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SELECTIONS FROM POLYBIUS.

Selections from Polybius. Edited by JAMES LEIGH STRACHAN-DAVIDSON, Fellow and Tutor of Balliol College, Oxford. Clarendon Press, 1888. (Large 8vo., pp. xviii. 690.) 21s.

THE plan and division of this work are as follows:—Preface (pp. ix.–xviii.); Prolegomena (pp. 1–80); Text (pp. 83–626); Appendix (pp. 629–670); Index (pp. 673–690), and three Maps at the end. Turning first to the text, where Mr. Strachan-Davidson follows Hultsch, with a conservative bias in favour of the older editors, we find the ‘extracts’ from Polybius divided into forty-four ‘sections,’ to each of which a distinct title is prefixed. By another principle peculiar to this edition the text is continuously subdivided into ‘chapters,’ 409 in number, and reference is further facilitated by the introduction of Bekker’s notation in the margin, and by the restoration, inside each ‘chapter,’ of the ‘verses’ of the earlier editors. This has sometimes a curious effect, as on p. 98, where the beginning of Mr. Strachan-Davidson’s ‘chapter’ does not correspond with the beginning of the chapter in the other editions. It would have been convenient if the lines on the pages had been numbered; at present the references in the indices are only to pages of the volume. Further help is given to the reader by the use of head-lines and a running analysis in the margin, including dates in heavy type. Into the body of the text, between the ‘chapters,’ where a gap in the story occurs, are inserted short ‘introductions’ to supply the necessary connexions. The editor warns us (p. xv. n.) that these ‘Introductions’ are not preliminary summaries of what follow in the text. The appearance of their being so would perhaps have been avoided, if they had not been numbered to correspond with the ‘chapters,’ which they precede. To the text are subjoined notes, which have only one fault, that they are too few. The editor certainly shows himself in his notes of no mind to spare the average student constant recourse to his Lexicon, and other works of reference. This economy may have advantages, yet it is not easy to see on what principle the line has been drawn. Few authors employ a more outlandish vocabulary than Polybius, few employ common words in more unexpected senses. A great many

cases are noticed or translated in the notes, but not a few of perhaps equal claims are left unshriven. Notes on the Polybian sense of such words as *οικονομία*, *δυναστεία*, *ἦθος* would not have been amiss: *ἐφοδιάζειν* obtains recognition but not *σπιβαδοκοιτεῖν*, *ἐπέρθεις* but not *ἱπαρξίς*, *σύνταξις* but not *συμπολιτεία*, and so on. The *Prolegomena* on the peculiar uses of words are so admirable that one only desires they should be increased. Mr. Strachan-Davidson cannot expect all his readers to possess Schweighäuser. The Polybian use of *ἄλυσις* (4, 76, 5) is not even in ‘Liddell and Scott.’ A note or index on the Greek terms for Roman officers, institutions, and articles would not be superfluous. It would also be an improvement if the explanation of a word were always given on its first occurrence. It is not uncommon to find instances such as *ἐπιβολή*, which occurs more than a dozen times in the first 150 pages, and is only explained on p. 547; so for *φαντασία*, *πραξικοπεῖν*, *ἀθεσία*, *φιλοτίμως*, *βίος*, and others. The editor might reply that a reference to the Index II. would show whether a word has been noticed, and direct the reader to the page where he will find it explained: but what is the reader to do in a case such as *εἰσφορά*, which occurs on p. 103, is noticed on p. 118, and is not given in the index at all? The reader will also probably desiderate more frequent cross-references in the notes, and though the index may guide him to a note in which a word is explained, it will do little to guide him to the numerous passages in the text where the word occurs. Similar criticisms apply to the notes and index of historical or material import. They are admirable as far as they go, but they stop short rather oddly, and a great deal of knowledge seems to be taken for granted in the reader. Polybius sometimes uses the Olympiad, but of this chronological device and its history the reader will get no explanation here. He must also find out for himself whether there was an eclipse of the moon in 168 B.C. and what its exact date (p. 533), and he must go to the chronologists for the dates of sundry events incidentally mentioned, as for example the attack of the Gauls on Delphi (p. 139). He will look in vain to his editor for any direction in regard to the legendary origines of the Achaean Dodekapolis (p. 147), the historic claims of

Athens to Delos and Lemnos (p. 556f.), the Byzantine *συμπολιτεῖ*. (p. 410), and the reforms of Prytanis (p. 157). Polybius may omit the Athenian ἀρχὴ from a comparison of imperial powers (p. 84), and represent the Spartan Ephors as democratic magistrates (p. 231) without comment or remark. The Carthaginian Zeus is to be no stumbling-block to the reader (p. 164), nor a Carthaginian trierarch a problem (p. 131). References made by Polybius to previous passages in his text must frequently be worked out by the reader unaided (pp. 162, 325, 408).

Two mistakes unnoticed in the table of *Errata* may here be mentioned. On p. 230 for *μοναρχία* the second time must be read *τυραννίς* (cf. Polyb. 6, 4, 3), and on p. 237 'ignis et aquae interdictio' is identified with sentence of death.

For the *Prolegomena* and *Appendix* (apart from their arrangement), there can be nothing but praise. The arrangement is indeed open to exception, for it is curious to find some six and twenty luminous pages on the 'Life and Writings of Polybius' sandwiched in the Appendix between an excursus on the site of Spanish Carthage and an 'Additional Note on Cannae,' while a long note on 'Jovem lapidem jurare' figures as *Prolegomena* VIII. It is not exactly a justification of this arrangement that the Preface anticipates to some slight extent the Appendix; for an editor who is at once so competent and so reticent as Mr. Strachan-Davidson must not be allowed to repeat himself, while anything worth saying by him remains unsaid. Whatever he says, is a model of lucid, terse, consequent English, and his own style has certainly not been formed on that of Polybius. The English of this book is indeed, much better reading than the Greek. It is not however the style alone that is to be commended. *Prolegomena* IV., on the Battle of Cannae, taken in conjunction with the 'Additional Note' and Plan I. should settle the problems discussed, and if Appendix I. on the site of Spanish Carthage with Plan III. is less definitive, it is a not less masterly exposition of topographical autopsy applied to illuminate historical and archaeological problems. If in the other chapters of the *Prolegomena* the editor has less scope for originality, he shows to equal advantage as a lucid and logical expositor. His work throughout will be found to exhibit a sober, independent, and slightly conservative tendency, as against lovers of the last new hypothesis; and work of this character is eminently wholesome and fit for educational

purposes. That student indeed will be very far above the average who can study Mr. Strachan-Davidson's work without being much the better for his pains.

There are three principal grounds upon which the study of Polybius is recommended; he is a truth seeker and teller, he is an exponent, according to his light, of the now resuscitated doctrine of the Unity of History, and his work is the principal library record and monument of an important age. These merits, even if sometimes exaggerated, are considerable. In regard to the last point it must, however, be admitted that Polybius is not the only authority, that he is not a highly graphic authority, and that he covers too much ground to be everywhere primary. If any one unacquainted with Polybius is led by the allusions in Mr. Strachan-Davidson's *Preface* to hope that he may rise from a perusal of the work with the same lively vision of the 'Age of Polybius' as is afforded, for other times and places, by the works of Aristophanes or of Cicero, he will be disappointed. Nor is it given to any author of any age to supersede all other sources, and students in want of a picture of the age of the Scipios are not to be limited to the covers of Polybius. The references in Mr. Strachan-Davidson's notes to some extent suggest this consideration, but it is a pity perhaps to introduce the *Selections*, and the somewhat bald and abstract narrative therein contained, as if they could render a whole age intimately accessible, or relieve posterity from the burden of consulting other authorities. To take a particular example, who will be content to derive the story of the Achaean Federation and its leaders from Polybius alone, although that is a topic where he ranks as the prime authority? This tendency to the apotheosis of particular authorities to the exclusion of others, even if inferiors, is not altogether a good method even for ordinary students, and their education. There is no question, however, that Polybius preserves a vast quantity of facts of interest and importance, and that the study of these matters of fact in his pages is interesting and instructive, in spite of the poverty of his thought and language. That he is remarkable for historical honesty, and singularly free from bias and prejudice is also apparent, and these virtues go some way to atone for the lack of moral enthusiasm not unjustly charged against him. He combines with his honest appreciation of facts a somewhat doctrinaire method of viewing the succession of events known to him, which

has earned him high commendation in some quarters. If it must be admitted that he shows a right and perhaps a remarkable appreciation of the historical mission of Rome down to his own time, it should also be pointed out that his philosophical explanations and his prophetic anticipations in regard to that mission are not characterised by complete historic sagacity. His attempt to explain Roman history in terms borrowed from Greek experience and philosophy is in fact a failure and a warning; what is now to be learnt from it is chiefly a caution to avoid repeating similar errors on a larger scale in our own case. On these and other defects in his author Mr. Strachan-Davidson hardly dwells in this edition. It must however be admitted that elsewhere he has pointed out the unsuitability of Polybius for the purposes of ordinary students with ruthless candour. In the charming essay which Mr. Strachan-Davidson contributed to the *Hellenica* (1880) he remarks: 'With all his excellences it is not probable that Polybius will ever be widely read. He cannot command the tones to sway or impress the mind. His book remains a storehouse from which the historian and the antiquary may draw, rather than a possession to enrich the mind of the ordinary reader.' And again: 'Although hardly any writer has said more interesting things than Polybius, he is tedious and uninteresting as a whole. It is characteristic of the man that the fragments should be the most valuable part of his work.' After further and equally just criticism Mr. Strachan-Davidson asks: 'Would it be well for ordinary classical students to give up any one of these [Thucydides, Tacitus, Herodotus] to spend the time over Polybius? It

must be confessed that Polybius as a writer cannot stand for a moment in the light of such a comparison.' Why then these *Selections*? Reduced to a third of their present bulk they would still have afforded a sample of the honest poverty of Polybius, sufficient for the ordinary student, while Mr. Strachan-Davidson's own papers, wherever printed, would certainly deserve and obtain the diligent consideration of all serious students of Roman antiquity. There seems to be, in fact, either too much or too little of Polybius in this volume. A much smaller selection would serve the purposes of a literary sample, or of a school book, while the more advanced student cannot really confine himself to what he finds here. Yet if these tentative remarks are refuted by practical experience, and the scholarly labours of Mr. Strachan-Davidson succeed in winning a substantial position for Polybius in the academic curriculum, no one will be better pleased by that refutation than the present writer, who, in common with many engaged in academic teaching, regrets the limitations and want of variety in the established courses of study. It is at any rate certain that Mr. Strachan-Davidson's volume gives Polybius, so to speak, such a chance as he has never had before of taking rank with the authors hitherto almost exclusively studied. Seeing as clearly as any one the demerits of Polybius for educational purposes, Mr. Strachan-Davidson deserves all the more commendation for undertaking, in the interests of education, a work which, if it prove successful, will owe almost everything to the industry, skill, and judgment of the editor.

R. W. MACAN.

THE CAMBRIDGE EDITION OF THE SEPTUAGINT.

The Old Testament in Greek according to the Septuagint. Edited for the Syndics of the University Press by HENRY BARCLAY SWETE, D.D. Cambridge, at the University Press. 1887. 7s. 6d.

THE Syndics of the Cambridge University Press have earned the gratitude of all biblical scholars by having fairly taken in hand the preparation of a critical edition of the LXX.: and they may be congratulated on having found an editor so competent for

the main purpose, so careful, and so trustworthy, as Dr. Swete. Though I am no without a personal regret that my own University has not thought fit to mark the close of the present century by undertaking with the help of new materials and a better method, a revision of the great edition which it began to publish at the close of the last century, I cannot help rejoicing that the great school of experts in biblical Greek which has grown up at the sister University in the course of the present generation has