



Priapeia: Sportive Epigrams on Priapus (Forgotten Books)

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Book Description:

"The Priapeia is a collection of poems (ninety five in number) in various meters on the subject of Priapus. It was compiled from literary works and inscriptions on images of the god by an unknown editor, who composed the introductory epigram. From their style and versification it is evident that the poems belong to the best period of Latin literature. Some, however, may be interpolations of a later period. They will be found in F. Bitchelers Peironius (f 904), L. Mullers Catullus (1870), and E. Bahrens, Poetae latini minores, I. (1879).

These poems were posted upon statues of Priapus that stood in the midst of gardens as the protector of the fruits that grew therein. These statues were often crude carvings made from tree trunks. They roughly resembled the form of a man and were equipped with a huge, erect phallus that doubled as a club that the gardener could use against would-be robbers. The statues also promoted the gardens' fertility.

The verses are attributed variously to Virgil, Ovid, and Domitius Marsus. However, most authorities on the matter regard them to have been the work of a group of poets who met at Maecenas's house, amusing themselves by writing tongue-in-cheek tributes to the garden Priapus. (Maecenas was Horace's patron.) Others, including Martial and Petronius, were thought to have added more verses in imitation of the originals.

The Priapeia was translated into English by Leonard C. Smithers and Sir Richard Burton (the latter of whom also translated *The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night*), who provided numerous glosses concerning the sexual practices and proclivities that are referenced in the poems. These explanatory notes address such diverse topics as fellatio (for which they use the synonym "irrumation"), cunnilingus, masturbation, bestiality, sexual positions, eunuchism, phalli, religious prostitution, aphrodisiacs, pornography, and sexual terminology.

The poems include monologues by Priapus in which the god congratulates and praises himself for the size and virility of his sexual parts and issues fearful warnings to those who would trespass upon his garden or attempt to steal its fruits, threatening such miscreants with various punishments of a sexual nature, such as fellatio and sodomy.

In the Introduction to the Priapeia, the translators point out that "The worship of Priapus amongst the Romans was derived from the Egyptians, who, under the form of Apis, the Sacred Bull, adored the generative Power of Nature,"? adding that "the Phallus was the ancient emblem of creation, and representative of the gods Bacchus, Priapus, Hercules, Siva, Osiris, Baal and Asher, who were all Phallic deities." (*Quote from wikipedia.org*)

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Publisher's Preface; Introduction; A Word To The Reader; Epigrams; To The Reader; In Play, Priapus (thou Canst Testify); Darkly Might I To Thee Say: Oh Give Me For Ever And Ever; These Tablets, Sacred To The Rigid God; All The Conditions (they Say) Priapus Made With The Youngling; Though I Be Wooden Priapus

(as Thou See'st); Oft In My Speech One Letter Is Lost; For Predicate Always; Matrons Avoid This Site, For Your Chaste Breed; 'why Be My Parts Obscene Displayed Without Cover?' Thou Askest; Why Laugh Such Laughter, O Most Silly Maid?; 'ware Of My Catching! If Caught, With Rod I Never Will Harm Thee; A She (than Hector's Parent Longer Aged; Thou Shalt Be Pedicate (lad!), Thou Also (lass!) Shalt Be Rogered; Here' Here! Nor Dare Expect (whoe'er Thou Be); Charged To My Charge The Fieldlet Who Shall Dare; Rare As Those Apples Wherewith Hippomenes Schoene's Ravished; What Hast Thou, Meddling Watch, With Me To Do?; Aye In This Prickle Of Ours The Bonniest Boon To Be Found Is; Will Ever Telethusa, Posture-mime; Thunders Are Under Jove; With The Trident Weaponed Is Neptune; Wealth Is My Loss! Do Thou Vouchsafe Lend Aid To My Prayer; An Fro' Me Woman Shall Thieve Or Plunder Me

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