

India, they had not even suitable and connected fables; that they preserved only lists more or less defective of their kings, and some remembrances of the more distinguished among them, of those especially who had taken care to have their names inscribed upon the temples and other great edifices which adorned their country; but that these remembrances were confused,—that they rested merely upon the traditional explanation which was given to the representations painted or sculptured upon the monuments; explanations founded solely upon hieroglyphical inscriptions, conceived, like that which has been handed down to us*, in very general terms, and which, passing from mouth to mouth, were altered, as to their details, at the pleasure of those who communicated them to strangers; and that it is consequently impossible to rest any proposition relative to the antiquity of the presently existing continents, upon the shreds of these traditions, so incomplete even in their own times, and become utterly unintelligible under the pen of those who have been the means of transmitting them to us.

Should this assertion require other proofs, they would be found in the list of the sacred works of

* That of Ramestes in Ammian. loc. cit.