

## *Reviews of Books*

*Aus orientalischen Chroniken.* Von ALBRECHT WIRTH. (Frankfurt  
a. M.: in Commission bei Moritz Diesterweg. 1894.)

THIS work consists of two main divisions. In the first (which, though in form merely introductory to the second, is the most useful part of the book) the author begins with some general remarks on the historical compositions of the Egyptians and the Assyrians, the Jews and the Greeks, the last of which he divides into pragmatistical works, like those of Thukydides and Polybios, works by followers of Herodotos (to which class he refers Ephoros, Theopompos, and Timagenes), and local histories like the *Ἀρχαῖες* (with which he classes Greek histories of various oriental countries—Persika, Lydiaka, &c.—wrongly, in our opinion, since such works have at least as much in common with the second class and might well form one of their own). He next proceeds to deal with those writers after the time of Alexander who endeavoured to determine accurately the dates of the chief events of Greek history and to establish synchronisms with that of oriental nations. This was first attempted systematically by Eratosthenes and his continuator, Apollodoros, who chiefly used Egyptian materials. A further improvement was introduced by the astronomer Ptolemy, an Alexandrian Greek, who employed the astronomical records of the Babylonian priests in the earlier part of his ‘Canon of Kings,’ a work whose importance for oriental history is out of all proportion to its small size. About the end of the second century after Christ the study of chronography underwent a remarkable development, it was then taken up by two Christian writers, Hippolytus of Portus and the Syrian Greek Julius Africanus, who undertook the task of reconciling Greek and especially Greco-oriental chronology with that of the Bible. In the fourth century Eusebios composed another chronicle on the same lines as that of Africanus, but differing materially in details; thus Eusebios placed the creation B.C. 5199, Africanus B.C. 5500, and the former placed the date of the Babylonian captivity forty-two years later than his predecessor had. None of these early chronicles are extant in their original form. That of Africanus is known to us by the quotations of Synkellos; that of Eusebios is preserved in a partial Latin version by St. Jerome, a more complete Armenian one, and in Greek quotations by Synkellos and others. Dr. Wirth next gives a short account of the various schools of chronographers. Those of western Europe generally followed St. Jerome’s version of Eusebios, the Irish, Welsh, German, and Scandinavian writers fitting

their national legends into the 'general scheme as best they could. The later Byzantine Greek chroniclers follow either Africanus or Eusebios, or occasionally, as in the case of Synkellos (whose 'Chronographia' in spite of its many defects, is one of the most valuable Byzantine works extant, in consequence of the numerous extracts from lost authors which it contains), give the views of both. Amongst the latest works of this class are the metrical chronicles of Dorotheos of Monembasia and Melaxos, who lived about the beginning of the sixteenth century. The Armenian, Slavonic, Syriac, and Christian Arabic chroniclers generally follow Eusebios, but for the earlier period they, especially the Armenians, often preserve national legends and local traditions of considerable value, while in the later period the Armenian and Syriac writers give important details of the wars between Rome and Persia. Their statements respecting the West on the other hand are often only calculated to excite our amusement. The Syrian Greek Malalas and a few others are more or less independent of Eusebios, and though generally deserving of very little credit sometimes preserve local traditions, such as are found in the vernacular chronicles. The Mahometan historians, hampered by the monstrous genealogies of the Koran, are of little value for anything before the time of the Sassanidæ. The remainder of Dr. Wirth's introduction, entitled 'Zur Chronologie,' is taken up with a general discussion of the systems adopted by the Greeks before Africanus, by the Christian chronographers, and by the Mahometans.

The second portion of the book contains (1) the text, with copious notes and parallel passages, of a Greek chronicle from the creation to the time of John Komnenos, with the title of *Ἐκλογὴ ἱστοριῶν*, which seems hardly worthy of the attention devoted to it by the editor; (2) a useful abstract in German of the chief Syriac, Christian Arabic, Armenian, Slavonic, Mahometan, and Samaritan chronicles, written between the fourth century A.D. and the end of the Middle Ages, with references to the best editions or European translations. The chief value of these, as of all the Christian chronographical works, lies in the names, facts, legends, and extracts from older writers which they embody; the dates given and many of the synchronisms are of no value in themselves, being due to an artificial system or systems; we must, in fact, take the history as exhibited in them to pieces, and put it together again by the help of information derived from extraneous sources, or mere probability.

The last 180 pages of Dr. Wirth's book form a sort of appendix, the most important item in which is the text of a Greek treatise found in a very corrupt form in several manuscripts, which professes to be an account by Anastasios, patriarch of Theoupolis (Antioch), 'who alone of the Romans was present,' of a disputation held at the court of the Sassanidæ, *Βασιλεύοντος Ἀρρενάρου τῆς Περσικῆς χώρας*, between the Christians, 'Greeks' (i.e. heathen), and Jews. A dispute having arisen as to the truth of the accounts of the nativity of Christ given respectively by the heathen historian Dionysaras and Philip, a contemporary of St. John Chrysostom, the king summoned 'all the bishops of the country, being more than a hundred, and the archimandrites' and the rabbis of the Jews to discuss the question. The disputation takes place under the presidency of Aphroditianos, the king's *ἀρχιμάγειρος*, whose wisdom is universally ad-

mitted. Aphroditianos, though a 'Greek,' decidedly favours the Christians, and relates a curious legend respecting the sending of the magi to Palestine by the king of Persia at the time of the nativity in consequence of certain prodigies. On the second day of the conference Horikatos, one of the king's soothsayers, challenges the Christians to the ordeal of fire. He and a Christian bishop accordingly enter the furnace; the bishop is unhurt, but Horikatos only escapes death by being dragged out by the Christians. Finally the Jewish disputants are worsted; they are consequently excommunicated by their co-religionists and then become Christians. Even if Dr. Wirth is right in supposing that this dialogue rests on no historical foundation it is valuable as being evidently the work of one well acquainted with the internal condition of the Persian empire at the time,<sup>1</sup> of which we know so little. The elaborate honorific formulas used by and applied to the king and his officers agree well with what we find in the inscriptions of the Sassanidæ. The king and Aphroditianos, though convinced heathens, are represented as tolerant and well-disposed to the Christians. Aphroditianos addresses the bishops in terms of respect; the anxiety he expresses that persons of various religions should live at peace with each other is a curiously modern feature. Even the strange legend told by him may be really a part of the eclectic mass of traditions circulated by the various semi-Christian sects—Manichæans, Mazdakites, Sabians—then existing in the Persian empire. With the dialogue itself the editor compares those between Mani and Archelaos, bishop of Kaslikar, and between bishop Grigentios and the Jews in Arabia.

A folding plate at the end exhibits a sort of genealogical tree of the various chroniclers, indicating at a glance the sources followed by each. The book is legibly printed on good paper, but is disfigured by several gross typographical errors.

JOHN E. GILMORE.

*Studi di Storia antica.* Pubblicati da GIULIO BELOCH. Fascicolo II. (Rome: Loescher. 1898.)

THIS is an interesting little volume. It seems that Professor Beloch trains his advanced pupils to study particular periods of history on scientific methods, and then publishes year by year the best results of their work. His name is, of course, a guarantee that no really bad work will be included, and what we have here, so far from being bad, is of a very honest and useful kind; and we may heartily congratulate the professor on such good evidence of the excellence of his teaching. He appears to concentrate the attention of his pupils as far as possible on a single period each year—in some ways, no doubt, a good plan, for they probably work to some extent together, and learn the arts of division and also of contribution of labour. The period selected last year calls for much more attention than it has recently received, especially in England. We have first a set of studies by G. de Sanctis on Athenian history for some sixty years after the Lamian war. Chapters

<sup>1</sup> The anterior limit of age is fixed by the allusions to Kobades, A.D. 518; it is alluded to by a writer of the ninth century.

are devoted to Phocion, Demetrius of Phalerum, Demetrius Poliorcetes, and Antigonus Gonatas, and an appendix is added which will be useful to all who work at the period, as it contains a painstaking attempt to clear up some of the chronological difficulties. We might have wished for more than eight pages on so interesting a personage as Demetrius Phalereus; but it must be allowed that in these eight pages is included almost all that we certainly know about him, and to speculate on the relation of his Athenian constitution to the political ideal of Aristotle was no doubt beyond the scope of this publication. The second essay, by R. Corsetti, S.J., is on a subject of great interest, viz. the average price of grain in classical antiquity. In twenty pages we do not expect to find a complete exposition, but what there is is clear and useful, and tends to the conclusion that prices in Greece rose steadily from the time of Solon to the end of the fourth century, when they reached their highest point. In the later periods the question is still very obscure. In this essay, as in the others, there is no padding and no confusion; both in matter and manner they are decidedly superior to other recent Italian attempts to deal with classical subjects. The 'Quellen,' down to the latest-found inscription, are handled with precision, and with much greater lucidity of arrangement and expression than is common among young scholars north of the Alps. There are two other essays—one by Cesare Salvetti on the extent of the Ætolian league at different times between 481 and 168 B.C., and the other by Filippo Arci on the Peloponnese at the time of the Social War. An interesting point in the former is the relation of the league to Delphi, of which hardly anything was known before the publication of the Wescher-Foucart collection of inscriptions. After the year 191 B.C. the name of the Ætolian strategus disappears from the inscriptions relative to manumission of slaves by Delphian citizens; hence Corsetti infers that Delphi ceased to belong to the league at this time, and became a *liberum oppidum*, as it appears in Pliny, 'N. H.' iv. 7. The last essay is a useful bit of work, and is illustrated by two rough but telling maps, drawn by Signor Arci himself.

W. WARDE FOWLER.

*Social England.* Edited by H. D. TRAILL, D.C.L. Vol. I. (London: Cassell & Co. 1898.)

THE 'Social History of England' is a book written by various authors and is of varying quality. It is edited, or, as it would be safer to say, not edited, by Dr. Traill, who for his part has contributed an introduction of some forty pages, in which he tells us what we may expect and what we may not expect to find in the remaining parts of the work; though even Dr. Traill does not prepare us for all that we find in the pages of the volume he introduces to our notice. It is unfortunate that the part under review deals with a period with which it is plain that the editor has a very limited acquaintance. An editor's duty most assuredly consists in the selection of competent contributors; and here it must be admitted that, in many cases, Dr. Traill has done well. But it would be idle to pretend that the editorial function ends here; for the editor should also have a sufficient acquaintance with all the branches of his subject to enable him to detect gross errors on the part of his con-