

**BACCHYLIDES; A
PROSE
TRANSLATION**

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Bacchylides; a prose translation by E. Poste

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E. POSTE

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79717

A PROSE TRANSLATION

BY

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PREFACE

SOME lovers of poetry, not readers of Greek, may glance with interest at a prose translation of the odes of Bacchylides which have been recently recovered from Egyptian papyri. They will hardly need to be warned that all, or nearly all, the poetry is inevitably washed out of a prose translation: even if—a large assumption—it retain the substantial tissue of the poet's thought. All brilliancy of diction and harmony of

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rhythm of course disappear ; indeed, even in verse, only a translation into Italian or Spanish could reproduce, or make any approach towards reproducing, the many-syllabled epithets and sonorous cadences of the Greek. Some fragments, too imperfect to interest the general reader, have been omitted.

Bacchylides, who flourished between 500 and 450 B.C., was a native of Ceos, the modern Zea, as also was his maternal uncle Simonides. Both were rivals of Pindar, and were placed by ancient critics on a list of the nine greatest masters of lyric poetry.



CONTENTS

	PAGE	
✓ 1. HERCULES AND MELEAGER	1	✓
✓ 2. THE DAUGHTERS OF PROTEUS	8	
✓ 3. THESEUS AND MINOS	13	✓
4. YOUTHFUL THESEUS	19	✓
5. NEMEA	22	
6. AJAX, OR THE TROJANS	26	
7. IO	29	
✓ 8. CROESUS	31	
9. MENELAUS	35	
10. DEIANIRA	37	
11. PEACE	39	✓

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11



12

I

The following ode celebrates a victory in the horse races at Olympia won by Hiero, tyrant of Syracuse, at some period between 500 and 450 B.C. The same victory is the subject of one of Pindar's extant odes. What Hiero had to do with Hercules or Meleager is a question which must be left to the conjecture of the reader, as to which the translator can offer little or no assistance. There were doubtless tragic incidents in the career of Hiero; and Bacchylides, after remarking that no human prosperity is unalloyed, proceeds to relate that even the invincible son of Zeus had certain adventures far from joyous.

HIGH-DESTINED lord of car-borne Syracufans, thou canst rightly judge, if any living mortal can, the violet-crowned Muses' dulcet strains: and now, resting awhile from cares of state, turn hither thy attention, and