

**Source: The Histories of Polybius V2 by Polybius □
(translated by Evelyn S. Shuckburgh 1889)**

BOOK XXVI

SELEUCUS PHILOPATOR, whom we last heard of as king of Syria, was assassinated by one of his nobles—Heliodorus—in the twelfth year of his reign. Antiochus his younger brother had been a hostage at Rome, and being, according to agreement, exchanged in B.C. 175 for Philopator's son Demetrius, he was returning to Syria. At Athens, on his journey home, he heard of the death of Seleucus, and the attempt of Heliodorus to usurp the kingdom. By the help of Eumenes Heliodorus was expelled and Antiochus installed, to the satisfaction of the people, who gave him at first the surname of Epiphanes. He is the Antiochus Epiphanes whose cruelties are recorded in the books of the Maccabees. He died mad at Tabae in Persia, B.C. 164. See 31, 11. For the following extract preserved by Athenaeus, see the translation of Livy, 41, 19.

1. ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES, nicknamed from his actions Epimanes (the Madman), would sometimes Antiochus steal from the court, avoiding his attendants, Epiphanes, B.C. and appear roaming wildly about in any ^{175-164.} chance part of the city with one or two companions. His favourite place to be found was the shops of the silver-smiths or goldsmiths, chatting and discussing questions of art with the workers in relief and other artists; at another time he would join groups of the people of the town and converse with any one he came across, and would drink with foreign visitors of the humblest description. Whenever he found any young men carousing together he would come to the place without giving notice, with fife and band, like a rout of revellers, and often by his unexpected appearance cause the guests to rise and run away. He would often also lay aside his royal robes, and, putting on a tebenna,¹ go round the market-place as though a candidate for office, shaking hands and embracing various

¹ This word, of unknown origin, seems to be used here for the toga, or some dress equivalent to it. See 10, 4.

people whom he intreated to vote for him, sometime as aedile, and sometimes as tribune. And when he got the office and took his seat on an ivory curule chair, after the fashion of the Romans, he heard law cases which came on in the agora, and decided them with the utmost seriousness and attention. This conduct was very embarrassing to respectable people, some of whom regarded him as a good natured easy-going man, and others as a madman. In regard to making presents, too, his behaviour was on a par with this. Some he presented with dice made of gazelle horn, some with dates, others with gold. There were even instances of his making unexpected presents to men whom he met casually, and whom he had never seen before. In regard to public sacrifices and the honours paid to the gods, he surpassed all his predecessors on the throne; as witness the Olympieium at Athens and the statues placed round the altar at Delos. He used also to bathe in the public baths, when they were full of the townspeople, pots of the most expensive unguents being brought in for him; and on one occasion on some one saying, "Lucky fellows you kings, to use such things and smell so sweet!" without saying a word to the man, he waited till he was bathing the next day, and then coming into the bath caused a pot of the largest size and of the most costly kind of unguent called *stactè* to be poured over his head, so that there was a general rush of the bathers to roll themselves in it; and when they all tumbled down, the king himself among them, from its stickiness, there was loud laughter. . . .

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