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THE
G E O G R A P H Y
OF
S T R A B O.

LITERALLY TRANSLATED, WITH NOTES.

THE FIRST SIX BOOKS

BY H. C. HAMILTON, ESQ.

THE REMAINDER

BY W. FALCONER, M.A.,

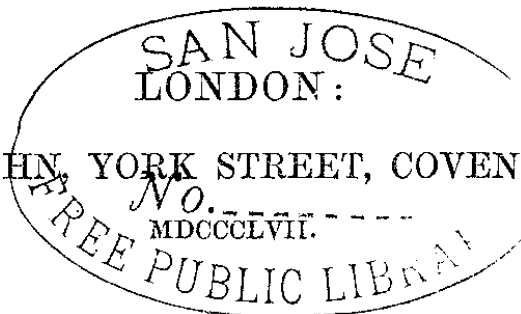
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PREFACE.

STRABO, the author of this work, was born at Amasia, or Amasijas, a town situated in the gorge of the mountains through which passes the river Iris, now the Ieschil Irmak, in Pontus, which he has described in the 12th book.¹ He lived during the reign of Augustus, and the earlier part of the reign of Tiberius; for in the 13th book² he relates how Sardes and other cities, which had suffered severely from earthquakes, had been repaired by the provident care of Tiberius the present Emperor; but the exact date of his birth, as also of his death, are subjects of conjecture only. Coray and Groskurd conclude, though by a somewhat different argument, that he was born in the year B. C. 66, and the latter that he died A. D. 24. The date of his birth as argued by Groskurd, proceeds on the assumption that Strabo was in his thirty-eighth year when he went from Gyaros to Corinth, at which latter place Octavianus Cæsar was then staying on his return to Rome after the battle of Actium, B. C. 31. We may, perhaps, be satisfied with following Clinton, and place it not later than B. C. 54.

In the 17th book our author speaks of the death of Juba as a recent occurrence. This event took place A. D. 21, or A. D. 18 or 19, according to other chronologists; he, therefore, outlived that king, but for how long a period we have no means of ascertaining.

The only information which we can obtain of the personal history of Strabo is to be collected from the scanty references made to himself in the course of this work;³ for although a writer of the Augustan age, his name and his works appear

¹ Book xii. c. iii. 39. Vol. ii. page 311, 312.

² Book xiii. c. iv. § 8. Vol. ii. page 405.

³ Book x. c. iv. § 10, and book xii. c. iii. § 33. Vol. ii. pp. 197, 307, of this Translation.

to have been generally unknown to his contemporaries, and to have been passed over in silence by subsequent authors who occupied themselves with the same branch of study. The work being written in Greek, and the subject itself not of a popular kind, would be hindrances to its becoming generally known; and its voluminous character would prevent many copies being made; moreover, the author himself, although for some time a resident at Rome, appears to have made Amasia his usual place of residence, and there to have composed his work. But wherever it was, he had the means of becoming acquainted with the chief public events that took place in the Roman Empire.

It is remarkable that of his father and his father's family he is totally silent, but of his mother and her connexions he has left us some notices. She was of a distinguished family who had settled at Cnossus in Crete, and her ancestors had been intimately connected with Mithridates Euergetes and Mithridates Eupator, kings of Pontus; their fortunes consequently depended on those princes.

Dorylaüs, her great grandfather, was a distinguished officer, and friend of Euergetes; but the latter being assassinated at Sinope, whilst Dorylaüs was engaged in levying troops in Crete, he determined to remain there. In that island he obtained the highest honours, having successfully, as general of the Cnossians, terminated a war between that people and the Gortynians. He married a Macedonian lady, of the name of Sterope; the issue of which marriage was Lagetas, Stratarchas, and a daughter. He died in Crete. Lagetas had a daughter, who, says Strabo, was "the mother of my mother."

Mithridates Eupator, who succeeded to the kingdom of Pontus on the death of his father, had formed from infancy a close friendship with another Dorylaüs, son of Philetærus (brother of the first-mentioned Dorylaüs), and besides conferring on him distinguished honours, appointed him high priest of Comana Pontica. The king extended also his protection to his cousins, Lagetas and Stratarchas, who were recalled from Crete. The prosperity of the family suddenly terminated by the discovery of an intrigue carried on by Dorylaüs with the Romans, for the overthrow of his benefactor. The motives assigned by Strabo for his disaffection and treachery were the declining

prospects of the king, and the execution of his son Theophilus and a nephew Tibius.

Dorylaüs made overtures to Lucullus for the revolt of the kingdom of Pontus to the Romans, and in return received great promises of reward, which were never fulfilled. Lucullus ceased to command in the war, and was succeeded by Pompey, who, through enmity and jealousy, prevailed on the senate not to confirm the conditions entered into by his predecessor. As before observed, there is no mention of Strabo's father in the works which have come down to us. Malte-Brun, in his *Life of Strabo* in the *Biographie Universelle*, collects several passages tending to show that he was a Roman. The name of Strabo, or "squinting," originally Greek, was used by the Romans, and applied to the father of Pompey the Great, among others. How the geographer acquired this name is not related.

When a very young man, he received instruction in grammar and rhetoric from Aristodemus, at Nysa in Caria.¹ He afterwards studied philosophy under Xenarchus of Seleucia, the Peripatetic philosopher.² Strabo does not say whether he heard him at Seleucia in Cilicia, or at Rome, where he afterwards taught.

Strabo also attended the lessons of Tyrannio of Amisus,³ the grammarian. This must have been at Rome; for Tyrannio was made prisoner by Lucullus, B. C. 71, and carried to Rome, probably not later than B. C. 66.

In book xvi.,⁴ Strabo states that he studied the philosophy of Aristotle with Boethus of Sidon, who afterwards became a Stoic philosopher. Notwithstanding all these advantages, Strabo was not possessed of all the knowledge of his times, particularly in astronomy and mathematics, but he was well acquainted with history and the mythological traditions of his nation. He was a devout admirer of Homer, and acquainted with the other great poets.

The philosophical sect to which he belonged was the Stoic, as plainly appears from many passages in his *Geography*.

He wrote a *History*, which he describes (vol. i. p. 21) as composed in a lucid style; it is cited by Plutarch, and also by

¹ Book xiv. c. i. § 48. Vol. iii. p. 26.

² Book xiv. c. v. § 4. Vol. iii. p. 53.

³ Book xii. c. iii. § 16. Vol. ii. p. 296, 380.

⁴ c. ii. § 24. Vol. iii. p. 173.

Josephus in his *Jewish Antiquities*, xiv. 7. It consisted of forty-three books, which began where the history of Polybius ended, and was probably continued to the battle of Actium. This valuable History is lost.

Strabo was a great traveller, and apparently had no professional or other occupation. We may therefore conclude that his father left him a good property. Much of his geographical information is the result of personal observation. In a passage of his 2nd book¹ he thus speaks: "Our descriptions shall consist of what we ourselves have observed in our travels by land and sea, and of what we conceive to be credible in the statements and writings of others; for in a westerly direction we have travelled from Armenia to that part of Tyrrhenia which is over against Sardinia; and southward, from the Euxine to the frontiers of Ethiopia. Of all the writers on geography, not one can be mentioned who has travelled over a wider extent of the countries described than we have. Some may have gone farther to the west, but then they have never been so far east as we have; again, others may have been farther east, but not so far west; and the same with respect to north and south. However, in the main, both we and they have availed ourselves of the reports of others, from which to describe the form, size, and other peculiarities of the country." He mentions having been in Egypt, the island Gyarus, Populonium near Elba, Comana in Cappadocia, Ephesus, Mylasa, Nysa, and Hierapolis in Phrygia. He visited Corinth, Argos, Athens, and Megara; but, on the whole, he does not appear to have seen more of Greece than in passing through it on his way to Brundisium, while proceeding to Rome. Populonium and Luna in Italy were the limit of his travels northwards. It is probable he obtained his information as to Spain, France, Britain, and Germany, while staying at Rome.

The first systematic writer on geography was Eratosthenes, who died at the age of 80, about B. C. 196. His work consisted of three books.

There is no ground for considering the Geography of Strabo an improved edition of that of Eratosthenes. Strabo's work was intended for the information of persons in the higher departments of administration, and contains such geographical and historical information as those engaged in political em-

¹ Book ii. c. v. § 10. Vol. i. p. 176, of this Translation.

ployments cannot dispense with. Consistently with this object he avoids giving minute descriptions, except where the place is of real interest, but supplies some account of the important political events that had occurred in various countries, and sketches of the great men who had flourished or laboured in them. It is a lively, well-written book, intended to be read, and forms a striking contrast to the Geography of Ptolemy. His language is simple, appropriate to the matter, without affectation, and mostly clear and intelligible, except in those passages where the text has been corrupted. Like many other Greeks, Strabo looked upon Homer as the depository of all knowledge, but he frequently labours to interpret the poet's meaning in a manner highly uncritical. What Homer only partially knew or conjectured, Strabo has made the basis of his description, when he might have given an independent description, founded on the actual knowledge of his time: these observations apply especially to his books on Greece. He does not duly appreciate Herodotus; nor does he discriminate between the stories which Herodotus tells simply as stories he had heard, and the accounts he relates as derived from personal observation. He likewise rejects the evidence of Pytheas of Marseilles as to the northern regions of Europe, and on more than one occasion calls him a liar, although it is very certain that Pytheas coasted along the whole distance from Gadeira, now Cadiz, in Spain, to the river he calls Tanais, but which was probably the Elbe; however, from the extracts which have been preserved it seems that he did not give simply the results of his own observations, but added reports which he collected respecting distant countries, without always drawing a distinction between what he saw himself and what was derived from the report of others.

Strabo's authorities are for the most part Greek, and he seems to have neglected the Latin memoirs and historical narratives of the campaigns of the Romans, which might have furnished him with many valuable geographical facts for the countries as well of Asia as of Europe. He made some use of Cæsar's description of France, the Alps, and Britain; he alludes to the voyage of Publius Crassus in speaking of the Cassiterides, and also the writings of Asinius Pollio, Fabius Pictor, and an anonymous writer whom he calls the Chorographer; but he might have obtained much additional inform-

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