

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php

Samajes are found at Bombay, at Ahmedabad, at Poona, at Bangalore, at Madras, at Mangalore, and possibly at other cities too in the west and south. These all have felt more or less of the influence of Keshab Chandra Sen, though they are not all, at the present time, directly connected with the Brahma Samaj of India, as his own society is called. Since the formation by secession of the Sadharan Brahma Samaj, after the Kuch Bihar marriage in 1878, many of the country branches have united with it, and others are independent of either, though holding in the main similar views.

ARTICLE VII.

CTESIAS OF CNIDUS.

BY PROF. H. A. SCHOMP, EMORY COLLEGE, OXFORD, GEORGIA.

PERHAPS no period in history is of more real interest to the historian, antiquarian, or biblical student than the few centuries immediately preceding 400 B.C., when the Greeks made their first invasion of Upper Asia. Precious must be all the knowledge of the East which even the fragmentary records of history and monumental inscriptions have left to us. Most of our knowledge of Upper Asia at this period, at least in so far as profane history is concerned, we owe to Herodotus and Ctesias of Cnidus; both Asiatic Greeks by birth and living almost as contemporaries. The works of Xenophon, it is true, have some value here; but chiefly as the observations of a judicious traveller, and not as the laborious researches of the industrious historian. In his *Anabasis* he holds closely to his theme — the march of the Greeks; and in the *Cyropaedia* he portrays a character too unreal to be historical. As a historian, then, of Persia, Xenophon is of little value. Other Greek writers have touched upon Persian history, but their meagre accounts, while throwing a gleam of light occasionally here and there, oft-times perplex rather than aid us in our efforts to penetrate

the obscurities of that little-known period. Such writers were Hecataeus of Miletus, Charon of Lampsacus, and Hellanicus of Mitylene; but these are of small account as authorities for Persian history.

As to Herodotus, perhaps in no part of his history is he less informed than where he attempts to give us an account of the primitive chronicles of the Assyrians, Medes, and Persians. In Egypt he is an eye-witness of much that he relates, and he has evidently long resided on the banks of the Nile. Not so as to Mesopotamia. It seems absolutely certain that he was never more than once east of the Halys; and then he travelled by a single road to Babylon, if indeed he ever visited this place at all, which has been much questioned. Into Assyria, Media, and Persia proper he evidently did not penetrate, and his chief authority seems to have been a priest of Belus at Babylon. Being a stranger of the hated Greek race, and visiting Babylon during the reign of the son of Xerxes, when the memory of Salamis and Plataea must have been fresh in the minds of the haughty Achaemenidae, Herodotus's opportunities for investigating the sources of Persian, Median, and Assyrian history must have been indeed small. Is it wonderful, then, that a Chaldean gloss should cover his story, since he probably received most of his information from no better authority? But more of this hereafter.

As to Persian authorities for the period in question, outside of inscriptions absolutely nothing exists. Several centuries after the Moslem conquest, the celebrated Ferdusi—the Persian Homer—was employed by the Caliph Mahmoud to collect and weave together such fragments, mostly traditional, of ancient Persian history as still existed. The result was the compilation known as the Shah Nameh, or King-history. But this work is too modern, is based upon too small a margin of fact and has too much Oriental coloring to be of value as an authentic record. In fact, it is impossible to conceive of an impartial history composed under the absolute tyrannies of the East. The true sources of history

would have been found in those royal archives *where* preserved with such care in the monarch's *care*; and woe betide the poor chronicler who should dare to depict truthfully the vices and rottenness of royalty. Who does not remember the vaunted *clemency* of Xerxes in sparing from condign punishment his aged uncle who had remonstrated against the Grecian expedition? To look for reliable history from Persian sources would indeed be absurd.

Nor can we rely on the inscriptions left by the various monarchs of their respective reigns, as giving us a truthful and complete history of their own times. What inscription tells of its author's disasters? Take the celebrated Behistun inscription, the work of Darius Hystaspes; it is but a series of triumphs; and even though it had been prolonged to the end of Darius's reign, would it have mentioned *Marathon*, or the disastrous Scythian expedition?

Under such circumstances how valuable to the world would have been a history compiled by a writer who enjoyed such extraordinary opportunities as Ctesias. For seventeen years he resided at the Persian court as royal physician; and among the extraordinary privileges which were enjoyed by that favored class — the court physicians — Ctesias had the opportunity to search the royal archives, the records of the ancient kings; a privilege never accorded to any other Greek, so far as we know. His history, too, was given to the world beyond the jurisdiction of the Great King; and he could portray the vices of royalty without fear or favor. That he has done this, we need only instance his account of that imperial tigress, Parysatis, and of her husband Darius. From what other author could we have gained so just a conception of the gilded wickedness of the court in all its splendors?

It is by no means improbable that the work of Ctesias might have afforded us much light upon that obscure question, the relation of the captive Jews to the monarchies of Assyria, Media, Babylon, and Persia. True, we ought not to expect any detailed account of one tribe among more than a hundred

subject nations, from a foreign writer who probably knew little of the Jews as a nation; for they were, for the most part, colonized at a distance from the capital; while his place as a physician would have been near the monarch's side; yet, in examining the royal archives from which his Persian history, *Τὰ Περσικά*, was compiled, his eye doubtless fell upon many of those royal decrees issued concerning the exiled seed of Israel. Doubtless he saw the decree of Cyrus for the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem, as well as the decrees to Ezra and Nehemiah concerning the return of the captives; and also that decree by which Ahasuerus — probably Xerxes — sentenced, at Haman's instigation, the whole Jewish race to destruction. And whether Ctesias had mentioned all or any of these decrees, yet a work written under such circumstances and compiled from the annals of a reigning family still on the throne, and less than a century after many of the events narrated concerning the captive tribes, would certainly have contained much which might now shed light upon some of the most interesting though obscure points in biblical or in classical history. We may well agree with Schoell, the historian of Greek literature, that "the loss of few works of antiquity is more to be deplored than that of Ctesias of Cnidus."

"Ctesias, a Cnidian physician," says Suidas, "was the son of Ctesiarachus, or Ctesiochus; and he composed the Persian history in twenty-three books." Eudocia, in her Dictionary, makes the same statement, so nearly in the same words as to arouse more than a suspicion that her account is taken from Suidas. If so, the time of the latter must be put earlier than the twelfth century.

Ctesias was born in Cnidus of Caria, and belonged to the famed family of the Asclepiadae, who boasted of medicine as their own peculiar inheritance. We cannot tell the exact period of his birth, but we know that he was somewhat younger than Herodotus, though he was probably born before Herodotus's death. Perhaps he was about the age of Xenophon, who was born not far from 440 B.C. Of his early

life we know nothing; nor can we tell how or when he came into the service of the Persian monarch. It has been very generally asserted, probably on the authority of Diodorus Siculus, that Ctesias was in the expedition of the Ten Thousand, and was taken prisoner at Cunaxa. But that this statement of Diodorus is wrong is perfectly apparent. Diodorus (Lib. xiv. ch. 46) says, after relating the cruelties inflicted upon the Carthaginian inhabitants of Syracuse and other Sicilian cities, that Ctesias, the author of the Persian history, ends his work at this same year, i.e. the third year of the ninety-fifth Olympiad, B.C. 399–398; having begun it from the times of Ninus and Semiramis. According to Major Rennel's calculation, the battle of Cunaxa was fought September 7, B.C. 401. This would leave only two or three years between Ctesias's assumed capture and the end of his history; yet Diodorus, undoubtedly following Ctesias himself, says that the latter remained seventeen years in Persia. It is perfectly plain from Xenophon that Ctesias was not captured at Cunaxa; for in the *Anabasis*, after mentioning the onset of the Persians with scythe-bearing chariots upon the Greek lines, Xenophon says that the only loss sustained by the Greeks in this charge was the wounding of one man by a bowshot; while another was caught by the chariots as if in a hippodrome, but was not hurt. Immediately after this onset occurred the rencounter between Cyrus and Artaxerxes beyond the Greek left, when Cyrus was killed and Artaxerxes was wounded. Xenophon adds that Ctesias healed the king's wound, which could not have been a severe one, as the king directly after leads his army to plunder the Greek camp. Therefore, at the time when Artaxerxes was wounded, no Greek prisoners had been taken, and Ctesias could not have been present, a newly-made captive, to play the role of royal physician. Besides, as Baehr has remarked in his *Prolegomena* to Ctesias, it is beyond probability that the treatment of the royal wound would have been committed to a stranger just captured from the enemy. Clearly, then, Ctesias must long have resided at the Persian court before

the Anabasis. But how, or when, he came to Persia, we are not informed. Felix Baehr suggests that Ctesias, either of his own accord or involuntarily, had gone to the monarch's court about 416 B.C. He bases his opinion upon the before-mentioned assertion of Diodorus that Ctesias's history ends 399 B.C., to which if seventeen years, the period of his residence in Persia, be added, we have 416 B.C. as the year in which Ctesias came to Persia. One statement, however, which not even the judicious Baehr seems to have regarded, appears to militate against this chronology. Ctesias says that the Greek generals, after long imprisonment, were put to death, Menon excepted; and that *eight years* afterwards palm trees, which Parysatis had secretly planted, appeared at the tomb of Clearchus. If this story, which of course comes through Photius, be true, the end of the Persian history could not be placed earlier than 392 B.C. This still leaves the period of Ctesias's arrival in Persia undetermined. Perhaps we might conjecture, with some probability, that Ctesias was one of those Greeks who, in the days of Darius Ochus, had been taken captive to the Persian court, or had been allured thither by the rewards offered for Greek physicians, after the Egyptian doctors had been dismissed. Many Greeks were attached to the Persian service even to the end of the Achaemenian dynasty; and four thousand Greeks, the royal band, formed the most faithful part of the army of Darius Codomannus in his conflict with Alexander the Great. And yet, judging from the last of the fragments we have of Ctesias, we can but conclude that his remaining in Persia was at least involuntary. His correspondence with Conon, the Athenian admiral, and his appending to Conon's letter to the king the request that he (Ctesias) might be sent to confer with Conon, and the return to his native land which shortly after followed, indicate a preconceived desire on his part to be free from the toils of such splendid, yet treacherous and cruel masters as the Persian kings.

Seven works have been ascribed to Ctesias, but it must be confessed that some of them are of doubtful authority.

Whether some of these works are by our Ctesias, or by another of the same name, or from other authors may perhaps be questioned. These works are: (a) On Mountains, *Περὶ Ὀρῶν*; (b) Periplus of Asia; (c) On Rivers, *Περὶ Ποταμῶν*; (d) On the Tribute of Asia, *Περὶ τῶν κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν φόρων*; also a treatise on medicine. These works, in addition to his two best known-works, the Persica and the Indica, have been attributed to Ctesias. They have been quoted chiefly by the geographers, as Strabo and Stephan of Byzantium; and by the compilers, Suidas, Athenaeus, and Plutarch. The patrilial designation of Cnidian is rarely added by any of these writers to the name of the Ctesias from whom they quote. This, however, can hardly be an argument against the genuineness of the extracts as if not taken from the Cnidian Ctesias. Plutarch, in his Life of Artaxerxes, quotes from Ctesias by name twenty times, without once adding the epithet of Cnidian; Athenaeus mentions Ctesias twelve times, but only once does he use the Cnidian to define his authority more closely; Stephan quotes Ctesias four times, but omits the Cnidus; nor does Strabo more than once or twice in his numerous *excerpta* from Ctesias inform us that his authority was the Cnidian Ctesias. From this it is plain that we can infer nothing conclusive relative to our Ctesias as the author of the numerous works attributed to him. But it seems most unlikely that he should have been the author of so many and such diverse works. A royal physician living at Susa would certainly have had little opportunity to compose works upon topics foreign to his profession, and often concerning the geography, etc., of countries which he probably never visited.

But the two works on Persian and Indian history, τὰ *Περσικά* and τὰ *Ἰνδικά*, are those by which Ctesias is almost exclusively known to the world. These two fragments we owe almost entirely to Photius, the learned Patriarch of Constantinople, A.D. 892. In his Myriobiblon Photius gives us a jumbled list of authors whom he had read, and an epitome of each. Among these authors he gives a synopsis of Ctesias's

Persian and Indian histories; the former of which, we are informed, was written in twenty-three books, and the latter in one book. The first six books of the Persica make what is commonly known as Ctesias's Assyrian history. Only with Cyrus the Great, at the beginning of the seventh book, does the Persian history proper commence. It seems not unlikely that in the age of Photius the Assyriaca and the Persica were considered separate works; at least, the patriarch seems to have read only the Persica, as he gives no epitome of the first six books. This is the more to be regretted, as the few notices or quotations from the Assyriaca, made chiefly by Diodorus Siculus, are so blended with other matter that it is often impossible to determine how much has been taken from Ctesias. Photius, on the other hand, gives a consecutive epitome of an author, so that we are not left in doubt as to his authority.

It must be borne in mind that we have not a single line extant which can be shown to be in Ctesias's own words. He is quoted always in *oratio obliqua* — a fact to be remembered when his style is attacked by modern writers. Photius tells us that Ctesias wrote in the Ionic dialect; but certainly there is but little trace of Ionic in any of the excerpts from his works. The first six books of the Persian history, i.e. the Assyriaca, treat of Assyrian affairs from Ninus to Cyrus the Great. Diodorus, to whom we owe most of what we know of the Assyriaca, dwells mostly upon the first and second books, which belong exclusively to the reigns of Ninus and Semiramis; while from Books III.—VI., the period most interesting of all, we have little besides the episodes of Memnon and Sardanapalus. Books VII.—XIII. treat of Persian history from the beginning of Cyrus's reign to the death of Xerxes. In this part of his history Ctesias is often in conflict with Herodotus. The remaining books, XIV.—XXIII., continue the Persian history to Ctesias's own time (B.C. 399).

Perhaps the veracity of few ancient writers has been more called in question than that of the Onidian historian. His motives for writing, his style, his fidelity, his capacity have

all been vehemently attacked. But even his enemies have been forced to concede his great facilities for investigating the subjects of which he treats; and they have also been compelled to admit that no such opportunity fell to the lot of any other foreigner. His greater credit among the ancients than Herodotus they also reluctantly grant; though they labor diligently to account for such superior authority. It is undeniable that almost all ancient authors followed Ctesias in preference to Herodotus. It is from the school of Herodotus that the most virulent attacks upon his rival have been made in modern times. The followers of Herodotus deem it absolutely essential to the credit of their favorite that that of the Cnidian shall be overthrown. Larcher, Rawlinson, and other followers of the Herodotean narrative freely denounce Ctesias as a most unblushing liar. We would not for a moment undervalue the great services to Oriental history conferred by the brothers Rawlinson, and especially do we acknowledge the great services rendered to history by the laborious researches in the East made by Sir Henry; but it seems difficult to assign a sufficient reason for the bitter attacks upon Ctesias in which the learned antiquarian so often indulges. His hostility to the Cnidian seems to be chronic. Rarely does he mention him without disparaging his authority. Some examples of his not very complimentary allusions to Ctesias are: "His authority carries no weight against the distinct testimony of Herodotus"; "Ctesias, with his usual incorrectness"; "an utterly worthless authority"; "with his usual disregard of truth"; "Few will credit Ctesias where he contradicts Herodotus"; "The list [of kings] of Ctesias bears fraud upon its face." Rawlinson charges Ctesias with seeking to ruin the reputation of his great predecessor, in order to build up his own and cause his history to supersede that of Herodotus, whose charms of composition he felt himself unable to rival. How Rawlinson could presume to judge of the style of Ctesias, of whose works we do not know that we possess a line, is certainly puzzling. Rawlinson furthermore charges Ctesias with de-

liberately planning to contradict Herodotus, whenever possible without danger of detection; and by "most unblushing effrontery he palmed off his history upon the world, and made it substitute that of Herodotus." Yet he is constrained to acknowledge the superior weight of Ctesias's authority among the ancients, but attributes it to lack of materials with which to confute him. He finds some consolation, however, in the fact that Aristotle and the "true" Plutarch disputed the truth of some of Ctesias's statements; but he neglects to tell us that these criticisms were in reference to the Indian history. It really seems ridiculous in Rawlinson, even in a foot note, to quote a Lucian or an Aelian to overthrow Ctesias. Even if these writers were authorities, their evidence would be anything but satisfactory to the Herodotus school; for Lucian, who mentions Ctesias but three times, invariably refers to him along with other fablemongers, as Herodotus, Homer, et al. Lucian, if he be true, is a witness who proves too much for the partisans of Herodotus. It has been a favorite method with the followers of this great author to use the *Indica* to impugn and overthrow Ctesias's credit, and then to discredit him in his Persian history. It will not do to pretend that Herodotus had equal opportunities with Ctesias to know the history of the East. A desire to contradict Herodotus seems but a feeble motive to assign as the basis of Ctesias's history. How could it have prompted the Indian History, when Herodotus wrote no Indian history? or could it have been the cause for writing the last ten books of the Persian history, since Herodotus gives us nothing of Persia later than Xerxes? Most of Ctesias's work, then, could not have been written to "contradict the assertions of his rival." Other grounds, therefore, must be sought to account for that "system of enormous lying by which Ctesias strove to rise into notice."

Most of what we have of the *Indica* is in Photius's epitome. The work is quoted by seven or eight other writers; and it is to be noted that nearly all of these quotations embrace some of the extracts given by Photius. This would indicate

that in Photius we have the substance of the whole work, since so many writers would almost certainly have quoted other portions of the work as well, had it comprehended much beyond what Photius has given us.

We are enabled, then, to form a tolerably fair estimate of the *Indica*, and we find it to be a collection of stories of the reputed animals and vegetable productions of India, that fable-land of ancient story. We repeat, these stories can hardly be Ctesias's own invention, for we have no evidence that he ever visited India. What he describes is most probably but the essence of the wonderful legends popular then in Persia concerning India. That Ctesias was never in India seems to be implied in his own work; e.g. in speaking of a certain Indian tribe, he says that he has seen two women and five men of this nation, doubtless at the Persian court; for we can hardly suppose that had he visited this nation he would have seen no more than seven individuals belonging to it. Merely through reports of travellers, then, he had learned of the enormous reputed width of the Indus. The few wandering travellers and merchants who visited India brought back wonderful stories of what they professed to have seen or heard, and the walls of Persepolis faithfully reflected in their sculptures the legends of the Indus. Not until the expedition of Alexander were the Greeks in any sense familiar with India.

To mention some of the wonders described by Ctesias, we are told that an amphibious worm (*σκόλληξ*) seven cubits long lives in the Indus; that it comes forth at night to prey upon the land, and is caught by hooks, then hung up for thirty days; and that its distilled oil, which will burn any animal or vegetable substance, is carried only to the king. We can hardly resist the conviction that we have here an exaggerated description of the crocodile, of which Ctesias probably knew nothing save by report. Probably from similar sources Ctesias received the story of the Indian mountain tribe, whose women brought forth but once; the children having teeth from birth, and being eight-toed, and

gray-haired until thirty years old, when the hair begins to turn black ; and their ears are large enough to touch behind, and cover the elbows. So, also, he derives the story of the crocotta or dog-wolf, which Pliny calls the hyaena. This was said to imitate the human voice, and lure men at night by its cry to their destruction. Thus, too, were probably derived the stories of the Euboean sheep, which have no bile ; of the Cynocephali, who do not wash, and live on milk, and have long tails ; of the onager (*ὄνος ἄρπιος*), which Baehr believes to be the rhinoceros. So, also, are derived the stories of the trees, as the parebus, which could attract metallic or vegetable substances ; and of the siptachora, which grows along the Hyparchus, overhanging the river, and for one month in the year dropping its tears (*δάκρυα*) of gum into the water, where they harden into the oft-mentioned electrum of the ancients. In the mountains lived a dog-headed race, which had no language, but barked like dogs, and had canine teeth and claws. Here, too, belong the stories of the pygmies and the griffins, both of which play so large a part in the mythology of the East ; and of the fountain whose red (chalybeate) waters compelled him who drank them to reveal all his inner life—a story which strongly reminds us of the Virgin Fountain at Jerusalem, whose waters were used as a test for female chastity. Wonderful stories, too, were told of the little understood magnetic stone, the sesame-emitting serpent ; and of the famous martichoras, the man-eater already alluded to.

We have here alluded to nearly all the marvellous stories of the Indica as given by Photius. Surely, if any more marvellous accounts had been found in the work they would not have been passed over by the wonder-loving Aelian, who has, as usual, extracted the most wonderful stories in the work. The Indica seems, then, to have been written to give the Greeks an account of the popular belief among the Persians in regard to India. But were these stories purely creations of Ctesias's brain? So Rawlinson and the partisans of Herodotus would have us believe. But

there are few of the marvels related which could not now be tallied by similar stories still current in the East. How many devout Mussulmen believe, as firmly as they believe in the tomb of the prophet, that in the depths of Africa a dog-headed race still live—the Beni Kelaab, as they are called by the Moslem pilgrim Haj Hamed; and there dwell the terrible Yam-Yam of the desert, who have tails, though they are good Mussulmen. Haj Hamed says that he was called by them in derision, “the tailless fellow.” When Herodotus mentions among the Libyans a nation dog-headed and having eyes in their breasts, Rawlinson comes to the rescue, and tells us that apes, pongos, or chimpanzees are probably intended. Marco Polo mentions such stories of distant tribes as prevalent in his day.

No little light is thrown upon this subject by the paintings still found at Tschil Minar, the ancient Persepolis. From Ker Porter, who is freely quoted by Heeren, we learn that the large building at Tschil Minar, whose sides are partly formed by the lofty cliffs, has projecting from its sides many fabulous animals. These, like the sphinx, are cut out of the native rock, to which they are still attached. Nearly all the strange animals described by Ctesias are found here. Heeren says that most of these monsters are compounds of lion, ass, horse, rhinoceros, ostrich, eagle, and scorpion. Among the fabulous creatures represented here are a pair of winged animals, having the body of a lion, the feet of a horse, and the head and beard of a man. Although they lack the scorpion tail, yet Heeren thinks that they represent the famed martichoras, the man-eater of the Persian mythology. Here, too, are found griffins, as described by Ctesias,—four-footed, with lion claws, wings upon the back, and head and beak like the eagle. The similarity of form and elements of composition of these creatures point to Bactria, or to Northern India, as the nursing mother of all these prodigies; and Ctesias could hardly have done more than describe that which he saw pictured or sculptured everywhere around him, or heard in popular song and story, of the unknown India.

the land of mystery. Why, then, should his historical fidelity be impeached, and he be regarded as the Munchausen of antiquity? To suppose that he gave no credence to opinions which were held universally around him would be to suppose him infinitely removed beyond his age. Let us remember that his history antedates by two or three generations the conquests of Alexander, which made India something more than the fable-land of the Greeks.

But the injustice done Ctesias becomes more apparent when we observe that the *Indica* is made use of to overthrow the *Persica*, his most important work. To prove him a liar by means of his Indian stories, and thus to invalidate his authority as a Persian historian, has been the tactics of the Herodotean school. What would become of the authority of Herodotus, if he be tried by the same standard? Take, for example, a story or two which the father of history himself tells concerning India, though he usually interposes *λέγουσι* (they say) between himself and public incredulity and criticism when indulging in such stories. Witness his story of the ants in the gold regions of India, which are smaller than dogs, but larger than foxes; which guard the heaps of golden sand which they have thrown up, and these treasures can only be seized in the heat of the day when the ants are asleep. So soon, however, as they awake, they pursue with incredible speed the camel-riders who have robbed them, and who are only saved by the start they have gained. Rawlinson apologizes for his author here by remarking that "it is curious to find the same narrative told gravely by Megasthenes, Dio, Pliny, and others." What would Rawlinson have said of the story of the flying serpents which guard the frankincense trees in Arabia, had it been told by Ctesias? How he might have sneered at Ctesias's story of the fat-tailed Indian sheep, had not Herodotus surpassed it in his account of the long-tailed Arabian sheep, under whose tails trucks must be placed as supports. What if Ctesias, instead of Herodotus, had told the story of the method of obtaining cinnamon? For every marvellous story

in the Indica, we could produce a dozen as wonderful from Herodotus.

Rawlinson exults in Aristotle's rejection of some of Ctesias's Indian stories, but he has nothing to say of the Stagirite's many strictures upon Herodotus. Yet after all who will assume to detract from the great value of the First of historians? After deducting the extravagant stories in which his narrative abounds, which ought, for the most part, to be charged to the traditions, superstitious pride, or ignorance of his informants, how much remains of the old Halicarnassian, which the world would not sell at any price! But why should Ctesias be deprived of the same charity accorded to Herodotus? That his stories pertain to a land of mystery we have already remarked; and how easily they were accepted by the credulity of his age, we may readily believe, when we remember that within the lives of men yet living similar stories have been in vogue concerning interior Africa and the wilds of America.

It has even been sought to array the authority of Xenophon against Ctesias. Thus after Cunaxa, the king sends to the Greeks an embassy, at the head of which was Phalinus, a Zacynthian Greek. It is objected that, as Xenophon does not mention Ctesias as a member of the embassy, Ctesias's assertion that he was present is false. We should rather take Xenophon on the other hand, as a silent witness for Ctesias, since he had read the work of the latter, and would most likely have denied Ctesias's assertion had he known it to be false. Phalinus was an Ionian islander, while Ctesias was an Asiatic Greek who had probably never visited Greece, since the Peloponnesian war had ravaged Greece for many years before Ctesias took up his residence in Persia. Phalinus would be much more likely than Ctesias to be known to the Greeks of the Anabasis. Xenophon, as well as nearly all other ancient writers, quotes Ctesias as a reliable authority; and no ancient author has indulged in strictures upon him who has not been at least as severe upon Herodotus. We have already noticed that the former was anciently in far greater repute than the latter.

The Persian history, commencing with the Seventh Book of the Persica, Photius gives in an epitome of fourteen pages. He probably did not read the first six books which make up the Assyriaca.

Cyrus, Ctesias tells us, was not the grandson of Astyages as Herodotus asserts, nor in anywise related to him by blood. Having taken Ecbatana, Astyages' capital, he captures the king himself, and very considerably espouses his daughter Amytis; her former husband, Spitamas, on a convenient pretext, having been put to death. Astyages, in the new relation of father-in-law to his conqueror, is treated with much consideration by Cyrus, who uses his influence to bring the rebellious Bactrians to submission. Astyages, for political reasons perhaps, is kept at Barcania, at a distance from the court. But once having been sent for by his loving son-in-law, he is starved to death on the road in the desert by Petsaces the eunuch, at the instigation of Oebanes, a noble in high repute with Cyrus. Petsaces atones to Amytis for his part in her father's death, by being blinded, flayed, and crucified.

We need scarcely remark the great difference between this account of Cyrus, and Herodotus's story of the exposure of the infant Cyrus by his grandfather, Astyages, and his final recognition by the latter, and establishment in the Median kingdom. This story is too much for even Rawlinson, who reluctantly admits that notwithstanding the "untrustworthiness of Ctesias," his account is "perhaps to be preferred." Ctesias places the conquest of the Sacae just after Cyrus's establishment in the Median kingdom, though Herodotus places this event after the subjugation of Lydia. Certainly the geographical position of the Sacae, and the circumstances of the later narrative, would rather favor Ctesias's version, and Rawlinson seems to concede as much, since he mentions Ctesias's account without disparagement.

The epitome of Photius is too fragmentary for historical continuity. Relating the invasion of Lydia, Ctesias says that Cyrus took Sardis by the stratagem of raising wooden figures of

the Persians on poles along the walls, and thereby frightening away the defenders. Polyænus, an ancient writer on military tactics, mentions the device with evident approval. Herodotus says that a Persian scaled the wall at a point where the ancient king had not carried around the sacred bull to make the city impregnable. Rawlinson pronounces Ctesias's version "too puerile to deserve a moment's consideration." The followers of Herodotus are inclined to touch lightly upon his story of the placing of Croesus upon the burning pyre (utterly contrary to the customs of the Persians), which was miraculously extinguished. So also in regard to the son of Croesus, who miraculously acquired the power of speech when he saw his father's tortures, although he had formerly been deaf and dumb. Ctesias does not so much stagger our credulity, since he tells us that Croesus's son was deprived of his sight by the conqueror. Surely if our credence be in inverse proportion to the relative amount of the wonderful in each author we must prefer the authority of Ctesias.

Our authors vary widely in regard to the death of Cyrus. According to Ctesias, Cyrus had marched against Amorraeus, king of the Derbicae, and having fallen into an ambush is mortally wounded by an Indian ally of this people. While the issue of the battle is still in doubt, Cyrus's ally, Amorges, comes up with a large body of horse, and terribly defeats Amorraeus, who is killed in the battle. Just before his death Cyrus wills the kingdom to Cambyses, his eldest son; while the second son, Tanyoxares, receives Bactria, Parthia, and Carmania as his satrapy, Amytis being left as queen-regent. Thus Cyrus dies after a reign of thirty years. According to the well-known version of Herodotus, Cyrus, who fell in an expedition against the Scythian Massagetæ, was taken prisoner and beheaded by the queen Tomyris, in revenge for the death of her own son. Cyrus had then reigned twenty-nine years. Even Rawlinson here doubts Herodotus, who, he says, was "unwittingly drawn towards the most romantic and poetic version of each story." Such an "unwitting" pro-

pensity in Ctesias, he would call downright lying. The ancients generally preferred Ctesias's story, and certainly the circumstances of the narrative make his story far more probable. Herodotus says that most of the Persians fell in the battle, and the headless trunk of Cyrus himself was left in the hands of the enemy. Yet, notwithstanding this crushing blow, we have no intimation that the wild Scyths followed up their victory by overrunning the defenceless territory of Cyrus; but, on the other hand, Cambyses, Cyrus's successor, feels himself so secure on the north and east as to lead expeditions against Phoenicia and Egypt. Would this have been the case had the power of Cyrus been broken by the Massagetæ? It is universally agreed that Cyrus was buried at Pasargadae, and Rawlinson is among the foremost defenders of Murg-Aub, the ancient Pasargadae, as the real tomb of Cyrus, as it has been described by the historians of Alexander. But how can this be possible, if the headless, dismembered corpse of Cyrus had been left with the barbarians? Rawlinson here admits that Ctesias is "less untrustworthy" than Xenophon. Certainly Ctesias's statement that the body of Cyrus was sent to Persia for interment, suits all the conditions far better.

Widely do our authors differ in relating the invasion of Egypt under Cambyses. This we might well expect, since their materials were plainly drawn from totally different sources, Ctesias drawing from Persian and Herodotus from Egyptian authorities. Ctesias says that Cambyses conquered the Egyptian king Amyrtaeus through the corruption of one of his eunuchs, and transported him, with six thousand other captives, to Susa, where he was treated with much consideration, and had a royal residence assigned him. All Egypt submits; but meanwhile Sphendadates, the Magian, having been punished by Tanyoxares in Persia, fled to Egypt, and persuaded Cambyses that his brother was plotting against him. Cambyses entrusts to Sphendadates the assassination of Tanyoxares. This task the Magian performs, and then, as he bore a striking resemblance to the slain prince, he gives

himself out as the real brother of Cambyses. For five years this "false Dimitri" was thought to be Tanyoxares, Cambyses conniving for political and domestic reasons. Finally, Amytis having learned the fate of her son, demands the Magian for punishment, and when Cambyses refuses to give him up, she commits suicide. Afterwards Cambyses accidentally cuts himself with a knife, and dies at Babylon after a reign of eighteen (?) years.

According to Herodotus, Cambyses invaded Egypt because the king Amasis had sent him the daughter of Apries, instead of his own daughter to be his wife. The details of the conquest of Egypt are given much more completely by Herodotus than by Ctesias, and we have here but little basis for a comparison between our authors. That Herodotus used Egyptian authorities, we may well assume, if from nothing else than the black features in which the character of Cambyses is presented to us. He is called a madman and a monster guilty of the most atrocious crimes. The Egyptian king was put to death, not carried to Susa, as Ctesias says. Cambyses, according to Herodotus, hears in Egypt of the revolt of the Magi, and hastily mounting his horse, he accidentally wounds himself with his own sword, and dies at Ecbatana in Syria (!) Even the partisans of Herodotus will not accept his story at par. Ctesias's account, taken from the Persian archives, is certainly more to be depended upon than Herodotus's Egyptian authorities, on Persian affairs. Ctesias evidently agrees nearer with the inscription, since he mentions but one Magian, while Herodotus mentions two. No antiquarian has ever yet found the Syrian Ecbatana of Herodotus where Cambyses died. Wide discrepancies in the Persian names are found between our authors. In fact no two authorities have any tolerable agreement with each other in this respect. As all know the difficulty of identifying the Scripture names of Persian, Assyrian, and Median kings, with any lists of those monarchs found in ancient historians, such divergence can hardly be made a ground of complaint against our author. Certainly the narrative of Herodotus partakes far more of the marvelous than that of Ctesias.

As to Darius Hystaspes, both authors mention his Scythian expedition, and both agree that the expedition utterly failed of its object; but Ctesias's story is, as usual, less marvellous than that of Herodotus. They agree in the main features of their accounts of Darius's Greek expedition, which culminated at Marathon. They are not in accord, however, in reference to Datis, the Persian commander at Marathon. Ctesias, if correctly quoted by Photius, declares that Datis fell at Marathon, while Herodotus makes him return to Asia. Baehr pertinently observes that the Persians ought to know best the fate of their own general. We can conceive of no reason why Ctesias should misrepresent facts which might so easily have been established. Osiander suggests that there may be a confusion of names here. At all events, it is singular that Datis so soon disappears from history. He does not again appear in the stirring events of Western Asia. Rawlinson, as usual, taking Herodotus as the standard of truth, tells us that "few will credit Ctesias where he contradicts Herodotus." Ctesias gives Darius a reign of thirty-one, Herodotus of thirty-six years. Of course the statement that Darius began to reign at twelve years of age is an error of the copyists, to whom, doubtless, ought to be charged many other discrepancies in numbers now attributed to the Onidian historian.

Xerxes, before starting on the Greek expedition, finds it necessary to punish the revolted Babylonians. The siege of Babylon, as given by Ctesias, is far more trustworthy than the account of Herodotus, whose strange tissue of narrative, miracle, and chronology is too much for even Rawlinson, who acknowledges that it has small claims to be considered historic truth. As to Xerxes's invasion of Greece, our authors agree in the most essential features of their narratives, but vary widely in the minor parts of the history. Ctesias puts the army of Xerxes at eight hundred thousand, and he gives him one thousand triremes. Herodotus estimates the army at one million seven hundred thousand foot, and eighty thousand horse, besides camels and chariots. He reckons the

triremes at one thousand two hundred and seven, and all the ships at three thousand. In some minor particulars of the description of the battle at Thermopylae, our authors vary, and Ctesias places the expedition against Plataea before the sack of Athens and battle of Salamis, while Herodotus places it after. Herodotus says that Mardonius was killed at Plataea; Ctesias says that he was wounded there, and some time after was killed by a hailstone at Delphi. Herodotus gives the Spartans a much larger army at Plataea, but at Salamis he gives the Greeks only three hundred ships, while Ctesias gives them seven hundred. In numbers our authors are especially out of agreement. At this day it is impossible to decide as to their relative accuracy. Certain it is that Herodotus gives numbers very carelessly, and oftentimes he cannot be brought into harmony with himself, so self-contradictory are many of his estimates. Ctesias is certainly more consistent with himself in this particular. One reason doubtless for the discrepancy between the two writers is, that Herodotus drew from Greek sources, and Ctesias from Persian, for their several accounts of the invasion of Greece.

It certainly is singular that Herodotus should make no mention of the death of Xerxes, who was killed by a conspiracy of Artapanes and Aspanithrus, for this event must have had no unimportant bearing upon Greek affairs subsequent to the invasion.

After the Greek expedition the histories of our authors no longer follow the same line of events. Herodotus concerns himself henceforth with Grecian affairs, while Ctesias continues (Books xiv.-xxiii.) the story of the Achaemenian house. We find little here on which to compare the respective value of our writers. Only when the government of the Great King comes into collision with the Greek Asiatic states, do the Greek writers afford us any light upon Persian affairs. Doubtless very much valuable information would be supplied at this point had we but the last ten books of the Persica entire.

With the death of Xerxes, the thirteenth book closes. In the epitome which Photius gives us of the last ten books, we

are told that Xerxes was succeeded by his son Artaxerxes (the Long-handed), who does not fail to take ample vengeance upon the murderers of his father and brother. Under his long reign the principal role is played by Megabyzus, the husband of his sister Amytis. Bactria and Egypt successively revolt, but both are finally subdued, though the conquest of the latter is accomplished by Megabyzus with great difficulty, and only after the loss of a multitude of men; Achaemenides, the brother of the king, being among the slain. Six thousand of the Egyptians' Greek allies surrender, upon promise of being restored to their native land. The mother of the king (here also called Amytis [?]) seeks for five years to avenge the death of her son Achaemenides, and finally gets Inarus and fifty of the Greeks into her power and crucifies them. Megabyzus, disgusted at this breach of faith, goes away to Syria, raises the standard of revolt, and defeats two armies which had been sent against him. The king at last, finding himself obliged to treat with his powerful subject, begs him, with many promises of pardon and reward, to come to court. Megabyzus, who well knew the royal faithlessness, for a long time turns a deaf ear, but finally yields, to the king's entreaties. We cannot wonder that he should distrust his royal master, who had once ordered his head to be struck off because he had anticipated the king in striking down a lion which was in the act of seizing the latter. Megabyzus, after years of exile and strange fortune, is once more restored to court, and dies a natural (!) death at an advanced age. The infidelity of his wife Amytis, even in the lifetime of her father Xerxes, had been a source of grievance to him; and this conjugal faithlessness finally culminates in the episode of the physician Apollonides of Cos.

The story of the reign of Artaxerxes continues through four books of Ctesias. After a reign of forty-two years he is succeeded by his son Xerxes, who, after reigning only forty-five days, is murdered by his illegitimate half-brother Secundianus (or Sogdianus). But he, in his turn, is slain, after a reign of six and a half months, by his brother Ochus, who

had married his half-sister Parysatis—all of them being children of Artaxerxes. Ochus assumes the name of Darius, and his wife Parysatis, a perfect Jezebel in cruelty, becomes his chief adviser. Before ascending the throne she had borne him two children, Amistris and Arsaces, afterwards Artaxerxes Mnemon. Afterwards she bears many children, of whom Cyrus (the Younger) is the first. The king's brother Arsites and his cousin Artuphius, son of Megabyras, revolt; but are both taken and, at the instigation of Parysatis, put to death, despite the royal oath and promise of protection. Revolts seem to have been the rule under the kingdom of this perfidious monarch. A fit and most crafty tool in his hands was the infamous Tissaphernes, whose treachery is so conspicuous in the *Anabasis*. His readiest means for circumventing an armed foe or a too dangerous rival were perjury and bribery, in all of which he was most heartily abetted by his unprincipled sovereign. Nearly all who trusted to their false oaths were exposed to a cruel death; and high rewards were paid to traitors, as in the case of Lycon, who received cities and lands as the price of his treason.

Artaxerxes, son of Ochus, marries Stateira, daughter of Idernes, and his daughter Amistris is married to Idernes's son Teritouchmes. The latter, however, who loves Roxana, cordially hates his princess wife, and seeks to destroy her. But the plot ends in his own destruction and in that of his family; for his savage mother-in-law, Parysatis, orders his mother, two brothers, and two sisters to be buried alive; and the unfortunate Roxana is cut to pieces without even the previous formality of being put to death; and Stateira is only saved by the prayers and tears of her husband Artaxerxes; the kind-hearted Ochus, meanwhile, warning his affectionate spouse that she will one day repent of this mercy. This closes the eighteenth book of the *Persica*.

Ochus dies after a reign of thirty-five years (a number perhaps too great), and is succeeded by Artaxerxes, who commences his reign by cutting out Oudias's tongue, at

Stateira's instigation. The story of Cyrus's revolt, expedition, and death at Cunaxa is told in language so like Xenophon that it must be faithfully accurate if neither copied from the other, and we have no intimation that Xenophon anywhere distrusts Ctesias.

Parysatis, though grieving for Cyrus, her favorite son, never forgets to take vengeance for him so far as she is able. Having beaten the king at dice (*κίβους*) she, Herodias-like, demands, according to the previous agreement, possession of Bagapates, who at the king's command had cut off the head and hand of Cyrus. The king, too *honorable* to refuse, gives up Bagapates, who is first flayed and then crucified by the royal tigress. This closes the nineteenth and twentieth books.

In the last three books we are told how Tissaphernes lays treacherous plots to destroy the Greeks, and through Menon's treachery he gets their generals into his power, though Clearchus from the first had apprehended mischief. The Greek generals being in chains, Parysatis shows them much kindness, remembering that they had espoused the cause of her favorite son; and she would have succeeded in liberating Clearchus but for the influence of Stateira, who persuades the king to put him to death; and all the generals die save the treacherous Menon. Over the body of Clearchus the wind heaps a mound of sand, and after eight years palm-trees, which had been secretly planted by order of Parysatis, appear.

The mutual suspicions and hatred between Stateira and her mother-in-law increase. But finally, notwithstanding all her precautions, the former is circumvented by the wiles of Parysatis and poisoned. This causes bitter hostility between the king and his mother, and the latter is removed from the court.

The epitome closes with a mere mention of mutual embassies, negotiations, and intrigues, to which the king, Evagoras, the Athenian admiral Conon, and the Lacedaemonians were parties; and Ctesias acts as royal ambassador. Finally, he mentions his own return to his native city, Onidus, and

appends an itinerary of stations and distances from Ephesus to Bactria and to India, with a catalogue of kings from Ninus to Artaxerxes.

The Persian history is quoted by not less than ten Greek authors, by not one of whom is its accuracy questioned, save in the single instance, already mentioned, of Plutarch. This author distrusts Ctesias's statement that he was present with Phalinus in the embassy to the Greek camp, which statement we have already considered.

Thus far we have omitted to notice the first six books of the Persica, which part is commonly known as the Assyriaca, since this is in no such complete condition as even the Persica. Photius has omitted all account of the Assyriaca, which he probably had never read; and this last fact awakens the suspicion that it had either perished or was considered by the scholiasts of that era as a separate work. The little that we have of the Assyrian history we owe almost entirely to Diodorus Siculus. By this author Ctesias is put at great disadvantage, since he is quoted in fragments, and these are sometimes so interwoven with other authorities in the text of Diodorus as to be indistinguishable. The Assyriaca is not, then, so definite as the Persica. In the latter, Ctesias is the historian; in the former, he plays but a subordinate part in the scheme of another writer. It is to be regretted that Diodorus's quotations belong chiefly to the first and second books of the Assyriaca, while of the long interval from Ninyas to Cyrus he has given us but one or two episodes.

In his second book Diodorus quotes from Ctesias the account of the conquests of Ninus, which included most of Asia, from the Indus to the Hellespont. After his conquests Ninus returns and builds Nineveh. From Ascalon he had brought the beautiful Semiramis, who becomes his wife, and bears him Ninyas. Ninus leads a great army against Bactria. He dies, and is buried by Semiramis in the palace; and a grand mound, visible from a great distance,—a kind of acropolis,—is erected over him. Semiramis, prompted by ambition, builds Babylon, employing two millions of men in

the work. The wall is three hundred and sixty stadia in length, and of immense height. Sixty plethra were left between the houses and the wall. Diodorus draws from Ctesias his account of Semiramis's great military expeditions against Media, India, Ethiopia, and other countries. Semiramis dies at the age of sixty-two, having reigned forty-two years. Some accounts fable that she was changed into a dove after death; the first element, *Semir*, in her name being the name for the dove. After his mother's death Ninyas withdraws from public gaze, and lives licentiously with his concubines. The succession of Assyrian kings embraces a list of not less than thirty monarchs, and some of the accounts give over forty rulers up to Sardanapalus, the last king; and a period of over thirteen hundred years intervenes for the duration of the monarchy. According to Syncellus the Trojan war happened in the reign of Teutames, the twenty-sixth Assyrian king. The number of kings from Ninus is given variously at from thirty to more than forty, and the total of their reigns at from thirteen hundred and six to thirteen hundred and sixty years.

The era of Sardanapalus and the length of the Median kingdom which succeeded the Assyrian present the greatest difficulties. Ctesias gives ten Median kings to the time of Astyages, embracing a period of two hundred and eighty-two years. Herodotus gives four kings and one hundred and fifteen years. Baehr regards it as useless (*perdidisse oleum*) to attempt to reconcile the two authors in their chronology. Diodorus probably derived from Ctesias the stories of Parsoudes, Zarina queen of the Sacae, and of the war between the Medes and Sacae. But here we tread on uncertain ground.

Nowhere has the veracity of Ctesias been more strongly impugned than on the side of his chronology. Rawlinson says that since the late discoveries in Babylonia and Persia "few will be disposed to give credit to Ctesias." Let us use Rawlinson himself as our cicerone among the monuments of Assyria, and surely a better guide could hardly be found in this

field, which he so thoroughly explored. Of the later labors of Smith and others in this field we need not now speak, particularly as they afford thus far but little help to the subject in hand.

The inscriptions give us little light on the subject of chronology, or even of connected history. They seldom record anything of the reigns of other kings than those who had them inscribed. The Behistun, the longest of the inscriptions, the work of Darius Hystaspes, is little more than a list of the rebellions against Darius, all of which he subdued "by the grace of Ormuzd." No chronological data are furnished, save the days of the months on which the battles were fought. The reigns of Cambyses and the Magian are alluded to, but only as introductory to the reign of Darius. About the only item of any value to chronology in the standard inscription of Nebuchadnezzar is that that monarch was the son of Nabopolassar. The same utter silence as to time-reckoning we observe in the inscriptions in the temple of Borsippa (Birs Nimrod), thought by many to be the temple of Belus described by Herodotus. Nor are we aided any in this respect by the tomb inscription at Nakshi-Rustam. In fact, the annals of many of the kings seem to purposely avoid all allusion to other kings, perhaps that the glory of these monarchs may not suffer from comparison with their predecessors.

When we are told that the chronology of Ctesias is irreconcilable with the Scriptures, with Herodotus, or with any other ancient writer, let us remember that in nothing can we find so many mistakes as in the numbers and chronology of the writers of antiquity. Nothing was easier than for errors to occur in numbers, which were very commonly represented by symbols, and could be easily changed by the mere dotting of the stylus through the ignorance of transcribers. Perhaps few ancient authors have suffered more than Ctesias from this source of error, especially as he comes to us entirely at second-hand, having twice run the gauntlet of the copyists.

If we seek confusion worse confounded, we need but

attempt to unravel the web of Assyrian, Median, and Babylonian chronology as we gather it from ancient authors. Neglecting the incredible periods of Berosus, we may commence with Ninus. But was Ninus the first Assyrian king? So says Diodorus, doubtless following Ctesias; but the majority of authorities give the first place to Belus, father of Ninus. Africanus and Castor call Belus the first king; but the time-reckoning commences with Ninus, probably on account of his extensive conquests. From Josephus we might conclude that Belus was the divinity from whom the Assyrians derived their line of kings. But what was the era of Ninus? Apollodorus places the first four kings of Assyria between A.M. 3216–3403. The flood, according to the Seventy, occurred A.M. 2242; the birth of Abraham, according to Eusebius, A.M. 3184; and the confusion of tongues, A.M. 2776. Africanus puts Abraham's emigration, A.M. 3277; but the Seventy place his birth A.M. 3313. Adding Cainan, = one hundred and thirty years, to Eusebius's list, we have Abraham's birth A.M. 3314, within one year of the time assigned by the Seventy. Castor makes Aegialeos, king of Sicyon, contemporary with Ninus, and also with Nahor, the grandfather of Abraham. From all the tables of these ancient authors Abraham was born a century or two after Ninus. If we place the commencement of our era at about A.M. 5500, we have not less than two thousand two hundred years, beginning with Ninus, in which to place the Assyrian, Babylonian, Median, Persian, and Greek kingdoms in Asia. But how shall this interval be apportioned among the several kingdoms? Here we have to thread a labyrinth lighted only here and there by a stray gleam from inconstant lights. Diodorus makes Sardanapalus the thirty-fifth king from Ninus, and he gives the kingdom a duration of more than thirteen hundred years. But he mentions only one or two of the intervening kings, speaking particularly of Teutames, the twenty-sixth king, who sent Memnon to help Priam, who may have been his tributary vassal. The Assyrian empire had then existed more than a thousand years. This, too,

would place its origin not later than 2200 B.C., which agrees tolerably well with our former reckoning. According to the tables of Syncellus, Troy was destroyed about A.M. 4328 or 4330, and one thousand and sixty years after Ninus began to reign. In the time of Metraeus, a thousand years after Semiramis, occurred the Argonautic expedition. This, too, would agree substantially with the era of Ninus, i.e. not far from 2200 B.C. Ctesias gives thirteen hundred and six or thirteen hundred and sixty years for the Assyrian kingdom, three hundred and seven years for the Median; and from Ptolemy's Canon we have two hundred and twenty-eight years to the Persian empire, and two hundred and ninety-three to the Macedonian up to Arsaces the Parthian.

When did Sardanapalus perish? The tables place the event at about 875 B.C. But the captivity under Shalmanezar is put ninety-six years before the Median conquest of Arbaces, and two hundred and seventy-six years are assigned for Median dominion. From Nabonassar, 747 B.C., to Alexander, according to Ptolemy's astronomical canon, four hundred and twenty-four years intervene, and two hundred and nine of these are computed to the accession of Cyrus, who is reckoned as the twenty-first king in this succession, while sixteen of the preceding kings (one hundred and twenty-four years) are counted as Chaldean, and of the other four preceding kings the seventeenth is Nabopolassar or Nebuchadnezzar, and the twentieth is Nabonadius or Astyages. How can we apportion these kings among Assyrians, Medes, Babylonians, or Chaldeans (?)? Where are two ancient authorities which are agreed? Herodotus allows the Median kingdom one hundred and twenty-eight years, to which possibly he intends to add twenty-eight years of Scythian dominion; altogether one hundred and fifty-six years. He gives five hundred and twenty years for the Assyrian kingdom, Berosus gives five hundred and twenty-six years. Ctesias allows two hundred and eighty-two years for the Median kingdom, or if we include Astyages, three hundred and seventeen years. Rawlinson says that the statements of both Ctesias and Herodotus "are

alike invalidated by the monuments," but he does not neglect to add that Ctesias's account is a mere fabrication of the writer, while Herodotus was doubtless "imposed upon" by a "fictitious narrative" palmed off upon him by "Median vanity"—a fair sample of this critic's method of dealing with the two writers. He claims truth for Herodotus though he admits the utter impossibility of reconciling his contradictions; yet he admits from Abydenus's story of the burning of Sardanapalus's palace, that there *may be* in the "perverted account of Ctesias no small admixture of truth"; possibly also "the minor features of his story may be true"; and he, "while distorting names and dates, may have preserved in his account of the fall of Nineveh, a *tolerably correct* statement of the general outline of the event." After all the efforts to reconcile Herodotus with himself, Rawlinson acknowledges that "no dependence at all can be placed upon Herodotus's chronological scheme for historical purposes." Why then the bitter denunciations of the Cnidian? Certainly all the researches of the commentators on Herodotus have left at least as irreconcilable difficulties, both in the chronology and statements of their favorite, as can be shown in the history of Ctesias, transmitted to us at second-hand. That Ctesias is strictly accurate would be too much to claim for him, or for any other ancient writer on Oriental affairs; but that he has been the wilful, malicious, falsifier which the Herodotus school assert, we must deny. Compared with Herodotus's "mistakes" and "misinformations," the preponderance of authority would seem rather to belong to Ctesias, even from Rawlinson's own showing.

Of whatever errors in names and in details Ctesias may have been guilty, the great cardinal statements of his Assyrian history seem trustworthy, even from the evidence of the monuments which are appealed to to overthrow his authority. That there was a great empire on the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates at least two thousand years before our era, under whatever name it was called, is abundantly established both from the monuments and from Berosus. That

this empire was Chaldean is certainly doubtful. The ethnic distinctions of that early day are but rudely preserved, and no man can decide in how far Assyrian, Chaldean, and, afterwards, Median lists of kings have been confounded. No two independent lists of monarchs can be harmonized. And the much-vaunted Berosus is very far from being in accord with the inscriptions. The royal names are so at variance in the lists that they appear to have been assumed according to the caprice of the monarchs or of the writers who have professedly written of them. What effrontery to demand of Ctesias an accordance with authorities so at variance among themselves, and then to denounce him as a liar, because, forsooth, he has not agreed with all! Rawlinson's canon of criticism as to Ctesias seems to be: Disagreement of Ctesias with any authority; ergo, Ctesias has falsified. Herodotus, under similar circumstances, has been "misled," "misinformed," or "mistaken." How is it possible for so eminent a scholar to allow his prejudice to carry him to such bounds? *Tantaene animis doctis irae*

Not less than a thousand years after the establishment of an empire in Mesopotamia occurred the Trojan war, and more than three centuries later happened the overthrow of this empire under the effeminate Sardanapalus, when the rule of the Medes succeeds. Are not these essential features of Ctesias's narrative in the main correct; and are they not in reasonable harmony even with the inscriptions?

But much weight is claimed for the account of Berosus. It is assumed that as a priest of Belus at Babylon his opportunities for knowing the history and chronology of his country were exceptionally good. We find Berosus, as Josephus says, vehemently censuring the Greek historians, because they attributed the building of Babylon to the Assyrians. Berosus will acknowledge no mother-land for Babylon; but, on the other hand, claims precedence for her over all lands. He professes to derive his information from carefully preserved records in the archives of the temple of Belus. Reckoning by the *sor*, *ner*, and *soos*, he assigns to the ten antediluvian

kings of Babylon a period of four hundred and thirty-two thousand years; then eighty-six Chaldean kings aggregate a reign of thirty-four thousand and eighty years; after whom Median, Chaldean, and Assyrian dynasties succeed in no very fixed order for an interval of fifteen (or eighteen) centuries. We find Berosus singularly jealous for Chaldean antiquity; but who will pretend to accept as historical his preposterous claims? The Chaldees as a nation enter the field of history in the ninth or eighth century before Christ; when they emerged from the country near the Persian Gulf, and, with Merodach-Baladan at their head conquered Babylonia. What would the detractors of Ctesias say had he made a statement so wide of the truth as Berosus has, even in his post-diluvian Chaldean kingdom of thirty-four thousand years? Yet Berosus is claimed as agreeing, for the most part, with the monuments. His chief aim is to exalt the glory and antiquity of the Chaldees; and we can easily see here his reluctance to admit claims for this purpose arising from any other quarter. Can his wild reckoning be harmonized with the inscriptions? None of Herodotus' followers dare follow Berosus until he descends to a period where they think they have some agreement with the former's account. But was not the enormous chronology of Berosus very possibly his own creation? Had such records existed at the temple of Belus in the days of Herodotus, would he not have given us some mention of it? Perhaps Berosus, or some of the later priests, coined the list in order to make stronger their nation's claim to antiquity. If Berosus may be trusted, Nabonassar collected and destroyed the annals of his predecessors, that time might henceforth be reckoned from his own era. Be this as it may, Berosus, during the five hundred and twenty-six years of Assyrian empire, follows the line of Assyrian, and not that of the Babylonian kings. But what of Ninus and Semiramis? Berosus rejects them altogether as founders of Babylon; yet Ninus is accepted all but universally by ancient authorities as a founder of empire, whose date cannot be later than 2000 B. C. Even Abydenus in one

place accepts Ninus as the sixth from Belus, as Moses Chorenensis states. Ptolemy's astronomical canon commences with Nabonassar, who is placed four hundred and twenty-four years before Alexander. But Ptolemy renders us no help as to the remote era of Ninus. We wonder how the story of Ninus and Semiramis ever acquired such a foothold in the East. Dalberg has shown that a kind of worship of Semiramis prevailed through nearly all Asia. Is it possible that such myths as those of Ninus and Semiramis could have been palmed off upon the Orientals when they had no ground in fact as their basis? Have mythologies been the pure creations of fable without any reference to real personages or events? Could such general credence have obtained in the few centuries intervening between Herodotus and the Ninus from whom he derives the line of Lydian kings down to Candaules, who "happened to be in love with his own wife"? It seems incredible. To reject the story of Ninus is somewhat like rejecting as pure myths the stories of a flood and a Noah, or of an Abraham, or a Sesostris, or any other of those famous names about which cluster so many of the traditions of the East.

The Ninus of Herodotus cannot surely be the founder of the Assyrian kingdom. Outside of Berosus and his followers who strove to obliterate every record of Assyrian antiquity and dominion, no respectable writer is found among the ancients who denies the place of Ninus and Semiramis in history; and the motives of Berosus are too apparent to be doubtful. Who that reads his three books of fable will venture to rely upon his chronology, and especially when he remembers the priest's prejudice and pride of race? Surely his boasted agreement with the inscriptions affords small foundation for so large a structure as Rawlinson has reared upon it.

Putting the foundation of the "new" Babylonian kingdom at the "era of Nabonassar," 747 B.C., it is assumed that the chronology of Ctesias cannot be brought into harmony with this date. If to the 747 years B.C. we add Ctesias's thirteen hundred and sixty years of Assyrian empire we come

to the era 2107 B.C., a date not very far removed from Ninus's era, and that too without allowing any interim between Nabonassar and the overthrow of Nineveh; a most uncertain epoch, which must have occurred in the preceding century. Before Nabonassar great confusion of dates certainly existed. The element "Nin" itself in the name seems to point to Ninus as the founder or augments of Nineveh. The antiquity of Nineveh cannot be questioned. In Genesis we are told that "out of that land (Shinar) went forth Asshur and built Nineveh." A great city even in the days of Moses, it is incredible that it should have first become important, if not have taken its origin, in the twelfth or the thirteenth century B.C. That Ninus's conquests may have extended from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean is not very improbable; for conquest in that early day did not imply any such permanence of occupation as in modern times. It was rather an overrunning and pillaging of a country, as e.g. the expedition of Chedorlaomer. No abiding conquest could be made among a pastoral people like those of Syria. It is hardly safe to hazard even a theory as to the immense armies which Ninus led. Ctesias evidently followed the accounts he had received, and Orientals are famous for their lack of accuracy in their estimates. Yet we, under a modern civilization, can hardly understand how readily immense hordes of men could be moved in ancient times. By rejecting authorities on such grounds as these we should sap the foundation of all history; for the apparently fabulous is an element in nearly all the old chroniclers.

That Babylonia was an older country than Assyria the record in Genesis plainly declares. From it went forth the builders of Nineveh and Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, the "beginning of Nimrod's kingdom." All ancient authorities attribute great antiquity to Babylon, and many of them say that it was built or magnified by Ninus or Semiramis. Whether or not Nabonassar destroyed the annals of preceding kings, we, at all events, have to look to Assyria for most of the history of that remote period. That a Chal-

dean priest should have been hostile to the story of Assyrian supremacy, and have forged a line of Chaldean kings for the space of near a half million of years, ought to go far to destroy his authority in history.

It ought not to surprise us that the Bible makes so little mention of either Babylon or Nineveh until the time of the prophets. We may remember that Memphis and Thebes, great and powerful as they were, come in for but little notice in the Scriptures, though they were so accessible to Palestine. As to the discrepancy charged between Ctesias's dates and those of Holy Writ, this disagreement is more apparent than real. All accounts, sacred and profane, point to the final destruction of Nineveh as occurring about 625 B.C. Esarhaddon is the last Assyrian king mentioned in the Scriptures: perhaps the only one who reigned at Babylon. He died probably about 660 B.C. It is asserted that up to this date, the Scriptures speak only of an Assyrian kingdom, and therefore Ctesias's Median monarchy of not less than two hundred and eighty-two years, which intervenes between the fall of Assyria and the rise of Persia under Cyrus, 558 B.C., must cover part of the time in which Assyria was still flourishing. Herodotus mentions four Median kings who reigned about one hundred and fifty years in all, which dating back from Cyrus would place the establishment of the Median monarchy at about 708 B.C.; while Ctesias's estimate would place this event more than a century earlier; both chronologies far antedating the vulgar era of Assyria's destruction in 625 or 626 B.C. It is evident that the rise of the Median kingdom must have long preceded the final destruction of Nineveh. At least two of Herodotus's Median kings, and six from the list of Ctesias, must have reigned while Nineveh was still in existence. Yet Media was a subject province of the Assyrians, inasmuch as they used it as a place of deportation for the captive Jews. If we compare the records of the Assyrian invasions in the Books of Kings and Isaiah, as well as the prophecies of Jeremiah and Nahum, who preceded the fall of Nineveh, with the prophecies of Ezekiel, who lived subse-

quent to that event, we must allow that the common era of 625 B.C. for the final overthrow of Assyria is substantially correct. This would give less than seventy years for Median ascendancy, and even then it would have been coeval with Babylonian dominion as re-established by Nebuchadnezzar. It is impossible to resist the conclusion that Media was long a dependency of Assyria; perhaps like Judea permitted to retain its own kings, and acknowledging its subjection by the payment of tribute and by military service. When the Medes came into power they may from national vanity have claimed all their tribute-paying princes as independent monarchs. And thus Ctesias, deriving his information from Medo-Persian sources may not have distinguished between independent and tributary kings.

We still have what appears to be too early a date assigned by Ctesias to the Median conquest of Assyria in the time of Sardanapalus 875 (?) B.C., and therefore too great a length for the Median or Middle kingdom, which fills the chasm between the fall of Assyria and the rise of Persia; for Babylon's place in the interim seems hard to determine. In the Scriptures the transition from Assyrian to Babylonian supremacy is not marked. With Esarhaddon (660 or 670 B.C.) Assyria, still in the zenith of her glory, passes out of view; and with Nebuchadnezzar 626 B.C., Babylon, already mistress of the East, is suddenly ushered upon the stage of history. But what revolutions must have taken place while the curtain was drawn.

We should honestly confess that the two or three centuries preceding Cyrus are involved in hopeless confusion. Assyria, Media, and Babylonia, flit like shadows across a stage too dimly lighted for us to make out their national outlines. Herodotus considers Nineveh and Babylon both as Assyrian, and this is perhaps the best method of reconciling some of the difficulties; for even if we turn to the Canon of Ptolemy, so accurate in dates, we find Nabonassar (747 B.C.) called a Chaldean, though ruling Assyrians; and he is made the first of a series of kings, of which Nebuchadnezzar is counted as

the fifteenth, and Cyrus the nineteenth ; Assyrian, Chaldean, and Persian being thrown together as if belonging to the same dynasty, and no account whatever is made of the Median kingdom, which has been overlapped in the compilation. We are driven unavoidably to the conclusion that the Assyrian and Babylonian or Chaldean empires were reckoned as essentially one in which the ethnic components alternately dominated. Bitter hostility certainly existed between the two nations. It was from Assyria that Babylon was besieged, and by Babylon and Media, Nineveh was finally destroyed. The Chaldean priest Berosus is himself a witness to this deep national hate and jealousy. For, several centuries after both cities had become integral parts of the Persian empire, and all had been subjected to the Greeks, he bitterly complains that Greek writers should attribute so high an antiquity to Assyria.

As to the Scriptures, it has already been shown that a marked era exists among the prophets. In Isaiah it is Assyria that is predominant, and all military expeditions proceed from Assyrian plains ; but Babylon is at the same time great and powerful. It is the "golden city," the "beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, the glory of kingdoms," and its king Merodach-Baladan is a contemporary of Hezekiah, and of the conquering Sennacherib — the latter, perhaps his liege lord. Hosea, Jonah, Micah, and Nahum precede the fall of Assyria. Zephaniah and Habakkuk are contemporary, and Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel are subsequent. Among the last three, we find no allusion to Assyria save as to a destroyed kingdom, and Babylon is all supreme. By the earlier prophets the Medes are usually enumerated as one of the nations subject to Assyria. Babylon is reckoned in the Bible a great city, which goes back for its origin to the primitive ages of the race ; and Nineveh has an antiquity almost as great. The kings of Nineveh appear to have long ruled over Babylon, and at least one of them, Esarhaddon, dwelt there, and the destruction of Nineveh finally comes from some of the subject nations, and from a rival city. Cer-

tainly Berosus, of the "bitter and hasty nation" of the Chaldees, will give us nothing which may add to Assyrian glory. Thus he does not even mention Sennacherib's conquest of Babylon and his establishment of Belibus upon the throne, events which are given in detail in Sennacherib's annals. Is Berosus entitled to rank as an authority in reference to Assyria, and ought the mere fact that he assigns five hundred and twenty-six years to the Assyrian kingdom, therein nearly agreeing with Herodotus, to be accepted as in any wise conclusive of his integrity?

This much-vaunted agreement between Herodotus and Berosus does not seem so remarkable when we remember that Herodotus appears to have received most of his account of Babylon and Assyria from one or more of the priests of the Temple of Belus at Babylon, of which temple two centuries later, Berosus was also a priest. That these Chaldean priests with their national antipathies should have assigned as late a date as possible to Assyrian power, seems more than probable; and Herodotus's story bears too strong a Chaldean coloring to be concealed. It was very easy for Berosus to agree with an account current among the priests of the temple and transmitted to their successors, and also to agree with Herodotus whom he had undoubtedly read, as he was familiar with Greek writers. The circumstance certainly does not add to the trustworthiness of this part of Herodotus's history.

It seems likely from Herodotus that no inconsiderable period elapsed after the Median revolt from Assyria before Deioces obtained the government. Probably the way had been paved for him by a long period of anarchy. He must have begun his reign about 710 B.C. If we allow upwards of a century for the preceding period of anarchy and lawlessness, which is probably not too short a time, we would be brought back to about the time when Ctesias places the death of Sardanapalus and the capture of Nineveh. At this first capture Nineveh seems not to have suffered any great destruction. The flood in the river had broken down part of the

wall, and the palace was burned by the monarch himself in his self-destruction ; but the city did not seem to have suffered very seriously. The calcined bricks still found in the ruins of Sardanapalus's palace show that fire was the agent in its destruction ; a fact which causes even Rawlinson to admit that Ctesias's story *may perhaps* "have no inconsiderable admixture of truth." Assigning this taking of Nineveh to the ninth century B.C., and allowing for Median revolutions and anarchy of Upper Assyria about a century and a half, we have an interval during which Nineveh regained, in part at least, her former splendor.

We are told that Sargon, about 720 B.C. began to repair the decayed walls, and under his son Sennacherib the city was raised to great power. But this spark of ancient life, though brilliant, gleamed but for a brief period. In less than a century afterwards Nebuchadnezzar utterly destroyed the city of Ninus, which never again aspired to dispute the sway of empire with its haughty rival on the lower Euphrates ; and, indeed, in the days of Herodotus it had utterly passed out of existence. To this second Nineveh we may apply much of the denunciations of the later prophets, and thus most of the oft-charged discrepancy between Ctesias and the books of the Canon would be removed. That this construction of history seems to reconcile our meagre authorities much better than to accept the story of Herodotus, seems apparent to all ; yet who dares be confident in matters so remote and so obscure ?

As before observed, it seems inconceivable that any Babylonian Semiramis so late as the era of Nabonassar, should have such celebrity throughout the East, and have passed into *Assyrian* annals as the founder of Babylon ; a city with fifteen centuries of history already behind it. Certainly it will not do to set aside the authority of tradition, of our Cnidian historian, and of almost all the authorities of antiquity, in favor of a Chaldean priest with his incredible annals of some four hundred and seventy thousand years, and the indefinite, incomplete, and confused story which

these Chaldean priests imposed upon the honest but credulous Herodotus.

In view of all the evidence before us, we can but conclude that great injustice has been done the Cnidian historian. Without even the privilege of the accused of appearing in person before this modern court of criticism, he can only be heard at second-hand and through proxies whose testimony is by no means uniform. Thus any errors in names or in dates which may have crept into his original text have hardly been corrected or diminished in number by the writers who in later times have quoted him. Making all due allowance for possible errors which may have been incorporated in the original from untrustworthy or conflicting sources, and possibly for many more which are attributable to transcribers, we cannot but regard the loss of Ctesias as among the most to be regretted of all the missing writers of antiquity. Well may compilers of encyclopaedias, classical dictionaries, and writers on ancient history, observe the warning words of the able and philosophic Heeren, who, after an exhaustive examination, says in reference to Ctesias: Man sey also minder freigebig mit den Benennungen von Märcheuerzähler, Lügenschmidt, u. s. w.

Boston Monday Lectures. — Circumstances altogether beyond our control have rendered it necessary to defer several book-notices which had been prepared for the October Number of the *Bibliotheca Sacra*. One of these notices related to the Boston Monday Lectures, and was called forth by the new volume, published in England, and entitled, "Advanced Thought in Europe, Asia, Australia, etc. By the Rev. Joseph Cook. To which is added a Personal Sketch of the Author, by the Rev. H. Beard, D.D. 12mo. pp. 374. London: Richard D. Dickinson. 1883." — This notice was designed to give an extended narrative of Mr. Cook's work in the lecture-field, and to suggest the sources of his power in directing the attention of men to the high themes of ethics and theology.

There are two methods of learning the value of sermons and lectures. Their worth may be ascertained by a thorough analysis of their contents, also by a careful statement of their influence. Some literary critics have affirmed that the sermons of Mr. Spurgeon are not at all remarkable; but