Roman Africa, archaeological walks in Algeria and Tunis

Boissier Gaston
By GASTON BOISSIER.

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ROMAN AFRICA

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WALKS IN ALGERIA
AND TUNIS

BY

GASTON BOISSIER

Author of "Cicero and His Friends," "Rome and Pompeii,"
"The Country of Horace and Virgil," etc.

AUTHORIZED ENGLISH VERSION BY

ARABELLA WARD

WITH FOUR MAPS

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

It is with great pleasure that I offer to the reading public the authorised English translation of Gaston Boissier's *L'Afrique Romaine*.

Monsieur Boissier needs no introduction to an English or American public. Those who have read his previous books are already familiar with the simplicity and clearness of the style, the picturesque descriptions of places and the vivid presentation of events which characterise Boissier's work, and have realised also that this work is based on a foundation of thorough scholarly knowledge.

The present volume deals with that part of Africa which came under the direct domination of Rome. The author transports the reader to Carthage, whence, at will, he may wander across the great stretch of surrounding country, visit the smaller cities and towns, and study, in the light of their past history, their inhabitants, their customs, their language and literature, their mode of living, their government, and the ruins of their ancient monuments, many of which are still standing.

I have followed for the spelling of the proper names the forms given by Heinrich Kiepert, Ph. D., in his *Manual of Ancient Geography*. In cases not mentioned by Kiepert, I have taken the authority
of William Smith’s *Ancient Geography* and *Classical Atlas*, appending to the ancient the modern name in all but a few instances in which I have been unable to find it. I have also occasionally been unable to discover the English equivalent of the ancient name as given by Boissier, and in these instances, I have left the word as it is in the French text. For further references, I have consulted: Polybius; Strabo; Herodotus; Pliny; Livy; Appian; Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; Sallust’s *F Jugurtha*; Virgil’s *Æneid* and *Georgics*; Chateaubriand’s *Itinéraire*; Mommsen’s *History of Rome*; E. H. Bunberry’s *Rome*; R. Bosworth Smith’s *Carthage and the Carthaginians*; G. L. Ditson’s *North Coast of Africa*; Church’s *Story of Carthage*; Davis’s *Carthage and her Remains*; Henty’s *Carthage and the Carthaginians*; Morris’s *Life of Hannibal*; J. Marcel’s *Tunis*; General Daumas’s *Mœurs*; Thompson’s *History of Roman Literature*; Cruttwell’s *History of Roman Literature*; Napoleon’s *Correspondence*; Anthon’s *Ancient Geography*, and Lippincott’s *Gazetteer*.

I have devoted to the work painstaking and conscientious study, and if in certain instances I have erred, if the English rendering mars or misinterprets the original, I can only ask the indulgence of the author as well as that of his readers.

*Arabella Ward.*

South Orange, N. J.,
December 1, 1898.
AUTHOR'S PREFACE

WHEN I visited Africa, in 1891, I met on my route a number of senators and deputies, who were travelling through the country in order to become acquainted with its resources and needs. The Algerian question had just been brought up again in the Chamber of Deputies; it had been discussed for a long time without result, and, as is the custom when an understanding cannot be reached, they succeeded in deciding to make an investigation. The politicians came therefore to seek, on the very spot, light on the discussions which they foresaw.

Naturally they set to work to study the actual condition of Algeria and Tunis; they computed the hectares of cultivated land, they looked into the yield of the crops and the vines, and the state of the shipping; they talked with the colonists and the natives; they strove to take account of that which has been accomplished in half a century, and that which remains to be done. Nothing is better; but is this all? In order to know the future of our African possessions, and to understand the true condition of their prosperity, is it sufficient to enquire into the present? I think not. It seems to me that the past also has the right to be heard. We are not the first who came from the countries of the
North to settle in Africa; we have had, on this soil, illustrious predecessors, who conquered it, as we did, and governed it with glory for more than five centuries. They encountered almost the same obstacles there that we did; they had to overcome the same resistance of nature, which was no kinder then than now; the same opposition of warlike races, which occupied the soil, and which were willing to share it with no one. How did they accomplish it? By what miracles of courage, of patience, and of skill did they make of this arid and oftentimes uninhabitable soil one of the richest provinces of their Empire and of the world? What means did they employ in order to implant their civilisation in the midst of these barbarians, and render it so flourishing there that Africa succeeded in producing Latin writers in abundance, and that in a short time it seemed more Roman than Italy and Rome? All that, it is important for us to know; we cannot neglect the lessons and the examples that the past is able to furnish us. In order that the desired investigation may be complete, it is necessary to call upon the Romans also to take part in it: I believe that, if we knew how to question them, they would have much to tell us.

Yet at first I hesitated to do this; it seemed to me that, in order to appreciate the work of the Romans in Africa, it was not sufficient to have merely glanced at the monuments that they left there, and to have spent a few weeks in travelling through the country. Happily, the very careful and exhaustive research, which lack of time has not