



METADATA

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Abstract

This book deals with the oeuvre of Sappho and Alcaeus, who composed mainly monodic poetry. These two great poets from Lesbos, inheritors of a rich tradition of poetry and music, lived at about the same time (late 6th century, early 5th century BC). While Alcaeus' poetry was dictated primarily by his politically turbulent surroundings, Sappho's poems were the fruit of her reflections on human relationships, the interaction with the divine, primarily with Aphrodite, and the problems that preoccupied both her audience and her wider social environment. The Introduction of this book begins with a general presentation of Early Greek Lyric Poetry and then focuses on the poetry of Alcaeus and Sappho, with particular emphasis on the historical and political context in which they acted and composed their songs, and on their audiences. Chapter 2

deals with the language, the Aeolian dialect, as well as with the metres and the versification of their poetry. At Chapters 3-12 a big part of the surviving fragments from the Odes of Sappho and Alcaeus which are categorized according to their subject, is presented, translated, analyzed and interpreted. The first chapters examine fragments with a common theme, such as prayer and hymn, erotic desire and the influence of Aphrodite and Eros, politics and invective, and old age, while the last chapters discuss themes that appear only in Alcaeus' poetry or only in Sappho's: The drinking songs (Alcaeus), Sappho's wedding songs and the poetess's odes on the sorrow of separation from the Sapphic circle. The fragments are approached not only as literary texts but also as compositions reflecting the early Greek society and its institutions.

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