



Love, Worship and Death: Some Renderings from the Greek Anthology by Rennell Rodd
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Love, Worship and Death : Some Renderings from the Greek Anthology.

By SIR RENNELL RODD. A new and enlarged edition. Pp. xx + 139. London : Edward Arnold, 1919.

This book, which first appeared in 1916, is now divided in two parts, the first containing a general selection of epigrams, the second devoted to translations from Sappho, Erinna and other women poets. Some of the versions are quite neatly turned, but as a whole they lack distinction and force.

The Greek Theater and its Drama. By ROY C. FLICKINGER. Pp. xxviii + 358.

Chicago : The University of Chicago Press, 1918. 3 dollars net.

Mr. Flickinger hopes for a great revival of popular interest in the drama on the return of peace. But he solemnly warns us that such an interest 'has little to commend it' if it be manifested 'by attempts at playwriting on the part of those without training, experience, or natural aptitude.' He does not explain how natural aptitude may be tested without writing. 'On the other hand,' he tells us, 'nothing can be more wholesome than a widespread knowledge of the origin, history, and basic principles of tragedy and comedy.' He is, in fact, somewhat deficient in humour. Indeed, at the head of a quite competent chapter on theatrical records, he has thought fit to inscribe the words 'Footprints on the sands of time.—Longfellow.' He apologises with laborious conscientiousness for his temerity in differing from a certain Mr. Spingarn, whose aesthetic theory forbids a critic to concern himself with the influence of material theatrical conditions on a play. He bowdlerises the very vases which he reproduces for the purpose of instructing us on the appearance of Greek comic actors (pp. 46-47, notes). He is capable of adducing Mr. Sutro as a parallel to the Greek tragedians; nor does he seem to realise that Mr. Sutro's habit of arranging all the exits and the entrances before he begins to write his dialogue, is part of Mr. Sutro's tendency to write machine-made, wooden plays.

Yet the discerning reader will pass over these absurdities with an indulgent smile, and will find in this same book much solid learning and many just observations. After a discourse on the origin of tragedy and comedy (pp. 1-56), and an account, adorned with excellent illustrations, of the structural history of the ancient theatre (pp. 57-117), the author deals at length with the influence on Greek drama of what he calls 'environment in the broadest sense of the term.' He sets out to show how the technique of the drama was affected by its religious origin, its choral origin, actors, festival arrangements, and 'physical conditions,' *e.g.*, the size and structure of the theatre. Under this last heading he discusses the so-called 'unities.' There is a chapter, far too slight, on the influence of national customs and ideas, a chapter on theatrical machinery and conventions, and finally the very useful essay on theatrical records.

Mr. Flickinger regards tragedy and the satyric drama as independent developments of the Peloponnesian dithyramb. Tragedy, he thinks, came to Athens by Ikaria, from Corinth, where Arion composed the first 'drama,' and from Sicyon, where the name 'tragic' was first used. Satyric drama was imported later by Pratinas from Phlius. Our author sticks closely to the ancient literary tradition; and this we hold to be a merit. It is of great advantage for the student to have a clear exposition of the *testimonia*, and a sober estimate of their content. But the result is negative. After all his argument, Mr. Flickinger is found assuring us that 'the general effect' of Bacchylides' *Thesens* 'must have been much the same' as that of a performance of Arion. The truth is, we do not know what Arion's performances were like. Mr. Flickinger does less than justice to theories based on ritual, especially on the cult of the dead. Whatever may have been the nature of Arion's dithyramb, it is certain that Aeschylus derived both matter and technique from the cult of heroes, so that anyone who is investigating the origin—or, as