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Mathematicians, and Poetry and Drama

By Professor Raymond Clare Archibald
Brown University

In general reading for a number of years I have been interested in accumulating information concerning, firstly, those who had not only achieved something noteworthy in mathematics but had also written verses or dramas; secondly, poems about mathematicians; and thirdly, the numerous incidental citations of mathematicians in poetry by poets of more or less distinction. Such general reading has not been confined to any one language, and translations of poetical or dramatic work of mathematicians were within the scope of my search. The large amount of material collected is in more than a score of languages, from the time of Pythagoras and his "Golden Verses" down to the present. It is my purpose to give you some idea of the nature of this material. I am not aware that any one else has previously discussed this general theme.

The relations between poetry and mathematics have been considered by a number of writers; but this is not the place to discuss them. There are, however, several that have been written in my own language that have been translated into English, with annotations. By M. Dacier. Now, into English. The Golden Verses translated from the Greek," by N. Rowe. London, 1707. "Greek text and Rowe's translation, pp. 149-164; xi. "Pythagoras," a play by Martin Slaughter, was first acted in London in 1596.

Editor's Summary

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