

# VELLEIUS PATERCULUS.

REMAINS OF HIS COMPENDIUM OF THE HISTORY OF ROME.

## BOOK I.

### THE ARGUMENT.

CITIES founded by the Greeks on their return from Troy; acts of Orestes; arrival of Tyrrhenus in Italy, I. Return of the Heraclidæ; death of Codrus; founding of Megara, Gades, and Utica, II. Of the Achæans, Pelasgi, Thessalians, and the settlement of Corinth, III. Chalcis, Magnesia, Cumæ, Naples, and many other cities, founded, IV. Age and character of Homer, V. Of the Assyrian empire, Lycurgus, and the origin of Carthage, VI. Of Hesiod, and the building of Capua and Nola, VII. The Olympic games; the founding of Rome, VIII. The second Macedonian war, IX. Of Antiochus the Great, and Æmilius Paulus, X. Pseudo-Philippus; Metellus Macedonicus, XI. Destruction of Corinth and Carthage, XII. Death of Cato; characters of Mummius and Scipio Africanus, XIII. Establishment of Roman colonies, XIV., XV. Considerations why many eminent men, in the several arts, arise at the same time, XVI., XVII. Commencement of similar observations on cities, XVIII.

I. \* \* \* \* [Epeus,] being parted<sup>1</sup> by a storm from Nestor his commander, built Metapontum<sup>2</sup>. Teucer, not being received at home by his father Telamon, for his pusillanimity in not avenging the injustice shown to his brother<sup>3</sup>, sailed to Cyprus, where he built Salamis, a city named after his own birthplace. Pyrrhus, the son of Achilles, took possession of Æpirus, and Phidippus<sup>4</sup> of Ephyra in Thes-

<sup>1</sup> I. [Epeus,] being parted, &c.] The name is wanting in the text at the commencement of this fragment. But it appears from Justin, xx., 2, as well as from Aristotle, De Miraculis, that it was Epeus, the builder of the Trojan horse, (*doli fabricator Epeus*, Virg. *Æn.*, ii., 264,) who founded Metapontum.

<sup>2</sup> Metapontum] On the coast of Lucania, in the south of Italy.

<sup>3</sup> His brother] Ajax, who was refused the arms of Achilles.

<sup>4</sup> Phidippus] An inferior leader in the Trojan war, from the isles of Calydnæ, on the coast of Caria. Hom. *Il.*, ii., 678.

protia. As to Agamemnon, the king of kings, he was driven by a tempest on the island of Crete, where he founded three cities, Mycenæ, Tegea, and Pergamus, of which two had names from his own country, and the third from the recollection of his recent victory. Soon after, being entrapped by the treachery of his cousin<sup>1</sup> Ægisthus, who bore a hereditary hatred towards him, and by the malice of his wife, he was murdered. Ægisthus held the throne for seven years; when Orestes, in concert with his sister Electra, a woman of masculine courage, and sharer in all his designs, slew both Ægisthus and his own mother. That his deed was approved by the gods, was apparent from the length of his life and the prosperity of his reign; for he lived ninety years and reigned seventy. He also revenged himself on Pyrrhus, son of Achilles, with similar spirit; for Pyrrhus having supplanted him by marrying Hermione, the daughter of Menelaus and Helen, who had been betrothed to Orestes, Orestes slew him at Delphi.

During this period, the brothers Lydus and Tyrrhenus, who reigned in Lydia, were compelled, by the unproductiveness of their corn-fields, to cast lots which of the two, taking half of the people with him, should quit their country. The lot fell upon Tyrrhenus<sup>2</sup>, who, sailing into Italy, gave, from his own name, an illustrious and enduring appellation to the country, the inhabitants, and the adjacent sea. After the death of Orestes, his sons, Penthilus and Tisamenus, reigned three years.

II. At this time, about eighty years after Troy was taken, and a hundred and twenty after the translation of Hercules to the gods, the family of Pelops, which, after expelling the Heraclidæ, had held, during the whole of this period, the sovereignty of the Peloponnesus, was in turn expelled by them. The leaders in recovering the dominion were Temenus, Cresphontes, and Aristodemus, of whom Hercules was great-grandfather.

About the same period, Athens ceased to be ruled by kings, its last monarch being Codrus, the son of Melanthus,

<sup>1</sup> His cousin] *Patruelis*. He was son of Thyestes, brother of Atreus, Agamemnon's father.

<sup>2</sup> Tyrrhenus] He gave name, it is said, to Tyrrhenia, Tuscia, or Etruria, in Italy. The story of his departure from Lydia is taken from Herod., i., 94.

a man deserving of particular notice ; for when the Spartans were severely pressing the Athenians in war, and Apollo had given an oracle that that side would be victorious whose leader should be killed by the enemy, Codrus, having laid aside his royal apparel, put on the attire of a shepherd, and went into the midst of the enemy's camp, where, intentionally provoking a quarrel, he was slain without being known<sup>1</sup>. From his death, eternal glory accrued to Codrus, and victory to the Athenians. Who can help admiring a man that sought for death with the same stratagems with which, by those of meaner spirit, life is wont to be sought? His son Medon was the first archon at Athens ; from whom his descendants were called by the Athenians Medontidæ ; and these, as well as the following archons, down to the time of Charops, held their office during life. The Peloponnesians, on retiring from the Athenian territory, founded Megara, a city equally distant from Corinth and Athens.

At this time, also, a fleet of the Tyrians, then very powerful at sea, founded the city of Gades, on the remotest coast of Spain, at the extremity of one part of the world, and on an island surrounded by the Ocean, divided from the continent only by a very narrow strait. By the same people, also, a few years afterwards, Utica, in Africa, was built. The children of Orestes, being expelled by the Heraclidæ, and harassed by various misfortunes, as well as by hardships at sea, found a settlement, in the fifteenth year after their expulsion, opposite the island of Lesbos.

III. During this period Greece was shaken by violent commotions. The Achæans, driven from Laconia, settled in those tracts which they now occupy. The Pelasgi removed to Athens ; and a young man of warlike spirit, by name Thessalus, and by birth a Thesprotian, took forcible possession, with the aid of a numerous body of his countrymen, of that region which is now, from his name, called Thessaly, but which was before termed the country of the Myrmidons. Hence there is reason to wonder at those authors, who, in their accounts of the Trojan period, speak of that country by the name of Thessaly ; a fault which not only other writers com-

<sup>1</sup> II. Without being known] *Imprudenter*. "He was slain by the enemy for being aware that he was the king." *Lipsius*.

mit, but writers of tragedy more frequently than any; though in them, least of all, is such licence to be excused, for they express nothing in their own character of poets, but narrate everything under the persons of those who lived at the time. But if any one shall maintain that they were called Thessalians from Thessalus, the son of Hercules<sup>1</sup>, he will have to give a reason why the people did not assume this name till the time of the latter Thessalus. A little before this, Aletes, sixth in descent from Hercules, and son of Hippotes, rebuilt<sup>2</sup> Corinth on the Isthmus, which was previously called Ephyre, and which forms the principal barrier of the Peloponnesus. Nor is there any reason for us to wonder that it was called Corinth by Homer; for, in his character of poet, he calls both this city, and some of the Ionian colonies, built long after the taking of Troy, by the same names which they bore in his own times.

IV. The Athenians settled colonies at Chalcis and Eretria in Eubœa; the Lacedæmonians established another at Magnesia in Asia. Not long afterwards, the people of Chalcis, who were sprung, as I have just said, from the Athenians, founded Cumæ in Italy, under the leadership of Hippocles and Megasthenes. The course of their fleet was directed, as some say, by the flight of a dove that preceded it, or, as others state, by the sound of brazen instruments during the night, such as is commonly made at the rites of Ceres. Some natives of this city, a long time after, built Neapolis; and the exemplary fidelity of both these cities to the Romans, renders them eminently worthy of their high reputation, and of the delightful situations which they enjoy. But the institutions of their original country have been more diligently preserved by the Neapolitans; for the neighbourhood of the Osci altered the manners of the people of Cumæ. The present extent of the walls of these cities shows the greatness of their power in former days.

At a subsequent period, a vast number of Grecian youth, seeking, from a redundance of population, for new settlements, poured into Asia. The Ionians, sailing from Athens under the conduct of Ion, took possession of the finest part

<sup>1</sup> III. Thessalus, the son of Hercules] Father of Phidippus above mentioned. Homer, *loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Rebuilt] *Condidit*. "Ex integro restituit." *Vossius*.

of the sea-coast, now called Ionia, and built the cities of Ephesus, Miletus, Colophon, Priene, Lebedus, Myus, Erythra, Clazomenæ, and Phocæa. They also seized on many of the islands in the Ægean and Icarian seas, as Samos, Chios, Andros, Tenos, Paros, Delos, and others of less note. Soon after, the Æolians also, setting out from Greece, and wandering about for a long time, found at length settlements not less valuable, and founded some famous cities, as Smyrna, Cyme, Larissa, Myrina, and Mitylene, with others in the island of Lesbos.

V. It was at this time that the illustrious genius of Homer shone forth; a genius great beyond example; for by the grandeur of his subjects, and the splendour of his verse, he has gained an exclusive right<sup>1</sup> to the name of poet. What is most remarkable with respect to him, is, that neither was there any one before him whom he could imitate, nor has any one since been found who could imitate him. Nor can we point to any other author, except Homer and Antilochus, who arrived at the highest excellence in the kind of writing of which he was the inventor. He lived longer after the Trojan war, which he took for his subject, than some suppose; for he flourished about nine hundred and fifty years ago, and was born within a thousand. It is not at all surprising, therefore, that he frequently uses the expression *οἱοὶ νῦν βροτοὶ εἶσι*, such as men now are; for by this the difference in mankind, as well as in ages, is signified. Whoever believes that he was born blind, must be himself deprived of all his senses.

VI. In the subsequent period, about eight hundred and seventy years ago, the empire of Asia was transferred from the Assyrians, who had held it a thousand and seventy years, to the Medes. For Arbaces, a Mede, dethroned and put to death their monarch Sardanapalus, a man immersed in luxurious gratifications, and courting extravagant pleasures to his own destruction; and who was the thirty-third in succession from Ninus and Semiramis, the founders of Babylon, a succession so regular that the son had in every instance inherited the throne of his father.

In this age, too, Lycurgus, the Lacedæmonian, a man of royal birth, was the author of a most severe and just body

<sup>1</sup> V. An exclusive right, &c.] *Solus appellari poeta meruit. Non summus modo; splendidum judicium.* Krause.

of laws, and of a system of education most suitable<sup>1</sup> to the character of his countrymen; and Sparta, as long as she adhered to it, was eminently prosperous.

During the same period, sixty-five years before the foundation of Rome, the city of Carthage was built by Elissa of Tyre, whom some suppose to be the same as Dido. About the same time, Caranus, a man of regal extraction, being the sixteenth in descent from Hercules, took his departure from Argos, and seized on the kingdom of Macedonia. The great Alexander, being the seventeenth in succession from Caranus, might justly boast of his lineages, as being on his mother's side from Achilles, and on his father's from Hercules<sup>2</sup>.

VII. Coeval with these events, and separated by about a hundred and twenty years from Homer, lived Hesiod, a man of exquisite taste, remarkable for the gentle sweetness of his numbers, and a great lover of ease and retirement. As he was nearest in time to his illustrious predecessor, he was also nearest in the reputation of his writings. He avoided resembling Homer in one respect, for he has mentioned both his country and his parents; but the former in the bitterest terms of reproach, on account of a fine which it had imposed upon him.

While I am treating of foreign matters, a point in our own history occurs to me, which has given rise to many mistakes, and about which there is the greatest discrepancy in the opinions of writers. Some authors say that, during this period, about eight hundred and thirty years ago, Capua and Nola were founded by the Tuscans; and to their opinion I readily assent. But how greatly does Marcus Cato differ from them, who states that "Capua was first founded by the Tuscans, and Nola some time afterwards; but that Capua had stood, before it was taken by the Romans, about two hundred and sixty years." If this be the case, and as only two hundred and forty years have elapsed since the taking of

<sup>1</sup> VI. System of education most suitable] *Disciplina convenientissimæ [vir]*. I have omitted *vir*, which, as Ruhnken says, "nullo pacto tolerari potest." Heinsius would alter it to *virtuti*; Ruhnken to *viribus*; and some other critics, as Krause signifies, have proposed *viris*.

<sup>2</sup> At the end of this chapter is inserted, in all the editions, a passage from *Æmilius* (or rather, as Krause thinks, *Manilius*) *Sura*. Some person, in old times, seems to have written it in the margin of his manuscript, whence it crept into the text. I have omitted it.

Capua, it can be but five hundred years since it was built. For my own part, speaking with deference to the accuracy of Cato, I can scarcely believe that so great a city rose, flourished, fell, and sprung up again, in so short a space of time.

VIII. The Olympic games, the most celebrated of all spectacles of entertainment, and best adapted for invigorating the mind and the body, had their commencement soon afterwards, the founder of them being Iphitus of Elis, who instituted these contests, as well as a market, eight hundred and four years before you, Marcus Vinicius, entered upon your consulship. By some, however, Atreus is said to have commenced this solemnity, when he exhibited, in this same place, funeral games in honour of his father Pelops, about twelve hundred and fifty years ago, on which occasion Hercules was victor in every kind of contest.

It was at this time that the archons at Athens ceased to be elected for life, Alcmaeon being the last that was so appointed, and were chosen only for ten years; an arrangement which lasted for seventy years, when the administration was committed to annual magistrates. Of those who held office for ten years, the first was Charops, and the last Eryxias; of those who retained it but one year, the first was Creon.

In the sixth Olympiad, twenty-two years from the commencement of the first, Romulus, the son of Mars, having avenged the wrong done to his grandfather, founded the city of Rome on the Palatine hill, on the day of the feast of Pales<sup>1</sup>; from which time, to that of your consulate, is a period of seven hundred and eighty-three years. This event took place four hundred and thirty-seven years after the taking of Troy. The work was effected by Romulus, with the assistance of the Latin legions of his grandfather; for I can readily believe those who give this account, since, without such assistance, and with merely a defenceless band of shepherds, he could hardly have established a new city, while the Vejentines, the other Etruscans, and the Sabines, were so close upon him, how much soever he strengthened it by opening an asylum between the two groves. He had a

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