



# Stateliest Measures: Tennyson and the Literature of Greece and Rome

*Arnold A. Markley iv*

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The great nineteenth-century English poet Alfred, Lord Tennyson received an unusually thorough education in the classical languages, and he remained an active classical scholar throughout his lifetime. His intimate knowledge of both Greek and Latin literature left an indelible stamp on his poetry, both in terms of the sound and rhythm of his verses and in the themes that inspired him. *Stateliest Measures*, the first full-length study of Tennyson's thematic and metrical uses of classical material, examines the profoundly important role that his classical background played as he fashioned himself into a poet in the 1820s and 30s, and as he defined himself as poet laureate as of 1850.

A.A. Markley examines Tennyson's objectives in developing the classical dramatic monologue, which, together with *In Memoriam* and his experiments with classical meters, indicate the degree to which he patterned himself after the Roman poet Virgil in attempting to provide modern Britain with a literature worthy of a new and rapidly expanding world empire. *Stateliest Measures* demonstrates that Tennyson's engagement with the long-running and complex nineteenth-century debates concerning Hellenism, Imperialism, and modern British culture was much more profound than his critics have recognized.

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