

Contributed.

Ancient History.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS, BY W. R. BIGG, ESQ.,
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ONT.

(Q.) 73. Sketch the events that occurred during the reigns of Phraortes and Cyaxares I.

(A.) Phraortes, the Arphaxad of the Book of Judith, succeeded Deiocees, B. C. 680, and reduced Persia, but was defeated and killed at the siege of Nineveh, B. C. 655; his son and successor, Cyaxares I., raised a powerful army to avenge his father's death, and was on the point of capturing Nineveh when he was obliged to withdraw his troops for the defence of his own dominions, against an irruption of the Scythians, B. C. 648, who occupied the country for 29 years. Unable to expel them by force of arms, recourse was had to treachery, and the leaders of the Scythians were massacred when inebriated at a feast, to which the Medes had invited them; Cyaxares then expelled the foreign invaders, and resumed the war against the Assyrians, in connection with Nabopolassar, King of Babylon. Nineveh was taken and destroyed by the confederate armies, B. C. 612, and the Assyrian Empire subdued.

2nd. The Median Empire thus restored by Cyaxares embraced besides Media, also Assyria, and was further extended by the subjugation of Persia proper and Bactria, and was bounded on the west by the River Halys.

(Q.) 74. Who was the last King of Media? State the events of his reign.

(A.) Astyages, B. C. 594. In his reign the subject Persians rose against the Medes, and subdued them. According to Herodotus, however, the daughter of Astyages (Mandane) married Cambyses, a Persian noble, whose son Cyrus usurped the Median throne, and thus became the founder of the Medo-Persian Monarchy, B. C. 559.

Xenophon and the Scriptures represent the son of Astyages, Cyaxares II. (Darius the Mede), the uncle of Cyrus, as the last king of Media.

Cyaxares II. died B. C. 536, leaving all his dominions to his nephew, Cyrus, who inherited about the same time the sceptre of his father, Cambyses.

(Q.) 75. By whom was Persia originally peopled, and by what name is it mentioned in Scripture?

(A.) By the family of Elam, the eldest son of Shem, and hence the inhabitants are called in Scripture the Elamites. In the Books of Daniel and Esdras it is called Pars or Pharas, whence it is obvious the term Persia is derived.

(Q.) 76. Who wrote the Zend-Avesta, and what does it contain?

(A.) Zerdushk, or Zoroaster. B. C. 1000; it contains the only native records of the history of Iran (Bactria, Media and Persia), and embodies the religious system of the Iranians, who worshipped fire and light.

(Q.) 77. Who were the Magi?

(A.) A sacerdotal caste of the Medes, who preserved the sacred fire brought to Media by Zoroaster, and which he is said to have received from Heaven.

(Q.) 78. When was Egypt subdued by the Ethiopians, and under whom?

(A.) In B. C. 770. Under Sabacus.

(Q.) 79. Which of the Dodecarchy became sole monarch of Egypt, and when?

(A.) Psammeticus of Saïs, B. C. 670. who expelled his rivals with the assistance of Greek mercenaries.

(Q.) 80. By whom was he succeeded, what work of art did he undertake, and whom did he conquer?

(A.) By his son Pharaoh Necho, B. C. 617; he attempted to join the Nile to the Red Sea by means of a canal 96 miles in length, which undertaking was finished by the Persians.

Necho, having defeated Josiah at Megiddo, B. C. 608, took Jerusalem, and appointed Eliakim tributary King, but was ultimately defeated by Nebuchadnezzar in the battle of Carchemish, B. C. 604.

(Q.) 81. Name the law givers of Athens, and state the principal features in the laws of Draco?

(A.) Draco and Solon; the laws of the former, B. C. 624, were said to be written in blood, as death was the penalty of all crimes.

(Q.) 82. When did Solon flourish; what did he effect, and what monarchs were contemporaneous with him, and what philosopher?

(A.) Solon, son of Execestides, laid the foundation of Athens as a maritime State, established the Council of Four hundred (Bule) to check the democracy, abolished most of Draco's laws, and shaped the Athenian constitution. He flourished B. C. 594; his contemporaries were Croesus, king of Lydia, Cyrus the Great of Persia, and Pythagoras, the philosopher.

(Q.) 83. Narrate the particulars of the Cylonian conspiracy?

(A.) In B. C. 612 Cylon, one of the nobles, formed a conspiracy to overthrow the Government, but after having made himself master of the Acropolis he was besieged by his brother nobles and the Athenians; during the blockade Cylon escaped, but his followers were compelled to surrender to Megacles, son of Alcmeon, on condition that their lives should be spared; this promise, however, was broken, the prisoners were slain, and some of them even at the altars of Eumenides or Furies, where they had taken refuge. Megacles and his party were ultimately tried for this breach of faith and sacrilege B. C. 597, found guilty, and all the Alcmeonids were exiled.

(Q.) 84. Sketch the events that led to the rise of Pisistratus, and the downfall of his sons.

(A.) Three parties; the first headed by Lycurgus; the second by Megacles, and the third by Pisistratus, a kinsman of Solon and a descendant of Codrus, had revived their ancient feuds. The attempts of Solon to restore union and peace were fruitless. Pisistratus, pretending to have been wounded by his enemies, prevailed upon the populace to grant him a body-guard for his personal safety, and then seized upon the Acropolis and drove out his antagonists, B. C. 560. After five or six years Lycurgus formed a coalition with Megacles, and Pisistratus was expelled; but, Lycurgus and Megacles disagreeing, the latter united with his old enemy Pisistratus, who now returned, B. C. 554, more powerful than before. His second tyranny lasted scarcely a year, when he was again compelled to flee by the insulted family of his wife, who was the daughter of Megacles. The latter again made common cause with Lycurgus, and drove Pisistratus from the city, B. C. 553.

Ten years later, having strengthened himself by alliances and mercenary troops in the interim,