

mit the few historical details which refer to more remote periods, it can scarcely be extended to forty*.

Herodotus, the first profane historian whose works have been transmitted to us, has not a greater antiquity than 2300 years†. The historians, prior to him, whom he may have consulted, do not date a century before him‡. We may even judge of what they were by the extravagances handed down to us, extracted from the works of *Aristæus* of Proconnesus, and some others. Before them we have only poets; and *Homer*, the most ancient that we possess, Homer the immortal master and model of all the West, flourished only twenty-seven or twenty-eight centuries before the present time.

When these first historians speak of ancient events, whether occurring in their own nation, or in neighbouring countries, they only cite oral traditions, and not public works. It was not un-

* The period of Ninus, about 2348 years before Christ, according to Ctesias, and those who have followed him; but only 1250, according to Volney, after Herodotus.

† Herodotus lived 440 years before Christ.

‡ Cadmus, Pherecydes, Aristæus of Proconnesus, Acusilaus, Hecataeus of Miletum, Charon of Lampsacus, &c. See Vossius, *Histor. Græc.* lib. i., and especially his fourth book.