

Sappho's Feminine Erotics.

Contemporary feminist criticism has forcefully argued that women have typically been precluded from poetic expressions of the erotic, either because of historically and culturally situated prejudices against female eroticism, or on account, paradoxically, of the suspicions of eroticism within feminism itself. This essay examines the work of the Classical poet Sappho as a counter-statement to these constraints. Sappho (ca. 630-570 BCE) wrote explicitly about her emotional and physical experiences of the erotic. Examination of the newly issued (Rayor & Lardinois, 2014) edition of the Sappho fragments reveals a poet whose encounters with the erotic seem deeply transgressive, while at the same time being deeply embedded in the cultural norms of Archaic Greece. The essay is contextualized by recent scholarship on Greek erotics, including Davidson's *Greek Love*, Roy's "An Alternative Sexual Morality for Classical Athenians" and Weiss' "Erotica: On the Prehistory of Greek Desire."