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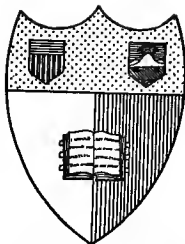
THE WINDFLOWERS OF
ASKLEPIADES AND THE
POEMS OF POSEIDIPPOS

TRANSLATED BY EDWARD STORER



LONDON: THE EGOIST PRESS
23 Adelphi Terrace House, 2 Robert Street, W.C.2

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FOREWORD

ASKLEPIADES wrote his epigrams about the end of the fourth century B.C. and the beginning of the third. He was a contemporary and master of Theokritos, and, like the Sicilian, an islander by birth; Samos his native place. In the Crown of Meleager Asklepiades' emblem is the wind-flower, the wild anemone which, according to the myth, sprang to life in the island of Cyprus from the tears shed by Aphrodite over the death of Adonis. Both Asklepiades and Poseidippos belong to the Alexandrine school, and probably lived most of their lives in the city of the Ptolemies.

For the Greek text I have taken the edition of Dubner published by Firmin-Didot and compared it with the rescension of Stadtmüller, sometimes accepting the emendations of the latter. I have consulted among other works *Poeti dell' Antologia Palatina* of Alessandro Veniero, Ascoli, 1905; the English versions of Professor Mackail and Mr. Paton (Loeb Library) and the French version of M. Nisard.

I have striven for accuracy and as simple a manner as possible, nor have I hesitated to translate directly certain lines which our modern culture generally veils in clumsy dog-Latin. To do otherwise seemed to me to destroy all the value and meaning of the translation which should surely not seek to impose our traditions on bygone happy Greeks.

This is the first time that either Asklepiades or Poseidippos has been collected in English.

E. S.

Σικελιδεὺ τ' ἀνέμοις ἄνθεα φύμενα.

MELEAGER.

THE WINDFLOWERS OF ASKLEPIADES

I

THE CROWN OF SPRING

SWEET for the thirsty in summer is snow to drink;
sweet for sailors after winter's storms to see the crown
of spring, but sweeter still when beneath one cloak two
lovers lie, giving their thanks to Kypris.

II

TO NIKO

The famous Niko promised to visit me to-night, and swore
it by holy Demeter. She has not come, and the watch has gone
by.

Did she mean to be faithless?
Slaves, put out the lamp!

III

THE PASSER-BY

The sweet face of Nikaris dear to the Desires appears at the
high-latticed windows, and the starry eyes of Kleophon flash
from her porch, O beloved Kypris of the gracious glance.

WINDFLOWERS OF ASKLEPIADES

IV

WAITING IN THE PORCH

Only to you, Night, will I confess how Pythias the daughter of Niko deceives me, the treacherous girl.

I did not come unasked. She invited me.

Night, may you hear these same complaints from her, standing by my door.

V

THE ROSE GARLAND

Stay here, my flowers hanging by this porch, not shedding too soon those petals I have wetted with my tears—for the eyes of lovers are drenched with tears.

But when the door opens, and you see him, drip down your rain over his head, so that at least that golden hair may drink my tears.

VI

TO A MAIDEN NOT TO BE WON

You grudge your maidenhood, and why? You will not find the lover of your choice in Hades, girl.

For the living only are the Kyprian's joys; in Akheron, maiden, we shall sleep bones and dust.

WINDFLOWERS OF ASKLEPIADES

VII

THE BEAUTIFUL AFRICAN

Didyme has conquered me with her loveliness. Alas! I melt like wax before the fire, seeing how fair she is.

She is black; what of that? So are coals, but when one sets them alight they burn like rosy calices.

VIII

THE TRIBADS

The Samians Bitto and Nanion refuse to worship according to the rites of Aphrodite, and seek other joys which are not seemly.

Queen Kypris, show your displeasure against those who forsake your bed.

IX

A MEMORY OF LOVE

Lysidike lays at your feet, Kypris, this racer's goad, the golden spur of a beautiful-limbed rider with which she has often urged her slim steed, though never have its sides been reddened by its nimble movements, so lightly does it prick.

Wherefore she hangs the golden trophy in the middle porch of your temple.

WINDFLOWERS OF ASKLEPIADES

X

AT THE PORCH

It is winter and the night is long. The Pleiades have travelled half their span, and I am passing by this door all wet with the rain.

Suffering from her treachery, I long for her.

O Kypris, it is not love you have sent me; it is some cruel shaft tipped with flame.

XI

THE REVEL

Run across to the Agora, Demetrios, and ask Amyntos for three blue-fish, two crabs and two dozen prawns which he will count himself, and come back here with them.

Bring also six chaplets of roses from Thauborios, and on the way, tell Tryphera to come soon.

XII

DOMESTICITIES

Bring us twelve prawns—do you hear?—and five coronals of roses. What! You've no money, you say? This is just robbery. Won't someone torture this Lapith on the wheel for me? It's a pirate we've got, not a slave.

You've done nothing wrong, you say. Nothing? Bring the account, and Phryne come here with the reckoning stones. Sly fox. Wine, five drakhmas, sausage, two . . . eggs, hares, tunnies, sesame, honeycombs. To-morrow we will go into that.

Run now to Aiskhra the perfume-seller, and tell her we know she gave herself to Bakkho five times running, for we have the proofs of it.

WINDFLOWERS OF ASKLEPIADES

XIII

THE POEMS OF ERINNA

How lovely is the work of Erinna, not great in volume, indeed, coming from a maiden of nineteen, but more enduring than the writing of many.

If death had not come to her so soon, what a name would have been hers.

XIV

TO THE HETAIRA HERMIONE

When I was caressing Hermione the hetaira, she wore a many-coloured girdle on which was written, O Paphia, in letters of gold: "Love me for ever, but do not be unhappy if another possess me."

XV

TO THE HETAIRA PHILANION

The wanton Philanion has hurt me, and though my grief is not to be seen, it flows through me to my finger-tips.

It is over with me, Loves, I am ruined, I perish.

Light-heartedly enough I went to see the girl, and now I am in Hades.

WINDFLOWERS OF ASKLEPIADES

XVI

THE CARELESS LOVES

I am not yet two-and-twenty, and I am weary of life. O,
Loves, why do you treat me so, why set me on fire?
For when I die what will you do then?
Play with your dice as before, thoughtless Loves!

XVII

DRINK, ASKLEPIADES

Drink, Asklepiades, rather than weep. From what do you
suffer? You are not the first the Kyprian has entrapped, and
cruel Eros has not prepared his bow and arrows for you alone.

Why, when still alive, do you seek the dust?

Let us drink a cup of unmixed wine. Dawn is but a finger
away. Do we wait to see the sleep-bringing lamp again?

Let us drink gladly. In a little while, unhappy man, we shall
sleep in the long night.

XVIII

ON THE TOMB OF AN HETAIRA

I hold Arkheanassa, the hetaira of Kolophon, in whose very
wrinkles love lived.

O, you, her lovers who plucked the early flowers of her first
youth, through what flames have you not passed!

WINDFLOWERS OF ASKLEPIADES

XIX

THE DREAD OF THE SEA

Keep eight cubits away from me, stormy sea, and swell and roar with all your might.

If you wash away the mound of Eumares, what will that profit you? You will find only bones and dust.

XX

FOR EUIPPOS

O, traveller, passing by my empty memorial, if ever you come to Khios, tell my father Melesagores that the evil Euros destroyed me with the ship and all its cargo.

Of Euippos there remains only a name.

XXI

THE DUTIFUL SCHOLAR

Konnaros having vanquished all the scholars in composition, received a prize of eighty knuckle-bones, and in thanks to the Muses, dedicated in return myself the comic mask of old Kharetos, amid the applause of the little boys.

XXII

TO A YOUTH

If you grew wings and in your hand were bow and arrows, we should not call Eros son of the Kyprian, but you, my boy.

WINDFLOWERS OF ASKLEPIADES

XXIII

PATIENT VIRTUE

Here I, patient virtue, sit by Ajax' tomb with shorn hair and my soul suffering a great regret, that among the Greeks wily-minded deceit should be more powerful than I.

XXIV

TO THE HETARIA HERAKLEA

Thrice, O lamp, in your presence Heraklea swore to come, and she is not here.

Lamp, if, indeed, you are a divinity, show no favour to the deceitful girl, but when, bringing someone to her house, she is bent on love, give her no light, refuse your aid!

XXV

THE HETAIRA'S OFFERING

(also attributed to Poseidippos)

Plangon has laid in the vestibule of Kypris' temple a purple riding-whip and shining reins which helped to conquer Philainis in the course—the young fillies neighing eagerly at evening for the race.

Bring her, beloved Kypris, glory and fame without end.*

* An epigram presumably of the same character as No. IX.

WINDFLOWERS OF ASKLEPIADES

XXVI

"LYDIA"

Lydia am I by birth and by name. Thanks to Antimakhos, I enjoy more honour than all the children of Kodros. Who has not chanted me? Who has not read "Lydia," the handiwork of Antimakhos and the Muses.

XXVII

TO HESIOD

(Also attributed to Arkhios)

The Muses themselves saw you, Hesiod, guarding your sheep upon the difficult mountainside and gave you a bough of sacred laurel to protect you from the heat with its fair leaves.

They gave you, too, the sacred water from the spring of Helikon, which gushed forth from the earth at the touch of the hoof of the winged horse.

Nourished on this sacred fount, you have left works and songs praising the immortals, the race of old heroes and the demi-gods.

XXVIII

A STATUE

This is a statue of Kypris, and yet surely, it is Berenike? I am puzzled to say whom it resembles more.

WINDFLOWERS OF ASKLEPIADES

XXIX

ON A BRONZE ALEXANDER

(Also attributed to Arkellos)

Lysippos has brought back to us the very body of Alexander, and all his daring. The bronze seems to look up to Zeus and to say: "I rule over the earth; while Olympos is yours."

XXX

KLEOPATRA'S RING

(Also attributed to Antipater of Thessalonika)

Drunkness am I—a gem worked by a subtle hand. I am graven in amethyst, and the subject and the stone are ill-assorted.

But I am the precious property of Kleopatra, and on the finger of a Queen even "drunkness" should be sober.*

XXXI

THE SIGNS OF LOVE

Wine is a test of love. Although Nikagoras denied his passion to us, his many cups of wine accused him.

Moreover, he wept and hung his head, and seemed sad and his coronal was all awry.

* A play on the words *methe*, drunkenness, and *a-methe*, not drunkenness, and *amethyst*.

WINDFLOWERS OF ASKLEPIADES

XXXII

FOR BOTRYS

Listen, passer-by, for a moment, even if you are in haste, to the great grief of Botrys, the old man of eighty years who buried his young son, already wise in art and learning.

Pity the father, pity, too, the son, the dear child of Botrys, who died ignorant of how many joys.

XXXIII

THE CRUEL LOVES

Let what remains of my soul lie in peace, Loves. This I pray of you by the gods, but if you must pursue me, strike me with fire rather than with arrows, so that I may be brought wholly to ashes and dust.

Consume, consume me, Loves. This is the last thing I ask of you.

XXXIV

SNOW AND HAIL

Snow, hail, grow dark, flash lightnings, thunder, shake out over the earth all your clouds, for, if you kill me, I shall cease to be, but if you let me live, though I pass through worse than this I shall rejoice in my love.

For the god drives me on who is your master, too, he at whose persuasion you entered as gold the brazen bridal chamber.

WINDFLOWERS OF ASKLEPIADES

XXXV

ARKHEADES

Formerly Arkheades was warmed in my embrace, but now not even in mockery does he turn to me in my wretchedness.

Honeyed love is not always sweet: but the god is often kindlier to those whom once he has tortured.

XXXVI

EBONY AND IVORY

To mate beauty with beauty, Love did not try to unite the emerald with gold, for they can never be alike nor ever flower, nor ebony with ivory, black with white, but he joined Eubotos to Kleander, flowers of friendship and grace.

XXXVII

DAMIS

I, Love, little and thoughtless, who flew away from my mother, do not leave the roof of Damis, but there with no rival, I talk and take pleasure with him alone.

XXXVIII

DORKIO

How that fair youth Dorkio, beloved of the young, can loose the flying darts of Kypris! Love flashes from his eyes if he sits at our table in petass and chlamys, leaving the breast bare.

WINDFLOWERS OF ASKLEPIADES

XXXIX

THE CHARMING SCHOLAR

Not armed with the bow, nor yet full-grown, but a mere child, my love returns to Kypriis, taking with him the golden writing tablets!

With them he spells out the names of Philokrates, son of Diaulos and Antigene, revealing a charm which enslaves the soul.

XL

LOVE IN DIFFICULTIES

It was night, it was raining, and for a third obstacle to love I was too much in wine. The North wind blew and I was alone. But lovely Moskos was worth all. "Would you, too, had had to wander about instead of resting indoors!" I said no more, but drenched through, exclaimed: "How long, Zeus? Peace, dear Zeus! You, too, have known love."

THE POEMS OF POSEIDIPPOS

FOREWORD

POSEIDIPPOS lived a little later than Asklepiades. He was writing about 250 B.C.¹, as we know from his epigram on Arsinoë, the sister and queen of Ptolemy, who died 247 B.C. Poseidippos was an Alexandrine and an epigrammatist of the same school as Asklepiades, with whose epigrams his own have sometimes been confounded. Athenæus mentions two epic poems by Poseidippos, *Aethopia* and *Asopia*. Both, unfortunately, have been lost.

The last two fragments of Poseidippos, Nos. XXIII and XXIV, are comparatively recent discoveries, and are to be found in—*Papyrus inédit. Fragments d'Euripide et d'autres poètes grecs publiés par M. Henri Weill, Paris, Firmin-Didot, 1879.*

THE POEMS OF POSEIDIPOPOS

I

TO A WINE VESSEL

DRIP, Attic flagon, the rich dew of Bakkhos, sprinkle your moisture over the common feast. Be silent, Zeno, swan of wisdom, and the muse of Kleantes. Let us turn our thoughts to bitter-sweet love.

II

TO PHILANION

Do not think I am deceived by these persuasive tears, Philanion. I understand. You love no one better than me when we are together, but if another has you, you tell him you love him best.

III

BLIND DESIRE

Tears and laughter: why, before I have rescued my feet from one of Kypris' furnaces, do you drive me to another?

Never do I find respite from love, but Desire, careless of my sufferings, is always seeking to add to it.

POEMS OF POSEIDIPPOS

IV

AT THE DOOR

If she has anyone with her, Pythias, I shall go away. But if she is really alone, then, by Zeus, call me in for a little while.

And tell her for a sign of me that drunken and in the night I come, driven on by impudent bold love.

V

THE REVEL

We are four revellers here, and a companion is coming for each. One flagon of Khian will not be enough for the eight of us.

Boy, go over to Aristios and tell him to send at once another half-flagon. Even that will leave us two khoes short. All the same, it will have to do. But run; we meet at the fifth hour.

VI

LITTLE ARKHEANAKTIS

(Attributed to Kallimakhos also)

The three-year-old child Arkheanaktis playing by a well was lured therein by his own mute image.

His mother drew him out all dripping wet from the water, seeking anxiously for any relic of life in him.

The child did not defile the spring of the nymphs, but hushed upon his mother's knees, began his long sleep.

VII

THE GRAVE OF THE SHIPWRECKED

(Attributed also to Plato, the comic writer)

Sailors, why do you bury me close to the sea? Better to fill in the wretched grave of the shipwrecked man further away. I shudder at the sound of the waves which were my death.

But even so, to whomsoever takes pity on Niketis—hail!

POEMS OF POSEIDIPPOS

VIII

THE ARROWS OF THE LOVES

Strike me, strike me, Loves! I am but one victim among many. Do not spare me, witless ones, for if you conquer me, you will be mighty bowmen among the immortals, as powerful as the great arrow-bearer himself.

IX

DESIRE AND THE CICALA

Love wishing to silence the cicala of the Muses in the acanthus bush set fire to its wings.

My mind intent upon books cares for nothing else, and spurns the suggestions of the god.

X

LIFE

(Attributed also to Plato, the comic writer)

How shall a man live? In the Agora are quarrels and hard dealings. At home, cares. In the fields, plenty of toil. At sea, terror. In a foreign land should you be rich, you will have no security; and if you are poor, you will be miserable.

Have you a wife? You will not be without difficulties. Unmarried? You are a lonely man.

Children are a grief, but the childless life is a crippled one. The young are thoughtless, but the old are weak.

In the end, your choice is then of two things: never to be born, or as soon as you are born to die.

POEMS OF POSEIDIPPOS

XI

ON A BRONZE ALEXANDER

O Lysippos, Sikyonia's sculptor, master-hand, craftsman of great skill, the bronze which you have modelled for this statue of Alexander seems on fire. The Persians will be blamed no more. One can forgive the cattle who run from the lion.

XII

DORIKHA

Dorikha, your bones are long since dust, and dust the fillet that bound your hair, and the perfume-breathing robe you folded about lovely Kharaxos when, in his arms, you sipped the wine at dawn.

But the white leaves of Sappho's precious ode remain, and will remain, speaking your adorable name which Naukratis shall never forget so long as a sea-going ship shall come to the waters of Nile.

XIII

THE HETAIRA'S PRAYER

Dweller in Kypris and Kythera and Miletos and the fair land of horse-trampled Syria, come graciously to Kallistion, who never sent a lover away from her door.

POEMS OF POSEIDIPPOS

XIV

ON A FIGURE OF LUCK

From what country is the sculptor? From Sikyonia. His name? Lysippos. And who are you? Luck, that rules everything. Why do you stand on tiptoe? I am always running. Why have your feet twin wings? I fly on the wind. Why have you a razor in your right hand? That men may know me sharper than the keenest blade. And why this hair over your forehead? That he who meets me may take hold of me. But, by Zeus, why are you bald behind? That no-one I have passed by on my winged feet may seize me at his fancy from behind.

Why has the artist fashioned you so? For your sake, stranger, he made me and set me up as a warning in this porch.

XV

THE FIGURE OF AN ATHLETE

Once for a wager I ate a Meonian ox, for my own country Thasos did not offer me good fare.

I am Theagenes. Having eaten, I asked for more.

Wherefore, I stand in this fashion with outstretched hand.

XVI

THE DRAGON STONE

This stone of dazzling purity was not found in a river surging over its banks, but in the head of a full-bearded dragon.

The sculptured chariot figured on it was graven by a man with eyes like a lynx, for you can see the design without noticing the relief in the surface. It is a great miracle of labour, and one wonders how the lapidary did not lose his sight over so close a task.

POEMS OF POSEIDIPPOS

XVII

TO A YOUTH

(Attributed also to Asklepiades)

If you had wings of gold, and there hung from your shoulders a quiver full of arrows, and you stood near the splendour-loving Eros, by Hermes, I swear that Kypris herself would not know which was her son.

XVIII

TO EIRENON

(Attributed also to Asklepiades)

The Loves themselves coming from Kypris' golden halls have seen the tender Eirenion, a sacred flower from her hair to her feet, a statue of carved white marble, weighed down with virginal graces.

And many arrows leaping from the purple bows of the Loves pierced the hearts of the young men.

XIX

THE END OF PYROMAKHOS

Pyromakhos, the glutton who used to devour everything like a bird of the night, lies in this broken ditch; his shroud the relics of a Pellenidean cloak.

Yet anoint his stele, Attikos, and lay a garland there if ever he was with you in the July feasts.

He came from the revels of the wine god, with dulled eyes, toothless, and with no hair on his head, having only his oil bottle and dressed in the actor's cape.

So it was he passed from Linnæos to Kalliope.*

*The point lies in a play on words—*Kalliopen*, and *kalenopen*, fine ditch.

POEMS OF POSEIDIPPOS

XX

AN ARGUMENT AGAINST LOVE

I am well armed and will contend with you, not yielding more than a mortal must. But come near me no more, Love.

If you should seize me though when I am drunk, you will capture only my folly.

When I am sober, I have an ordered argument against you.

XXI

NAMES IN THE WINE

Fill me two cups of wine for Nannos and Lydia, and one for Mimnermos, the friend of lovers, and one for the wise Antimakhos. A fifth I will drink to myself, and a sixth, Heliodoros, for whomsoever you say you love. A seventh for Hesiod, and for Homer an eighth. The ninth shall be for the Muses; the tenth for Memosynes.

A cup full to the brim I drink to you, Kypris, and other toasts I could give—never a difficult matter for a drunkard.

XXII

KLEANDER AND NIKO

(Attributed also to Asklepiades)

Kleander saw Niko floating in the blue sea by your shores, O Paphian Kythera, and a burning flame filled the youth's heart for the fair swimmer.

He lay like a shipwrecked man on the beach, while she, borne up by the waves, gained the smooth sand.

But now they are happy in a love which they share, and the vows they made by the sea endure still.

POEMS OF POSEIDIPPOS

XXIII

THE LIGHT-HOUSE

Mighty Proteos, here, by the shore of Pharos, Sostratos of Dexiphanos the Knidian raised a light-house for the safety of the Greeks, where before there was no lookout among the islands.

But now your great pile draws the ships to your shores, where the beacon rears its head above the clouds, so that at night the pilot, seeing the light flash over the waves and the fire burning brightly on the summit, will be able safely to steer his ship to royal Proteos, and, ploughing our sea, to come securely to the harbour of Tauros.

XXIV

ARSINOË'S TEMPLE

Here, between the shore of Pharos and the high waves, and the mouth of Canopos, this monument turns away from Libya, fruitful in flocks, to meet the west winds from Italy.

Kallikrates erected me here, and consecrated me to Queen Arsinoë Aphrodite.

Chaste daughters of the Greeks, and you mariners of the sea, turn to Aphrodite of the favouring winds who will hear your prayers.

To give you good refuge from the angry Pelagian was this temple raised.

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