

T H E
R O M A N A N T I Q U I T I E S
O F
D I O N Y S I U S H A L I C A R N A S S E N S I S,

Translated into E N G L I S H ;

W I T H

N O T E S and D I S S E R T A T I O N S.

B Y

E D W A R D S P E L M A N, Esq.

V O L. I.

L O N D O N,
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M D C C L V I I I.

P R E F A C E.

I *HAVE* often wondered that the history, which I now take the liberty of offering to the public, and which is perpetually quoted by every author, who has written upon the constitution of the Romans, as the source of all their learning, and an authority, to which all men have agreed to submit, should never have appeared in our language. Whether the length of the work, or the difficulty of explaining the original constitution of the Romans, and particularly of ascertaining the differences between the three sorts of comitia, upon which the exercise of that constitution, in a great measure, depended; whether these, or any other motives discouraged our men of learning from attempting a translation of this history, I cannot say: But this I will venture to affirm, that the analogy between the regal constitution of the Romans, and our own, and a more surprising analogy, I mean That between the Greek, and English languages,

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languages, might very well have encouraged them to translate it, and to recommend it to their countrymen, as a possession they were, in a particular manner, intitled to. Whether my translation of this history will answer the design of such a recommendation, must be left to the voice of the public, upon whose decision, the fate of all productions of this kind must necessarily depend: And the only hope I can entertain that their determination may not be in my disfavor, is derived from the pains I have bestowed upon this translation, rather than from the effect of those pains.

Every reader has a natural curiosity to be informed of the birth, the private life, and character, and of all other particulars relating to the author of any work he peruses: I am sorry it is not in my power to satisfy this reasonable curiosity any otherwise, than by referring my readers to what our author says of himself in the preface to this history: There they will find, among other things, that Dionysius lived at Rome in the Augustan age, an age celebrated above all others in the Roman history both for the great writers it produced, and for the distinguishing encouragement given by Augustus to those writers. He was cotemporary, and, probably, acquainted with Livy, Virgil, Horace, Ovid, and many other learned, and polite authors, with whom that remarkable age was adorned, and was himself a conspicuous star in that bright constellation.

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*I need not acquaint the learned reader that our author, besides his history, composed many other works, all tending to the improvement of oratorical, and historical writing, some of which are lost; but much the greatest part is preserved, and contains the best precepts to form an orator, and an historian, and to enable others to judge of both. It has been a doubt among the men of learning, whether he published these critical works before, or after his Roman history: ¹ Dodwell has embraced the former opinion; for which he gives this very good reason, that, in his critical works, he never makes any mention of his history, though he often takes notice of the other writings he had before published. Dodwell also thinks that the Cn. Pompeius, to whom he dedicates his criticism upon the Greek historians, was the same person, who was substituted consul (consul suffectus) in the month of October in the Varronian year 723. By this, and many other arguments, it appears that this Cn. Pompeius could not have been the great Pompey, who was slain in Ægypt in 706, though M. * * *, in his preface, has thought fit to establish a friendship between that great man, and our author; and to make the former desire his judgement concerning the Greek historians: This I conclude from his mentioning Pompey without any distinction; which manner of speaking is, both in his, and in all other languages, applicable only to the per-*

¹ Dissert. de Ætat. Dionys. c. vii. & viii.

son, who has rendered his name so famous both by his successes, and his misfortunes.

We know by Photius, who lived in the middle of the ninth century, and by many other authors, that this history contained twenty books, and that Dionysius himself made, what Photius calls, a synopsis of it in five books. So that, the nine last books must have been lost since the middle of the ninth century; but how long since we know not. Henry Glarean, professor at Freiburg, says, at the end of his chronological tables dedicated in 1532 to Ferdinand, then king of the Romans, that these nine books were at that time in being, and concealed by some men of learning: The reason he gives for this assertion is, that Constantine Lascaris, a modern author, cites him in Greek. This, indeed, leaves us some room to hope that they may one day see the light.

I come now to my brother labourers, the translators of Dionysius. The first was Lapus Biragus, a Florentine, who translated the eleven books now remaining into Latin from two old manuscripts, and dedicated his translation to pope Paul the second. It was first printed at Treviso, a town in the territories of the Venetians, in 1480. ² Vossius very justly censures both his fidelity, and his style. The next was That of Gelenius, printed at Basil in 1549. He writes better Latin than Lapus; but the liberties he has taken in mangling the periods

² De Hist. Lat. B. iii. c. 10.

of the Greek text, and of altering many places, which he did not understand, have condemned his translation to be never read: Particularly, after That of Sylburgius appeared in 1586, printed at Frankfort, with the Greek text, which had not been printed with the former Latin translations: Sylburgius had also the assistance of the Venetian, and Roman manuscripts, which his predecessors wanted. Not long after, appeared another Latin translation, viz. in 1590, by Æmilius Portus, which Hudson has printed with the Greek text in 1704: The latter says indeed, in his preface, that he has corrected the translation of Portus, where he thought it necessary: I wish he had oftener thought it necessary; because he has suffered many errors of Portus to stand unmolested. However, this edition of Hudson is by much the best; as the Greek text is throughout illustrated with the notes of Sylburgius, Casaubon, Portus, and some others; all which I have occasionally made use of, and always acknowledged. But the greatest advantage, which this edition has over all the others, is derived from two Vatican manuscripts, one 700 years old for the first ten books, and the other not quite so old for the eleventh book; the readings of both which are set down at the foot of every page; and, in every page, these manuscripts, particularly the first, illustrate the Greek text where it is obscure, explain it where doubtful, and supply it where it is defective. The

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