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Barthold Georg Niebuhr  
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VOLUME 3

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# THE HISTORY OF ROME

BY

**B. G. NIEBUHR**

TRANSLATED

BY

**WILLIAM SMITH, PH. D.**

AND

**LEONHARD SCHMITZ, PH. D.**

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## P R E F A C E.



WHEN Niebuhr with sad feelings finisht the second volume of his history of Rome, he exprest in that remarkable preface his longing for *some rest* to enable him to hasten to the completion of the third volume. Four months later he was called to eternal rest, and left behind him the work which immortalises his name, in the form which he there intimates, “what was comprehended within the limits of the original second volume, was already planned, the remainder down to the first Punic war only wanted a last revision.” It was not granted him to bring it to completion. There remained then for his nearest friends, to whom the last will of the deceast had confided the care of his manuscripts, only the melancholy duty of preserving this precious bequest in its purity, and of giving it to our age and posterity as the only possible compensation for the irreparable loss of the complete history of Rome. The honorable charge of undertaking the business of editor was conferred on me by those revered persons. They thought that the circumstance of my having been closely connected in love and veneration with the deceast during the last four years preceding his death, which forms the greatest happiness of my life, rendered me worthy of such great confidence. If my love and veneration

for the memory of Niebuhr could justify their confidence, I might hope to possess some claim to it. But how could I conceal from myself the truth, that very different qualities were requisite to ensure the success of the undertaking? That I nevertheless did not shrink from the responsibility, is owing especially to the kind assistance of Professor Twesten, who gave himself the trouble to go with me through the whole manuscript, and to the valuable counsel of Savigny, without whose sanction I have not allowed myself the solution of any doubt whatever. But the weight of the responsibility was diminished above all things by the simple principles which were to guide me, and on which I had agreed with these eminent men: carefulness, fidelity and completeness were the laws with which the printing was conducted. There could of course be no attempt to make any arbitrary application or alteration of mere materials;—who would dare to continue that which Niebuhr's hand had begun?—on the contrary the duty owing to the public of collecting all the fragments of his history of Rome, and of making them the common property of all, which the conviction of their undisguised genuineness will render dear to all his friends and admirers, must alone have kept at a distance every attempt to give by polishing and revision an appearance of completion, which could only have been wished for from the hand of the author himself. There is therefore no account to be given here of any revisal which has been undertaken, but only information as to the arrangement of the whole, which from its nature has necessarily grown out of heterogeneous parts.

What is here presented to the public, united into a third volume, is all that could be gathered from the papers of the deceased for publication: it is absolutely

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the work of Niebuhr, written by his own pen and printed from his manuscript with conscientious fidelity. But it is the work of three different periods of his life, which stand in an inverse relation to the periods of the history which are treated of. The last part was written first, and has not been revised: the first which belongs to the second volume of the first edition, has been accurately revised and received various alterations along with that volume, shortly before the death of the author. This part which comprises the first nine chapters of the present volume down to page 151, is reprinted from the copy of the earlier edition, which Niebuhr had revised with extraordinary pains and care, and which had received corrections almost in every page: in cases where the narrow margin of the printed book was too small to contain the alterations, he had rewritten the whole on separate pieces of paper. It was in this way that he had revised the first and second volumes too: we might therefore have considered this first part of our third volume to have received his finishing hand, were it not necessary to suppose, that, as was his custom, previous to sending it to press, he would with his own hand have made a copy of the whole, in which of course the less important defects and inequalities would have been corrected. A case in which such a final correction is evidently wanted, is noticed in page 55. In this sense we must understand the expression of Niebuhr in the preface, when he calls this part of the former second volume only *planned*: he would have once more revised and copied it.

The first Punic war from p. 561 to the end is derived from quite a different source. It will appear unexpected to all who recollect the words of Niebuhr in his preface, “the remainder down to the first Punic war only wanted



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a last revision," and who see in this expression the limits to which he had extended his preparations. There is no doubt that this was indeed his meaning. His history, as far as it was written, closes at p. 560 with the chapter: *Internal History—down to the first Punic war*: he himself would here have commenced writing afresh, if Providence had permitted him to continue his work. But among the papers left by the author there was found a carefully written manuscript, which according to the object expressly stated in its beginning was intended to be the commencement of the continuation of the lectures on Roman history, which he had delivered in 1811 in the University of Berlin. This manuscript contains in a briefer narrative nearly the whole history of the present third volume from the subjugation of Latium down to the end of the first Punic war. So long as we possess along with this manuscript the later and more detailed history, we could not of course think of making any public use of it, although the comparison of the two works shewed that the latter was frequently based upon the former. But where the completed history breaks off without any prospect of its being continued in this manner, and where the wish of every reader is most ardently excited to be further guided into the most agitated time of the Roman people by the safe hand he had hitherto followed: there it seemed no violation of the intention of the author to use the extant materials as far as possible, and to add the first sketch of the further history in an appendix obviously distinct from the rest of the work: to give it just as it is written down in its rapid progress, even to where the connected history breaks up into isolated notes (p. 611). Every one who knows and loves the spirit and hand of Niebuhr, will joyfully recognise them even in this un-

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nist work. All that is published from this earliest manuscript, contains only the external history: it is followed in the manuscript by a sketch respecting the change of the constitution of the centuries upon the basis of the tribes, which he too formerly placed after the completion of the thirty-five tribes, consequently after the first Punic war (compare p. 345). It is now discussed in another place (p. 320 to p. 349) with a depth which leaves nothing to be wished for.

The *middle* and greatest part, the real kernel and body of the present volume was written by Niebuhr at Bonn during the winter of 1824 and 1825, soon after his return from Italy. He had then not yet formed the resolution of remodeling the first two volumes, and he described with all the joyfulness of progressive production, which he always remembered subsequently with great pleasure, the freshest and healthiest period of the Roman people, for this he considered the fifth century to be. He wrote, separated from his library, with few books, from the fulness of his knowledge, the liveliness of his perception and the warmth of his heart. This spirit pervades the whole of this main part of the volume, which comprises the chapters from p. 152 to 560, from the year of the city 416 down to 488 according to the common chronology. This character of unity and equality appears clearly even in the manuscript which consists of fifty sheets. Nowhere has Niebuhr during the seven years that followed made any alteration in it, but towards the end of his life he had a copy made of it.

As this work however was destined to follow the first two volumes of the first edition, there was frequently occasion to return with new views to subjects that had been treated of there. All passages of this kind were carefully used by Niebuhr in the subsequent remodeling

of those two volumes, and inserted in the context. From this circumstance there arose for the publication of the third volume the necessary law of avoiding the longer or literal repetitions of what was contained in the new edition of the first and second volumes, because there could be no doubt that the author regarded such points as settled. The most important application of this law, of which an especial account must be given here, has been made in the transition from that revised remainder of the second volume, p. 151, to the real continuation of the history. For the new manuscript before the chapter p. 152, *Internal History down to the Caudine peace*, has another one entitled, *The Roman state after the union with Latium*, which has not been printed. For it consists of three parts, all of which were already inserted in their proper places. Here first were given the outlines of the theory of the colonies, of the isopolity and the municipium, which form the fourth and fifth chapters of the new edition of the second volume. Here secondly was found a minute development of the view proposed there, p. 68, foll., concerning the returns of the censors as the standard for the varying isopolite relations; and lastly, the part which referred to the settlement of the relations of Latium and of separate Latin places, had already been incorporated by Niebuhr with the conclusion of the preceding chapter, *The Latin war*, as it is now printed from p. 140. As therefore it could be proved, sentence by sentence, that the whole substance of that chapter had been used, the difference in the form which belonged to an earlier time, did not seem a sufficient reason for justifying in the eyes of the public a repetition of several sheets, which might perhaps have been desirable to separate friends.

The other passages, not many in number, of which

shorter parts have been omitted without injuring the context, because they had already found their place in the earlier volumes, are in each case stated in the notes. Where however such a passage was too closely interwoven with the context to be severed from it, without considerable alterations, there it seemed a lesser disadvantage to allow a short repetition to occur, than arbitrarily to touch the connexion of the whole. For this reason for instance no change has been made in p. 177, p. 298, p. 350, p. 450, p. 451, p. 452, but only references given to the kindred passages of the first and second volumes.

We have laid down the same principle as our law in the more difficult cases, where there were differences between remarks and opinions in the present and former volumes. However decidedly it must be established as a principle in judging of these cases, that the opinion, which has been received into the later edition of the first volumes, according to the last examination and revision, and even into the first section of the present one down to p. 151\*, is in each case the one preferred by the author himself; yet the earlier form could and should be effaced just as little as the whole work could give up the character of its earlier origin. It was in all these cases sufficient to direct attention in the notes to the relation between the earlier work and the more recent treatment of the same subject. Only in one point was it necessary to allow to the matured investigations of the first two volumes an influence upon this third one, that is, in the chronology. After the author in vol. II. p. 565 and p. 566 had expressed his decided intention to use the corrected chronology throughout the work,

\* The differences in the account of Archidamus between p. 86 and p. 162, as well as the difference of the expression concerning the situation of the ancient Vescia in notes 253 and 628, are to be judged of accordingly.

and as this had been done both at the conclusion of the printed second volume and in the revision of the part of it, hitherto unprinted, it was necessary to observe this principle in the subsequent parts also, although the manuscript has throughout the common calculation of the years of Rome. In order however not to offend too much by the innovation, we have every where chosen to add the Catonian era in parenthesis to the date corrected by Niebuhr. The difference between the two down to the eleventh year of the second Samnite war, where the common calculation has again inserted an idle year (compare p. 229. note 401), amounts to five years. While we have thus also followed here the conviction which the author has expressed in the second volume p. 560 and p. 566, it is nevertheless to be regretted, that the examination of this question in the passages of the third volume relating to it (p. 192 and p. 229) had not yet led to the same result; so that there is now no perfect agreement between the critical treatment of the history in the text and the chronology which is followed.

In one case the difficulty was presented of choosing between two finished representations of the same subject in the manuscript: this occurred in the chapter headed *Epirus and Pyrrhus*, where the history of the youth of Pyrrhus was found in quite a different essay. Nay, it is a remarkable proof of Niebuhr's peculiar partiality for that portion of the history and of his love for its hero, that three more modes of treating the same subject are written down in his papers. The form here published, which was written latest and which thereby had external appearance also in its favour, appeared at the same time to be the best and most perfect, to which the others should justly give way.

The converse of this embarrassment arising from

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abundance, in which an expected description is missing in the manuscript, unfortunately occurs likewise, and that in a passage, in which the gap will be very painfully felt; in p. 547. For here, where the discussion of the constitution which united Italy for the first time into one state, is promised in the most distinct words, we find no more than a reference to a *Manuscript* † †. This created a hope of finding the discussion of the subject in some other place; but this hope has not been realised after the most careful searching through the papers of the author. The only manuscript which can be meant, is the very same from which the chapter on the first Punic war has been printed: the manuscript in which he made his preparations for the lectures delivered at Berlin: lectures delivered at Bonn cannot be thought of for this reason, that the whole manuscript of the third volume was written, before Niebuhr had made up his mind to deliver them. The older manuscript of the year 1811 must be regarded as the one referred to by † † the more, since in the earlier chapters, as was remarked above, it was frequently made the basis of the new work. But unfortunately this manuscript, as the printed essay shews, from p. 613 to p. 616, only gives such an unsatisfactory account concerning the important question of the constitution of Italy, that we must be convinced, that Niebuhr had reserved to himself the complete investigation of it, and that he only wished to remind himself by that note of the leading outlines, such as he had written them down in the earlier work. Memorandums of this kind made by short signs, for the purpose of making use of new thoughts or new materials in the last revision, occurred not unfrequently in the margin of the manuscript; they have in every case been indicated in this volume with the painful feel-

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ing, that they only marked so many irreparable losses. See notes 287. 486. 497. 499. 503. 505. 549. &c.

In looking back upon the whole of this principal part of the present volume, even apart from the differences existing between it and the earlier volumes, no reader who takes an interest in the matter, can refrain, we think, from asking, how far Niebuhr himself in revising it would have left this history of the fifth century unaltered, and in what form he would have given it to the public. Who is there that can answer this question put to the grave of the deceased? Yet I may be allowed to point out some reasons which render it probable, that he himself would not have made very considerable changes in what had been written. This belief is supported first by the expression, which Niebuhr himself wrote down in the preface to his second volume, a few months before his death; “the remainder down to the first Punic war only wants a last revision”: an expression, which manifestly does not imply the intention of making any material alteration. With no less justice may we infer from the character of the history described in the third volume, and from the nature of its sources, that it is almost certain, that a remodeling such as was called for in the first two volumes by the ever increasing gains of an unwearied investigation of dark times and difficult relations, would never have become necessary here. On the contrary, the freshness and liveliness of the description, such as it had been written out from the first conception, will remain its imperishable beauty. I may also add, that Niebuhr’s subsequent lectures on Roman history in the university of Bonn, which I had the happiness of attending twice from beginning to end, perfectly agreed with what is contained in this volume, so far as this can be expected between the careful and

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elaborate history such as it is written down, and a general sketch communicated in an oral discourse. In these lectures he only made a slight allusion to that most important investigation into the internal history which adorns this volume : the investigation of the constitutional changes in the censorship of Fabius and Decius, and of the alteration in the centuries on the basis of the tribes, p. 320 to p. 349. But that in this investigation, too, such as it lies before us, we are justified in recognising the matured conviction of the deceast, is clear from the circumstance, that Niebuhr even in later years communicated this part of his history from the manuscript to several friends : nay I must here quote my own evidence, not without sad feelings, that at Christmas in 1829, only one year before his death, he gave me this proof of his kindness and confidence, by reading to me that chapter from the manuscript. And as I have here been obliged to speak of the reasons, on which my own conviction is founded, I may add the remark, that in note 320 the insertion of the name of Niebuhr's excellent friend, does not rest upon a mere conjecture. Whoever knew his love and admiration for Count de Serre, would have guesst it : but as Niebuhr's recollection always dwelt with indescribable veneration upon this friend who went before him to eternity, so he also often related and with delight the circumstance mentioned in the passage referred to, how Count de Serre in their common excursions in the neighbourhood of Naples recognised the site of Palæopolis, as there described.

After this account of the parts which constitute this third volume, the remark is perhaps superfluous, that the original form of Niebuhr's style is nowhere altered by any addition from the hands of a stranger. The only point in which the editor might be allowed to supply



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things for the advantage of the readers, were the references given in the notes. As Niebuhr, as we have already remarked, had written the chief part of the whole with the assistance of few books, he had put down a number of references merely from his admirable memory, often only mentioning the author, without ever completing the reference afterwards. So far as it was possible for me to give such passages with certainty, I have done so. . . .

J. CLASSEN.

BERLIN,  
*November 12, 1832.*

NOTE.—The remaining part of the Editor's preface is of no interest to the English reader, as it partly refers to some deficiencies and inequalities in the references to writers as Dionysius, Strabo and Zonaras, which have been corrected by the translators, and partly to the Indexes, which in the translation are united into one for all the three volumes, and adapted to the last (third) edition of the first and second volumes.

THE TRANSLATORS.

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