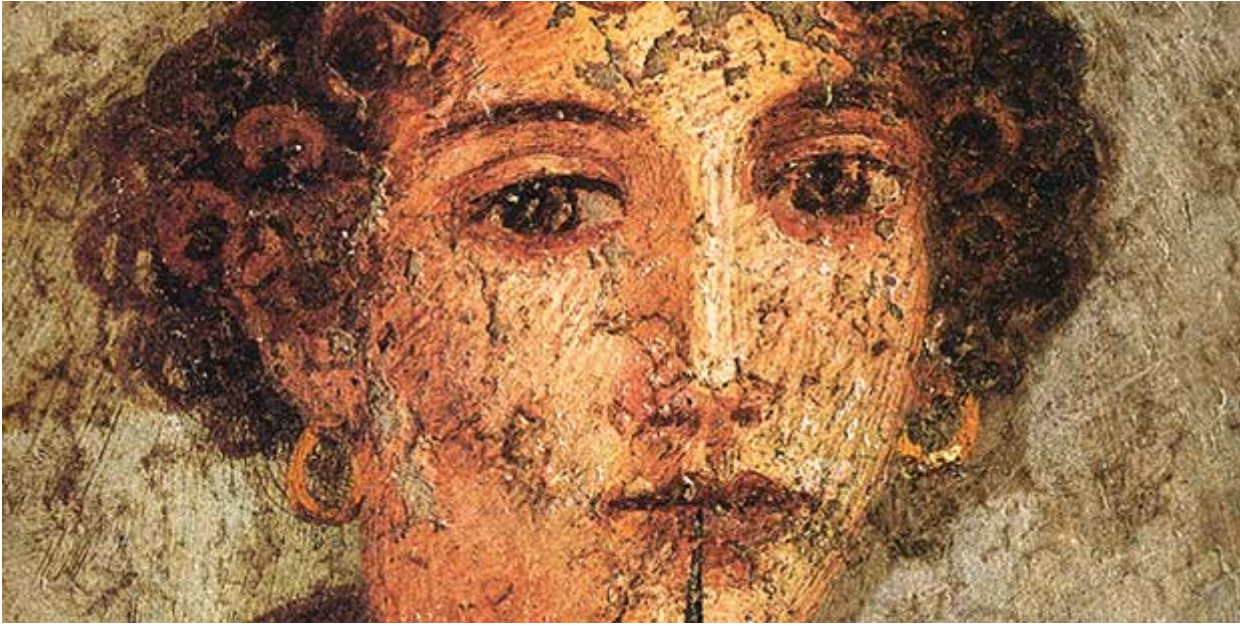


# A New Translation Of Sappho

By **Alexander Baron** - Jul 8, 2015

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*A portrait of a woman thought to be Sappho*

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Sappho is arguably the greatest poetess of not simply Ancient Greece but of the ancient world, period. Born probably some time between 630 and 612BC, her work is legendary, although little of it survives. If you are not familiar with the lady, you can read more about her than you will probably want in this lengthy *New Yorker* article from March this year.

The Egyptologist and classicist **Terence DuQuesne**, who died last year, was also a Sappho scholar. According to his publisher Daniel Jacobs, it was Sappho who originally inspired him to study classical Greek. In 1989, he published *Sappho Of Lesbos: The Poems*. This work was illustrated by his close friend, the artist **Dwina Murphy-Gibb**.



James Terence DuQuesne (1942-2014).

In 2004, two new Sappho poems were authenticated; DuQuesne was working on a revised edition of his book when he died. As Daniel Jacobs said: “Terence felt it would be wrong to republish the book without revising it in light of the new finds, especially as his interpretations of them differed from those of other scholars. He also wanted to accompany the book with a CD of all the poems in Greek and English so that their full beauty could be appreciated...in January 2014, the discovery of a new papyrus was announced, containing two new Sappho poems, and filling in gaps in three others. Given his attitude to the 2004 finds, I felt it necessary to update the book in light of the new finds before bringing it out. As a result, publication was deferred, and the book is now expected to appear early in 2016.”

It was intended initially to set them to music, but that may not happen. Sappho wrote her poems more as songs to be accompanied on the lyre, and there are doubts about how the music could be reconstructed authentically. There have been attempts in this field such as the work of Michael Levy, but the *Song Of Seikilos* was found with complete notation. There is at least one Sappho poem set to music in the modern era, *Painetai*, which dates to 1987.



The English version on the CD will be narrated by Dwina; the original Greek has yet to be decided, but Dwina's son RJ – he of *Titanic Requiem* fame – will be assisting with the recording.

As with most scholarly works there is likely to be limited interest in this anthology, but not as limited as might be expected. There will be interest from poets as well as classicists, and even a lesbian market, although it remains to be seen if Sappho actually was a lesbian as is widely believed.

As with the publication date, the price of this new translation has yet to be decided, but details of both will appear on the [Darengo Publications](#) website in due course.

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