



APPIANUS

APPIANUS (APPIAN) OF ALEXANDRIA, historian, born probably toward the end of the 1st century A.D. Little is known of his career, except that he established himself in Rome, where he occupied the post of imperial procurator under Marcus Aurelius (161-69). His *Roman History*, which he must have composed before 165, was divided into twenty-four volumes devoted to different nations which had fought against Rome (except for Books 13 to 17, which deal with the Roman civil wars). Appian's sources were varied and of unequal value. The author does not always exclude dubious or legendary material from his narration. On the problem of Appian's sources, cf. Th. Reinach, *Mithridate Eupator, roi du Pont*, Paris, 1890, pp. 443-47; Pauly-Wissowa, II/1, cols. 216f.; E. Will, *Histoire du monde hellénistique II*, Nancy, 1967, pp. 469-71; *Der kleine Pauly I*, 1964, cols. 463-65.

Appian often alludes to his intention of writing a *Parthica* or "Parthian history" (see below). Now in the Photius's summary (*Library* 57, ed. R. Henry, I, 1959, p. 47), the eleventh book of *Roman History* is mentioned as including the "Syrian wars" as well as "Parthian History." But it seems that the "Parthian history" used by Photius (9th century) was a fabrication (compiled from Plutarch?) added to the *Syriaca* or "Syrian wars" in the early Byzantine period (cf. Pauly-Wissowa, II/1, col. 217). Still Appian has preserved some valuable details about the troubled period that followed Crassus' defeat at Carrhae (53 B.C.); especially in the "Civil Wars:" (1) Caesar's preparation for a Parthian war, which fell through after his assassination on 5 March 44 B.C., four days before the expedition was due to start (2.110-11); (2) Cassius' embassy to king



Orodes to seek his support (4.59); (3) the presence of contingents of Parthian and Median archers in the Roman troops opposing Octavius and Antonius (4.63,88); (4) the flight of the Palmyrenes into Parthian territory to escape Antony's soldiers (5.9); (5) expelled from Syria by Antony, the local "tyrants" favoring the Parthians took refuge in the court of the Arsacides (5.10). There is a reference to the *Parthian History* for the defeat of Crassus at Carrhae (2.18) and for the activities of Labienus at the head of the Parthian army (5.65). The *Syriaca* (from the conquests to the dissolution of the Seleucid monarchy), although highly relevant to Iranian history, contributes little that is original. There is a reference to the *Parthica* for the Parthian incursions into Syria between 50 B.C. and 40 B.C. (*Syriaca* 51), and some valuable information concerning the conquests of Tigranes the Great: for instance the promotion of Megadates (or Bagadates) as strategos (i.e., satrap) of Syria and Cilicia annexed to Great Armenia in 83 B.C. (*Syriaca* 51).

Of great interest is the *Mithridateios*, the book on the Mithridatic wars. Its principal figure, Mithridates IV Eupator, king of Pontus, was of Persian origin, as was his ally, Tigranes the Great, king of Armenia. This is the only work which offers us a circumstantial account of the Mithridatic wars (cf. Th. Reinach, *Mithridate*, passim, and recently E. Olshausen, in Pauly-Wissowa, Supp. XV, cols. 426-35) with their continuation in Armenia (the siege and the capture of Tigranocerta; *Mithr.* 84f.; cf. H. Manandian, *Tigrane II et Rome*, Lisbon, 1963, pp. 93f.), the submission of Tigranes (related differently from Plutarch and Dio Cassius), and the subsequent events (*Mithr.* 104-05; cf. Manandian, pp. 169f.). Some passages express a rather unfavorable attitude toward the Romans, and this points to Appian's use of some authors from the Near East who were independent of the Roman tradition, such as Nicolaus of Damascus, which he must have known through Posidonius (cf. Reinach, *Mithridate*, p. 448; Manandian, *Tigrane II*, pp. 114, 173; Will, *Monde hellénistique* II, p. 449). It is doubtless from some such source that Appian borrowed a description of sacrifice offered by Mithridates to Zeus Stratiotes (Ahura Mazdā?) after a victory (81 B.C.): A woodstack piled on the top of a mountain was lit by the king himself after a ritual banquet, "as was in use at Pasargadae for the sacrifices of the Persian kings" (*Mithr.* 66; cf. Reinach, *Mithridate*, p. 289; Pauly-Wissowa, IVA/1, cols. 260, 262).



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Editions of the *Roman History: Historia Romana*, ed.

P. Viereck and A. G. Roos, I, Leipzig, 1939 (Teubner Collection); rev. ed. by E. Gabba, I, Leipzig, 1962. Ed. with Eng. tr. by H. White, I-IV (Loeb Classical Library), London and Cambridge, Mass., repr. 1979.

(M. L. Chaumont)