YALE STUDIES IN ENGLISH; XV. ESSAYS ON THE STUDY AND USE OF POETRY; PP.13-136

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649511808

Yale Studies in English; XV. Essays on the Study and Use of Poetry; pp.13-136 by Plutarchus & Basil The Great & Frederick Morgan Padelford

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd. Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

PLUTARCHUS & BASIL THE GREAT & FREDERICK MORGAN PADELFORD

YALE STUDIES IN ENGLISH; XV. ESSAYS ON THE STUDY AND USE OF POETRY; PP.13-136

Trieste

YALE STUDIES IN ENGLISH

ALBERT S. COOK, EDITOR

C

*r:

xv

ESSAYS ON THE STUDY AND USE OF POETRY

PLUTARCH AND BASIL THE GREAT

TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK WITH AN INTRODUCTION

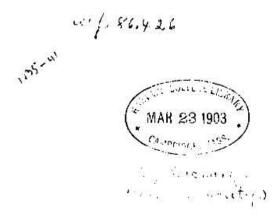
BY

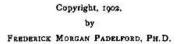
FREDERICK MORGAN PADELFORD, Ph.D.

Professor of the English Language and Literature in the University of Washington



NEW YORK HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY 1901





 $\mathbb{N} = \mathbb{C}$ 14

TO GEORGE DANA BOARDMAN PEPPER AND ADONIRAM JUDSON PADELFORD

10

33

×

TABLE OF CONTENTS

12

Para

- 33

									rage	
PREFACE,		•		•	27.	(7)	1.50		7	
INTRODUCTIO	ON,	3.63		20	89 ⁶⁰	30	145	32	11	
Plutarch	n's Th	eory of	f Poetry	h .		8	•		13	
The Life	e of S	it. Basi	I and th	e Addı	ess to Y	oung	Men,		33	
How A You	NG M	AN SH	IOULD S	TUDY	POETRY,	÷	-	4	45	
Outline,				•	18		100		47	
Translat	tion,	33	<u>.</u>		12	3 0	65.0	12	49	
ADDRESS TO	You	NG MR	N ON TH	R RIGH	IT USE OF	GRE	ek Lite	RA-		
TURE,		(\mathbf{x})		•	23		300	\otimes	97	
Outline,						۵°		1	99	
Translat	ion,	5 4		10		*	200		IOI	
Appendix,	<u>.</u>		÷	2	32	¥3	6	32	121	
Index,	*			•3	2	82	32.5		125	•

э н

PLUTARCH'S THEORY OF POETRY

Unless one accepts the theory, playfully or otherwise advanced in the Ion, that the poet is but the instrument of an overmastering divinity, he is often at a loss to explain the inability of many a genius in the world of art and letters to judge of the relative excellence of his own creations. Michel Angelo eagerly dropped the brush and resumed the chisel, with the joy of one who returns to the work he loves after interruption, and yet succeeding generations have been unable to tell whether they admire more the frescoes of the Chapel or the Pietà; Wordsworth, the author of Michael, the Daffodils, and 'There Was a Boy,' with infinite self-satisfaction drew out the prolonged monotony of the Excursion as the supreme work of a lifetime; and he whose imagination swept from the 'visible darkness' of the throne of Chaos to the skirts of God, 'dark with excessive bright,' failed to see how far the intensity, sublimity, and mighty organtones of Paradise Lost excel the unimpassioned finish of Paradise Regained.

In a similar way Plutarch misjudged his productions, for although he regarded philosophy as the ideal field for the mind's activity, he was not profound enough nor subtle enough to excel as a philosopher, so that the *Morals* are hardly known more than by title to the cultivated reader of to-day, while the *Lives*, those 'idealized ethical portraits,' as Professor Perrin calls them, have charmed generations of English readers by their freshness and spirit, and are found on many a book-shelf where poverty allows them no other companions save Shakespeare and the Bible.

And yet the Morals have great value historically. No other extant writings give so complete and satisfactory a record of custom and thought in the late Greek period.

Plutarch's Theory of Poetry

Domestic life in its many phases, affairs of government, questions of religion and ethics, the investigations of science, and the problems of art, all find a place in the pages of this multifarious collection of essays.

The student of poetry, and of aesthetics in general, will find these essays fruitful or barren according to the point of view from which they are approached. If, in the essay on poetry, the reader looks for intrinsic excellence in criticism, he will be disappointed, and will find many pages that are distressingly pedantic, and many that are commonplace and trivial; thus, when the charming episode of Nausicaa and Odysseus is made the subject of prudish speculation, the reader is equally offended by the triteness of the thought and by the writer's pragmatism. If, however, Plutarch is regarded as an exponent of the thought and feeling of his time, the essay is full of significance, for it shows the attempts of decadent Greece to deal with an art which had been the glory of the classical period.

Accordingly, the following pages will attempt an analysis of Plutarch's theory of poetry, the material furnished by the essay on poetry being supplemented by gleanings here and there from essays on other subjects. First will be considered Plutarch's theory of the distinction between poetry and prose; secondly, his theory of the relation of poetry to nature and to truth; thirdly, his theory of the end of fine art.

Wherein do poetry and prose differ? Although Plutarch does not follow Aristotle in threatening the established tradition which made metrical form essential to poetry,¹ he does agree with him in saying that the nature of its subject largely determines whether a composition is prose or poetry.² With playful disdain he criticizes the early Greek philosophers and naturalists for presenting didactic subjects metrically: "The verses of Empedocles and Parmenides, Nicander's verses on antidotes to poisons, and the maxims of Theognis, borrowed the poetic form and dignity only as a sort of riding-carriage to avoid footing it.²⁸

¹ Poet, i, 5; ix, 9. ⁹ Ibid. i, 7-8; ix, 2. ⁸ See p. 53.