What recurring images do we find in Sappho's poetry? In short, what did she value?
2. How is Aphrodite portrayed? Playful? Serious? Powerful? What were her powers? attributes? How does Sappho's view of Aphrodite compare with Homer's and Hesiod's? Whose view do you prefer?
3. What is Sappho's attitude toward love? Does Sappho's portrayal of Aphrodite (her theory of love, if you will) correspond to her actual relationships (i.e. the practice of love)?
4. What kind of relationship did Sappho have with her *hetairai*, "female companions"? Was it physical as well as emotional? Was there an intellectual component? If you were to speculate, what were the reasons for Sappho's attachment to her companions? What evidence is there that Sappho's *hetairai* were attracted to her? Is there any evidence in her poems of the *erastes-eromenos* relationship that we see in classical Athens?
5. How is poetry important to Sappho? What role does memory and remembrance play in her poetry? What relationship exists in Sappho's poetry between speaker, addressee (person addressed in the poem), and audience?