The Classical Review

<http://journals.cambridge.org/CAR>

Additional services for *The Classical Review*:

Email alerts: [Click here](#)

Subscriptions: [Click here](#)

Commercial reprints: [Click here](#)

Terms of use : [Click here](#)

Mahaffy's *Problems in Greek History* *Problems in Greek History*, by J. P. Mahaffy, M.A., D.D., etc. etc. Macmillan & Co. Crown 8vo. pp. xxiv. 240. 7s. 6d.

R. W. Macan

The Classical Review / Volume 6 / Issue 08 / October 1892, pp 361 - 364

DOI: 10.1017/S0009840X00186536, Published online: 27 October 2009

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0009840X00186536

How to cite this article:

R. W. Macan (1892). The Classical Review, 6, pp 361-364 doi:10.1017/S0009840X00186536

Request Permissions : [Click here](#)

vol. xviii. no. 35, (2) the supreme importance of Harl. 2682 for the *Pro Milone*, and *de imp. Cn. Pompei*.

Mr. Clark gives us in the triple-column form adopted by the Clarendon Press for its valuable series of *Anecdota Oxoniensia* a complete and obviously most careful collation of this immensely important codex, in all the works of Cicero catalogued above except the *Epistt. ad Familiares*, *de pet. Consul.*, *Philippics*, *Paradoxa*, *de Officiis*. He has added besides a collation of the spurious *Controversiae Ciceronis* in *Salustium* and *Salustii* in *Ciceronem* contained in the same MS. It will be seen from this how useful, not to say indispensable, the new volume is likely to be to every careful reader of Cicero. In view of such readers, and they are likely to increase as the dominion of palaeography is enlarged, it is a matter of consequence to state the opinion of Mr. Maunde Thompson as to the age of the MS. 'The writing,' says this eminent expert, 'is in minuscules of German type of the latter part of the 11th century.' The beautifully executed facsimile in collotype, for which all students should be grateful to Mr. Horace Hart, will enable the curious reader to judge of the look of the MS.

It must not be supposed that the value of the book is confined to the collations, or to the account given of the history of the MS. There is food for meditation and judgment in the review which Mr. Clark has given of the passages where the readings of H modify or confirm the opinions of previous scholars. A large and important section of the work is devoted to this investigation. The present writer has found this highly instructive throughout: and especially in the *Pro Milone* and *de imp. Cn. Pompei*. The evidence

extends not only to the speeches, but to the *de Amicitia* and *de Senectute*; the total amounts to no less than xlvi. pp. of the introduction. It would be wrong to suppose that in every case H gives a *better* reading than that hitherto known from other MSS. In many instances it does no more than confirm what has hitherto been mere conjecture, or point the way to a new solution of the critical difficulty under examination. Nor does Mr. Clark claim for his own views, in many instances, more than the consideration owing to a scholar whose judgment is based on a long-continued study of Cicero, and whose critical faculty has been developed on the one hand by the works of Orelli, Madvig, Halm, Baiter, E. Thomas, Reid, Tyrrell, Nohl and other critics of acknowledged greatness or discernment, on the other by the restless spirit of modern criticism and the determination not to allow any prejudice to interfere with the natural inferences to be drawn from a source which, though long known and acknowledged, has only within the last decade been adequately or thoroughly probed. The strange fate of the MS., which transferred it from the library of a cathedral to the library of an English nobleman and thence to the British Museum, has at least had the advantage of making it easily accessible to the philological world. Henceforward we know *exactly* what its readings are, and need no longer depend on the citations from it—whether as *Bas. Col.* or *Hitt.*—which the works of Modius, Gulielmus, Gruter, or Graevius furnish. Scientific criticism must do the rest. Of such criticism Mr. Clark's Introduction supplies, in the opinion of the present writer, an admirable specimen.

ROBINSON ELLIS.

MAHAFFY'S PROBLEMS IN GREEK HISTORY.

Problems in Greek History, by J. P. MAHAFFY, M.A., D.D., etc. etc. Macmillan & Co. Crown 8vo. pp. xxiv. 240. 7s. 6d.

THIS volume is one to read with pleasure, and to re-read with an increasing sense of its merits. A first perusal may excite some irritation in the mind of any reader who has claims to belong to the category (not ill described by Professor Mahaffy) of 'cold calm college don(s), loving cautious

statement and accurate rendering as the highest of virtues' (p. 13); but if the reader's desire be to discover the strong points of the volume, and to appreciate justly the author's proper contribution to learning, he will not be slow to acknowledge that Professor Mahaffy in his latest published work, as in his earlier volumes, has deserved well of all students of Greek history and of Greek culture.

It might have been expected from the title of this volume that the author would

enumerate distinctly the problems in Greek history with which he proposed to deal: but this is not the method observed or followed in the ten chapters of this Essay. A careful reader will discover and classify for himself the problems as they arise in the course of the work: neither the *Preface* nor the full *Table of Contents* seeks to formulate them. In the first chapter however (§ 3) the author lays down the plan of the work, which embraces a review of the general lines followed by the great historians of Greece during the last three generations (especially Grote and Thirlwall), a notice of some current misconceptions and errors to be corrected in the light of recent evidence, some consideration of disputed and speculative questions omitted in mere text-books: a general anticipation of what is to be expected from fresh attempts in Greek history. Digressions are not excluded, but are to be subordinate to the general plan, which ends with some reflections upon the artistic lessons of Greek life, at last becoming accessible to the larger public.

From this paraphrase it will be seen that the plan of the work is discursive, and covers many different positions. The ten chapters include critiques and discussions of the literary treatment of Greek history, legend, and chronology, as well ancient as modern (chs. i. ii. iii. v.), and also more direct discussions on the objective course of events (chs. iv. vi. ff.). The two aspects, or senses of 'history,' are not indeed treated as mutually exclusive, nor would it be easy so to treat them. It might however have been well to have distinguished at starting the 'problems' which simply or mainly arise from the idiosyncrasy of this or that historian, from the problems which may be said to belong to the objective order of events, and to concern any and every treatment of the evidences. Yet such a procedure might have hampered the author inconveniently. It is not very difficult to follow Professor Mahaffy, as he reviews and discusses the various problems which have interested him—now from this point of view, now from that—and so form a good notion of the general result of his studies. Whether he is discussing the merits and defects of various historians ancient and modern, or the new contributions made by the traveller and the digger to knowledge, or the characteristics of ancient states and forms of government, or the characters of public men in antiquity, or the analogies to be drawn between ancient and modern

politics, or popular fallacies respecting the debts of the modern to the ancient world—Professor Mahaffy never leaves the reader in doubt as to his views and position. It is always stimulating, suggestive, provocative; and that is partly a result of his good-humoured *obiter dicta*, his challenges, his taste for paradox.

Professor Mahaffy might reply that the paradoxes of one generation are the truisms of the next, and have some right on his side. This very volume of *Problems* is incidentally and among other things an apology for the author's paradoxes in the past; but the apology takes the form of a demonstration that the world has come round to his views again and again. It is only fair to remember that Professor Mahaffy was among the first to recognise the value of Schliemann's early work, and stood by it when a good many of the 'minute scholars' were over-sceptical. It is fair to remember that Professor Mahaffy had not to wait for the lucubrations of Müller-Strübing and of Beloch to discover that Thucydides was a 'clever rhetorician' and Demosthenes 'a patriot but not honest' or wise. It is only fair to admit that in the long series of literary works which Professor Mahaffy has produced, instinct with vigour and *Geist*, he has always brought an absolutely independent and original mind to bear upon the literary and historical problems with which he was dealing, and the result has been that no living writer in English has contributed so much of novelty, and done so much to justify Hellenic studies in the popular eye, as Professor Mahaffy. The present volume is for this very reason a little disappointing to any one already well acquainted with the author's previous works. It is too like a brief summary of points and results from them. Professor Mahaffy has taught us to expect an absolutely fresh departure in each new volume. The present volume goes over in little the whole ground he has traversed in its predecessors.

It even contains, as an *Appendix*, his excellent paper 'On the Authenticity of the Olympian Register,' reprinted, with some corrections, from the *Journal of the S.H.S.* Not but what there are special points of interest in the present volume. It serves especially to emphasise the beginnings and the end of Greek history as the periods upon the problems of which Professor Mahaffy has shed, and is still to shed, most light. In what might be called the middle or intervening period and its problems he

is hardly so strong. He has indeed suggested here that the time is come for a rehabilitation of the Greek Despots, and a depreciation of the Greek Democracies: but these are points which have long ceased to be thought paradoxical on this side St. George's Channel. In regard to the details of Athenian government and administration his remarks will not carry conviction to every reader. To describe the Athenian Assembly as 'an absolute sovran' is to use words out of strict relation to the proper authorities. The *Demos* was perhaps 'sovran,' but not the Assembly. Such a thing as an appeal to a High Court of Judicature against a decree of the Assembly, which Professor Mahaffy says (p. 90) would have been regarded as absurd, was of course just what existed in Athens. All this only helps to show that we shall never get the Institutions of ancient Athens properly understood until we describe them, as far as possible, in the strict language of the contemporary authorities, at least wherever the English (or Latin) translations are apt to breed confusion and to suggest false analogies. Even Grote writes of the Athenian 'Senate': that is a blunder of which Professor Mahaffy steers clear. But the notice of inscriptions 'recording the quotas paid from the tribute of the several allied cities to Athena and to the other gods' (p. 95) is calculated to puzzle those who have only met with Athena in the *phoros*-inscriptions, and the notice of the Athenian tax-gatherers insisting upon the tribute (p. 179) seems to go rather beyond the evidences. The description of the Peloponnesian army under Archidamus as an agricultural population 'fighting for its liberties' (p. 113) seems hardly fair to Athens and to Perikles. In regard to Thucydides indeed and the Peloponnesian war Professor Mahaffy is well known to be a terror to the orthodox. Not content with his previous success, he here (p. 92) reduces the duration of that warfare to twenty years. There is no reference in this volume anywhere to the late Professor Freeman's monumental fragment upon Sicily, but it is tolerably evident that Professor Mahaffy could not approve of Freeman's tone of writing of Thucydides, or of Freeman's devotion of the greater part of one big volume to the Sicilian episode in the Peloponnesian war. And when Professor Mahaffy protests against being 'bullied' by the 'minute scholars' into Thucydolatry, one is reminded of the fable of the wolf and the lamb, and one catches

the—twinkle—of his eye, and likewise bows. Why, at the very same time when Professor Mahaffy was tossing off this sparkling *parergon*, he must have been laboriously transcribing, commenting and editing the Flinders Petrie Papyri, which he published last year under the auspices of the Royal Irish Academy! These labours fully explain the fact that, in regard to the 'Αθηναίων πολιτεία, his utterances in this volume (pp. 84, 87, 89, 96, 122, 128—there is no index) have rather the appearance of *obiter dicta*. For example: a note on p. 87 states that Plutarch cited, but not fully, his quotations in the *Life of Solon* from the text of the Aristotelian 'Αθηναίων πολιτεία. But this statement is highly disputable. There are some lines of Solon's in the new text which are not in Plutarch's *Life*, but there are some lines in Plutarch's *Life* which are not in the new text: and if Plutarch had been dependent upon the text of the 'Αθ. πολ. for his quotations from Solon's poems he could hardly have written, after quoting two lines: τοῦτο τὸ ποίημα Σαλαμῖς ἐπιγέγραπται καὶ στίχων ἑκατόν ἐστι χαριέντως πάννυ πεποιημένον. Yet a note on the same page of Dr. Mahaffy's *Problems* on 'three remarkable laws, all intended to save the Athenian democracy . . . from sudden overthrow' proves how suggestive and original he can be in regard to Athenian institutions when he turns his attention to details connected specially with them. But at present it is on the literary and on the archaeological sides of Hellenism, and it is particularly on the earliest and on the latest stages of Greek history, that Professor Mahaffy's great strength has been expended. European scholars, whose methods and productions are rather of the 'minute' than of the 'practical' order, know how to do justice to his pioneering labours. Thus it is that Susemihl, in the preface to the second volume of his exhaustive and minute history of Greek Literature in the Alexandrian period, expresses his regret that Mahaffy's *Greek Life and Thought from the Age of Alexander to the Roman Conquest* only attracted his attention too late for his purpose. It may seem ungrateful to say so, but it must be said that Professor Mahaffy's works have done more for the literature and general culture of Hellas than for its political institutions or history, though he seems himself to find fault with modern scholars 'for allowing themselves to be led by literary instead of political greatness' (p. 140). The periods and aspects of Greek history,

for which he has done so much, are not those usually regarded as the periods of Greek political greatness. He has indeed a great deal to say on the politics of the decadence, and upon 'the profoundly interesting and thoroughly modern problems, which agitated the minds of men in post-Alexandrian Greece' (p. 185). Here too is one of his heresies in the eyes of matter-of-fact scholars. Extremes meet. Dr. Mahaffy takes his stand with Thucydides (the clever rhetorician) and Polybius (dull but worthy man) in favour of the 'didactic' uses of history. We are to solve modern problems in the light of ancient examples. Cicero tried it. *Should Rome have been abandoned by Pompey? Themistokles said Yes: Perikles said No.* That is the worst of precedents! As to Polybius, he might have described the institutions of Rome all the better, if he had not been corrupted by Greek analogies. Writing ancient history with modern problems dangling before one, is pamphleteering. There is however a difference in methods: and Dr. Mahaffy does not corrupt his ancient history by importing modern politics into it; he believes however that modern problems can be solved, more or less, by the light of the antique. If you would understand the true bearings of Home Rule study the history of the Achaian League. Is not this an illusion? It is difference, not resemblance, which makes history. Professor Mahaffy points out that all sceptics have their credulous side: what is his own little superstition? It is hard to take him at a

disadvantage; but perhaps the notion that history should be made 'useful' is rather a creature of the twilight, though it goes down very well at summer meetings. As a theorem or philosophema can it be quite right? It seems perilously near the notion which underlies and justifies Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*. Professor Mahaffy knows that the great men of different epochs are never very similar (p. 163) and that the practice of comparing them is not much more than an amusement. As with the men so with the epochs. But amusements are perfectly legitimate, and the practice of drawing historic parallels and proposing historic analogies is an excellent pastime, even though not a single vote will be affected at the General Election by the fate of 'Nationalists' in Achaia. Surely, far better than such devices for making 'the acts and lives of older men speak across the chasm of centuries' (p. 197) is the attempt to bridge and fill in the chasm, and restore the actual causality and continuity between Hellenism and modern Europe, between one phase of Hellenism and another. Dr. Mahaffy has done more than most people towards that very object, and must not rest content until he has completed or supplemented the goodly series of volumes in which he has traced the literary and spiritual moments of Hellenism from the cradle to the grave by the promised volume, which shall exhibit fairly the debt of early Christendom to Hellas.

R. W. MACAN.

Euripides, Medea: N. WECKLEIN. Third edition. Leipzig, Teubner. Mk. 1.80.

THE most interesting feature in this new edition of a valuable work is the Critical Appendix. Though small change has been made in the introduction or the commentary, the critical notes have been largely re-written. Not only have recent contributions to the constitution of the text been noticed, but on the basis, as the author says, of Prinz's edition more specific information as to the readings of the MSS. and the earlier criticism has been added, together with a few fresh suggestions made by Dr. Wecklein himself. Of alterations in the text the following may be noted here. v. 157 *κουνὸν* for *κύνῃ* Verrall (though Verrall's punctuation of the line is not adopted). v. 184 the author suggests *μέγ' ἄλαστον* for *μεγάλως τὸδ'*. v. 503 *ἄμ' ἐσπόμην* for *ἀφικόμην* Naber. v. 717 *σ' ἄτεκνον ὄντα* for *δέ σ' ὄντ' ἄπαιδα* Kuiper. vv. 798—810 and vv. 1056—1080 the author regards as belonging to Euripides' earlier tragedy bearing the same name: noticing that whereas the children are dismissed at v. 1053 they are still present at 1069. v. 829 *φορβὰν* for *σοφίαν*—reading at the

corresponding place in the antistrophe *χώραν κατάρδειν καὶ καταπνέιν ἀνέμων ἡδυπνόους αἶρας*—the author. (In v. 829 I would suggest the possibility of reading *κλεινότατοι σοφίαν*, taking *φερβόμενοι* absolutely.) v. 910 the author conjectures *παρεμπολῶντι συλλέκτρῃ πόσει* or *τῷ συναόρῃ*. v. 976 he suggests *κούρας* for *παίδων*. (At v. 1120, where Wecklein with Prinz suspects *κακόν* and suggests *ἔπος* for it, I would suggest *ἀγγελῶν* for *ἀγγελεῖ*, taking 'he' as the subject of *δείκνυσσι* instead of *πνέιμα*.) v. 1123 Wecklein suggests *παρεῖδ'* for the hopeless *λιποῦσ'*. It is true that Jortin's *αἰτοῦσ'* comes nearer to the MSS. reading, but there is something strange about this *λιποῦσ'*. At three places in this tragedy, vv. 781, 1123 and 1263, the word is, I think, inexplicable, and would seem to have been used as a familiar copyists' stop-gap. I would suggest *μένουσ'* here. v. 1136 f. W. suggests *ἐπεὶ τέκνον παρήλαθε δίπτυχος γονῇ | σύν πατρὶ καὶ δάροισι νομφικοῦς δόμους*. v. 1146 W. suggests *ποθεινὸν* for *πρόθυμον*. (At v. 1283 where W. notices Verrall's *γυναικῶν φίλοις*, some support may be gained for the *ἐν* of the MSS. by a consideration of the *τέκνοισι σοῖσιν ἐμβαλεῖν ἕξιφος* of v. 1325.) It seems a pity that the author has not adopted