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Barthold Georg Niebuhr

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VOLUME 2

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# THE HISTORY OF ROME

BY

B. G. NIEBUHR

TRANSLATED

BY

JULIUS CHARLES HARE, M.A.

AND

CONNOP THIRLWALL, M.A.

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## P R E F A C E.



**T**HIS volume appears three years later than, when the second edition of the first was published, I confidently thought it would have done; and I am bound to explain the occasion of this delay to the friendly reader who may have complained of it.

Ever since the continuation of my history was interrupted, my mind had been in a very different state with regard to the contents of the second volume and to those of the first. With the latter I was incessantly busied: every fresh piece of information I acquired concerning the original institutions of other nations combined itself with the researches there commenced into kindred institutions at Rome; and many of my views were modified by the sight of Rome and of Italy. To the second volume, which relates only to particular points in the condition and laws of the Romans, and was never recalled to my thoughts by any such occasions, I had become a stranger. At the same time I knew very well that the dissertations comprised in it were incomparably more mature and complete than those in the first: in the former, especially in that on the agrarian institutions, the investigation of which had been gone through before the design of treating the history of

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Rome arose in my mind, there was nothing to correct, little to add. Other discussions which were to be introduced, though they had not been put in writing for the press, had been in part sketcht out, as for instance that on the rights of isopolity and municipium while I was at Rome; and the substance of all of them had been repeatedly delivered by word of mouth. Thus nothing remained but the historical narrative, with regard to which I thought it certain that it was impossible to arrive at any more determinate conclusions than those contained in the first edition; so that at all events it would be useless to spend more care and go more into detail on occurrences of such a petty scale.

Under this notion I fancied that a revised edition might be accomplisht in a few months: but ere long I saw clearly that, in spite of all scepticism, a critical examination of the facts would enable me to restore and establish a certain and credible history from the epoch at which this volume begins: and this being so, it became worth while to sift every particular with the utmost care, and during this period not to pass over what in an age of great events would have been excluded as trifling. In like manner I perceived that the changes in the constitution might be traced step by step. Under favorable circumstances even this task might have been executed rapidly, like several disquisitions in the first volume: but that volume had left me in a state of exhaustion, which was the consequence of the continued exertion of all my faculties, directed to a single object for sixteen months without any intermission, except now and then a very few days. My sight grew dim in its passionate efforts to pierce into the obscurity of the

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subject: and unless I was to send forth an incomplete work, which sooner or later would have had to be wholly remodelled, I was compelled to wait for what Time might gradually bring forth: nor has he been niggardly, but, though slowly, has granted me one discovery after another. I must not however omit that this exhaustion, which in fact resembled the dizziness of a person long deprived of sleep, excited a vehement desire for some different employment; and this led me, most inconsiderately, having already such a task as this history on my hands, to engage in editing the Byzantine historians: which, along with other very laborious occupations, for instance the revisal of the third edition of the first volume, greatly impeded the progress of my plan after it had been twice recast; and, as I wisht to carry them all on together, my health, serenity, and clearness of mind for a time deserted me.

At length I had got quit of many of these interruptions; many of them were overcome: I again felt free and cheerful: the first sheets were written out, and were to be sent to the press the next morning, when the calamity which befell my house during the night, destroyed them all with the exception of a leaf that I happened to have lent to a friend. The materials however had been preserved, and my spirit did not fail: seven weeks after my misfortune the lost manuscript was replaced, and the printing began. At another season this delay would have had no influence on the execution of my work: but only two thirds of it were completed when the madness of the French court burst the talisman which kept the demon of the revolution in bonds: the remainder has



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been written under a feeling that it was a duty not to leave what I had begun unfinished, amid constant efforts to repel the harassing anxiety ever pressing upon me from the prospect of the ruin which menaced my property, my dearest possessions, and my happiest ties. The first volume was written when every thing was smiling around me, and I was thankfully and heartily enjoying it in the most perfect unconcern about the future: now, unless God send us some miraculous help, we have to look forward to a period of destruction similar to that which the Roman world experienced about the middle of the third century of our era,—to the annihilation of prosperity, of freedom, of civility, of knowledge. Still even though barbarism should for a long season scare the muses and learning entirely away, a time will come when Roman history will again be an object of attention and interest, though not in the same manner as in the fifteenth century.

But for the breaking out of this tremendous calamity I should have hastened after a short interval of rest to complete and publish the third volume; of which the part comprehended within the limits of the original second volume has already been planned, the remainder down to the first Punic war only wants a last revision. If peace be allowed to continue any time, this shall be the first work I take in hand.

In the present volume the space occupied by the narrative is still inconsiderable when compared with the dissertations: this proportion is entirely changed even in the parts of the next which are already composed: it was to go down to the second Punic war; and, having felt interested and animated by what I had already written,

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I rejoiced, at the time when it seemed that the completion of the remainder could not be far off, in the prospect of having hereafter to represent and portray men and events. Whenever I have been able to do so with any confidence in occurrences of the least moment, I have done it in this volume: but I could never bring myself to repeat stories on the face of which it was evident that they were merely invented by the annalists to fill up the canvas. The endeavour to impart my own firm conscientious conviction with regard to every proposition and every thought to my readers is here, as in the first volume, the only principle that has guided me both as to matter and to manner. Whenever I could do so at once briefly and cogently, I was the better pleased: and in the period before the decemvirate this purpose often appeared to be answered by the citation of a single decisive passage, taken chiefly from Dionysius: in the subsequent part, especially where Livy is our only authority, and every other trace that might guide us is lost, my object frequently was not to be gained without discussions, which, as I wisht to assert nothing arbitrarily, and not to reckon on the disposition of my readers to agree with me, may have grown at times almost prolix, and may not be altogether free from repetitions.

Bonn, *October 5*, 1830.

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*WITHIN three months of the publication of this volume its great Author died, and his work is destined to be no more than a fragment. Among his manuscripts however there has fortunately been found a continuous history from the dictatorship of Publilius, where the original second volume closed, down to the beginning of the first Punic war, written out for the press ten or twelve years ago. This, along with the corrections made in the latter part of the original second volume, embracing the period from the promulgation of the Licinian laws to the dictatorship of Publilius, has been placed in the hands of his illustrious friend, Savigny; and its speedy publication is expected. As soon as it comes out, the Translators will endeavour to complete what has now become their melancholy duty.*

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