

**LOVE, WORSHIP AND
DEATH; SOME
RENDERINGS FROM
THE GREEK ANTHOLOGY**

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

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RENNELL RODD

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LOVE, WORSHIP AND DEATH

Some Renderings from the
Greek Anthology

BY
SIR RENNELL RODD

AUTHOR OF
'BALLADS OF THE FLEET'
'THE VIOLET CROWN,' ETC.

A NEW AND ENLARGED EDITION

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PREFACE

THE little volume published in 1916 under the title of *Love, Worship and Death* met with a kindly reception which has encouraged me to reprint the renderings from the Greek Anthology which it contained with an almost equal number of others hitherto unpublished.

In this new edition I have placed in a group by themselves the translations from the lyric poetesses of ancient Greece, together with some of the memorial verses recording the fame of Sappho and Erinna. In other respects the approximately chronological arrangement of the former volume is preserved. References to the Greek texts have been added to the index.

The introduction to the first edition is reproduced with only a few verbal corrections. There is little to add to it save the consoling reflection which I have derived from a renewed examination of the greater portion of the Anthology. The experiences of the late grim years have revealed to us how readily a large section of civilised mankind can revert to the instincts of the primeval savage. On the other hand these little poems, written for the most part some two thousand years ago, bear eloquent testimony that those qualities of kindness and tenderness and sympathy, which they so beautifully express, are eternal and essential in the heart of man. In evidence of which I may refer my readers to the versions on pages 24, 61, and 72. R. R.

INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST EDITION

AMONG the many diverse forms of expression in which the Greek genius has been revealed to us, that which is preserved in the lyrics of the Anthology most typically reflects the familiar life of men, the thought and feeling of every day in the lost ancient world. These little flowers of song reveal, as does no other phase of that great literature, a personal outlook on life, kindly, direct and simple, the tenderness which characterised family relations, the reciprocal affection of master and slave, sympathy with the domestic animals, a generous sense of the obligations of friendship, a gentle piety and a close intimacy with the nature gods, of whose presence, malignant or benign, the

Greek was ever sensitively conscious. For these reasons they still make so vivid an appeal to us after a long silence of many centuries. To myself who have lived for some years in that enchanted world of Greece, and have sailed from island to island of its haunted seas, the shores have seemed still quick with the voices of those gracious presences who gave exquisite form to their thoughts on life and death, their sense of awe and beauty and love. There indeed poetry seems the appropriate expression of the environment, and there even still to-day, more than anywhere else in the world, the correlation of our life with nature may be felt instinctively; the human soul seems nearest to the soul of the world.

The poems, of which some renderings are here offered to those who cannot read the originals, cover a period of about a thousand

years, broken by one interval during which the lesser lyre is silent. The poets of the *elegy* and the *melos* appear in due succession after those of the *epic*, and, significant perhaps of the transition, there are found in the first great period of the lyric the names of two women, Sappho of Lesbos, acknowledged by the unanimous voice of antiquity, which is confirmed by the quality of a few remaining fragments, to be among the greatest poets of all times, and Corinna of Tanagra, who contended with Pindar and rivalled Sappho's mastery. The canon of Alexandria does not include among the nine greater lyrists the name of Erinna of Rhodes, who died too young, in the maiden glory of her youth and fame. The earlier poets of the *melos* were for the most part natives of

'the sprinkled isles,
Lily on lily that o'erlace the sea.'