Poems From Ancient Hebrew Literature.

David's Lamentation for Jonathan.

Jonathan and David made a covenant; as he loved David as his own soul Jonathan stripped himself of his robe and gave it to David, and his garments, even his sword, his bow and his girdle.

Soon after, the Philistines made war against Israel and they slew Jonathan the King’s son. Then David lamented with this lamentation over Jonathan.

The Lamentation for Jonathan.

The beauty of Israel is slain on the high places; How are the mighty fallen! I am distraught for you, my brother Jonathan; Very pleasant have you been with me! Your love was wonderful: passing the love of women! How are the mighty fallen: And the weapons of war perished!

Songs from the Song of Songs Which is Solomon's.

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: For his love is better than wine.

As the Apple-tree among the trees of the wood, So is my Beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shade with great delight And his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting-house: And his banner over me was Love. Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, For I am sick with love. His left hand is under my head And his right hand embraces me!

My beloved is white and ruddy Chief among ten thousand! His head is as the finest gold; His locks are bushy and shine as the raven’s wing, His eyes are as the eyes of doves, Washed with milk,—fitly set: His cheeks are as beds of spices, as sweet flowers, His lips as lilies, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh. His belly is as bright ivory overlaid with white sapphires, His mouth most sweet: He is altogether lovely! 5
Solon.
(B. C. 638-558)

Solon, the great law-giver of Athens, one of the Seven Sages of Greece, has left a number of epigrams on the love of boys. The following are examples.

**Boys and Sport.**

Blest is the man who loves and after early play
Whereby his limbs are supple made and strong,
Retiring to his house, with wine and song
Toys with a fair boy on his breast the livelong day!
Translated by J. A. Symonds.

**The Love of Boys.**

In the flower-time of youth
Thou shalt love boys,—
Yearning for their honied mouths.
(Plutarch cap. 5, p.751)
Theognis.
(B. C. 570-490)

Theognis, one of the earliest of the Greek poets, devoted a
great part of his verse to his young friend Kurnos. As an
aristocrat he was exiled from his home city, Megara, upon the
triumph of the Democratic party. But he was allowed to return
before his death in 490 B. C.

Harsh and sweet,
Alluring and repellant,
Is the love for young men,
If one brings it to perfection,—
Then it is sweet;
But if a man pursues and does not win,
Then it is of all things
The most painful!

(Bergh, line 1,353)

O Boy, so long as your chin remains smooth,
Never will cease my slavery to you,—
Not if it is appointed to me to die.

(line 1,327)

May I have Youth's prime,
By Apollo's favor,
Delight my spirit with sweet boys.

(line 1,115)

Theognis uttered a prophesy (lines 237-254) that his love for
and celebration of his friend young Kurnos, would immortalize
this young man's name. Two thousand years later, Shakespere
in his sonnets made the same prophesy regarding his beloved
friend Mr. W. H. Both predictions have come true.

"Lo, I have given thee wings wherewith to fly
Over the boundless ocean and the earth;
Yea, on the lips of many shalt thou lie
The comrade of their banquet and their mirth.
Youths in their loveliness shall make thee sound
Upon the silver lute's melodious breath;
And when thou goest darkling underground
Down to the lamentable house of death
Oh yet not then from honor shalt thou cease,
But wander, an imperishable name,
Kurnos, about the isles and shores of Greece!
Translated by G. Lowes Dickenson

7
Anacreon.
(B. C. 550-464)

Anacreon was the court poet of King Polycrates of Samos. In his poems he celebrated the beauty of the boys, Cleobulos, Smerdies, Bathyllus and Leucaspis. Smerdies was a Thracian boy who for his great beauty was presented to King Polycrates.

To Cleobulos.

Cleobulos, I love;
For Cleobulos, I'm wild;
Cleobulos I watch
And follow with mine eyes!

To Bathyllus.

O Boy with a maiden's eyes
I seek and worship thee!  

Translated by E. E.
Pindar.
(B.C. 518-438)

Pindar, one of the greatest of the Greek poets, the inventor of the Pindaric ode, was held in extraordinary reverence by the people of his day. He loved the handsome youth Theoxenos whom he celebrates in his poems. Pindar died in Theoxenos' arms when the great poet was suddenly stricken in the gymnasium at Argos.

To Theoxenos.

Right it were, fond heart,
To cull love's blossoms in life's prime!
For whoso'er when he has seen
The rays that flash from Theoxenos' eyes
Does not right straightway swell with mad desire,
His black heart was surely forged
Of Adamant or Iron!

Translated by E. E.

The Bloom of Soft-Limbed Boys.

I, like the wax of holy bees
That melted is by heat of sun,
Waste clean away when I behold
The bloom of soft-limbed boys.

Translated by E. E.
Plato.
Statesman and Philosopher.
(B.C. 427-347)

Plato, one of the greatest philosophers the world has seen, was also a poet. Plato's devotion to youths is well known through Jowett's translation of his Dialogues. The term "Platonic Love" is misused when it is applied to a cold friendship between a woman and a man. It rightly applies to a high minded and spiritual devotion between a man and a boy, as developed in Plato's philosophy.

Several epigrams of Plato regarding his boy friends are preserved. One makes a play on the boy's name "Aster", and its meaning in Greek,—a star.

To Aster.

Thou wert the morning star among the living
Ere thy fair light had fled;
Now, having died, thou art as Hesperus, giving
New splendor to the dead.

Trans. by P. B. Shelley.

To Agathon

Thee as I kist, behold! on my lips my own soul was trembling;
For, bold one, she had come, meaning to find her way through!

Trans. by Edw. Carpenter.
Theocritus.
(flourished 283-243 B.C.)

Theocritus, the most famous poet of Sicily, was the first to
celebrate in his verse the simple love stories of the Sicilian
contadini. He shows the shepherd in love with his fellow shep-
 herd, the country boys worshipping at the shrine of a favorite
boy of one of the Gods. He tells the story of Hercules' love for
Hylas and its sad ending. He was the first preacher of the
"simple life", a thesis so many after preachers have reiterated.

And best of all he has taught us the real meaning of Sicily,
that magic isle of the "Middle Sea". Theocritus has told us the
secret of the Sicilian ethos, and when we think of Sicily we
think of it in terms of Theocritus, so attractive has been the love-
liness of his "Idylls". He has had hosts of imitators and trans-
lators, from Vergil to Andrew Lang.

Hylas.

What pool is this by galingale surrounded,
With parsley and tall iris overgrown?
It is the pool whose wayward nymphs confounded
The quest of Herakles to glut their own
Desire of love. Its depths hath no man sounded
Save that young Mysian Argonaut alone:
When round his drooping neck he felt, astounded,
The cruel grasp that sunk him like a stone.
Throughout the land, the Hero wandered, crying,"Hylas" and "Hylas" till the close of day;
And thrice there came a feeble voice replying
From watery caverns where the prisoner lay!
Yet to the ear it seemed but as the sighing
Of zephyrs through the forest far away!

by E. C. Lefroy.
Vergil.
(B.C. 70-19)

Publius Vergilius Maro, the most famous of the Latin poets, has devoted the second of his Eclogues to a celebration of the devotion of the shepherd Corydon to the young Alexis. In this he is supposed to be portraying his own affection for the youthful Alexander.

In the ninth book of Vergil's masterpiece, the Aeneid, he relates the love of the two friends Nisus and Euryalus. The great poet died in B. C. 19, before the completion of the Aeneid, having never married.

The Second Eclogue of Vergil.

Corydon, keeper of cattle, once loved the fair lad Alexis;
But he, the delight of his master, permitted no hope to the shepherd.
Corydon, lovesick swain, went into the forest of beeches
And then to the mountains and woods—the one relief of his passion—
With useless effort outpoured the following artless complainings:—

"Alexis, barbarous youth, say, do not my mournful lays move thee?
Showing me no compassion, thou’lt surely compell me to perish.
Alone in the heat of day am I left with the screaming cicalas,
While patient in tracking thy path, I ever pursue thee,
Beloved."

Translated by J. W. Baylis.
Gaius Valerius Catullus, one of the greatest of the Latin poets, amid his various amours, seems to have had a deep devotion to his boy friend Juventius. Several of Catullus' most characteristic poems are addressed to this boy. Two of them, translated by Sir Richard Burton, are here given.

To Juventius Upon a Stolen Kiss.

E'en as you played by the road side,
O honey-sweet Juventius,
Love-tempted, a swift kiss I snatched
From your red lips so glorious,—
Not food of gods is half so sweet,
Nor nectar half so marvelous!

Yet then for my rash, reckless theft
Did I a bitter penance do,—
For half an hour upon the cross
Of your Unlove I fully knew
The wrath you heaped upon my head
Who did it all for love of you!

The instant that our lips disjoined
You fiercely washed my kiss away!—
Scrubbing your lips with fingers all
To spurn the kiss I gave in play:
So that my Nectar turned to Gall
That you with scorn should love repay!

To Juventius.

Those honied eyes of thine, Juventius,
If any suffer me, "sans stint" to "buss" (kiss)
I'll kiss of kisses hundred thousands three
Nor ever deem I'd reached satiety,—
Not albeit thicker than wheat sheaves grow
The kissing harvests our embraces know!
Tibullus.
(B.C. 54-19)

Albus Tibullus wrote his two books of Elegies about the year B.C. 20. Besides his infatuation with divers women, Tibullus appears to have been very devoted to a young lad named Marathus. Of Marathus Tibullus wrote his 8th and 9th Elegies. The friendship was a very stormy one and the ninth Elegy is an invective against Marathus for his unfaithfulness to the poet.

Of The Boy Marathus.

Gold is less precious than a lad
Whose face is smooth and bright;
Under his shoulders place thine arms,
And thus look down on all the treasures of a King!

Translated by E. E.

To Marathus Unfaithful.

Didst dare, mad boy, to sell caresses
That belonged to me?
And to take to others
Kisses that were mine?
Thou sure wilt weep when other lad
Hath captured me,
And proudly reigns in realms
That once were thine!

Translated by E. E.
Philostratos.
(3rd Century A. D.)

The philosopher Philostratos flourished in the time of the Emperor Severus. Besides his biographical and philosophical writings he left a very charming series of amatory letters to young boys. These have been an inspiration to many poets.

Epistle I. Sent to a Fair Boy With a Present of Roses.

Fledged with the rose leaves as with wings
My roses hasten to thy feet.
Take graciously a gift that brings
Remembrance of Adonis sweet:
Nay, take them as the Paphian dyes,
Or as the Earth's enamoured eyes!
Olives become the athlete best,
Great princes the tiara wear,
Meet for the soldier is his crest,
But roses for a stripling fair,
The rose doth kindred colours show
And kindred fragrance she discloses,
Nor will my flowers adorn thee; no
'Tis thou who will adorn the roses.

Translated by Percy Osborn.
The Palatine Anthology.
(Tenth Century A. D.)

Of this wonderful collection of Greek poetry, J. A. Symonds says that were the whole of other Greek verse lost but this, the life of ancient Greece could be reconstructed from these lovely poems and epigrams.

It is interesting that one of the most significant books in recent American literature, Master's "Spoon River Anthology", arose directly from the author's devotion to the Palatine Anthology.

Although epigrams and poems regarding the love of boys are found in most sections of the Anthology, one Book, the Twelfth, is particularly devoted to this type of verse. This Book, the "Mousé Paidiké," or "Boy-lover's Muse" was put together by a Byzantine poet, Constantine Cephalas, of the Tenth Century. The main sources were the Garland of Meleager and the "Crown" of Strato and other anthologies, all of which have disappeared.

Boyhood's Charms.
By Rhianus.

Boys are a labyrinth
From which there's no way out,
For wheresoe'er cast thou thine eyes
They're snared by some fair sight:
Here Theodorus draws thy gaze
By the plump ripeness of his flesh,—
There Philocles with golden face
Shines with a nimbus crowned:
And if thou look'st on Leptines
Fast to the spot thou'lt rooted be;
Such power so hath his eyes' fierce flame
To fire thee through and through!
All hail, thrice hail, ye wondrous boys!
May Youth's fair prime be fully yours
Till white hairs' snows ye see!

Translated by E. E.
Antiochus.
By Meleager

In summer heat my thirst to slake
I called my Love a kiss to take
And on his tender lips did slake
Desire, and parching thirst abate.

O, Father Zeus, dost thou not feed
Thy thirsty lips on Ganymede,
Who bears thee nectar in thy need?

So when my kisses blushes call
From sweet Antiochus whom all
Most fair among the youths extol
'Tis sweetest honey of the soul!

Translated by Sydney Oswald.
"A Boy and Roses"
By Strato

Today when dawn was dim I went
Before the garland-weavers stall
And saw a boy whose beauty sent
Like stars of Autumn when they fall
An arrow of swift fire that left
Glory upon the gloom it left.

Roses he wove to make a wreath
And roses were his cheeks and lips,
And faintly flushed the flowers beneath
The roses of his finger-tips.
He saw me stand in mute amaze
And rosy blushes met my gaze.

"O flower that weavest flowers" I said,—
"Fair Crown where myrtle blossoms white
Mingle with Cyprian petals red
For love's ineffable delight."—
"Tell me, what God or Hero blest
Shall bind thy garland to his breast?"

"Or can it be that even I
Who are thy slave to save or slay,—
With price of prayers and tears may buy
Thy roses ere they fade away?"
He smiled and deeper blushed and laid
One finger on his lips and said:

"Peace, lest my father hear" then drew
A blossom from the crown and pressed
Its perfume to the pinks that blew
Upon the snow-wreath of his breast,
And kissed and gave the flower to be
Sweet symbol of assent to me!

Roses and wreaths with shy pretense
As for a bridal feast I bought,
And veiling all love's vehemence
In langour, bade the flowers be brought
To deck my chamber by the boy
Who brings therewith a greater joy!
Translated by J. A. Symonds.