

**A HISTORY OF CLASSICAL  
GREEK LITERATURE, VOL.  
II, PART I**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649093496

A history of classical Greek literature, Vol. II, Part I by John Pentland Mahaffy

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)

**JOHN PENTLAND MAHAFFY**

**A HISTORY OF CLASSICAL  
GREEK LITERATURE, VOL.  
II, PART I**



CLASSICAL GREEK LITERATURE

VOL. II. - PART I.

*Originally published elsewhere. First printed for  
MACMILLAN & Co. 1890. Reprinted 1895, 1903.*

A HISTORY  
OF  
CLASSICAL GREEK LITERATURE

BY THE  
REV. J. P. MAHAFFY, D.D., D.C.L.

KNIGHT COMMANDER OF THE ORDER OF THE RED KEMER  
SEN. FELLOW OF TRIN. COLL. DUBLIN  
HON. FELLOW OF QUEEN'S COLL. OXFORD  
AUTHOR OF 'SOCIAL LIFE IN GREECE' 'PROLEGOMENA TO ANCIENT HISTORY'  
'GREEK LIFE AND THOUGHT' 'RAMBLES AND STUDIES IN GREECE'  
'THE GREEK WORLD UNDER ROMAN SWAY' ETC.  
CORRESP. MEMBER OF THE ACADEMIES OF VIENNA, BERLIN, AND THE LINCETI (ROME)

*IN TWO VOLUMES*

VOL. II. PART I.  
THE PROSE WRITERS  
FROM HERODOTUS TO PLATO

*FOURTH EDITION*

London  
MACMILLAN AND CO. LIMITED  
NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1903

*All rights reserved*

ἐκεῖ δὲ τοῦ βίου μεταβολὴν ἅμα ταῖς τύχαις καὶ ταῖς φέσεσι λαμβάνοντος, ἐξωθοῦσα τὸ περιττὸν ἢ χρεια, κρυβύλους τε χρυσοῦς ἀφῆρει, καὶ ξυστίδας μαλακὰς ἀπημφίαζε, καὶ πονοὺς καὶ κόμπην σοβαρωτέραν ἀπέκειρε, καὶ ὑπέλυσε κοθορνόν, οὐ φαύλως ἐθιζομένων ἀντικαλλωπίζεσθαι πρὸς τὴν πολυτέλειαν εὐτελείᾳ, καὶ τὸ ἀφελὲς καὶ λιτὸν ἐν κόσμῳ τίθεσθαι μᾶλλον, ἢ τὸ σοβαρὸν καὶ περιέργον· οὕτω τοῦ λόγου συμμεταβάλλοντος ἅμα καὶ συναποδυομένου, κατέβη μὲν ἀπὸ τῶν μέτρων, ὥσπερ ὄχημάτων, ἢ ἱστορίας, καὶ τῶν περὶ μάλιστα τοῦ μυθώδους ἀπεκρίθη τὸ ἀληθές· φιλοσοφία δὲ τὸ σαφὲς καὶ διδασκαλικὸν ἀσπασαμένη μᾶλλον ἢ τὸ ἐκπληττον, διὰ λόγων ἐποιεῖτο τὴν ζήτησιν.—PLUTARCH, *De Pyth. Oraculis*, 24.



PREFACE  
TO  
THE THIRD AND FOURTH EDITIONS.

THE publication of this new edition enables me to add a good many references to recent books, and to correct some errors which still remained. These corrections are far more numerous than would appear from the slight increase of the volume in size. As regards the bibliography of each author, it is hardly necessary, in the face of such works as Bursian's *Jahresbericht*, to attempt any complete catalogue of German books or tracts. But in the case of English commentaries, which are often ignored or neglected in the German and French periodicals, I thought it desirable to give the student a reference to at least the most recent English treatment of each author, where he will generally find the further information he requires.

I am not aware that in the department of prose literature there has been any remarkable addition to, or rectification of, our knowledge during the interval, unless Gomperz be right in attributing the Hippocratic tract *περὶ τέχνης* not only to the earliest moment of Ionic prose, but even to the pen of the famous Protagoras.<sup>1</sup> I have announced in its place a new discovery relating to the *Phædo* of Plato, and have added at the conclusion of the volume a scrap of an unknown historian recovered from an inscription.

As regards the peculiar views maintained in this book on the credibility of Thucydides' Sicilian archæology, on the estimate Xenophon has given us of himself, on the integrity of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. his curious edition and commentary just published in *Sitz.-Ber.* of the Vienna Academy, vol. cxx.

Demosthenes, on the comparative youth of Hypercides, I have found no reason to make me recede from the positions previously adopted. For in no case have these views been refuted by argument, though there have since appeared, and no doubt there will yet appear, many books adopting the traditional opinions on these points, without any attempt to re-think the problems independently. This is perhaps the most unsatisfactory feature in the study of a subject so long taught in schools and colleges. Those who profess it are generally unwilling to discover, or to admit, that what they have been long repeating to their classes is untenable or even doubtful. We must console ourselves with the maxim *magna est veritas, et prævalebit*, though we cannot but wish that this future victory were more definitely and proximately assured. The great difficulty seems to be a certain want of interest, a certain dislike to grapple with a new view, which affects the minds of those who have spent their years in teaching or learning what other people say, and setting or passing examinations in it. Let us only get over this obstacle; let us have an honest discussion about a new and startling theory, and we shall have it either adopted or abandoned.

This, at least, has been the good fortune of Mr. Sayce, in his recent attack on Herodotus, that his views have received prompt attention; and though I cannot but think he has been in the main refuted, he has enriched our knowledge of Herodotus by many criticisms which even his critics have adopted. The echo of this controversy has reached across the Channel, and not only has H. Diels exercised his acumen in showing that the alleged fragments of Hecataeus are not centos from Herodotus (as Cobet endeavoured to prove), but M. Alfred Croiset, in the just published second volume of a History of Greek Literature, has carefully rehearsed the whole charge, and given all the guide-posts through the controversy.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. and M. Croiset, *Hist. de la Litt. grecque*, ii. 582, sq. He follows me in calling attention to Blakesley's earlier attack, and gives references

But here I do not think that we shall gain more than a new and more critical attitude towards a justly favourite Greek author. If, on the other hand, by accepting my arguments, the early Olympiads be discredited, or the birth of Hypereides brought down half a generation, we shall have facts to correct, and in the former case even to revise our whole conception of early Greek annals. In any case let us make our study of Greek, if we are to maintain it in the forefront of higher education, a living study; let us not talk of *injustice* to an ancient author if a critic speaks his candid opinion, and tells us that it is in conflict with the traditions on the subject.

The reader will find a brilliant argument of this kind in Mr. Rutherford's *Fourth book of Thucydides* (Macmillan, 1890), in which the condition of that text has undergone a searching revision, and an amount of corruption in the way of idle or futile additions is alleged which, if proved, would remodel many of our notions concerning Thucydidean Greek. But will the learned author receive the honest attention for his arguments which he deserves? Is it not more likely that those who have been exhibiting their cunning in analysing and explaining the Attic purity of the accretions which he condemns will fancy they feel the ground slipping from under their reputations, and will use every device, direct and indirect, to discredit his enquiry, and set it aside as a piece of idle ingenuity? A new and weighty argument, however, against him is the discovery of many early papyrus fragments of classical texts, which agree closely with our mediæval MSS., thus proving their sound tradition.

For a different reason I have taken no notice of the bitter controversy between an Oxford and a Cambridge scholar concerning a certain commentary on Plato produced by the latter. Let us hope that this dispute will be as ephemeral as the interest it has excited. The only permanent feature about it is that

to Father Delattre in the *Muséon belge* for 1888. On the dispute about Hecataeus he gives a good summary (*op. cit.* ii. 547), and cites the article of H. Diels in *Hermes* for 1887, pp. 411, 59.