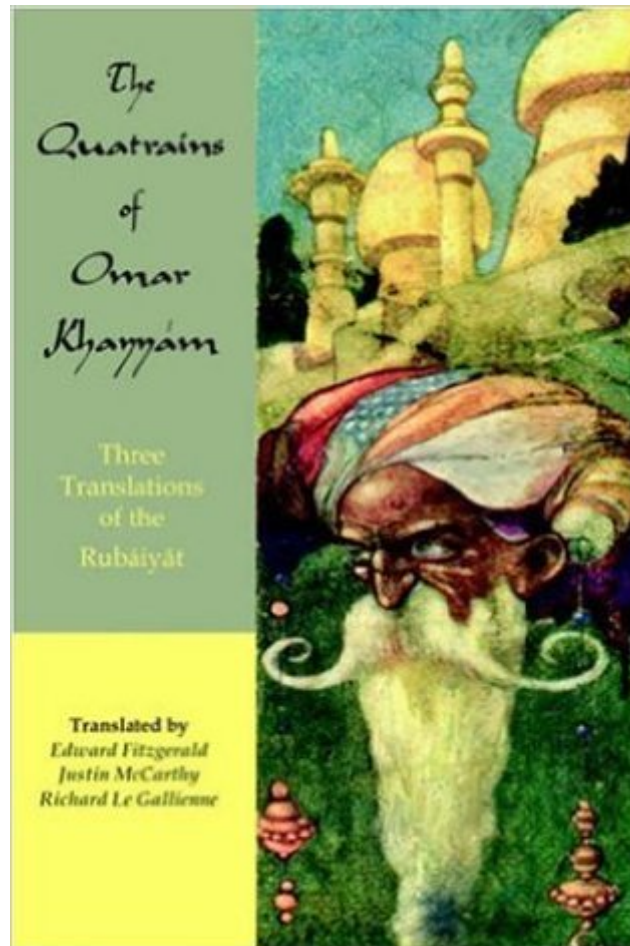


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The Quatrains Of Omar Khayyam: Three Translations Of The Rubaiyat



Synopsis

Though few translations have had as much impact as Edward Fitzgerald's Rubā'iyāt of Omar Khayyām, anyone who wishes to truly appreciate Omar Khayyām needs to read more than one translation. This volume contains Edward Fitzgerald's classic translation with all its variations, Justin McCarthy's elegant and mystical literal translation and Richard Le Gallienne's sharp and poetic version. For the first time the reader can appreciate the range of Omar Khayyām and his interpreters in a single volume.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I should start off by saying that I am not familiar with Omar Khayyam or his work. I should also state that Richard La Gallienne's translation is likely completely unlike the literal translation. His effort was only to produce a witty and stylish version reminiscent of Khayyam's original intent. From what I have read, it is excellent on its own. I do not generally go in for poetry, but found that I couldn't stop reading this work. Here are some especially interesting excerpts: Look not above, there is no answer there; Pray not, for no one listens to your prayer; Near is as near to God as any Far, And Here is just the same deceit as There. [...] And do you think that unto such as you; A maggot-minded, starved, fanatic crew: God gave the secret, and denied it me?-- Well, well, what matters it! Believe that, too. [...] "Did God set grapes a-growing, do you think, And at the same time make it sin to drink? Give thanks to Him who foreordained it thus-- Surely He loves to hear the glasses clink!"

of the many editions of the ruba'iyat available in english, this is probably the most interesting and rewarding. the voices of three translators (all men of 19th century england) open the poetry from different points of view: mccarthy (466 quatrains) translates roughly half of the persian text in literal and free verse stanzas; fitzgerald's famous "transmogrification" (selective, fabricated and frequently fanciful) of a mere 110 quatrains is cleverly arranged by editor A.P. Smith to sample the best among fitzgerald's three different versions of the poems; le gallienne's rhymed and somewhat more accurate version of 260 quatrains stands as a compromise between the other two (and relies on both fitzgerald and mccarthy in many places).khayaam's poems are peculiar for several reasons. praised in translation, they are considered by persian scholars to be mediocre stuff. frequently translated but rarely faithfully, the first scholarly edition was later found to be based on forged manuscripts. extending to over 1000 quatrains, the themes -- wine, time, song, love, death and dust -- are numbingly repetitive. the decoration with the false colors of 19th century orientalism and antique speech ("thou beside me in the wilderness!") extends from fitzgerald, whose editions languished unsold at booksellers until the decadent poets swinburne and rossetti found and made them popular with london literati.for those who like their poetry in contemporary verse, the translated selection by avery & stubbs (penguin edition) is both accurate, judicious and beautifully illustrated with 16th century persian paintings. for those who like their ruba'iyat decanted in the gilded crystal of victorian times, this edition is a splendid summation. highly recommended.

I was aware of the Fitzgerald translation. The other two translations in the book are equally high quality.

This is a tremendous resource for collecting the work of three separate translators in one single volume. The 2-star review is due to the abysmal editing and publication by Bardic Press. In my reading I have found roughly an average of one error for every two pages (!). A handful of these are understandable in any work, but I have found them to be a consistent problem throughout the entire volume; I would expect better editing work from a high school senior's final project. Even the woodcuts are often nonsensically placed; the one on page 93, for example, is found in the middle of the McCarthy translation, despite actually using Fitzgerald's translation, originally found 88 pages earlier!Errors include, but are not limited to: quatrain numbering errors (see p. 88), basic factual errors (listing 566 quatrains from McCarthy on p. ii, when he only wrote 466), general misspellings, and punctuation errors. I have found the latter to be especially problematic; they halt the flow of the prose that is necessary to fully appreciate the work ("He who has laid the foundations of the earth,

of the, wheel..." pg. 83). Until Bardic Press learns how to proofread, I don't see myself buying from them again.

Did Omar Khayyam really write these? Love them. It's good to have three different "translations".

disappointed. I wanted line by line translation.

Fitzgerald is best.

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