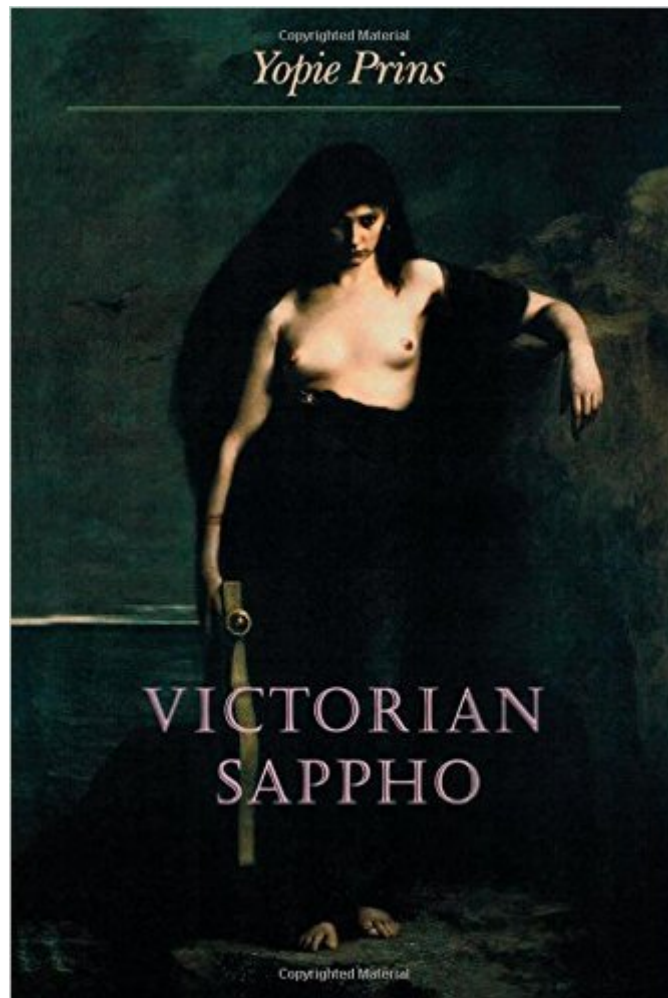


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Victorian Sappho



Synopsis

What is Sappho, except a name? Although the Greek archaic lyrics attributed to Sappho of Lesbos survive only in fragments, she has been invoked for many centuries as the original woman poet, singing at the origins of a Western lyric tradition. Victorian Sappho traces the emergence of this idealized feminine figure through reconstructions of the Sapphic fragments in late-nineteenth-century England. Yopie Prins argues that the Victorian period is a critical turning point in the history of Sappho's reception; what we now call "Sappho" is in many ways an artifact of Victorian poetics. Prins reads the Sapphic fragments in Greek alongside various English translations and imitations, considering a wide range of Victorian poets--male and female, famous and forgotten--who signed their poetry in the name of Sappho. By "declining" the name in each chapter, the book presents a theoretical argument about the Sapphic signature, as well as a historical account of its implications in Victorian England. Prins explores the relations between classical philology and Victorian poetics, the tropes of lesbian writing, the aesthetics of meter, and nineteenth-century personifications of the "Poetess." as current scholarship on Sappho and her afterlife. Offering a history and theory of lyric as a gendered literary form, the book is an exciting and original contribution to Victorian studies, classical studies, comparative literature, and women's studies.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Are you studying Sappho? How about Michael Field or Algernon Swinburne? This book covers in

detail how Victorian poets were or were not like the Greek poet Sappho. During the Victorian time period, fragments were published of Sappho's work. This took the Victorians by storm. Dr. Henry T. Wharton published a book about Sappho entitled "Sappho: Memoir, Text, Selected Renderings, and a Literal Translation." Many writers and artists of the time were mesmerized by his book. Prin tells us that his book had a "broad circulation" and was reprinted 4 times between 1887-1907. Prin is a Victorian scholar with a great deal of knowledge to bestow. In this particular book, she talks about the connection between Sappho's writing and legend and Dante Gabriel Rossetti; Christina Rossetti; Mary Robinson; John Addington Symonds; Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Robert Browning; and many others. Prin states in her book "Rather than organizing the chapters to imply a developing tradition or a linear progression, I emphasize the continual recirculation of Sappho within Victorian poetry" (p. 15).

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