

Statues & Songs



Looking to the End

“You appear to me to be very rich, and a king over many men; but that which you ask me, I cannot yet say, not until I hear that you have come nobly to the end of your lifetime.” (Herodotus 1.32)

- Who does the looking – *to* the end and *at* the end?
- Croesus’s change of mind, after his downfall: “Solon is the one whom I would have every king consult, regardless of the expense.” (Hdt. 1.86-92, pp. 38-42 in Johnson *The Essential Herodotus*)

Korê (maiden)
Statue of a
Young Woman
(pl. *korai*)

Kouros (young
man)
Statue of a male
youth (pl.
kouroi)



Phrasikleia.

550-540

BCE,

made by

Aristion of

Paros,

Attica



I, Phrasikleia's grave marker [*sêma*], shall always be called maiden [*korê*], having received this name from the gods instead of marriage.





ΣΕΜΑΦΡΑΣΙΚΕΙΑΣ
ΚΟΡΕΚΕΚΛΕΘΟΜΑΙ
ΑΙΕΙΑΝΤΙΛΑΜΟ
ΠΑΡΑΘΕΟΝΤΟΥΤΟ
ΛΑΧΟΣΟΜΟΜΑ



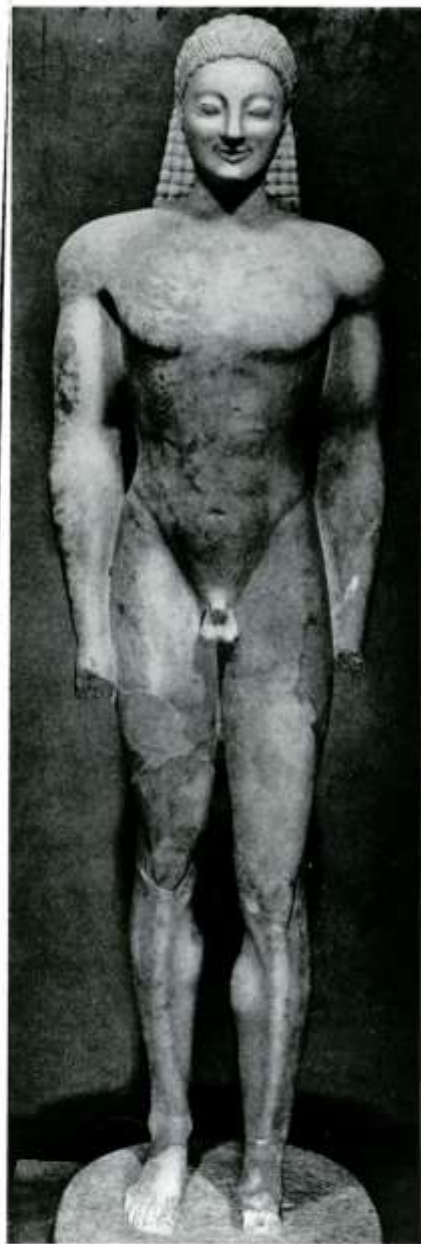
Chios Korê, ca. 520



Korê No. 674 from the Acropolis, ca. 500



Peplos Korê, ca. 530



120 Kourus from Volokmandra (Attica), ca. 560. Ht. 1.79 m. Athens. The front part of each foot is restored.

Precedent?

Small Bronze Votive,
found near Thebes, ca.
700 BCE

“Mantiklos dedicated me to the
Farshooter [Apollo] with the Silver
Bow from his offering; grant, Apollo,
something good in return.”

MANTIKLOS ANFOTHEX ABOL
MAATTAIAYIO
XOTITAYOD
3DYITATAY



*“Stop and grieve at the
tomb of the dead
Kroisos, whom raging
Ares slew as he fought
in the front line.”*



The Anavysos Kouros

agalma

Glory or honor

Pleasing offering
to the gods

→ statue





Red-Figure Krater showing Sappho, ca. 470 BCE

Comments about Sappho, Ancient and Modern

- “Sappho [is] a wonder. For we know in all recorded history not one woman who can even come close to rivaling her in the grace (*charis*) of her poetry” (Strabo, *Geography* 13.2.3)
- “Sappho sang many contradictory things about Eros.” (Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 9.27.3)
- “It would be hard to think of another poet whose status is so disproportionate to the size of her surviving body of work.” (Daniel Mendelsohn, *The New Yorker*, 16 March 2015)

Solon



Sappho

“One evening, while drinking wine, the nephew of Solon the Athenian sang one of Sappho’s songs, and Solon liked it so much that he ordered the boy to teach it to him.

When one of the company asked why he was learning, he answered, ‘I want to learn it and die.’” (Stobaius, *Anthology* 3.29.58)

What is Lyric “Poetry”?



Sappho, Charles Mengin, 1877



Sappho (active ca. 600-580 BCE)

← *Roman copy of an original 5th C BCE Greek bust*

Sappho, fr. 31 (trans. Anne Carson)

He seems to me equal to the gods that man
whoever he is who opposite you
sits and listens close
to your sweet speaking

and lovely laughing — oh it
puts the heart in my chest on wings
for when I look at you, even a moment, no
speaking
is left in me

no: tongue breaks and thin
fire is racing under skin
and in eyes no sight and drumming
fills ears

and cold sweat holds me and shaking
grips me all, greener than grass
I am and dead — or almost
I seem to me.

But all is to be dared, because even a person of
poverty . . .



Π
ΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΙΔ
ΠΑΝΝΙΧΙΣΔΟ
ΣΑΛΛΕΙΔΟΙ
ΦΑΣΙΟΚΟΛΠΩ
ΑΛΛΕΤΕΡΟ
ΣΤΕΙΧΕΣΙΣ
ΚΑΙ ΕΘΕΣΝΑ
ΤΡΗΝΟΝ ΔΩΛ

ΜΕΛΩΝ

ΧΗΝΕ ΔΩ

Some men say an army of horse and some men
say an army on foot

and some men say an army of ships is the most
beautiful thing

on the black earth. But I say it is
what you love.

Easy to make this understood by all.

For she who overcame everyone
in beauty (Helen)

left her fine husband

behind and went sailing to Troy.

Not for her children nor her dear parents

had she a thought, no —

] led her astray

] for

] lightly

] reminded me now of Anaktoria
who is gone.

I would rather see her lovely step
and the motion of light on her face
than chariots of Lydians or ranks
of footsoldiers in arms.

Sappho fr. 16 (trans. Anne Carson)

The Challenge (or Pleasure) of the Fragment

“you burn me” (fr. 38)

“yes! radiant lyre speak to me
Become a voice” (fr. 118)

“I used to weave crowns” (fr. 125)

“neither for me honey nor the honey bee” (fr. 146)

Sappho Fr. 143



“and gold chickpeas were growing on the banks”


Allen Ginsberg (1926-1997)

Red cheeked boyfriends tenderly kiss me sweet mouthed
under Boulder coverlets winter springtime
hug me naked laughing & telling girl friends
gossip til autumn

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Sappho

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MIMNERMUS

- 1 What's life, what's joy, without love's heavenly
gold?
I hope I die when I no longer care
for secret closeness, tender favours, bed,
which are the rapturous flowers that grace
youth's prime
for men and women. But when painful age
comes on, that makes a man loathsome and vile,
malignant troubles ever vex his heart;
seeing the sunlight gives him joy no more.
He is abhorred by boys, by women scorned:
so hard a thing God made old age to be.

The Preoccupations of Lyric

- Unrequited desire
- Ephemerality of experience
- Pleasure (wine, sex, beauty)
- Death

Eros the melter of limbs (now
again) stirs me –
Sweetbitter unmanageable
creature who steals in
(Sappho fr. 130)