

# A SOURCE-BOOK OF ANCIENT HISTORY

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"THE STORY OF ROME AS GREEKS AND ROMANS TELL IT"

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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 self-sufficiency 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. The selections would be robbed of this value by excessive comment and by the elimination of all obscurities, un-

familiar 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.

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LILLIE SHAW BOTSFORD

MOUNT VERNON, New York,  
October 30, 1912.

# CONTENTS

## BOOK I

### THE ORIENTAL NATIONS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION TO THE SOURCES. ....	1
II. EGYPT. ....	5
III. THE TIGRIS-EUPHRATES VALLEY. ....	27
IV. SYRIA: THE PHœNICIANS AND THE HEBREWS. ....	42
V. THE MEDIAN AND PERSIAN EMPIRES. ....	55

## BOOK II

### HELLAS

VI. INTRODUCTION TO THE SOURCES. ....	67
VII. THE CRETAN AND MYCENÆAN CIVILIZATIONS. ....	77
VIII. THE EPIC OR HOMERIC AGE. ....	81
IX. MYTH AND RELIGION. ....	88
X. THE CITY-STATE AND ITS DEVELOPMENT. ....	97
XI. ECONOMY AND COLONIZATION. ....	103
XII. THE RISE OF SPARTA AND THE PELOPONNESIAN LEAGUE	111
XIII. ATHENS: FROM MONARCHY TO DEMOCRACY. ....	123
XIV. THE POETS AND THE PHILOSOPHERS. ....	141
XV. THE IONIC REVOLT. ....	152
XVI. THE WAR BETWEEN GREECE AND PERSIA. ....	162
XVII. THE DELIAN CONFEDERACY AND THE ATHENIAN EMPIRE	175
XVIII. THE AGE OF PERICLES. ....	180
XIX. THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR TO THE SICILIAN EXPEDITION. ....	211
XX. FROM THE SICILIAN EXPEDITION TO THE END OF THE WAR. ....	218
XXI. SICILY: THE TYRANT AND THE LIBERATOR. ....	241



CHAPTER	PAGE
XXII. THE SUPREMACY OF SPARTA. ....	247
XXIII. THEBES ATTEMPTS TO GAIN THE SUPREMACY. ....	258
XXIV. THE RISE OF MACEDON. ....	266
XXV. ALEXANDER'S EMPIRE. ....	276
XXVI. GREEK LIFE AND THOUGHT. ....	283
XXVII. THE HELLENISTIC AGE. ....	297

## BOOK III

### ROME

XXVIII. A. INTRODUCTION TO THE SOURCES. ....	313
B. ITALY AND HER PEOPLE. ....	326
XXIX. ROME UNDER THE KINGS. ....	334
XXX. THE EARLY REPUBLIC: (I) THE PLEBEIANS WIN THEIR RIGHTS. ....	348
XXXI. THE EARLY REPUBLIC: (II) ROME BECOMES SU- PREME IN ITALY. ....	361
XXXII. ROMAN ORGANIZATION: PROGRESS IN CULTURE. ..	371
XXXIII. THE FIRST AND SECOND PUNIC WARS. ....	379
XXXIV. THE END OF GREEK FREEDOM. ....	389
XXXV. GROWTH OF PLUTOCRACY; PROGRESS IN CIVILIZATION	397
XXXVI. THE REVOLUTION: (I) FROM PLUTOCRACY TO MILI- TARY RULE. ....	417
XXXVII. THE REVOLUTION: (II) THE MILITARY POWER IN CONFLICT WITH THE REPUBLIC. ....	433
XXXVIII. THE FOUNDING OF THE PRINCIPATE; AUGUSTUS AND TIBERIUS. ....	464
XXXIX. FROM PRINCIPATE TO MONARCHY: THE CLAUDIAN AND FLAVIAN PRINCES. ....	480
XL. THE PERIOD OF THE FIVE GOOD EMPERORS. ....	502
XLI. EARLY HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY. ....	521
XLII. THE ABSOLUTE MONARCHY. ....	527
XLIII. SOME ASPECTS OF THE DECLINE. ....	537
XLIV. THE NORTHERN BARBARIANS. ....	544
XLV. ROMAN LIFE UNDER THE LATE EMPIRE. ....	558
XLVI. THE MOHAMMEDANS AND THE FRANKISH POWER. ..	574
INDEX. ....	585

# 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 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 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

Greek  
sources.

See chapter  
vi.

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

Native  
sources for  
Egypt, Bab-  
ylonia, 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 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, fled to India, where they are still settled.

*Ancient  
World, 54.*

642 A.D.

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Herodotus, see p. 75.

Strabo, see p. 76.

## CHAPTER II

### 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 1. 4.  
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  $\Delta$ .

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 eye-witnesses that the Nile owes its rise to summer rains, which



fall in great abundance in Upper Ethiopia, especially in the most distant mountains. When the rains cease, the fulness of the river gradually subsides. This was particularly observed by those who navigated the Arabian Gulf on their way to the Cinnamon country and by those who were sent to hunt elephants, or for such other purposes as induced the Ptolemies to send persons in that direction.

## II. FERTILITY

Farm labor  
is easy.

Herodotus  
ii. 14.

They (the Egyptians) gather the fruit of the earth with far less labor than any other people. . . . For they do not toil in breaking furrows with the plow nor in hoeing it, nor in doing any other work in which men are employed in raising a crop; but when the river of its own accord comes up over the field and waters it and then withdraws to its bed, each farmer sows his field with seed and turns the swine into it; and when the swine have trodden the seed down, he awaits the harvest. Then he threshes by means of the swine and gathers in his crop.

## III. THE PYRAMIDS

The greatest  
pyramid.

Herodotus  
ii. 124.

The remains  
of two cause-  
ways are  
extant.

After Cheops had ascended the throne, he brought the country into every manner of evil. First closing all the temples, he forbade sacrificing there, then ordered all the Egyptians to work for him. Some he bade draw stones from the quarries in the Arabian mountains about the Nile; others were ordered to receive them after they had been carried over the river in boats, and to draw them to the Libyan mountains. And they worked in groups of 100,000 men, each group for three months continually. Ten years of oppression for the people were required for making the causeway by which they dragged the stones.

This causeway which they built was not a much inferior work to the pyramid itself, as it seems to me; for the length is five stades and the breadth ten fathoms; its highest point is eight fathoms; it is made of polished stones and engraved with the figures of living beings. Ten years were required for this, and for the works on the mound, where the pyramids stand, and for the underground chambers in the island, which he intended as sepulchral vaults for his own use, and lastly for the canal which he dug from the Nile. The pyramid was building 20 years; it is square; each side measures 800 feet and its height is the same; the stones are polished and fitted together with the utmost exactness. Not one of them is less than 30 feet in length.

A stade  
(stadium)  
was 600 feet.

No trace of  
the canal can  
now be found.

The pyramid was built in steps, battlement-wise, or as some say, altar-wise. After laying the base, they lifted the remaining stones to their places by means of machines, made of short pieces of wood. The first machine raised them from the ground to the top of the first step; and when the stone had been lifted thus far, it was drawn to the top of the second step by another machine; for they had as many machines as steps, or they lifted the same machine, which was made so as to be easily carried, from one step to the other for the purpose of elevating the stones; for I give both methods as they were told me. At any rate, the highest parts were finished first, then the next, and so on till they came to the parts resting on the ground, namely the base. It is set down in Egyptian writing on the pyramid how much was spent on radishes and leeks and onions for the workmen; and I remember well the interpreter read the sum of 1600 talents of silver. Now if these figures are correct, how much more must have been spent on the iron which with they worked, and on the food and clothing of the workmen, considering the length of

Lifting ma-  
chines.

*Ib.* 125.



time which the work lasted, and an additional period, as I understand, during which they cut and brought the stones, and made the excavations.

#### IV. TREATY BETWEEN RAMESES II AND THE HITTITES

A treaty of peace was signed between Rameses II and the Hittite King, 1272, the earliest treaty now extant. The following is the more important part of it. Breasted, *Records of Ancient Egypt*, iii. pp. 165-174.

The contracting parties.

*Ancient World*, 12.

The treaty which the great chief of the Hittites, Khetasar, the valiant, the son of Merasar, the great chief of the Hittites, the valiant, the grandson of Seplel, the great chief of the Hittites, the valiant, made upon a silver tablet for Rameses II, the great ruler of Egypt, the valiant; . . . the good treaty of peace and of brotherhood, setting peace between them forever. . . .

Renewal of old relations.

Behold, then, Khetasar, the great chief of the Hittites, is in a treaty relation with Rameses II, the great ruler of Egypt, beginning with this day, in order to bring about good peace and good brotherhood between us forever, while he is in brotherhood with me; and I am in brotherhood with him, and I am in peace with him forever. Since Metella, the great chief of the Hittites, my brother, succumbed to his fate, and Khetasar sat as great chief of the Hittites upon the throne of his father, behold, I am together with Rameses-Meriamon, the great ruler of Egypt, and he is with me in our peace and our brotherhood. It is better than the former peace and brotherhood which were in the land. Behold, I, even the great chief of the Hittites, am with Rameses, the great ruler of Egypt, in good peace and in good brotherhood. The children of the children of the great chief of the Hittites shall be in brotherhood and peace with the children of the