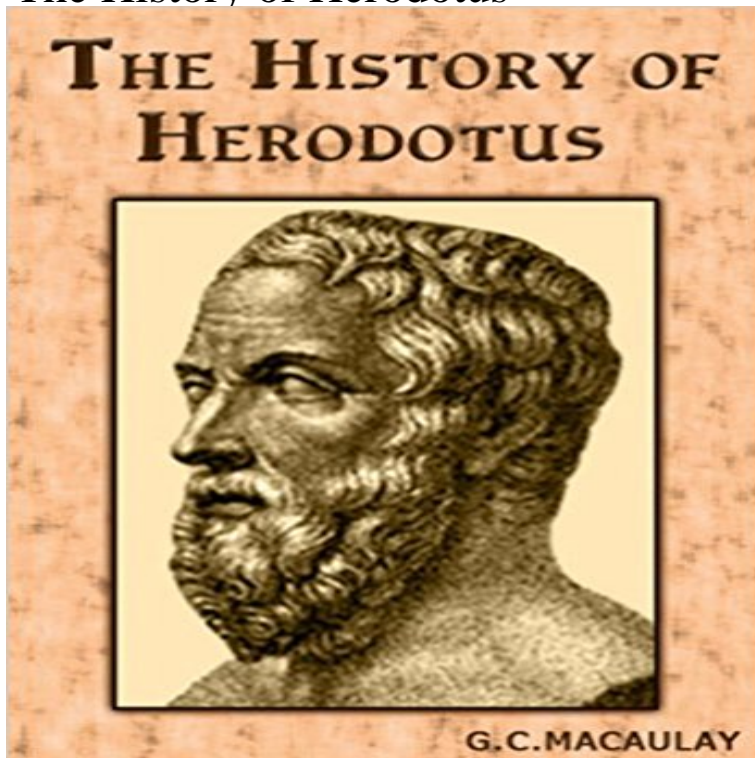


The History of Herodotus



The History of Herodotus translation by G. C. Macaulay If a new translation of Herodotus does not justify itself, it will hardly be justified in a preface; therefore the question whether it was needed may be left here without discussion. The aim of the translator has been above all things faithfulness--faithfulness to the manner of expression and to the structure of sentences, as well as to the meaning of the Author. At the same time it is conceived that the freedom and variety of Herodotus is not always best reproduced by such severe consistency of rendering as is perhaps desirable in the case of the Epic writers before and the philosophical writers after his time: nor again must his simplicity of thought and occasional quaintness be reproduced in the form of archaisms of language; and that not only because the affectation of an archaic style would necessarily be offensive to the reader, but also because in language Herodotus is not archaic. His style is the best canon of the Ionic speech, marked, however, not so much by primitive purity as by eclectic variety. At the same time it is characterised largely by the poetic diction of the Epic and Tragic writers; and while the translator is free to employ all the resources of modern English, so far as he has them at his command, he must carefully retain this poetical colouring and by all means avoid the courtier phrase by which the style of Herodotus has too often been made more noble.[1] As regards the text from which this translation has been made, it is based upon that of Steins critical edition (Berlin, 1869-1871), that is to say the estimate there made of the comparative value of the authorities has been on the whole accepted as a just one, rather than that which depreciates the value of the Medicean MS. and of the class to which it belongs. On the other hand the conjectural emendations proposed by Stein have very seldom been adopted, and his text has been departed

from in a large number of other instances also, which will for the most part be found recorded in the notes.

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