

‘A book that succeeds brilliantly in achieving something that I had always assumed was impossible: providing a historically grounded portrait of the man Socrates may actually have been. **Not merely eye-opening, it is thrilling and moving.**’

Tom Holland

‘**Write the name Aspasia on your hearts!** History, as told by men, has often erased the role of women. Now Armand D’Angour has pieced together the evidence that a woman of great intellectual power helped lay the foundations of Western philosophy. This is an exhilarating piece of serious scholarship.’

Baroness Helena Kennedy QC

SOCRATES IN LOVE *The Making of a Philosopher*

ARMAND D’ANGOUR

BLOOMSBURY 7th March 2019 £18.99 Hardback

A revelatory study of the young Socrates gives us a thrilling new account of his early life and the woman who influenced his thinking

In his momentous new book, *SOCRATES IN LOVE*, Oxford Fellow and Classics Professor Armand D’Angour presents a revisionist biography of a thinker whose legacy has dominated Western philosophy since its inception 2500 years ago.

Drawing on neglected sources and uncovering new evidence, D’Angour presents a new account of Socrates’ youth, examining how his early years informed the ideas that led him to be recognised as the pre-eminent thinker of his age and beyond. There is much received wisdom in the standard narrative of Socrates’ life: that he was of low birth and never enjoyed financial means of his own; that he undertook military service to earn a few drachmas; that he was uneducated in youth, and untrained in music and dancing; that he was fat, bald and ugly; and perhaps most importantly of all, that his philosophical approach and ideas have no obvious influences or antecedents.

But a re-examination of Socrates’ early life casts him in a very different light, suggesting he was well schooled from youth, that he was courageous and physically strong, and wealthy enough to serve as a heavy-armed infantryman. Most sensationally of all, D’Angour identifies a woman as the chief influence on Socrates’ early thinking, placing her firmly at the very heart of his formative years as a thinker.

In Plato’s *Symposium*, Socrates says that, “long ago, I learned all about love from a clever woman”, supposedly a fictional character named Diotima. But renewed scrutiny of the text of *Symposium* and of relevant historical evidence points to Diotima being Plato’s disguise for a real woman: Aspasia of Miletus.

Aspasia was legendary in her day, the cleverest and most influential woman in Athens, celebrated and reviled in equal measure. As partner of Athens’ leading citizen, Pericles, for more than a decade she was an essential part of his circle of thinkers, artists and politicians. She was well known as an expert on eloquence and as a sought-after advisor on marital relationships. D’Angour presents the evidence that Aspasia was a fundamental intellectual influence on Socrates -- thus making her instrumental in the birth of the Western philosophical tradition.

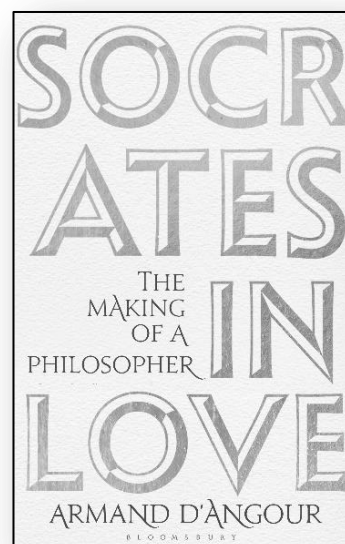
Much of what we know of Socrates comes from Plato and Xenophon, men who first knew him only when he was in his fifties, as an unprepossessing philosopher who went around barefoot and in ragged clothes. What emerges from D’Angour’s vivid portrayal is the young Socrates: an athletic wrestler and dancer, a passionate lover, and a heroic warrior whose life and thinking was changed by his encounter with the most famously erudite woman of the age.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Armand D’Angour is currently an Associate Professor of Classics at Oxford and Fellow and Tutor at Jesus College, Oxford. Trained as a pianist and cellist as well as a classicist, he has recently contributed to the rediscovery of the sounds of ancient Greek music. His book *The Greeks and the New* was a *Spectator* Book of the Year 2011.

For more information please contact:

SUE AMARADIVAKARA, PR COLLECTIVE / 07786 626492 / SUE@PRCOLLECTIVE.CO.UK / @SUEA1001

/P.T.O.



Praise for **SOCRATES IN LOVE** *The Making of a Philosopher*

‘An accessible, lucid, and readable new look at the relationship between Socrates and Aspasia by a stylish scholar combining erudition and exceptional psychological sophistication’

Professor Edith Hall

‘In this brilliant study, Armand D’Angour re-focuses the works of Socrates the Philosopher by looking afresh at the life of Socrates the Man. In doing so, he provides new insights not just into Socrates but into ancient Greek thinking as a whole’

Professor Peter Frankopan, author of *The Silk Roads*

‘In this beautifully written book, Armand D’Angour bring a new Athenian world to life, where a ferociously intelligent foreign woman and the son of a stonemason might fall in love and between them create some of the greatest works of world philosophy and literature. Aspasia and Socrates, reviled by their contemporaries as a poisonous prostitute and a corrupter of youth become in his telling full-blooded, complex individuals caught up in dramatic and difficult times’

Professor Josephine Quinn, Oxford University

‘A fascinating and revelatory book. A penetrating combination of tremendous scholarship, imagination and sympathetic understanding’

William Boyd

‘*Socrates in Love* is fascinating and thought-provoking – beautifully written with huge erudition that is never ostentatious.’

Lindsay Johns, broadcaster