

Source: Justin, Cornelius Nepos; and Eutropius
Translated by John Selby Watson (published 1897)

JUSTIN'S HISTORY OF THE WORLD,

EXTRACTED FROM

TROGUS POMPEIUS.

PREFACE.

AFTER many Romans,* men even of consular dignity, had committed the acts of their countrymen to writing in Greek, a foreign language,† Trogus Pompeius, a man of eloquence equal to that of the ancients,‡ whether prompted by a desire to emulate their glory, or charmed by the variety and novelty of the undertaking, composed the history of Greece, and of the whole world, in the Latin tongue, in order that, as our actions might be read in Greek, so those of the Greeks might be read in our language; attempting a work that demanded extraordinary resolution and labour. For when, to most authors who write the history only of particular princes or nations, their task appears an affair of arduous effort, must not Trogus Pompeius, in attempting the whole world, seem to have acted with a boldness like that of Hercules, since in his books are contained the actions of all ages, monarchs, nations, and people? All that the historians of Greece had undertaken separately, according to what was suitable to each, Trogus Pompeius, omitting only what was useless, has put

* Among these were Aulus Albinus, consul A.U.C. 602, Cic. Brut. c. 21; Aul. Gell. xi. 8; Lucius Cincius, mentioned by Dionys. Halicarn. i. 6; Caius Julius a senator, Liv. Epit. liii.; Lucius Lucullus, consul A.U.C. 679, Cic. Acad. ii. 1; and Cicero, who sent an account of his consulship (A.U.C. 690) written in Greek to his friend Atticus; Ep ad Att. i. 19.—Wetzel.

† *Græco peregrinoque sermone.*] Greek, and therefore foreign, not Latin.—Wetzel.

‡ *Vir prisca eloquentiæ.*] More literally, "A man of ancient eloquence."

together in one narration, everything being assigned to its proper period, and arranged in the regular order of events. From these forty-four volumes therefore (for such was the number that he published), I have extracted, during the leisure that I enjoyed in the city, whatever was most worthy of being known; and, rejecting such parts as were neither attractive for the pleasure of reading, nor necessary by way of example, have formed, as it were, a small collection of flowers, that those who are acquainted with the history of Greece might have something to refresh their memories, and those who are strangers to it something for their instruction. This work I have sent to you, * not so much that it may add to your knowledge, as that it may receive your correction; and that, at the same time, the account of my leisure, of which Cato thinks that an account must be given, may stand fair with you. For your approbation is sufficient for me for the present, with the expectation of receiving from posterity, when the malice of detraction has died away, an ample testimony to my diligence.

* *Ad te.*] In the editions before that of Bongarsius, 1581, the words *Marce Antonine* followed *te*, but as they did not appear in the manuscripts which Bongarsius consulted, he omitted them. They are generally supposed to have been inserted by some editor or editors, who confounded Justin the historian with Justin Martyr, who lived in the reign of Antoninus. At what time Justin the historian lived is uncertain. See the biographical notice prefixed. But Pontanus and Isaac Vossius argued for the words being retained; and Scheffer, observing that the oldest editions, and that of Bongarsius himself, based on at least eight manuscripts, have *Quod ad te non cognoscenda magis quam emendandi causâ transmissi*, would read, *Quod ad te non tum cognoscendi, Marce Antonine Cæsar, quam emendandi, &c.*, supposing *magis* to be a corruption of *M. A. C.*, the first letters of the emperor's name.

BOOK I.

The monarchy of the Assyrians, Ninus, I.—Semiramis, II.—Sardana palus, III.—The monarchy of the Medes; Astyages, IV.—The youth of Cyrus, V.—He becomes king, VI.—His victory over Croesus; Candaules and Gyges, VII.—Expedition of Cyrus against the Scythians; his death, VIII.—Cambyses; the Magi; Otanes, IX.—Darius, the son of Hystaspes, X.

I. ORIGINALLY,* the government of nations and tribes was in the hands of kings; † whom it was not their flattery of the people, but their discretion, as commended by the prudent, that elevated to the height of this dignity. The people were not then bound by any laws; the wills of their princes were instead of laws. It was their custom to defend, rather than advance, ‡ the boundaries of their empire. The dominions of each were confined within his own country.

The first of all princes, who, from an extravagant desire of ruling, changed this old and, as it were, hereditary custom, was Ninus, king of the Assyrians. It was he who first made war upon his neighbours, and subdued the nations, as yet too barbarous to resist him, as far as the frontiers of Libya Sesostris, § king of Egypt, and Tanaus, || king of Scythia, were indeed prior to him in time; the one of whom advanced into Pontus, and the other as far as Egypt; but these princes engaged in distant wars, not in struggles with their neigh-

* *Principio rerum.*] “In the beginning of things,” i. e., as soon as there was any government at all.

† *Penes reges.*] See Sallust, Cat. i. 2; Cig. Leg. 2, 11, de Off. ii. 12; Arist. Polit. i.

‡ See Sall. Cat. 2; Tacit. Ann. iii. 26; Ov. Met. i. 89.

§ Justin, ii. 3, makes Sesostris fifteen hundred years older than Ninus; but the truth is that his age and actions are equally involved in obscurity, though Usher says that he was the son of the Amenophis who perished in the Red Sea, and that, consequently, he began his reign A.M. 2513. But Reitz, on Herod. ii. 102, fixes his death in A.M. 2713, eighty-seven years before the taking of Troy. Marsham, again, in his Can. Chr. p. 22, follows Josephus (Ant. viii. 4) in placing him much later, and in making him the same with Shishak, who took Jerusalem and plundered the temple, A.M. 3013, two hundred and thirteen years after Troy was taken. Diodorus Siculus, who speaks of his actions, i. 53—58, settles nothing certain concerning his age.—

Wetzsch.

|| Herodotus, iv. 5, calls the first king of Scythia Targitaus.

bours; they did not seek dominion for themselves, but glory for their people, and, content with victory, declined to govern those whom they subdued. But Ninus established the greatness of his acquired dominion by immediately possessing himself of the conquered countries.* Overcoming, accordingly, the nearest people, and advancing, fortified with an accession of strength, against others, while each successive victory became the instrument of one to follow, he subjugated the nations of the whole east. His last war was with Zoroaster,† king of the Bactrians, who is said to have been the first that invented magic arts, and to have investigated, with great attention, the origin of the world and the motions of the stars. After killing Zoroaster, Ninus himself died, leaving a son called Ninyas, still a minor, and a wife, whose name was Semiramis.‡

II. Semiramis, not daring to entrust the government to a youth, or openly to take it upon herself (as so many great nations would scarcely submit to one man, much less to a woman), pretended that she was the son of Ninus instead of his wife, a male instead of a female. The stature of both mother and son was low, their voice alike weak, and the cast of their features similar. She accordingly clad her arms and legs in long garments, and decked her head with a turban; and, that she might not appear to conceal any thing by this new dress, she ordered her subjects also to wear the same apparel; a fashion which the whole nation has since retained. Having thus dissembled her sex at the commencement of her

* *Continuâ possessione.*] His establishment of his power over the countries was immediately consequent on his subjugation of them.

† By Diodorus, ii. 6, he is called Oxyartes. See also Plin. H. N. xxx. 1; August. De Civ. Dei. xxi. 14.—*Wetzl.* Concerning the age of Zoroaster all is uncertainty; such is the difference of opinions about it. Agathias and others think that he must have lived at a later date, about the commencement of the Persian empire. See Marsham in Canon. Ægypt. ad Sec. ix.—*Gronovius.* It has not yet been shown that Zoroaster the king and Zoroaster the Magus were the same person.

‡ See Diodorus, xi. 4; Plutarch in Amator.; Ælian. Var. Hist. vii. 1; Polyæn. Stratag. vii. "Conon apud Photium, Narr. ix. states, that Semiramis was not the wife but the daughter of Ninus or Ninyas, and says, *eam ignavam cum filio concubuisse*, and afterwards, *re cognita*, married him; after which occurrence it was lawful among the Persians for sons *commisceri matribus.*"—*Fossius.* To this *concupitæ cum equo* Pliny alludes, H. N. viii. 64.

reign, she was believed to be a male. She afterwards performed many noble actions; and when she thought envy was overcome by the greatness of them, she acknowledged who she was, and whom she had personated. Nor did this confession detract from her authority as a sovereign, but increased the admiration of her, since she, being a woman, surpassed, not only women, but men, in heroism.

It was she that built Babylon,* and constructed round the city a wall of burnt brick; bitumen, a substance which everywhere oozes from the ground in those parts, being spread between the bricks instead of mortar.† Many other famous acts, too, were performed by this queen; for, not content with preserving the territories acquired by her husband, she added Ethiopia also to her empire; and she even made war upon India, into which no prince,‡ except her and Alexander the Great, ever penetrated. At last, conceiving a criminal passion for her son, she was killed by him, after holding the kingdom two and forty years from the death of Ninus.

Her son Ninyas, content with the empire acquired by his parents, laid aside the pursuits of war, and, as if he had changed sexes with his mother, was seldom seen by men, but grew old in the company of his women. His successors too, following his example, gave answers to their people through their ministers. The Assyrians, who were afterwards called Syrians, held their empire thirteen hundred years.

III. The last king that reigned over them was Sardanapalus, a man more effeminate than a woman. One of his satraps, named Arbaces, governor of the Medes, having, with great difficulty and after much solicitation, obtained admission to visit him, found him, among crowds of concubines, and in the dress of a woman, spinning purple wool with a distaff, and

* Concerning the real builder of Babylon, see Strab. xvi. init.; Diod. Sic. ii. 17; Q. Curt. v. 1, 42; Euseb. Chron. init.; Jerome on Hos. c. xi.; Herod. i. 184.; AMMON. Marcell. xxii. 20.—Lemaire.

† *Arenæ vice.*] Understand sand mixed with lime.—*Berneccerus*
But the signification of *arena* is not always confined to that of *sand*; it sometimes means *earth* or *mud*. Thus Virgil, Georg. i. 105, has *malè pinguis arena*; and, speaking of the Nile, says, *Viridem Ægyptum nigrâ fecundat arenâ*. Dübner's edition has *arenati vice*, I know not on what authority

‡ *Nemo.*] Justin has forgotten the expeditions of Hercules and Bacchus.—Lemaire.

distributing tasks to girls, but surpassing all the women in the effeminacy of his person and the wantonness of his looks. At that sight, feeling indignant that so many men should be subject to one so much of a woman, and that those who bore swords and arms should obey one that handled wool, he proceeded to his companions, and told them what he had seen, protesting that he could not submit to a prince who had rather be a woman than a man. A conspiracy was consequently formed, and war raised against Sardanapalus; who, hearing of what had occurred, and acting, not like a man that would defend his kingdom, but as women are wont to do under fear of death, first looked about for a hiding-place, but afterwards marched into the field with a few ill-disciplined troops. Being conquered in battle, he withdrew into his palace, and, having raised and set fire to a pile of combustibles, threw himself and his riches into the flames, in this respect only acting like a man. After him Arbaces, who was the occasion of his death, and who had been governor of the Medes, was made king, and transferred the empire from the Assyrians to the Medes.

IV. After several kings, the crown, by order of succession, descended to Astyages. This prince, in a dream, saw a vine spring from the womb of his only daughter, with the branches of which all Asia was overshadowed. The soothsayers being consulted concerning the vision, replied, that he would have a grandson by that daughter, whose greatness was foreshown, and the loss of Astyages's kingdom portended. Alarmed at this answer, he gave his daughter in marriage, not to an eminent man, nor to one of his own subjects (lest nobility on the father or mother's side should rouse the spirit of his grandson), but to Cambyses, a man of mean fortune, and of the race of the Persians, which was at that time obscure. But not having, even thus, got rid of his fear of the dream, he sent for his daughter, while she was pregnant, that her child might be put to death under the very eye of his grandfather. The infant, as soon as it was born, was given to Harpagus, a friend of the king's and in his secrets, to be killed. Harpagus, fearing that if the crown, on the death of the king (as Astyages had no male issue), should devolve upon his daughter, she might exact from the agent, for the murder of her child, that revenge which she could not inflict on her

father, gave the infant to the herdsman of the king's cattle to be exposed. The herdsman, by chance, had a son born at the same time ; and his wife, hearing of the exposure of the royal infant, entreated, with the utmost earnestness, that the child might be brought and shown to her. The herdsman, overcome by her solicitations, went back into the wood, and found a dog by the infant, giving it her teats, and protecting it from the beasts and birds of prey. Being moved with pity, with which he saw even a dog moved, he carried the child to the cattle-folds, the dog vigilantly following him. When the woman took the babe into her hands, it smiled upon her as if it knew her ; and there appeared so much vivacity in it, with a certain sweetness in its smile as it clung to her, that the wife at once entreated the herdsman to expose her own child instead of the other, and to allow her to bring up the royal infant, whether to his own fortune or to her hopes.* Thus the lot of the children being changed, the one was brought up as the shepherd's son, and the other exposed as the king's grandson. The nurse had afterwards the name of Spaco ; for so the Persians call a dog.

V. The boy after a time, while he was among the shepherds, received the name of Cyrus. Subsequently, being chosen by lot king among his play-fellows, and having boldly scourged such of them as were disobedient to him, a complaint was made to the king by the parents of the boys, who were angry that free-born youths should be lashed with servile stripes by the king's slave. Astyages having sent for the boy and questioned him, and the boy replying, without any change of countenance, that " he had acted as a king," was struck with his high spirit, and reminded of his dream and its interpretation. In consequence, as both the resemblance of his features, the time of his exposure, and the confession of the herdsman, concurred exactly, he acknowledged him as his grandson. And since he seemed to have had his dream accomplished, by the boy's exercise of rule among the shepherds, he subdued his feelings of animosity ; but with regard to him only ; for, being incensed with his friend Harpagus, he, in revenge for the preservation of his grandson, killed his son.

* *Sive fortunæ ipsius sive spei suæ pueram nutrire.*] She hoped that the child would be restored to the regal station or fortune in which it had been born.—*Lemairé.*

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