

BOOK XI.

ASIA.

SUMMARY.

The Eleventh Book commences with Asia and the river Don, which, taking its rise in the northern regions, separates Europe from Asia. It includes the nations situated in Asia near its sources on the east and south, and the barbarous Asiatic nations who occupy the neighbourhood of Mount Caucasus, among whom are the Amazones, Massagetæ, Scythians, Albani, Iberes, Bactriani, Caspii, Medes, Persians, and the two Armenias, extending to Mesopotamia. Among these nations are included the Troglodytæ, Heniochi, Sceptuchi, Soanes, Assyrians, Polyphagi, Nabiani, Siraci, and Tapyri. Mention is made of Jason and Medea, and of the cities founded by them :—of Xerxes, Mithridates, and Alexander, son of Philip.

CHAPTER I.

1. ASIA is contiguous to Europe, approaching close to it at the Tanaïs or Don.

I am to describe this country next, after dividing it, for the sake of perspicuity, by certain natural boundaries. What Eratosthenes has done with respect to the whole habitable earth, this I propose to do with respect to Asia.

2. The Taurus, extending from west to east, embraces the middle of this continent, like a girdle, leaving one portion to the north, another to the south. . The Greeks call the former Asia Within the Taurus,¹ the latter, Asia Without the Taurus. We have said this before, but it is repeated now to assist the memory.

3. The Taurus has in many places a breadth of 3000 stadia ; its length equals that of Asia, namely 45,000 stadia,²

¹ B. ii. c. v. § 31.

² The following are the measurements of our author :

	Stadia.
From Rhodes to Issus	5,000
From Issus to the Caspian Gates	10,000
From the Caspian Gates to the sources of the Indus	14,000
From the Indus to the mouth of the Ganges	13,500
From thence to Thinæ	2,500
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	45,000

reckoning from the continent opposite to Rhodes to the eastern extremities of India and Scythia.

4. It is divided into many parts, which are circumscribed by boundaries of greater or less extent, and distinguished by various names.

But as such an extended range of mountains must comprise nations some of which are little known, and others with whom we are well acquainted, as Parthians,¹ Medes, Armenians, some of the Cappadocians, Cilicians, and Pisidians; those which approach near the northern parts must be assigned to the north, (northern Asia,) those approximating the southern parts, to the south, (southern Asia,) and those situated in the middle of the mountains must be placed on account of the similarity of the temperature of the air, for it is cold to the north, while the air of the south is warm.

The currents of almost all the rivers which flow from the Taurus are in a direction contrary to each other, some running to the north, others to the south, at least at the commencement of their course, although afterwards some bend towards the east or west. They naturally suggest the adoption of this chain of mountains as a boundary in the division of Asia into two portions; in the same manner that the sea within the Pillars, which for the most part runs in the same line with these mountains, conveniently forms two continents, Europe and Africa, and is a remarkable boundary to both.

5. In passing in our geographical description from Europe to Asia, the first parts of the country which present themselves are those in the northern division, and we shall therefore begin with these.

Of these parts the first are those about the Tanais, (or Don,) which we have assumed as the boundary of Europe and Asia. These have a kind of peninsular form, for they are surrounded on the west by the river Tanais (or Don) and the Palus Mæotis² as far as the Cimmerian Bosphorus,³ and that part of the coast of the Euxine which terminates at Colchis; on the north by the Ocean, as far as the mouth of the Caspian Sea; on the east by the same sea, as far as the

¹ Strabo calls the Parthians, Parthyæi; and Parthia, Parthyæa.

² The Sea of Azoff.

³ The Straits of Kertch or Zabache.

confines of Albania and Armenia, where the rivers Cyrus¹ and Araxes² empty themselves; the latter flowing through Armenia, and the Cyrus through Iberia³ and Albania;⁴ on the south is the tract of country extending from the mouth of the Cyrus as far as Colchis, and comprising about 3000 stadia from sea to sea, across the territory of the Albani, and Iberes,⁵ so as to represent an isthmus.⁶

Those writers do not deserve attention who contract the isthmus as much as Cleitarchus, according to whom it is subject to inundations of the sea from either side. According to Posidonius the isthmus is 1500 stadia in extent, that is, as large as the isthmus from Pelusium to the Red Sea. And I think, says he, that the isthmus between the Palus Mæotis and the Ocean is not very different from this in extent.

6. I know not how any one can rely upon his authority respecting what is uncertain, when he has nothing probable to advance on the subject; for he reasons so falsely respecting things which are evident, and this too when he enjoyed the friendship of Pompey, who had carried on war against the Iberes and Albani, and was acquainted with both the Caspian and Colchian⁷ Seas on each side of the isthmus. It is related, that when Pompey⁸ was at Rhodes, on his expedition against the pirates, (he was soon afterwards to carry on war against Mithridates and the nations as far as the Caspian Sea,) he accidentally heard a philosophical lecture of Posidonius; and on his departure he asked Posidonius if he had any commands; to which he replied,

¹ The Kur or Kour.

² Eraskh or Aras.

³ Georgia.

⁴ Shirvan.

⁵ See b. ii. c. v. § 31.

⁶ To understand how this part of Asia formed a peninsula, according to the ideas of our author, we must bear in mind, that (1) he supposed the source of the Don to have been situated in the neighbourhood of the Northern Ocean; (2) he imagined the Caspian Sea to communicate with the same Ocean. Thus all the territory comprehended between the Don and the Caspian formed a sort of peninsula, united to the continent by an isthmus which separated the Euxine from the Caspian, and on which was situated Colchis, Iberia, and Albania. The 3000 stadia assigned to the breadth of this isthmus appears to be measured by stadia of 1111½ to a degree. *Gossellin.*

⁷ The Euxine.

⁸ Pompey appears to have visited this philosopher twice on this occasion, B. c. 62, and B. c. 67, on the termination of his eastern campaigns.

“To stand the first in worth, as in command.”¹

Add to this, that he wrote the history of Pompey. For these reasons he ought to have paid a greater regard to truth.

7. The second portion is that above the Hyrcanian,² which we also call the Caspian Sea, extending as far as the Scythians near the Indians.

The third portion is continuous with the above-mentioned isthmus, and consists of the country following next in order to the isthmus and the Caspian Gates,³ and approaching nearest the parts within the Taurus, and to Europe; these are Media, Armenia, Cappadocia, and the intervening country.⁴

The fourth portion consists of the tract within the Halys,⁵ and the parts upon and without the Taurus, which coincide with the peninsula formed by the isthmus,⁶ which separates the Euxine and the Cilician Seas. Among the other countries beyond the Taurus we place Indica and Ariana,⁷ as far

¹ Il. vi. 208. *Pope.*

² In many authors these names are used indifferently, the one for the other; they are however distinguished by Pliny, (iv. 13;) who states that this sea begins to be called the Caspian after you have passed the river Cyrus, (Kur,) and that the Caspii live near it; and in vi. 16, that it is called the Hyrcanian Sea, from the Hyrcani who live along its shores. The western side should therefore in strictness be called the Caspian; the eastern, the Hyrcanian. *Smith*, art. Caspium Mare.

³ A narrow pass leading from North Western Asia into the N. E. provinces of Persia. Their exact position was at the division of Parthia from Media, about a day's journey from the Median town of Rhagæ. (Arrian. iii. 19.) According to Isodorus Charax, they were immediately below Mt. Caspius. As in the case of the people called Caspii, there seem to have been *two* mountains *Caspius*, one near the Armenian frontier, the other near the Parthian. It was through the pass of the Caspiæ Pylæ that Alexander the Great pursued Darius. (Arrian. *Anab.* iii. 19; Curt. vi. 14; Amm. Marc. xxiii. 6.) It was one of the most important places in ancient geography, and from it many of the meridians were measured. The exact place corresponding with the Caspiæ Pylæ is probably a spot between *Hark-a-Koh*, and *Siah-Koh*, about 6 parasangs from *Rey*, the name of the entrance of which is called *Dereh*. *Smith*, art. Caspiæ Pylæ.

⁴ Du Theil justly remarks on the obscurity of this passage. His translation or paraphrase is as follows: “La troisième contiendra ce qui touche à l'isthme dont nous avons parlé; et, par suite, ceux des pays qui, au sud de cet isthme et des Pyles Caspiennes, mais toujours en deçà, ou, au moins, dans le sein même du Taurus, se succédant de l'est à l'ouest, se rapprochent le plus de l'Europe. In B. ii. c. v. § 31, Strabo assigns *Colchis* to the third portion, but in this book to the first.

⁵ The Kizil Ermak.

⁶ B. i. c. iii. § 2.

⁷ A district of wide extent in Central Asia, comprehending nearly the

as the nations which extend to the Persian Sea, the Arabian Gulf, and the Nile, and to the Ægyptian and the Issic seas.

CHAPTER II.

1. ACCORDING to this disposition, the first portion towards the north and the Ocean is inhabited by certain tribes of Scythians, shepherds, (nomades,) and Hamaxœci (or those who live in waggon-houses). Within these tribes live Sarmatians, who also are Scythians, Aorsi,¹ and Siraci, extending as far as the Caucasian Mountains towards the south. Some of these are Nomades, or shepherd tribes, others Scenitæ, (or dwellers in tents,) and Georgi, or tillers of the ground. About the lake Mæotis live the Mæotæ. Close to the sea is the Asiatic portion of the Bosphorus and Sindica.² Next follow Achæi, Zygi, Heniochi,³ Cercetæ, and Macropogones (or the long-beards). Above these people are situated the passes of the Phtheirophagi (or Lice-eaters). After the Heniochi is Colchis, lying at the foot of the Caucasian and Moschic mountains. Having assumed the Tanais as the boundary of Europe and Asia, we must begin our description in detail from this river.

whole of ancient Persia; and bounded on the N. by the provinces of Bactriana, Margiana, and Hyrcania; on the E. by the Indus; on the S. by the Indian Ocean and the eastern portion of the Persian Gulf; and on the W. by Media and the mountains S. of the Caspian Sea. Its exact limits are laid down with little accuracy in ancient authors, and it seems to have been often confounded (as in Pliny, b. vi. c. 23, 25) with the small province of Aria. It comprehended the provinces of Gedrosia, Drangiana, Arachosia, Paropamisus mountains, Aria, Parthia, and Carmania. *Smith*, art. Ariana. See b. xv. c. ii. § 7, 8.

¹ The Aorsi and Siraci occupied the country between the Sea of Azoff, the Don, the Volga, the Caspian Sea, and the Terek. May not the Aorsi, says Gosselin, be the same as the Thyrsagetæ, Agathursi, Utidorsi, Adorsi, Alanorsi of other writers, but whose real name is Thyrsi? The Siraci do not appear to differ from the Soraci or Seraci of Tacitus, (Ann. xii. 15, &c.,) and may be the same as Iyrces, Ἰύρκες, afterwards called Turcæ.

² The country to the N. and N. E. of Anapa. By Bosphorus we are to understand the territory on each side of the Straits of Kertch.

³ B. ii. c. v. § 31.

2. The Tanais or Don flows from the northern parts. It does not however flow in a direction diametrically opposite to the Nile, as some suppose, but its course is more to the east than that of the latter river ; its sources, like those of the Nile, are unknown. A great part of the course of the Nile is apparent, for it traverses a country the whole of which is easy of access, and its stream is navigable to a great distance from its mouth. We are acquainted with the mouths of the Don, (there are two in the most northerly parts of the Mæotis, distant 60 stadia from each other,) but a small part only of the tract above the mouths is explored, on account of the severity of the cold, and the destitute state of the country ; the natives are able to endure it, who subsist, like the wandering shepherd tribes, on the flesh of their animals and on milk, but strangers cannot bear the climate nor its privations. Besides, the nomades dislike intercourse with other people, and being a strong and numerous tribe have excluded travellers from every part of the country which is accessible, and from all such rivers as are navigable. For this reason some have supposed that the sources of the river are among the Caucasian mountains, that, after flowing in a full stream towards the north, it then makes a bend, and discharges itself into the Mæotis. Theophanes¹ of Mitylene is of the same opinion with these writers. Others suppose that it comes from the higher parts of the Danube, but they do not produce any proof of so remote a source, and in other climates, though they seem to think it impossible for it to rise at no great distance and in the north.

3. Upon the river, and on the lake, stands a city Tanais, founded by the Greeks, who possess the Bosphorus ; but lately the King Polemon² laid it waste on account of the refractory disposition of the inhabitants. It was the common mart both of the Asiatic and of the European nomades, and of those who navigate the lake from the Bosphorus, some of whom bring slaves and hides, or any other nomadic commodity ; others exchange wine for clothes, and other articles peculiar to a civilized mode of life.

¹ Cn. Pompeius Theophanes was one of the more intimate friends of Pompey, by whom he was presented with the Roman franchise in the presence of his army. This occurred in all probability about B. c. 62. *Smith*, art. Theophanes. ² About B. c. 16. *Smith*, art. Polemon I.

In front of the mart at the distance of 100 stadia is an island Alopecia, a settlement of a mixed people. There are other small islands not far off in the lake.

The city Tanais,¹ to those who sail in a direct line towards the north, is distant from the mouth of the Mæotis 2200 stadia, nor is the distance much greater in sailing along the coast (on the east).

4. In the voyage along the coast, the first object which presents itself to those who have proceeded to the distance of 800 stadia from the Tanais, is the Great Rhombites, as it is called, where large quantities of fish are captured for the purpose of being salted. Then at the distance of 800 stadia more is the Lesser Rhombites,² and a promontory, which has smaller fisheries. The [nomades] at the former have small islands as stations for their vessels, those at the Lesser Rhombites are the Mæotæ who cultivate the ground. For along the whole of this coasting voyage live Mæotæ, who are husbandmen, but not less addicted to war than the nomades. They are divided into several tribes; those near the Tanais are more savage, those contiguous to the Bosphorus are more gentle in their manners.

From the Lesser Rhombites to Tyrambe, and the river Anticeites, are 600 stadia; then 120 to the Cimmerian village, whence vessels set out on their voyage along the lake. In this coasting voyage we meet with some look-out places, (for observing the fish,) said to belong to the Clazomenians.

5. Cimmericum was formerly a city built upon a peninsula, the isthmus of which it enclosed with a ditch and mound. The Cimmerii once possessed great power in the Bosphorus, whence it was called the Cimmerian Bosphorus. These are the people who overran the territory of the inhabitants of the inland parts, on the right of the Euxine, as far as Ionia. They were dislodged from these places by Scythians, and the Scythians by Greeks, who founded Panticapæum,³ and the other cities on the Bosphorus.

¹ If there ever did exist such a city as Tanais I should expect to find it at the extremity of that northern embouchure of the Don, which I have before mentioned as bearing the very name the Greeks gave to the city, with the slightest variation of orthography, in the appellation Tdanaets or Danaetz. *Clarke's Travels in Russia*, chap. 14.

² Strabo makes the distance too great between the two rivers Rhombites.

³ Kertch.

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