

# 1. Title: Analyzing imagery of Sappho, Aspasia and Aristotle throughout time

## 2. Knowledge and didactic objectives

- To be able to identify (and compare) differences between how female and male actors in history are portrayed and presented through time, using the concepts of continuity and change.
- To discuss the causes of the differences using perspectives of structure (gender, class, generation, sexuality, ethnicity) and agency.

## 3. Timing

2 x 80 minutes

## 4. Grouping of students

1. Couples
2. Large group

## 5. Historical thinking skills

Continuity and change  
(Structure and agency)

## 6. Development or sequence of the activity

1. Students should have general knowledge of ancient societies, especially the conditions for women and men in Greek society, before doing this activity.
2. The teacher briefly reminds the students of the biographies of Sappho, Aspasia and Aristotle
3. The teacher explains the second order concepts of *continuity and change*.

4. The students work in pairs with one, or all three picture galleries. The main purpose is to compare the different images of Sappho, Aspasia and/or Aristotle over time and to identify continuity and change among the images of the person.
5. The teacher summarizes the students' findings and comments them in the large group of students. From a gender perspective, the difference between the static image (interpretation) of Aristotle and the changing images (interpretations) of Sappho and Aspasia over time, could be of special interest.
6. The teacher reminds the students of the concepts of structure and agency. It can be of special importance to relate the different pictures and the time they are produced in.

## 7. Assessment techniques and instruments

*How? When? and what to evaluate?*

What to assess:

- The student's ability to identify continuity and change in the images of historical persons.
- The student's ability to identify contemporary influences in the pictures.

When to assess:

- While the students working in pairs with the assignments.
- During the joint discussion at the end.

How to assess:

Formative, namely, to provide feedback while the students are working with the assignments.

**8. Complementary resources** (web links, bibliography for students, visits to heritage elements, press news, videos, documentaries, etc..).

Picture gallery of Sappho, Aspasia, Aristotle

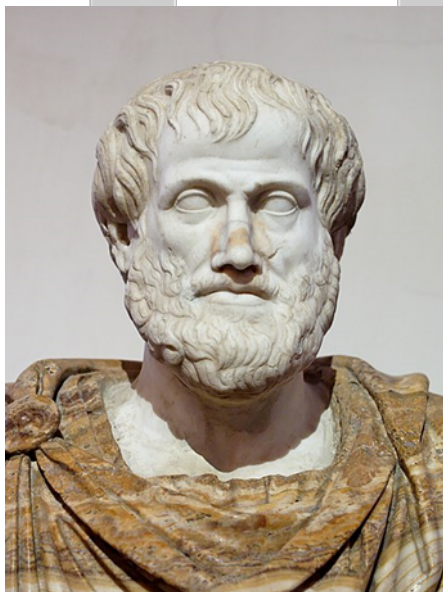
## 9. Annexes

The web resources from the History Lab project about *Women and the change for gender equality in Europe*, “Ancient societies”.

## Picture gallery of Aristotle

In this document, you have access to six pictures of **Aristotle** from different periods in history. The pictures are presented in chronological order. Use the questions next to the different pictures to discuss how Aristotle is portrayed and pictured. In the end of the document you find three final questions.

### 1. Ancient Rome



How is Aristotle portrayed in this statue? What impression does the statue give you?

When is the statue created?

LAB

Roman copy of a Greek statue from 330 BC. The mantle is added by the roman artist. Artist unknown.

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aristotle\\_Altemps\\_Inv8575.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aristotle_Altemps_Inv8575.jpg)

### 2. 15<sup>th</sup> Century



Picture in a book with collections of Aristotle's philosophical texts. Artist: Unknown.

Describe what you see in the picture?

How is Aristotle portrayed? What impression of Aristotle does the picture give you?

When is the picture created?

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%27Aristotle%27,\\_manuscript\\_miscellany\\_of philosophical writings, mainly texts by Aristotle.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%27Aristotle%27,_manuscript_miscellany_of_philosophical_writings,_mainly_texts_by_Aristotle.jpg)

### 3. 16<sup>th</sup> Century



The painting is called The School of Athens. It pictures the most famous Greek philosophers discussing and reading. In the enlargement to the left Plato is talking to his pupil Aristotle.

Artist: Raphael

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Plato\\_and\\_Aristotle\\_in\\_The\\_School\\_of Athens, by italian Raphael.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Plato_and_Aristotle_in_The_School_of_Athens,_by_italian_Raphael.jpg)

<https://www.su.se/sok-kurser-och-program/ih2001-1.423607>

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Raphael-Italian-painter-and-architect>

Study the picture, and describe what you see.

How are the philosophers portrayed? Why is Aristotle and Plato centered in the picture you think?

Who painted the picture, and when?

#### 4. 19<sup>th</sup> Century



Portrait of Aristotle

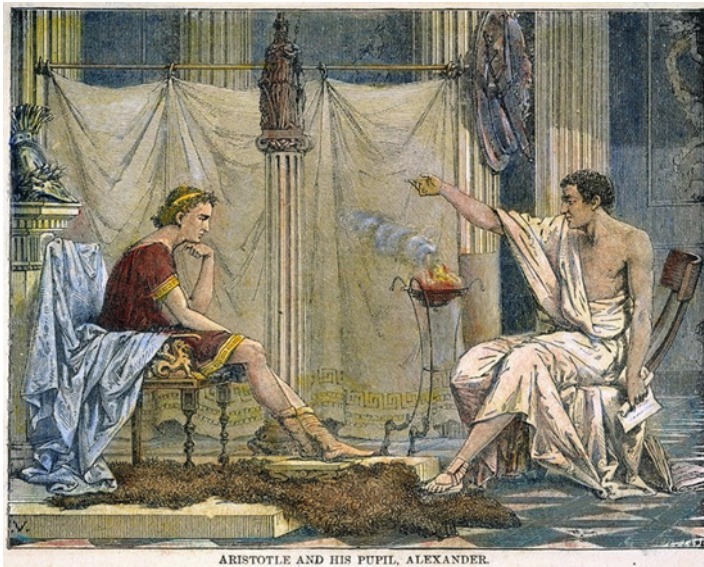
How is Aristotle portrayed in the picture? What impression of Aristotle does the picture give you?

When is the artwork created? By whom?



Artist: Ambroise Tardieu, a famous portrait and geographical engraver. He became a celebrated engraver of portraits and also did geographical engraving. He traded prints, books and maps. He is remembered for more than 800 portraits engraved through his career, many depicting scientists of the period.

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aristotle\\_1.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aristotle_1.jpg)



Describe what you see in the picture!  
How is Aristotle and Alexander portrayed?  
When is the artwork created, and for what purpose?

Image in the French book “The lives of the Geniuses” of Louis Figuier, 1866. The picture shows Alexander the Great (to the left) and his teacher Aristotle. Artist: Charles Laplante

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Alexander\\_and\\_Aristotle.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Alexander_and_Aristotle.jpg)

## 5. 21<sup>st</sup> Century



How is Aristotle portrayed in this statue? What impression does the statue give you?

When is the statue created?

Statue of Aristotle from 1990 at Aristoteles square in Thessaloniki. Aristotle was born outside Thessaloniki. He holds a parchment roll in his hand, which symbolize his important philosophical work and legacy. Artist: G. Georgiades.

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aristotelous\\_Square\\_-\\_Aristotle\\_statue.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aristotelous_Square_-_Aristotle_statue.png)

#### Summarize:

1. Is there one or two pictures/statues of Aristotle that stands out? If, so, why?
2. Does the "image of Aristotle" change over time? If so, in what way?
3. Do you notice any continuous features in the "image of Aristotle"? If so, in what way?

## Picture gallery of Aspasia

In this document, you have access to seven pictures of **Aspasia** from different periods in history. The pictures are presented in chronological order. Use the questions next to the different pictures to discuss how Aspasia portrayed and pictured. In the end of the document, you find four final questions.

### 1. Ancient Rome



Describe what you see in the picture.

What impression does the statue of Aspasia give you?

How is Aspasia portrayed?

When is the statue created? By whom?

Roman copy of an ancient Greek original statue. Possibly a copy from her grave. Artist: Unknown.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aspasia>

2. 17th Century





In this painting, Aspasia, in the centre, converses with Greek philosophers. Artist: Michel Corneille the Younger. He was a French painter who was devoted to historical painting; a genre that often depict a moment in a narrative story.

[https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q18683684#/media/File:Michel\\_II\\_Corneille\\_-\\_Aspasie\\_au\\_milieu\\_des\\_philosophes\\_de\\_la\\_Gr%C3%A8ce\\_-\\_Google\\_Art\\_Project.jpg](https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q18683684#/media/File:Michel_II_Corneille_-_Aspasie_au_milieu_des_philosophes_de_la_Gr%C3%A8ce_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michel\\_Corneille\\_the\\_Younger](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michel_Corneille_the_Younger)

### 3. 18th Century



Look at the two paintings from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century!

Describe what you see in the pictures and discuss how Aspasia is portrayed. What is going on in the pictures?

Why make a self-portrait as yourself, as Aspasia?

This self-portrait of the artist, picturing herself as Aspasia, was produced in 1794. The painting was exhibited at the Paris Salon, where it received an Encouragement price.

Artist: Marie Bouliard 1763-1825

[https://sv.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fil:Aspasia\\_painting.jpg](https://sv.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fil:Aspasia_painting.jpg)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marie\\_Bouliard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marie_Bouliard)

#### 4. 19th Century



Aspasia and Pericles in the studio of Phidias. Phidias was a Greek sculptor, perhaps the most famous one and a close friend of Pericles. Phidias got the mission from Pericles to lead the reconstruction of Athens' artworks after the Persian war. Pericles was an eminent Greek politician and general who lived together with Aspasia. Artist: Louis Hector Leroux

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Illus0362.jpg>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis\\_H%C3%A9ctor\\_Leroux](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_H%C3%A9ctor_Leroux)



Look at the pictures from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

Who are the main persons in the two paintings, other than Aspasia?

Why are they in the paintings?



## 5. 20th Century



What kind of situation between Pericles and Aspasia do you think the artist wants to portray?

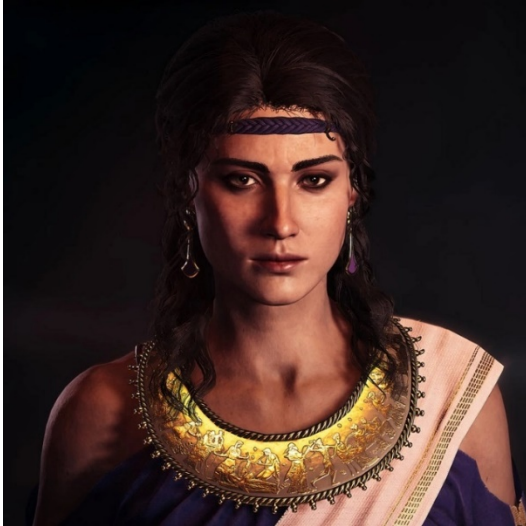
How do you perceive Aspasia in this painting?

Pericles and Aspasia portrayed by Italian artist Fortunino Matania. Matania was first known as a war artist. He painted very graphic and realistic images from the first world war. After the war he switched path and became a painter of ancient life for a British woman's magazine. His studio in London was filled with reproductions of Roman furniture and he would read many history books to find suitable objects to paint. The painting of Pericles and Aspasia is surely a product of this period. Matania strived for a high level of accuracy and detail in his paintings of ancient persons.

<https://www.mutualart.com/Artwork/Pericles-and-Aspasia/CA9FAD6F0D4A6200>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fortunino\\_Matania](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fortunino_Matania)

## 6. 21th Century



Describe how Aspasia is portrayed in the video game.

What does the video game tell us about how we perceive Aspasia today?

Aspasia pictured in the video game *Assassin's Creed Odyssey* from 2018, by Ubisoft.

<https://www.worldhistory.org/image/14079/aspasia-of-miletus-artists-impression/>

Link to video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cGI6cZYikGo>

### Summarize:

1. Does the "image of Aspasia" change over time? If so, in what way?
2. Do you notice any continuous features in the "image of Aspasia"? If so, in what way?
3. Is there one or two pictures/statues of Aspasia that stands out? If so, why?
4. What are the advantages and disadvantages with the fact that historical persons are being interpreted and used in different ways in different times?

### Picture gallery of Sappho

In this document, you have access to six pictures of **Sappho** from different periods in history. The pictures are presented in chronological order. Use the questions next to the different pictures to discuss how Sappho is portrayed and pictured. In the end of the document, you find four final questions.

### 1. Ancient Rome



Describe what you see in the picture.

How is the woman portrayed?  
What is your impression of her?

Roman painting from Pompeii. The woman is called Sappho. She is holding a book and a pen as symbols for her poetry. However, scientists believe that the woman in the painting lived in Pompeii 50 B.C in a wealthy family. Artist: Unknown  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fresco\\_showing\\_a\\_woman so-called Sappho holding writing implements, from Pompeii, Naples National Archaeological Museum \(14842101892\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fresco_showing_a_woman_so-called_Sappho_holding_writing_implements_from_Pompeii_Naples_National_Archaeological_Museum_(14842101892).jpg)



Describe what you see in the picture. How is Sappho portrayed?

In what way does this art piece of Sappho differs from the painting from Pompeii?

How reliable is this sculpture/source if you want to find out how Sappho looked?

Roman copy of a Greek ancient sculpture of Sappho. The romans made a lot of copies of Greek statues. Today this sculpture is placed in Istanbul Museum. Artist: Unknown  
[https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sapfo#/media/Fil:Head\\_of\\_Sappho Smyrna Istanbul Museum Hellenistic period.JPG](https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sapfo#/media/Fil:Head_of_Sappho_Smyrna_Istanbul_Museum_Hellenistic_period.JPG)

## 2. 15th Century





What kind of situation between Sappho and her companions do you think the artist wants to portray?

Miniature painting of Sappho and her companions in a Flemish translation of Christine de Pizan's book *Livre de la Cité des Dames*. The women wear dresses typical for the fashion in 15<sup>th</sup> century Europe. Christine de Pizan was a French writer who lived in the Italian city Bologna. She is well known for her feminist approach in her writing and in public debate with men, but her feminism differs of course a lot from the one we know today.  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pizan\\_sappho.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pizan_sappho.jpg)

### 3. 19<sup>th</sup> Century



What kind of messages do you think the artist want to send to those studying this painting?

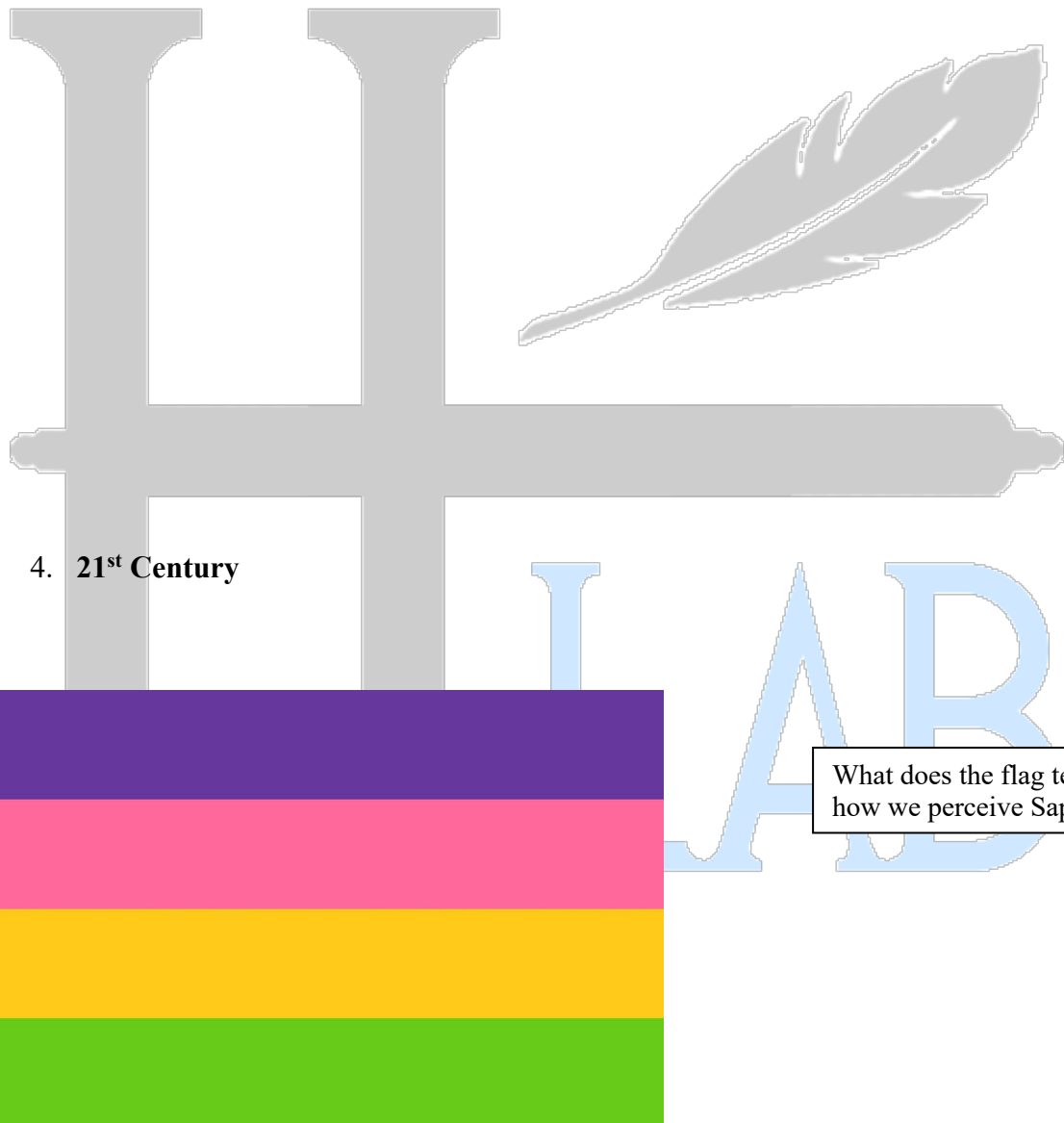
The painting represents Sappho and her fellow poet Erinna in an intimate scene. Artist: Simeon Solomon. He was a British painter whose art often had biblical and Jewish motives. Solomon



was arrested several times for homosexual relations and lived there after for several years in a poorhouse.

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sappho\\_and\\_Erinna\\_in\\_a\\_Garden\\_at\\_Mytilene.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sappho_and_Erinna_in_a_Garden_at_Mytilene.jpg)

<https://www.simeonsolomon.com/simeon-solomon-biography.html>



4. 21<sup>st</sup> Century

What does the flag tell us about how we perceive Sappho today?

Sapphic flag or Lesbian pride flag from 2018. Artist: Lydia.

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lesbian\\_flag\\_Sappho\\_2.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lesbian_flag_Sappho_2.jpg)



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How do you perceive Sappho in this painting?

What does the painting tell us about how we perceive Sappho today?

Mural painting in Sappho's birth village on the Greek island, Lesbos. The picture represents a modern version of Sappho with cigarette and headphones, but also with a laurel-wreath as an ancient attribute. Artist: Unknown

<https://twitter.com/leonidragozin/status/1135279392102465536?lang=fi>

### Summarize:

5. Does the "image of Sappho" change over time? If so, in what way?
6. Do you notice any continuous features in the "image of Sappho"? If so, in what way?
7. Is there one or two pictures/statues of Sappho that stands out? If so, why?
8. What are the advantages and disadvantages with the fact that historical persons are being interpreted and used in different ways in different times?

### Disclaimer

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