A SOURCE-BOOK OF ANCIENT HISTORY



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# A SOURCE-BOOK OF ANCIENT HISTORY

#### $\mathbf{BY}$

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#### AND

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#### PREFACE

This volume may be used in connection with any course in Ancient History. It is especially intended, however, to serve as an auxiliary to Botsford's "History of the Ancient World." The material has accordingly been arranged in chapters parallel to those of this text-book, to which references are constantly given.

Some of the selections have been translated by friends—especially by Dr. E. G. Sihler of New York University and Miss Rachel R. Hiller—and others by ourselves; but most of them have been taken from published translations, to which credit is duly given. Particularly in the case of excerpts from translations by scholars of recognized merit, we have followed the policy of making the least possible revision, even to the extent of allowing some inconsistencies in the spelling of proper names. Readers will thus be reminded that the spelling of Greek names is far from being standardized.

As to the use of the volume, we advise that the pupils read each chapter in connection with their study of the corresponding chapter of the text-book. The questions, which suggest the more important facts to be gathered from the selections, are to be regarded merely as examples. The teacher may modify or expand them according to the needs of the class. In the case of the more mature pupils, greater attention should be given to a study of the authors and to the critical appreciation of the selections than these illustrative questions indicate. In such work the pupils could advantageously use Murray's "History of Ancient Greek Literature;" Mahaffy's

"History of Classical Greek Literature;" Mackail's "Latin Literature;" Duff's "Literary History of Rome;" Teuffel and Schwabe's "History of Roman Literature;" and the histories of Greece and of Rome by Grote, Curtius, Holm, Mommsen, Duruy, and others. Historical criticism, however, involving the careful weighing of evidence and the valuation of the reliability of authors and documents, is an exceedingly complex and difficult work, which must in the main be reserved for students of University grade.

It is to be noticed that the questions rarely call for an expression of opinion as to the right or wrong, the folly or wisdom, of an action. It is true that when an act is obviously right or wrong, the character of the pupil may be strengthened by his being called upon to pronounce judgment; but nothing so conduces to superficial selfsufficiency as the practice of declaring off-hand opinions on subjects but partially and one-sidedly known. The power of discrimination, most essential to a well-developed mind, may be better cultivated by exercise in determining, for instance, what is relevant and what irrelevant to a given subject, what are the facts in the case and what is merely opinion, what are the essential elements of a given subject, and what are its connections with related subjects. In text-books the material is so selected and arranged as to train the memory more than any other mental faculty. The sources, on the other hand, while bringing the reader into close, almost personal touch with the individuals and events treated, have the advantage of presenting a body of raw material, on which the mind may exercise itself, especially in discrimination. selections would be robbed of this value by excessive comment and by the elimination of all obscurities, unfamiliar names, and other difficulties. It will be a great advantage to the pupil to learn by experience that, without being able to pronounce every proper name or to clear up every difficulty in a given passage, he may yet extract useful information from it. With no detriment to himself or to others, he may learn, too, at an early age that neither teacher nor author is omniscient.

There are already in existence good source-books for Greece and Rome, to which references are given in Botsford's text-books in ancient history. To those who wish a greater amount of source material on Rome, woven into a connected, readable narrative extending from the founding of the city to the death of Marcus Aurelius, and abounding in interesting sketches of characters and customs, we recommend our "Story of Rome as Greeks and Romans tell it." The present volume may claim the unique merit of rendering Oriental sources available for high-school and college courses in ancient history. It includes, too, certain classes of sources for Greece and Rome not represented in other books of the kind. The aim, however, has been not novelty but usefulness.

#### **EXPLANATIONS**

Greece, Rome, and Ancient World are abbreviated titles of Botsford, History of Greece, History of Rome, and History of the Ancient World, respectively.

Words supplied by the editors are enclosed in parentheses.

The design on the cover represents a herm of Herodotus now in the Berlin Museum.

GEORGE WILLIS BOTSFORD LILLIE SHAW BOTSFORD

MOUNT VERNON, New York, October 30, 1912. 

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# A Source-Book of Ancient History

#### BOOK I

#### The Oriental Nations

#### CHAPTER I

#### INTRODUCTION TO THE SOURCES

At the opening of the last century almost our only Greek sources of information for ancient Egypt, Babylonia, and Assyria were the works of the Greeks. For the earlier history of the first two countries here named these writers See chapter had to depend largely on folk tales, which though not real history throw a clearer light on the customs and thought of the Orientals than could any narrative of events however detailed. Even at the present day, notwithstanding the vast accumulation of other sources, we are attracted to Herodotus, "the Father of History," who visited Egypt and Babylon about the middle of the fifth century B.C. In simple, charming style, he wrote down what he himself saw and what the priests and others told him of native history, religion, social customs, and achievements in engineering and architecture. Although we can place little dependence upon his account of earlier times, his own age he portrays with great fidelity. For geography, products, and to some extent customs we may still use Strabo, the famous Greek geographer who wrote in the first century of the Christian era. Scattered through Greek and Roman literature are many incidental but

valuable references to the Orient, with here and there more extended summaries of history and chronology.

Native sources for Egypt, Babylonia, and Assyria.

Our knowledge of that part of the world, however, has been vastly increased since the beginning of the nineteenth century by the decipherment of ancient scripts, first the Egyptian and afterward the Babylonian. The great value of these native sources lies in the facts (1) that they are nearly always contemporary with the persons, events, or conditions to which they refer, (2) that they are composed by natives and present therefore the native attitude of mind and mode of thought, (3) that their abundance and variety enable us to examine with great minuteness and accuracy all the activities of these nations in war, commerce and industry, the useful and fine arts, religion, morals, and science—in brief every field of thought and endeavor of the poor and lowly as well as of kings and officials. We are therefore especially well provided with the means of studying the Egyptians, Babylonians and Assyrians.

## Sources for Syria.

P. 47.

Of the peoples of Syria we have almost no early written records in addition to the letters found at Tel-el-Amarna, Egypt, described below. These letters, written in the fifteenth century by various governors of the Syrian cities to the Egyptian king, throw an interesting light especially on Palestine before its conquest by the Hebrews. Almost nothing has reached us from the Phœnicians, whereas the Hebrews created a rich literature in the books of the Old Testament.

#### Sources for Persia.

The Persians were a race of warriors, and the inscriptions of their kings are, like those of Assyria, mainly a record of conquest and building. There remains, however, a considerable part of their sacred books comprised in the Avesta. The beginnings of these writings belong to Media. From that country they were adopted by the Persians,

who gradually added to them as their religion expanded. This entire body of writings, however, purported to be a revelation of God to his prophet Zoroaster (native name Zarathrustra). Although some modern scholars look upon this figure as a myth, it seems more probable that he was a historical person who lived in the latter half of the seventh century B.C. The religion he taught is Ancient called Zoroastrianism after himself, or Mazdeism, after his supreme God, Ahura Mazda. It is an interesting fact that of all the pagan worships which flourished in Egypt and southwestern Asia Mazdeism alone has survived to the present day. It is held by a sect called the Parsis, who, when the Mohammedans conquered Persia, 642 A.D. fled to India, where they are still settled.

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Herodotus, see p. 75. Strabo, see p. 76.

#### CHAPTER 11

#### EGYPT

#### I. THE NILE

THE Nile, when it leaves the boundaries of Ethiopia, The Delta. flows in a straight line toward the North, to the tract called the Delta, then, cloven at the head, as Plato says, Strabo xvii. it makes this point the apex of a triangle, the sides of which are formed by streams. . . . An island is thus formed by the sea and the two streams of the river, called the Delta from its resemblance to the letter of that name  $\triangle$ .

At the time of the rising of the Nile the whole valley is covered and resembles the sea, except the inhabited parts, which are on natural hills or mounds; the larger cities and the villages appear like islands on the distant prospect.

After having continued on the ground more than forty days in Summer, the water subsides by degrees in the same manner as it arose. In sixty days the plain is entirely exposed to view and dries up. The sooner the land is dry, so much the sooner the plowing and sowing are accomplished, and it dries earlier in those parts where the heat is greater. The country above the Delta is irrigated in the same manner, except that the river flows in a straight channel to the distance of about four thousand stadia unless where some island intervenes.

In later times persons learned by experience as eyewitnesses that the Nile owes its rise to summer rains, which

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