

**ESSAYS ON THE GREEK  
CHRISTIAN POETS AND  
THE ENGLISH POETS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649597307

Essays on the Greek Christian Poets and the English Poets by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

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](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING**

**ESSAYS ON THE GREEK  
CHRISTIAN POETS AND  
THE ENGLISH POETS**



ESSAYS  
ON THE  
GREEK CHRISTIAN POETS  
AND THE  
ENGLISH POETS.

BY

*Mrs* ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

---

NEW YORK:  
PUBLISHED BY JAMES MILLER,  
(SUCCESSOR TO G. S. FRANCIS & CO.,)  
322 BROADWAY.  
1863.

NOTE BY THE AMERICAN PUBLISHER.

---

THIS little book of prose, added to Mrs. BROWNING's previous books of verse, completes the publication of her works. These stand now in five volumes, uniform with the present, including a MEMORIAL by Theodore Tilton.

JAMES MILLER.

134510

The right of publishing this Book in the United States having been purchased by Mr. JAMES MILLER, it is hoped there will be no interference with the same.

ROBERT BROWNING.

LONDON, *February*, 1863.

## PREFACE TO THE LONDON EDITION.

---

THE following pieces, first printed in 1842 by the "Athenæum," are now reprinted with the liberal permission of that journal.

It was intended by its writer, that the account of the Greek Christian Poets should receive corrections, or certainly additions: a project which new objects of interest came to delay. The glancing series of notes upon the English Poets seems suggested by, as well as consequent upon, the account; unless it arose from the publication of Wordsworth's "Poems of early and late years, including *The Borderers*,"—in the form of a review of which, the latter part of the paper originally appeared: the former was occa-



sioned by "The Book of the Poets," a compilation of the day.

Both performances, laid away long ago, and only lately unfolded for the first time, were perhaps almost forgotten by their author; but on the whole, in all likelihood, some way or other reproduction was desired: and this is effected accordingly.

A name, which occurs unworthily enough toward the close, should be withdrawn were it found possible: its presence may be pardoned, as serving at least to mark more dates than one.

LONDON, *February*, 1868.

SOME ACCOUNT  
OF THE  
GREEK CHRISTIAN POETS.

---

THE Greek language was a strong intellectual life, stronger than any similar one which has lived in the breath of "articulately speaking men," and survived it. No other language has lived so long and died so hard,—pang by pang, each with a dolphin color—yielding reluctantly to that doom of death and silence which must come at last to the speaker and the speech. Wonderful it is to look back fathoms down the great Past, thousands of years away—where whole generations lie unmade to dust—where the sounding of their trumpets, and the rushing of their scythed chariots, and that great shout which brought down the birds stone dead from beside the sun, are more silent than the dog breathing at our feet, or the fly's paces on our

window-pane; and yet, from the heart of which silence, to feel *words* rise up like a smoke—words of men, even words of women, uttered at first, perhaps, in “excellent low voices,” but audible and distinct to our times, through “the dreadful pothèr” of life and death, the hissing of the steam-engine and the cracking of the cerement! It is wonderful to look back and listen. Blind Homer spoke this Greek after blind Demodocus, with a quenchless light about his brows, which he felt through his blindness. Pindar rolled his chariots in it, prolonging the clamor of the games. Sappho’s heart beat through it, and heaved up the world’s. Æschylus strained it to the stature of his high thoughts. Plato crowned it with his divine peradventures. Aristophanes made it drunk with the wine of his fantastic merriment. The later Platonists wove their souls away in it, out of sight of other souls. The first Christians heard in it God’s new revelation, and confessed their Christ in it from the suppliant’s knee, and presently from the bishop’s throne. To all times, and their transitions, the language lent