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Antiochus VI Dionysus



Antiochus VI Dionysus ([Altes Museum, Berlin](#))

Antiochus VI Dionysus: name of a [Seleucid](#) king, ruled from 145/144 to 140.

Successor of: [Alexander I Balas](#)

Relatives:

- Father: [Alexander I Balas](#)
- Mother: [Cleopatra Thea](#) (daughter of [Ptolemy VI Philometor](#))

Main deeds:

- Born c. 147
- 145/144: The child's father is dethroned by [Demetrius II Nicator](#), but the boy's life is saved by [Diodotus Tryphon](#), who proclaims him king
- 141 or 140: Killed by Diodotus, who claims the throne for himself

Succeeded by: [Diodotus Tryphon](#)

Sources:

- [1 Maccabees, 11-13](#)
- [Appian of Alexandria, Syrian Wars, 68](#)
- [Diodorus of Sicily, Library of World History, 32.9d-10, 33.4a, 33.28](#)
- [Flavius Josephus, Jewish War, 1.48](#)
- [Flavius Josephus, Jewish Antiquities, 13.131, 144ff, 176, 218-219](#)
- [Livy, Periochae, 55](#)

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Antiochus VII Sidetes



Antiochus VII Sidetes

Antiochus VII Sidetes: name of a [Seleucid](#) king, ruled from 138 to 129.

Successor of: [Demetrius II Nicator](#) and [Diodotus Tryphon](#)

Relatives:

- Father: [Demetrius I Soter](#)
- Mother:
- Wife: [Cleopatra Thea](#) (daughter of [Ptolemy VI Philometor](#); former wife of [Alexander I Balas](#) and [Demetrius II Nicator](#))

Main deeds:

- Lives in [Side](#) during the reign of his brother [Demetrius II Nicator](#), and stays out of his conflict with [Diodotus Tryphon](#)
- July/August 138: Demetrius taken captive by the [Parthian](#) king Mithradates I the Great, who has conquered [Media](#), [Babylonia](#), and Elam
- After August 138: Antiochus VII Sidetes, supported by several parties, attacks Diodotus Tryphon in Dor, but he escapes
- Diodotus commits suicide in Apamea
- Early 137: Antiochus' commander Cendebeus defeated by Simon, high priest in the [Hasmonaean](#) kingdom
- 134: January: Simon is assassinated; Antiochus invades Judaea, besieges Jerusalem, and recognizes John Hyrcanus as high priest; he does not interfere with the Jewish religion (and is therefore sometimes called *Euergetes*, 'benefactor').
- 133: Sends expensive presents to Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus, who is besieging Numantia
- 132: Death of the Parthian king Mithradates; he is succeeded by Phraates II
- 130: Antiochus successfully fights a war against the Parthians, who are expelled from Babylonia and Media
- 129: Antiochus demands full restoration of all Seleucid territories in Iran; the Parthians defeat him
- After 20 May 129: suicide
- The Parthians reconquer Media and Babylonia, add [Mesopotamia](#), and reach the [Euphrates](#). Demetrius II, who is still held in captivity, is allowed to return to his old kingdom, which has by now been reduced to Syria and [Cilicia](#)

Sources:

- [1 Maccabees, 15-16](#)
- [Appian of Alexandria, Syrian Wars, 68](#)

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- [Diodorus of Sicily](#), *Library of World History*, 34/35.1, 34/35.15-18
- [Flavius Josephus](#), *Jewish War*, 1.50-51, 61-62
- [Flavius Josephus](#), *Jewish Antiquities*, 7.393, 13.219ff, 236ff, 261ff, 271ff
- [Flavius Josephus](#), *Against the Greeks*, 2.82
- [Strabo](#), *Geography*, 14.668

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Hasmonaean coin (C!!)

1 Maccabees 1

The *First Book of Maccabees* describes the struggle of the Jews for religious, cultural, and political independence against the Seleucid king [Antiochus IV Epiphanes](#) and his successors, who were Greeks and sympathized with the hellenization of Judah. It is slightly ironic that the anonymous author of The *First Book of Maccabees* wrote a *history* to make his point, because this literary genre was invented by Greeks.

Although the book is biased, it is not the worst of all historical studies from Antiquity; in fact, the author is quite capable. He presents the Jewish leaders Judas, Jonathan, and Simon as devout people and has little sympathy for people who favor hellenization, but it must be noted that he nowhere mentions divine intervention.

The contents of the book can be summarized as follows:

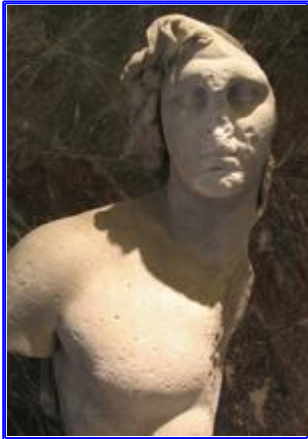
- Chapter 1-2: The hellenization of Judah and the non-violent resistance by Mattathias;
- Chapter 3-9: Military actions by Judas the Maccabaeus ('battle hammer') : after 166, he defeats the Seleucid armies three times and liberates Jerusalem, where the temple is purified; more operations; Judas' defeat and death in 161;
- Chapter 9-12: Continued warfare, led by Judas' brother Jonathan (160-143), who, benefiting from wars of succession in the Seleucid Empire, restores the fortunes of the Jewish nationalists and adds to their territories;
- Chapter 13-16: The third brother, Simon, achieves political independence, and founds the [Hasmonaean](#) dynasty.

The author must have been a cultivated Jew living in Judah, and can be dated to c.100 BCE. The presumed Hebrew or Aramaic original is now lost, but the Greek version, which must have been popular in the [Diaspora](#), has survived and was accepted as canonical by the Christians, until, in the sixteenth century, the scholars of the Reformation preferred to concentrate on those texts of the Jewish Bible that were written in Hebrew.

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The first chapter of *1 Maccabees* is offered here in the Revised Standard version.

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Alexander, bust from Delos
([Louvre](#))

1 After [Alexander](#) son of [Philip](#), the [Macedonian](#), who came from the land of Kittim,^[1] had defeated [Darius](#), king of the Persians and the [Medes](#), he succeeded him as king. (He had previously become king of Greece.) **2** He fought many battles, conquered strongholds, and put to death the kings of the earth. **3** He advanced to the ends of the earth, and plundered many nations. When the earth became quiet before him, he was exalted, and his heart was lifted up. **4** He gathered a very strong army and ruled over countries, nations, and princes, and they became tributary to him.

5 After this he fell sick and perceived that he was dying. **6** So he summoned his most honored officers, who had been brought up with him from youth, and divided his kingdom among them while he was still alive. **7** And after Alexander had reigned twelve years, he died.

8 Then his officers began to rule, each in his own place. **9** They all put on crowns after his death, and so did their sons after them for many years; and they caused many evils on the earth. **10** From them came forth a sinful root, [Antiochus Epiphanes](#), son of [Antiochus](#) the king; he had been a hostage in Rome. He began to reign in the one hundred and thirty-seventh year of the kingdom of the Greeks [[the Seleucid Era; 175/174](#)].

11 In those days lawless men came forth from [Israel](#), and misled many, saying, "Let us go and make a covenant with the Gentiles round about us, for since we separated from them many evils have come upon us."

12 This proposal pleased them, **13** and some of the people eagerly went to the king. He authorized them to observe the ordinances of the Gentiles. **14** So they built a gymnasium in Jerusalem, according to Gentile custom, **15** and removed the marks of circumcision,^[2] and abandoned the holy covenant. They joined with the Gentiles and sold themselves to do evil.

16 When Antiochus saw that his kingdom was established, he determined to become king of the land of Egypt, that he might reign over both



Bust of Ptolemy VI Philometor, from Aegina (National Archaeological Museum, Athens)

kingdoms. **17**So he invaded Egypt with a strong force, with chariots and elephants and cavalry and with a large fleet. **18**He engaged [Ptolemy \[VI Philometor\]](#), the king of Egypt, in battle, and Ptolemy turned and fled before him, and many were wounded and fell. **19**And they captured the fortified cities in the land of Egypt, and he plundered the land of Egypt.

20[Autumn 169] After subduing Egypt, Antiochus returned in the one hundred and forty-third year. He went up against Israel and came to Jerusalem with a strong force. **21**He arrogantly entered the sanctuary and took the golden altar, the [lampstand](#) for the light, and all its utensils. **22**He took also the table for the bread of the Presence, the cups for drink offerings, the bowls, the golden censers, the curtain, the crowns, and the gold decoration on the front of the temple; he stripped it all off. **23**He took the silver and the gold, and the costly vessels; he took also the hidden treasures which he found. **24**Taking them all, he departed to his own land. He committed deeds of murder, and spoke with great arrogance.

25Israel mourned deeply in every community,

26rulers and elders groaned,
maidens and young men became faint,
the beauty of women faded.

27Every bridegroom took up the lament;
she who sat in the bridal chamber was mourning.

28Even the land shook for its inhabitants,
and all the house of Jacob was clothed with shame.

[167]**29**Two years later the king sent to the cities of Judah a chief collector of tribute, and he came to Jerusalem with a large force. **30**Deceitfully he spoke peaceable words to them, and they believed him; but he suddenly fell upon the city, dealt it a severe blow, and destroyed many people of Israel. **31**He plundered the city, burned it with fire, and tore down its houses and its surrounding walls. **32**And they took captive the women and children, and seized the cattle.

33Then they fortified the city of David with a great strong wall and strong towers, and it became their citadel. **34**And they stationed there a sinful people, lawless men. These strengthened their position; **35**they stored up arms and food, and collecting the spoils of Jerusalem they stored them there, and became a great snare.

36It became an ambush against the sanctuary,
an evil adversary of Israel continually.

37On every side of the sanctuary they shed innocent blood;
they even defiled the sanctuary.

38Because of them the residents of Jerusalem fled;
she became a dwelling of strangers;
she became strange to her offspring,
and her children forsook her.

39Her sanctuary became desolate as a desert;
her feasts were turned into mourning

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her sabbaths were turned into mourning,
her sabbaths into a reproach, her honor into contempt.

40 Her dishonor now grew as great as her glory;
her exaltation was turned into mourning.



Antiochus IV Euphron

41 Then the king wrote to his whole kingdom that all should be one people, 42 and that each should give up his customs. 43 All the Gentiles accepted the command of the king. Many even from Israel gladly adopted his religion; they sacrificed to idols and profaned the sabbath. 44 And the king sent letters by messengers to Jerusalem and the cities of Judah; he directed them to follow customs strange to the land, 45 to forbid burnt offerings and sacrifices and drink offerings in the sanctuary, to profane sabbaths and feasts, 46 to defile the sanctuary and the priests, 47 to build altars and sacred precincts and shrines for idols, to sacrifice swine and unclean animals, 48 and to leave their sons uncircumcised. They were to make themselves abominable by everything unclean and profane, 49 so that they should forget the law and change all the ordinances. 50 "And whoever does not obey the command of the king shall die."

51 In such words he wrote to his whole kingdom. And he appointed inspectors over all the people and commanded the cities of Judah to offer sacrifice, city by city. 52 Many of the people, every one who forsook the law, joined them, and they did evil in the land; 53 they drove Israel into hiding in every place of refuge they had.

54 Now on the fifteenth day of [Kislev](#), in the one hundred and forty-fifth year [[SE](#); [6 December 167](#)], they erected a desolating sacrilege upon the altar of burnt offering. They also built altars in the surrounding cities of Judah, 55 and burned incense at the doors of the houses and in the streets. 56 The books of the law which they found they tore to pieces and burned with fire. 57 Where the book of the covenant was found in the possession of any one, or if any one adhered to the law, the decree of the king condemned him to death. 58 They kept using violence against Israel, against those found month after month in the cities.

59 And on the twenty-fifth day of the month [[3](#)] they offered sacrifice on the altar which was upon the altar of burnt offering. 60 According to the decree, they put to death the women who had their children circumcised, 61 and their families and those who circumcised them; and they hung the infants from their mothers' necks.

62 But many in Israel stood firm and were resolved in their hearts not to eat unclean food. 63 They chose to die rather than to be defiled by food or to profane the holy covenant; and they did die. 64 And very great wrath came upon Israel.

[>> to chapter 2 >>](#)

Note 1:

Kittim is an expression to describe people from the west.

Note 2:

The operation to undo circumcision is described by Celsus, [On Medicine, 7.25.1c](#).

Note 3:

The king's birthday.

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Strabo of Amasia

Strabo of Amasia (c.62 BCE - c.24 CE): Greek geographer, one of the most important sources for ancient topography and history.

Strabo of Amasia is the author of one of the largest works of geography from Antiquity. His mother's family had been important during the reign of king [Mithridates VI of Pontus](#), but during the war against the Roman general Pompey, it had switched sides. This loyalty provided Strabo with connections in the Roman world.

The seventeen books of his *Geography* are partially based upon autopsy (Asia Minor, Greece, Italy, Egypt), and partially on good sources like [Polybius of Megalopolis](#) and Megasthenes (who had visited India). The books are written in a simple Greek, but are more entertaining than other ancient works of geography.

A translation can be found [here](#).

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Appian of Alexandria

Appian of Alexandria (c.95-c.165): one of the most underestimated of all Greek historians, author of a *Roman History*. The part on the Civil

an GREEK HISTORIAN, AUTHOR OF A ROMAN HISTORY. THE PART ON THE CIVIL Wars survives.

Life

Appian of Alexandria wrote an autobiography, but it is almost completely lost, and consequently we hardly know anything about the historian from Alexandria. We have to distill information about his life from his own writings and a letter by Cornelius Fronto, a famous *littérateur* living in Rome in the mid-second century, and the tutor of the future emperor [Marcus Aurelius](#).

In spite of this lack of information, it is certain that Appian was born in c.95 in [Alexandria](#), the capital of Roman Egypt, and belonged to the wealthy upper class. After all, his parents were Roman citizens and could pay for their son's formal education. He became a barrister and boasted in the introduction to his *Roman History* "that he pleaded cases in Rome before the emperors".

This must have happened after c.120, because Appian states in one of his surviving fragments that he managed to escape from a band of Jewish looters who pursued him in the marshes of the Nile ([more](#)). This strange piece of information can only be dated to 116-117, when the Jews of the [Cyrenaica](#) and Egypt revolted, believing that one [Lukuas](#) was the [Messiah](#) ([more...](#)). As Appian was still in Egypt by the end of the reign of [Trajan](#), he must have moved to Rome at a later date, and the emperors whom he claims to have addressed must therefore have been either [Hadrian](#) and [Antoninus Pius](#) or Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius.



Antoninus Pius (Agora Museum, [Athens](#))

The *Roman History* was finished before 165, because Appian mentions the river [Euphrates](#) as the eastern frontier of the Roman empire, which was no longer true after the campaigns of [Lucius Verus](#). Perhaps we can be a bit more precise. Appian mentions that during the reign of Hadrian, parts of Italy were ruled by a [proconsul](#) (13.38). He adds that this policy was reversed by Antoninus Pius, but is unaware of its reintroduction by Marcus Aurelius in 162. This suggests that the *Roman History* was completed during the reign of Antoninus Pius. This does not exclude the possibility that Appian pleaded cases before Marcus Aurelius, who was co-emperor with Antoninus Pius after 147.

Fronto's letter, a request on behalf of Appian to give him the rank of [procurator](#), can be dated during the coregency, i.e., between 147 and 161. It is interesting that he applied for this office, because it means that he belonged to the [equestrian](#) class, the "second class" of Roman citizens (after the [senatorial](#) order). We know that Appian actually won his office, but it is not certain whether it was merely a honorific or a real job.

This is all we know about Appian of Alexandria: born as a member of a wealthy family in c.95, working as a barrister in Rome after 120,

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becoming procurator after 147, he published a *Roman History* that appeared before 162.

The Roman History

	The table shows the survival of Appian's <i>Roman History</i> . Yellow means that the book survives in its entirety; pink that Byzantine excerpts have come down to us.	
	Preface	text
1	Early history of Rome	text
2	Conquest of Central Italy	text
3	Samnite wars	text
4	Wars against the Gauls	text
5	Conquest of Sicily	text
6	Wars in Hispania	text
7	War against Hannibal (Second Punic war)	text
8	Wars against Carthage	text
	with an appendix on the Numidian war	text
9	Macedonian wars	text
	with an appendix on the Illyrian wars	text
10	Wars in Greece and Asia	lost
11	Syrian War	text
	with an appendix on the Parthian wars	lost
12	Wars against Mithridates VI of Pontus	text
13	Civil wars 1 (Sulla)	text
14	Civil wars 2 (Julius Caesar)	text
15	Civil wars 3 (War of Mutina)	text
16	Civil wars 4 (War against Brutus and Cassius)	text
17	Civil wars 5 (War against Sextus Pompeius)	text
18	Egyptian war 1	lost
19	Egyptian war 2	lost
20	Egyptian war 3	lost
21	Egyptian war 4	lost
22	Wars of the empire	lost
23	Trajan's conquest of Dacia	lost
24	Trajan's eastern campaigns	text

The most remarkable aspect of this work, as Appian announces in his

[Preface](#), is its division. For example, Book 4 describes the wars against the Gauls from the very beginning, the sack of Rome in 387/386 BCE, to [Caesar's conquest of Gaul](#), more than three centuries later. Although this organization is sometimes confusing (e.g., when Appian ignores Caesar's creation of a power base in Gaul in his account of the civil war against Pompey), the advantage of his system clearly outweighs these minor irritations. Appian offers much more topographical clarity and gives us a better look on the the strategic choices made by commanders. His account of the [Mithridatic wars](#) is a case in point.

Moreover, Appian is not faced with the problem that historians who strictly adhered to the chronological sequence of events had to cope with: if an enemy of Rome has a specific custom, they had to explain it twice or leave it unexplained.

Finally, it should be noted that this way of arranging the subject matter prevents the story from becoming too much centered on Rome. This might have been fine with earlier historians (e.g., to [Livy](#)), but in the second century, the [provinces](#) of the Roman empire were almost equals of Italy, and a Rome-centered narrative was no longer acceptable.

Although Appian uses a geographical division of his subject matter, the people whose subjection he describes are mentioned in chronological order. He places the various people who fought against Rome in the order in which they first made contact. Only Books 13-17 do not fit in this scheme: Romans fighting against Romans. These books are the first ones of the second half of the project, and this is no coincidence. In the first twelve books, Rome has conquered the world; now it, has to fight its most formidable opponent - itself.

The next four books continued this story: the war against the Egyptian queen [Cleopatra VII Philopator](#) was, of course, a civil war between the two leaders of the faction of Julius Caesar, [Octavian](#) and Marc Antony. In calling these books "the Egyptian war", Appian followed the official propaganda of Octavian. He treated the subject matter at great length - one sixth of the total *Roman History*-, not because he thought that the conquest of his own native country was important, but, on the contrary, because he understood that it was more than just another foreign war.

Like his younger colleague [Cassius Dio](#), Appian rarely mentions his sources, and probably for the same reason: he does not follow one single source, but has checked more than one older text. His contemporary [Arrian of Nicomedia](#) did the same in his book on [Alexander the Great](#): where his two main sources agreed, he accepted their story as the truth, mentioning divergences only when they seemed important. Ancient historians did not often check the sources of their sources (which meant a visit to an inaccessible archive, if there was an archive at all), but there is one instance where we can see Appian paraphrasing an original document (Marc Antony's funeral speech of Julius Caesar; [text](#)) and there are no doubt other instances, which we do not recognize.

Appian is a far better historian than most twentieth-century classicists have been willing to accept. He identified good sources and used them with due criticism (e.g., using the *Commentaries on the Illyrian wars* by the emperor [Augustus](#), and complaining about their incompleteness). It must be stressed that he is the *only* ancient author who recognized the social causes of the Roman civil wars, for which Appian remains one of the most important sources. He is also a fine writer, who can vividly describe events, and knows how to evoke the smaller and larger tragedies that are history. He includes nice digressions, has an eye for the better anecdote, and does not ignore the interesting detail. Never has the stylistic device of repetition been used more effectively than by Appian in his shocking account of the persecution of the enemies of the [Second Triumvirate](#), which belongs to the finest that was ever written in Greek. In other words, Appian falls short of no meaningful standard, except that of the hyperprofessionalized study of history of our own age.

Literature

There is an excellent Penguin edition of the *Civil Wars*, translated and introduced by John Carter. Recommended! Translations of ancient sources should all be like this one.

- K. Broderson, "Appian und sein Werk", in: *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 2.34.1 (1993) 339-363
- Emilio Gabba, *Appiano e la storia delle Guerre Civili*, 1956 Firenze
- Alain Gowing, *The Triumviral Narratives of Appian and Cassius Dio*, 1992 Ann Arbor
- Martin Hose, *Erneuerung und Vergangenheit. Die Historiker im Imperium Romanum von Florus bis Cassius Dio* (1994 Stuttgart)
- I. Hahn & G. Nemeth, "Appian und Rom", in: *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 2.34.1 (1993) 364-402

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Diodorus of Sicily

Diodorus of Sicily: Greek historian, author of the [Library of World History](#). His activities can be dated between 60 and 30 BCE.

The year of Diodorus' birth and death can not be established exactly, but his work offers several clues. For example, he mentions that Caesar (i.e.,

[Octavian](#)) "removed the citizens of Tauromenium from their native state and the city received a *colonia*" (*World History*, 16.7.1). This almost certainly refers to an incident during or shortly after the war between the members of the [Second Triumvirate](#) and Sextus Pompeius, in 36 BCE. Diodorus must have died after this event.

Diodorus also mentions that in his days, the [Macedonians](#) were still rulers of Egypt, which suggests that he published his work shortly before 30, when Octavian defeated Marc Antony and [Cleopatra](#), the last [Ptolemaic](#) queen, and conquered the ancient country along the Nile.

On the other end of the spectrum, Diodorus mentions how he witnessed that a group of Egyptians lynched a Roman who had accidentally killed a holy cat (*WH*, 1.83.8-9). This happened "before king [Ptolemy XII Auletes](#) had been recognized by the Romans". He was, however, called "friend" in the year of the consulship of [Julius Caesar](#) (59), so we can be confident that Diodorus was in [Alexandria](#) by then. If we assume that he did his historical research and writing between 65/60 and 35/30, we can not be far off the mark.

We don't know much about other aspects of his life either. He was born in Agyrium on [Sicily](#), which was, according to the Roman orator Cicero, an impoverished town. Our writer understood some Latin, although he continued to make mistakes. He visited Egypt and Rome, and claims to have traveled extensively, but he nowhere shows acquaintance with important cities like [Athens](#), [Miletus](#), [Ephesus](#), or [Antioch](#). His description of Nineveh as a city on the [Euphrates](#) is simply wrong, and so is his statement that Chalcidice is near the [Hellespont](#) (*WH*, 2.3.2 and 16.53.2).

On the other hand, he must have been a rich man, because he mentions no literary patron and could afford to spend thirty years reading and writing (*WH*, 1.4.1). He makes no reference to any occupation of public offices, so he seems to have been a bookish man, a historian who carefully studied, excerpted, and reworked the works of earlier scholars. This method is not unlike that of his younger Roman contemporary [Livy](#), who started to write more or less at the moment when Diodorus published the *Library of World History*.

For a man who lived through the decade between 70 and 60, the theme of a world history was obvious. As a young man, Diodorus had seen how the entire Mediterranean world had been united by the Romans, with campaigns conducted by general Pompey the Great, who had pacified large parts of Hispania in the west and the entire east, where he had defeated the [Cilician pirates](#), conquered large parts of Anatolia, added the remains of the once powerful [Seleucid empire](#) to the Roman empire, an annexed [Judaea](#) as well.

Although Diodorus twice announces that he wanted to continue his *World History* until the moment that Caesar had conquered Britain and

reached the [edges of the earth](#), it seems that the end was in fact the year 59: Caesar's consulship, the ratification of Pompey's oriental acts, the conclusion of [First Triumvirate](#), and the beginning of Caesar's Gallic War and rise to power. The ratification of Pompey's eastern measures was a fitting conclusion: from now on, the world was a unity. Telling the story of later events (the Roman civil wars) was politically unsafe for a man writing in the 30's.

Although Diodorus must have seen the rise of Rome as something inevitable, he does not really like the new masters of the Roman world. He never fails to point out the cruelty, rapacity, and impiety of the Romans. He had no reason to: both Sicily and Alexandria had been the scene of a civil war.

Diodorus' *World History* was, in his own words, "an immense work" that consisted of forty books, of which 1-5 and 11-20 survive completely. (The last complete copy vanished when the Turks sacked [Constantinople](#) in 1453.) Fragments from the other volumes are known from [Byzantine](#) excerpts and are sufficiently well understood to know that Diodorus used histories by [Polybius of Megalopolis](#) and the Stoic philosopher [Posidonius of Apamea](#). The first half of the *WH* can be summarized as follows:

	Subject	Sources
1	Myths and kings of ancient Egypt	Hecataeus of Abdera
2	Assyria , India, Scythia , Arabia	Ctesias ; Megasthenes
3	Ethiopia and Libya; birth of the gods	Dionysius Scytobrachion
4	Greek gods and heroes	Dionysius S. & Euhemerus
5	The islands and peoples of the west	Timaeus of Tauromenium
6	Greek legends	Dionysius S. & Euhemerus
7	The Trojan War	Dionysius Scytobrachion
8	Archaic age	?
9	Archaic age (until c.540); the Seven sages	a/o Herodotus
10	Archaic age (c.540-481)	a/o Herodotus
11	Persian war; Pentacontaetia (480-451)	Herodotus; Ephorus
12	Pentacontaetia; Archidamian War (450-416)	Ephorus
13	Sicilian Expedition ; Ionian War (415-405)	Ephorus
14	Corinthian war (404-387)	Ephorus
15	Rise of Thebes (386-361)	Ephorus
16	Philip of Macedonia (360-336)	Ephorus & anonymous
17	Alexander the Great (335-324/3)	Cleitarchus
18	Diadochi (323-318)	Hieronymus of Cardia
19	Diadochi (318-311)	Hieronymus of Cardia
20	Diadochi (310-302)	Hieronymus of Cardia
21	Fragments, including the death of Agathocles (301-c.285)	
22	Fragments, including the Gallic attack on Macedonia and Delphi , and Mamertine and	

Antiochus VI Dionysus

	Roman cruelties in Messina (c.280-264)
23	Fragments, including the First Punic War (264-250)
24	Fragments, including the First Punic War (250-241)
25	Fragments, including the Carthaginian Mercenary War; Carthaginian advances in Iberia (242-222)
27	Fragments, including Nabis of Sparta and the second half of the Second Punic War (211-c.200)
28	Fragments, including Philip V of Macedonia and the Second Macedonian War (204-195)
29	Fragments, including the Syrian War and Third Macedonian War (195-172)
30	Fragments, including the second half of the Third Macedonian War (172-168)
31	Fragments, including the rise of Cappadocia (169-153)
32	Fragments, including the destruction of Carthage and Corinth (153-146)

All these books contain digressions on events in the west, for which Diodorus used good sources: Timaeus of Tauromenium for Sicily, and an excellent Roman annalist for the history of Italy. Although the table above usually mentions one source for each book, it should be noted that Diodorus felt free to introduce bits and pieces from other sources, and reworked his information considerably.

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholars (e.g., [Mommsen](#), Schwartz) have criticized Diodorus, who was, in their vision, an uncritical maker of excerpts and a poor historian. Indeed, the Sicilian makes strange mistakes in the chronology of ancient Rome and makes other errors. Yet, this criticism is ill-judged and the latest research offers something of a rehabilitation, stressing that the Sicilian author did what he wanted to do - write an easily accessible world history. The title, *Library of World History*, proves that Diodorus did not pretend to offer more than a collection of summaries. As a historian, he is simply as good as his sources.

Besides, he knows how to tell a story, although he lacks the speeches that make other ancient historians so entertaining. Yet, he writes in a clear and unaffected style that is usually easy to understand. One brief example of his nice, well-balanced sentences may suffice, a remark about Agathocles, the [tyrant](#) of Sicily:

Conferring benefits on many, making encouraging promises to not a few, and by conversing in a friendly fashion with everyone he gained great favor.

[\[full story\]](#)

Diodorus' theme, how disunited cultures were growing to one Mediterranean civilization under Roman rule, is well-worked out and was certainly appreciated by his contemporaries. For example, we know that among his readers were [Pliny the Elder](#) (who says that unlike other anthologies, the work of Diodorus has an honest title), Aelian, Athenaeus, and the Christian author Eusebius.

Why did Diodorus spend 30 years writing a not highly original work? He explains it in his introduction (cf. *WH*, [10.12](#)). History is useful. It is the teacher of humankind because it transmits experience. Readers are inspired by noble examples, and will understand the true power and justice of the gods, who punish evil acts. Therefore, a historian is a benefactor to society: he tells a delightful story and instructs. In other words, Diodorus is like any other wealthy Greek or Roman: he accepted his responsibility for his community, and although he never occupied an office and is not known to have donated a nice building to his hometown, he gave his fellow-man something important.

To us, he is a very important source. After all, the remains of the *Library of World History* are the largest surviving corpus of any ancient Greek historian, yes, books 11-20 are the *only* surviving continuous account of the Greek 'classical' age. It would be impossible to write a history of Sicily without Diodorus, and for the period 480-431 (the *Pentacontaetia*) and the age of the [Diadochi](#) he is our main source. His description of [Alexander's](#) last weeks in [Babylon](#) is high-quality material, and it has recently been shown by assyriologists that no other Greek author shows so much understanding of Babylonian civilization and the teaching of the [Chaldaeans](#) (which is also a compliment to Diodorus' source, [Cleitarachus](#)). Finally, it should be noted that although he makes mistakes in synchronizing Greek and Roman chronology, Diodorus' list of Roman magistrates is the best one we have - he ignores the errors of the [Varronian Chronology](#). The Sicilian historian may not be among the greatest authors of Antiquity, but no ancient historian can afford not to read the entire work.

Literature

- Diodorus of Sicily, [Library of World History](#)
- P. Green, *Diodorus Siculus Books 11-12.37.1. Greek History, 480-431 BC - the Alternative Version* (2006)

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Hyrkania



Hyrkania and Parthia

Hyrkana (Old Persian *Varkâna*, 'country of wolves'; Akkadian *Urqananu*): part of the ancient [Achaemenid empire](#), on the southern shores of the [Caspian Sea](#), now called *Gorgan*.

Hyrkania is situated between the [Caspian Sea](#) -which was called Hyrcanian Ocean in Antiquity- in the north and the [Elburz](#) mountains in

Hyrcania is bounded by the Caspian Sea to the north and the [Elburz](#) mountains to the south and west. The country has a tropical climate and is very fertile; the Persians considered it one of 'the good lands and countries' which their supreme god [Ahuramazda](#) had created personally ([text](#)). To the northeast, Hyrcania is open to the Central-Asian steppe, where nomads have been living for centuries; on several occasions, they invaded the country.

Hyrcania became part of the Achaemenid empire during the reign of king [Cyrus the Great](#) (559-530) or [Cambyses](#) (530-522). The [satrap](#)'s capital was called Zadracarta, and was possibly identical to modern Sari. There is no report about the conquest of Hyrcania, but from the [Behistun inscription](#) we know that it was Persian by 522. The story is as follows:

After the death of Cambyses, the [Magian](#) usurper [Gaumâta](#), who did not belong to the [Achaemenid](#) dynasty, usurped the throne. The adherents of the Persian royal house, however, helped [Darius](#) to become king; he killed the usurper on 29 September 522. Almost immediately, the subjects of the empire revolted. When Darius was suppressing these rebellions and stayed in [Babylon](#), the [Median](#) leader [Phraortes](#) made his bid for power (December 522). His revolt soon spread to [Armenia](#), [Assyria](#), [Parthia](#) and Hyrcania.

However the Persian garrison in Parthia still held out. It was commanded by Darius' father [Hystaspes](#). On 8 March 521, the Parthians and their allies, the Hyrcanians, attacked the Persian garrison, but they were defeated. Not much later, Darius was able to relieve his father. This was the first appearance in history of the Hyrcanians.

In the fifth century, the Greek researcher [Herodotus of Halicarnassus](#) mentions them several times in his [Histories](#). He has a confused report on irrigation (3.117), which may be compared to the statement of the second-century historian [Polybius of Megalopolis](#) that the Persians had built large irrigation works ([World History](#), 10.28.3). Herodotus also tells us that Hyrcanian soldiers were part of the large army which king [Xerxes](#) (486-465) commanded against the Greeks in 480 BCE. The historian notes that they carried the same arms as the Persians. Perhaps, they stayed in [Lydia](#) after the war; we know of a Hyrcanian garrison guarding the valleys of the Caicus and Hermus.

It is possible -and seems increasingly likely- that during the Persian period, a wall was built to defend Hyrcania against the nomads of the Central-Asian steppe. The ruins of the wall north of the river Gorgan that are visible today and are called "[Wall of Alexander](#)", were built later, but they probably replaced a Persian defense work.

In the confused years after the death of king [Artaxerxes I Makrocheir](#) (465-424), three of his sons succeeded to the throne: [Xerxes II](#), [Sogdianus](#) and Darius II. The latter was satrap in Hyrcania and may have used troops from Hyrcania and the "upper satrapies", that is [Aria](#), Parthia, [Arachosia](#) [Bactria](#) and Sogdia

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Hyrkania makes its reappearance in history when the [Macedonian](#) king [Alexander the Great](#) (336-323) invaded Asia. Hyrcanians are mentioned during the battle of [Gaugamela](#) (1 October 331), and in August 329, when the last Persian king, [Darius III Codomannus](#), was dead, many Persian noblemen fled to Hyrcania, where they surrendered to Alexander (a.o. [Artabazus](#)).

After Alexander's reign, his kingdom fell apart and Hyrcania became part of the new empire of the [Seleucid](#) rulers, a Macedonian-Greek dynasty. At the end of the third century BCE, northeastern nomads belonging to the tribe of the [Parni](#), invaded Parthia and Hyrcania. Although Parthia was forever lost to the Seleucids, Hyrcania was in the last decade of the third century reconquered by king [Antiochus III the Great](#) (222-187). After a generation, however, Hyrcania was lost again.



Terrace agriculture in eastern Hyrcania

To the Parthians -the new name of the Parni- Hyrcania was an important part of the empire, situated between their Parthian territories and their homeland on the steppe. It is certain that the Parthian kings used a Hyrcanian town as their summer residence. They were also responsible for the 'wall of Alexander', which is 180 km long and has forty castles. Nonetheless, it was not an uncontested part of their empire; for example, it is known to have revolted in 58 CE.

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