CITIES OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

ANTIOCH

A History

Andrea U. De Giorgi and A. Asa Eger

ANTIOCH

This is a complete history of Antioch, one of the most significant major cities of the eastern Mediterranean and a crossroads for the Silk Road, from its foundation by the Seleucids, through Roman rule, the rise of Christianity, Islamic and Byzantine conquests, to the Crusades and beyond.

Antioch has typically been treated as a city whose classical glory faded permanently amid a series of natural disasters and foreign invasions in the sixth and seventh centuries CE. Such studies have obstructed the view of Antioch's fascinating urban transformations from classical to medieval to modern city and the processes behind these transformations. Through its comprehensive blend of textual sources and new archaeological data reanalyzed from Princeton's 1930s excavations and recent discoveries, this book offers unprecedented insights into the complete history of Antioch, recreating the lives of the people who lived in it and focusing on the factors that affected them during the evolution of its remarkable cityscape. While Antioch's built environment is central, the book also utilizes landscape archaeological work to consider the city in relation to its hinterland, and numismatic evidence to explore its economics. The outmoded portrait of Antioch as a sadly perished classical city par excellence gives way to one in which it shines as brightly in its medieval Islamic, Byzantine, and Crusader incarnations.

Antioch: A History offers a new portal to researching this long-lasting city and is also suitable for a wide variety of teaching needs, both undergraduate and graduate, in the fields of classics, history, urban studies, archaeology, Silk Road studies, and Near Eastern/Middle Eastern studies. Just as importantly, its clarity makes it attractive for, and accessible to, a general readership outside the framework of formal instruction.

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ANTIOCH

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Andrea U. De Giorgi and A. Asa Eger

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This book is dedicated to the people of Antioch, who carry within them this history, distinctive identity, and power of resilience, even in the face of recent conflict.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAES	*Publications of an American Archaeological Expedition to Syria in 1899–1900*; New York, 1903–1930
	I. R. Garret, *Topography and Itinerary*, 1914
	II. H. C. Butler, *Architecture and Other Arts*, 1903
	III. W. K. Prentice, *Greek and Latin Inscriptions*, 1908
IV.	E. Littmann, *Semitic Inscriptions*, 1904
ANS	*American Numismatic Society*; New York
Antioch Archives	Excavations Diaries, Field Reports, Correspondence and Objects Catalogue, 1932–1940. Antioch Expedition Archives, Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University; Princeton
Antioch I	G. Elderkin (ed.), *Antioch on the Orontes I. The Excavations of 1932*; Princeton, 1934
Antioch II	R. Stillwell (ed.), *Antioch on the Orontes II. The Excavations. 1933–1936*; Princeton, 1938
Antioch III	R. Stillwell (ed.), *Antioch on the Orontes III. The Excavations. 1937–1939*; Princeton, 1941
Antioch IV.i	F.O.Waagé (ed.), *Antioch on the Orontes IV. Part One. Ceramics and Islamic Coins;* Princeton, 1948
Antioch IV.ii	D. Waagé (ed.), *Antioch on the Orontes IV. Part Two. Greek, Roman, Byzantine, and Crusader Coins*; Princeton, 1952
Antioch V	J. Lassus, *Les Portiques d'Antioche*; Princeton, 1972
Antioche de Syrie	B. Cabouret, P.L. Gatier, C. Saliou (eds), *Antioche de Syrie. Histoire, images et traces de la ville antique*. Topoi Supplément 5; Lyon, 2004
Braidwood, Mounds	R. Braidwood, *Mounds in the Plain of Antioch. OIP* 48; Chicago, 1937

BE	*Bulletin Épigraphique*, annually in *Revue des Études Grecques*
BMC	*A Catalogue of the Greek Coins in the British Museum;* London, 1873–
Chronicon Paschale	M. Whitby and M. Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale 284–628*. Liverpool, 1989
Chron. 1234	A. Hilkens, *The Anonymous Syriac Chronicle of 1234 and its Sources*. Leiden, 2018.
City of Mosaics	Scott Redford (ed.), *Antioch on the Orontes. Early Explorations in the City of Mosaics* *Asi'deki Antakya. Mozaikler Şehrinde İlk Araştirmalar*; Istanbul, 2014
CRAI	*Comptes-rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*
CJ	P. Krueger, *Codex Justinianus. Corpus Iuris Civilis*, *II*; Berlin, 1914
CTh	P. Krueger, P. M. Meyer, T. Momsen, *Codex Theodosianus*; Hildesheim, 2000
Downey, History	G. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria from Seleucus I to the Arab Conquest*; Princeton, 1961
Dussaud	R. Dussaud, *Topographie historique de la Syrie antique et médiévale*; Paris, 1927
East & West	K. Ciggaar and M. Metcalf. *East and West in the Medieval Mediterranean I: Antioch from the Byzantine Reconquest until the end of the Crusader Principality:* Acta of the Congress held at Hernen Castle in May 2006. OLA 147. Leuven, 2006
Euseb.HE	I. Boyle and C. F. Cruse, *The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius Pamphilus, Bishop of Caesarea, Palestine*: New York, 1856
Evagrius	M. Whitby, The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus; Liverpool, 2000
Expositio	G. Lumbroso, *Expositio Totius Mundi et Gentium*; Roma, 1903
Gourob, Papyrus	Holleaux, M. (1906) 'Remarques sur le papyrus de Gourob (1). Flinders Petrie Papyri, II; XLV; III; CXLIV'; *BCH* 30: 330–348
IG	*Inscriptiones Graecae*
IGLS	*Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*
ILS	H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*; Berlin, 1892–1916
Isaac of Antioch	G. Bickell (ed.) *S. Isaaci Antiocheni, Doctoris Syrorum, Opera Omnia*; Giessen, 1873
John of Nikiu	R. H. Charles (ed.), The Chronicle of John, Bishop of Nikiu; London, 1913
Levi, Pavements	D. Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*; Princeton, 1947
Life of St. Symeon	P. Van den Ven, *La Vie ancienne de St. Syméon Stylite le Jeune. Vie grecque de Sainte Marthe, mère de St. Syméon*; Bruxelles, 1962–1970

Lost Ancient City	C. Kondoleon, *Antioch. The Lost Ancient City*; Princeton, 2000
P. Macarius	*Voyage du Patriarche Macaire d'Antioche*. Texte Arabe et traduction française par B. Radu. Patrologia Orientalis, 22, 30, fasc. 1
Malalas	E. Jeffreys, M. Jeffreys, and R. Scott. *The Chronicle of John Malalas. A Translation*; Melbourne, 1986
McAlee, Coins	R. McAlee, *The Coins of Roman Antioch*; London, 2007
Michael the Syrian	R. Bedrosian, *Chronicle of Michale the Great Patriarch of the Syrians;* Long Branch, 1871
Petit	P. Petit, *Libanius et la vie municipale à Antioche au IV*[e] *siècle après J.-C.*; Paris, 1955
Proc. *Wars*	Procopius, *History of the Wars*, Volume I: Books 1–2 *(Persian War)*. Translated by H. B. Dewing. Loeb Classical Library 48; Cambridge, MA, 1914
PUAES	*The Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria in 1904 and 1909*; Leiden, 1907–1949 I. H. C. Butler, F. E. Norris, E. R. Stoever, *Geography and Itinerary*, 1930 II.B H. C. Butler, *Architecture. Northern Syria*, 1920 III.B W. K. Prentice, *Greek and Latin Inscriptions. Northern Syria*, 1922 IV.B E. Littmann. *Semitic Inscriptons. Arabic Inscriptions*, 1949
Pietro Della Valle	Pietro Della Valle, *Viaggi di Pietro della Valle il Pellegrino descritti da lui medesimo in lettere familiari all'erudito suo amico Mario Schipano, divisi in tre parti, cioè la Turchia, la Persia e l'India colla vita e ritratto dell'autore*, II; Torino, 1843
PLRE	A.H.M. Jones et al., *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*; Oxford, 1971–1972
RE	*Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumwissenschaft.*
Res Gestae Divi Saporis	Ernest Honigmann e André Maricq, *Recherches sur les Res Gestae Divi Saporis, in* Mémoires de l'Académie royale de Belgique, Classe des lettres et des sciences morales et politiques, XLVII.4; Bruxelles, 1953
SEG	*Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*
SGLIBulg	*Spätgriechische und spätlateinische Inschriften aus Bulgarien*
Socr.HE	E. Walford and H. de Valois, *The Ecclesiastical History of Socrates, named Scholasticus, or the Advocate*. London, 1853.
Stephanus of Byzantium	Augustus Meineke, *Stephani Byzantii Ethnicorum Quae Supersunt*. Reimer, 1849
Synkellos, Chron.	*The Chronography of George Synkellos*. A Byzantine Chronicle of Universal History from the Creation. Translated with Introduction and Notes by W. Adler and P. Tuffin; Oxford, 2002

Tchalenko, Villages	G. Tchalenko. *Villages Antiques de la Syrie du Nord. Le massif du Bélus à l'époque romaine*, III vols; Paris, 1953
Theod.HE	L. Parmentier and G. C. Hansen, *Théodoret de Cyr. Histoire ecclésiastique*; Paris, 2006
Theod.HR	P. Canivet and A. Leroy-Moninghen, *Théodoret de Cyr. Histoire des Moines de Syrie*; Paris, 1977–1979
Theophanes	C. Mango and R. Scott, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*. Oxford, 1997
TIB	K. P. Todt and B. A. Vest, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini 15. Syria Prōtē, Syria Deutera, Syria Euphratēsia*; Vienna, 2014
WSM	E.T. Newell, *The Coinage of the Western Seleucid Mints from Seleucus I to Antiochus III*; New York, 1977

INTRODUCTION

> Antioch is among the cities in which the stranger finds comfort away from his homeland.
>
> – 'Alī b. Abī Bakr al-Harawī[1]

It is an exciting time to be writing a history of Antioch, the most significant and continuously occupied major city of the eastern Mediterranean. An ongoing flurry of research initiatives attests to the vitality of the field of Antiochene studies. Whether bringing into focus the materiality of the city or its pivotal role in the religious discourse of Late Antiquity, which reverberated throughout the medieval period, these analyses teem with the energy, contradictions, and dilemmas of a city that eludes firm characterizations. We thus align ourselves to the group of scholars who are magnetically attracted to and, at least in our case, more often than not baffled by the city on the Orontes.

It seems that the more one engages with Antioch (modern Antakya in the Republic of Turkey), the more it deceives its beholder. Topography, foundation, political orientation, religion, demographics, downfall: these are but some of the topics with unanswered questions the city still poses. Antioch's vast literary repertoire, primarily Late Antique and Crusader, indeed affords glimpses into the here and now of life in the city, but it is hardly a coherent narrative of the community. More to the point, the voices of the actors that *made* Antioch are missing. The meager numbers of inscriptions – fewer than 100 – further inhibit the braiding together of stories of the families, notables, and folks at large who inhabited the city. And if the epigraphic record for the classical and post-classical periods is lamentable, that for the Islamic epoch is equally regrettable.

Another challenge is the fact that the number of textual sources regarding Antioch far outweighs the archaeological work done on the city, particularly in

certain periods. Merging and aligning these two is frequently not possible. On the one hand, we have a mountain of allusions to toponyms, places in the city where a myriad of events took place, from the largest conquests and sieges of its gates to the smallest sales of garden plots. Yet aside from the city wall, citadel, and hippodrome, we know virtually nothing about where any of these places were actually located in the city.

Of course, we are not the first authors to foreground Antioch's paradoxes while stressing the city's centrality. Glanville Downey wrote his masterly *A History of Antioch in Syria from Seleucus to the Arab Conquest* (1961), which remains a seminal work for any Antioch research. We have drawn greatly on his work and benefited from its unparalleled marshaling of the sources. But much has happened since 1961. For all his enthusiasm and stamina, Downey wrote in the aftermath of the Princeton excavations (1932–1939), a project that ultimately fell short at meeting the expectations of the scholars and stakeholders involved. Downey's lukewarm treatment of the excavations reveals the shared sense of modest returns that he and others – especially one of the team's primary (and non-Princetonian) field excavators, Jean Lassus[2] – stressed in their work. In the end, the excavations failed to expose the materiality of the city they had so adamantly sought to achieve, even as Downey's personal involvement (on the 1932 Daphne Road dig) yielded no trace of the florid past of Antioch's suburbs. Overall, his limited recourse to the archaeological record shows how Downey sidelined information that generally seemed impractical and convoluted. Corollary to this, publications and exhibitions on Antioch have focused much as the original excavators eventually did – on its mosaics. The significant volumes since Downey – including the Worcester Art Museum's *The Arts of Antioch* and *Antioch: The Lost Ancient City* and Doro Levi's study of mosaics[3] – all elevate the Antiochene mosaics above all else, as does the city's brand new Hatay Archeological Museum. The dispersal of this collection, with hundreds of pavements scattered among key North American museums from Honolulu to Richmond, to name but two, further reinforces Antioch's reputation as "the city of mosaics."[4]

Conversely, our book seizes the opportunity to take up the 1930s excavations with a view toward enriching and finessing existing narratives. To that end, this book offers three contributions to the study of Antioch, from which emerge four dominant themes to connect each period of the city's long history.

Contributions

New research

First, this study harnesses unpublished Antioch collections at the Princeton University Art Museum and the Visual Resources Collection of its Department of Art and Archaeology, as well as the latest published field research, to imbue the historical data with new topographic and material perspectives. For instance, the discovery between 2010 and 2012 of an extensive sixth-century bath complex and

fifth-century villa and shops at the site of construction for a new high-end hotel raises new questions about the buildings that articulated life in Antioch, whether in its public areas or along its axes of movement. We also still have much to learn about the city's topography and how it was experienced in antiquity. A German-Turkish archaeological survey of the city studied its walls and water systems and conducted geophysical work, particularly on the plateau on top of Mt. Staurin, from 2004 to 2008, and produced a new topographic work with 355 archaeological features on both the plain and the mountains. It also discerned building phases for the Iron Gate via photogrammetry as well as for the citadel.[5] Current Turkish excavations in the area of the former Island by the local Mustafa Kemal University have also begun to pour new information into our understanding of the city's physicality. Further, our study also gathers important new work that has appeared recently, such as the large, wonderfully well-researched, meticulous description of the city in the *Tabula Imperii Byzantini* volume on Syria and the almost completed French *Lexicon Topographicum Antiochenum*, based largely on written sources.[6] A US-based international team, the New Committee on the Excavations of Antioch and Its Vicinity, has also begun piecing together the material culture derived from the Princeton excavations of 90 years past, infusing the archival data with new studies on ceramics, glass, metal, coins, and small finds, and new interpretations on stratigraphy.[7] One of these areas that we incorporate into almost every period is an overview of the coin evidence and how that informs wider questions of economy and links to the city's political history. Certain key periods also continue to be the foci of new research, such as the Late Antique and Crusader eras, together with ongoing studies on Christianity, churches, and so forth, as well as the Crusader Principality of Antioch. Lastly, with the tremendous help of Steve Batiuk, we have pieced together a plan of the city for each of its main ten periods of occupation. These plans show the changing fortification walls, water supply and river channels, and gates of the city and all the features discussed therein (see Appendix 1). To be sure, these plans are not the final word on how Antioch appeared; however, they incorporate historical maps, excavations, topography, hydrology, geology, remote sensing, and textual accounts to show a city, not frozen in one specific time period (as numerous plans of Antioch show, not least Downey's), but as constantly transforming, evolving to reflect the constraints of its time and meet the needs of its citizens.

Longer life and afterlife

Second, the book builds a narrative that, starting with the city's foundation under the Seleucids, continues well into the twentieth century; this is a biography of a city. The version of Antioch typically remembered is invariably the classical one culminating in the fourth and fifth centuries, when it was an imperial capital city at its largest and most populated. Arguing that 900 years was its lifespan, Downey devoted but a single page to Antioch following the Islamic conquest of 638.[8] The *Arts of Antioch* volume, meanwhile, completely ignores the medieval

period, including not a single object and only two coins dating to the Crusades, while *Antioch: The Lost Ancient City* was similarly published in this vein, with hardly any mention of medieval Antioch. The historical overview of the recent exhibition hosted by Koç University's Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations, *Antioch on the Orontes: Early Explorations in the City of Mosaics*, likewise winds down with the fourth century and draws a line after the Islamic conquests.[9] A book entitled *Antiochia sull'Oronte*, published in Italy by Capuchin Christians of Antioch, mentions the Islamic periods in two sentences.[10] This limited version of the city indeed comes from the Byzantine authors themselves, like Libanius, whose biased descriptions concealed any notion of urban decline, neglect, or change in favor of a literature praising the city and its political prominence. We feel, however, that this presentation of the city does not adequately serve the discourse of a community that in the postclassical epochs reinvented itself time and again as it negotiated new realities of power and religion. We therefore offer a novel, holistic treatment of Antioch that intends to illustrate the history of the city in full.

Downey's own omissions fit into a much larger pattern of how postclassical cities in the Mediterranean have been regarded. Despite a growing body of scholarship on the nature of early medieval cross-cultural interactions[11] and a recent trend in trans-Mediterranean history, most Western civilization, art history, philosophy, and literature surveys still follow a common and entrenched assumption: that "Western" culture was manifested in the great classical cities of the Greek and Roman periods in the Mediterranean, and when they declined, all achievements in learning, art, economics, and social organization transferred to medieval Europe. What is left out of this model and continues to remain uncritically engaged with is the crucial role played by post-Roman cities, mostly under Islamic rule, in shaping Mediterranean and European cultures, east and west. With few exceptions, archaeologists have excavated classical cities and discarded their later (Islamic and medieval) levels, granting institutions continue to give money to classical excavations and not Islamic or medieval ones, and tourist and antiquities departments of various countries present these cities to the public with their Islamic and medieval incarnations eviscerated. Inaccurate and incomplete knowledge about the development of Mediterranean society after the Roman period is thus a form of history-making that substantiates a fictional West-versus-East division, thereby disconnecting the West from an interconnected history with its Islamic forebears.

In contrast, we operate here within a theoretical framework of urban transformation as opposed to postclassical decline. This book thus significantly expands and revives Downey's seminal volume, with its second half comprising entirely these "forgotten" chronologies: Early Islamic (638–969), Middle Byzantine (969–1084), Saljūq (1084–1098), Crusader (1098–1268), Mamlūk (1268–1516), and Ottoman (1516–1920). In doing so, the narrative of Antioch we present negates that of the seventh- or even sixth-century decline of the city, arguing instead for transformation from the classical city into a medieval one. Scholars have demonstrated that Antioch underwent substantial changes already in the sixth century, just *before* the Islamic conquests; however, the city was not abandoned and did not become

useless, and it did not decline, an evaluation that serves only to discourage continuing inquiry after this period.[12] In fact, archaeological reanalysis shows that the city continued to thrive and transform well into the Islamic/medieval periods as a religious, intellectual, and economic center.[13] With the available data, this volume thus seeks to shed light on the specific changes manifested in the city's physical topography, economic life, and civic administration over the entire course of its occupation, to illuminate *how* urban space can show a society's changing priorities, and to better trace the complicated systems of networks and cross-cultural exchange that took place across the Mediterranean between the seventh and early twentieth centuries.

Focusing on the built environment and its evolution will address why transformations occurred during the medieval period when, for example, the city contracted and was more densely populated, public areas filled in and became private, villas were abandoned, and entertainment and public institutions were transformed into industrial zones. It also serves to demonumentalize the city somewhat by bringing together equally processes of ruralization, encroachment, industrialization, and spoliation. Meanwhile, the material culture provides valuable data on the city's economic health, the provenance of goods coming into or leaving the city gives evidence for trade, and excavated workshops show local production. Indeed, this study shows that the roots of privatization of commerce, globalization, and capitalism in far-reaching market economies, commonly seen in medieval European cities,[14] in fact have their origins in early medieval Islamic cities such as Antioch.[15] Antioch is also a perfect case study of a border town inhabited by diverse populations. In addressing these matters, this book thus significantly fills in the rather large omission of Antioch's influence at this time, apparent in all the scholarship on Late Antique and medieval Mediterranean archaeology, economy, settlement, urbanism, and social life over the last 80 years.

Wider vistas

The book's third contribution is to bring together a discussion of the city within its landscape, both its immediate hinterland and its broader region bridging Anatolia and Syria. Antioch was a classical city, founded as one of several Seleucid imprints on a new landscape. Its location, in geographic and historic Syria, was along the Orontes River in a narrow valley sandwiched between two substantial mountain ranges – the more gradually rising foothills of the Amanus Mountains to the west and the steep, sharply rising Mt. Silpius (1,660 feet) and Mt. Staurin, part of the Jibāl al-Aqra‘ range to the east. Its location made it particularly susceptible to intense winds, mentioned in several sources, which, coming through the Amuq Plain along the Orontes and funneling between the narrow river plain, are to this day a hallmark of the city's location.

Antioch's position was not merely strategic in a micro-topographical sense. It was situated within the southwest corner of the Amuq Plain, a large, triangular, fertile lowland watered by four rivers, three of which, the northern Kara

Su, the northeastern Yaghrā, the eastern Afrin, and the Orontes – emptied into the marshy Lake of Antioch (Amik Gölü) and surrounding wetlands. Exiting the lake, they joined the Orontes River, which watered the plain from the south. The lake drained just 15.5 kilometers north of Antioch via the Küçük Asi River.

The Amuq Plain has been one of the most important nodes of habitation since the earliest history of human settlement (Figure 0.1).

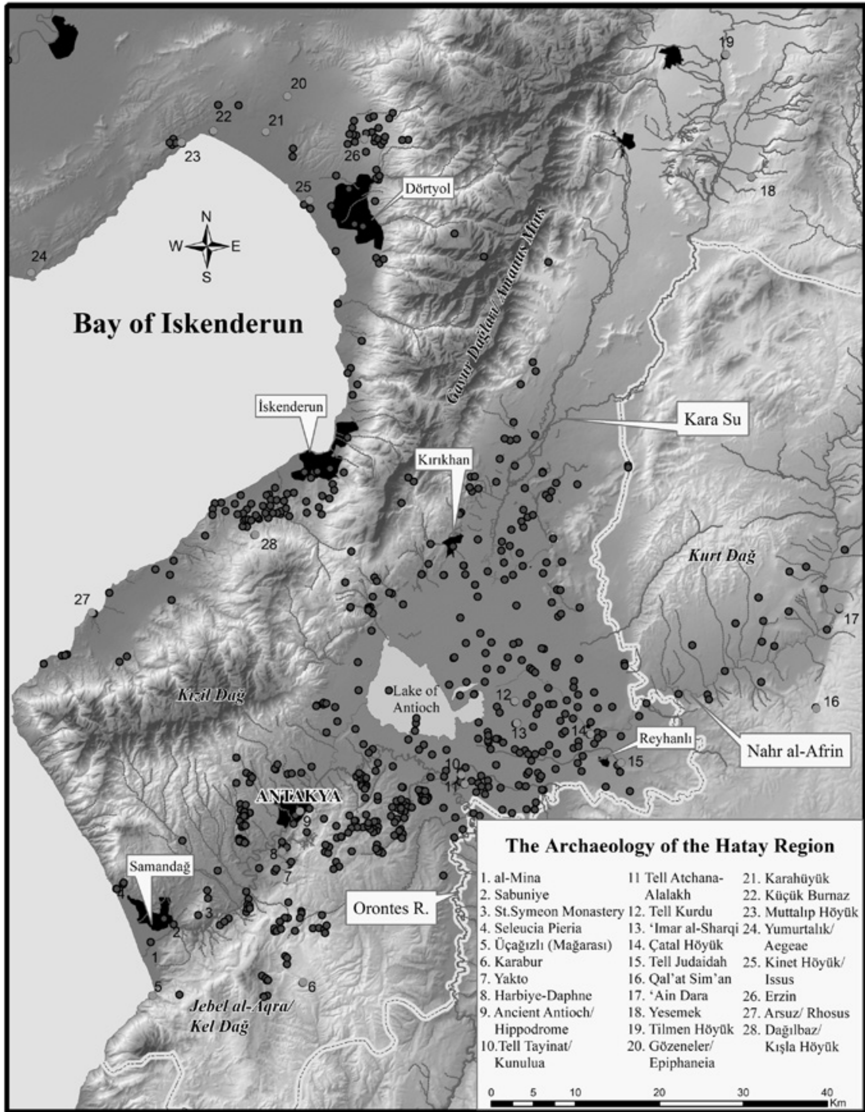

FIGURE 0.1 Archaeological sites in the Hatay region of Turkey

Source: Courtesy of Stephen Batiuk

Virtually every traveler in every period for which written sources remain has waxed eloquently on its productivity and abundance. Today, the Amuq unassumingly continues its role as the predominant agricultural provider in the area, while beneath its irrigated soils and on its many tells are literally hundreds of potential archaeological sites.

The Amuq Plain's importance throughout human history also owes to its regional location as a zone of transition, travel, communication, and trade, one of the few links connecting Anatolia with Syria and the western coastal mountainous zones with the eastern deserts of the Middle East. The Orontes River also gave it direct access to the Mediterranean Sea. Until the Late Roman/Early Islamic periods, the Orontes was navigable from the Mediterranean Sea to the city, facilitating its importance in the Mediterranean world. When the river was no longer usable, caravans began taking merchandise along the local road from the Orontes delta to Antioch, a distance of about 24 km.

The route into the Amuq Plain also acted as a funnel for routes from the Belen Pass westward over the Amanus to Cilicia, the Kara Su Valley north to Mar'ash, the Afrin River Valley northeast to the Upper Euphrates Valley and the eastern frontier, and the Orontes Valley south from Apamea. For the wider region, Antioch was a major stop for east-west routes to Aleppo and the Euphrates (and then to Baghdad) and north-south routes across the Taurus Mountains to the *thughūr* frontier and to Anatolia via the Cilician Plain.

This work builds on research conducted by many teams of archaeologists, including the authors', on surveys and excavations in the vicinity of Antioch. At present, the Amuq Survey, launched in 1932 by Robert Braidwood in the same year that Princeton began its excavations and restarted in 1995 as the Amuq Valley Regional Project, sponsored by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, has covered some 1,875 km^2 and recorded nearly 400 sites.[16] Meanwhile, the Orontes delta Archaeological Project, recording 55 sites and covering 150 km^2, was part of the Amuq Valley Regional Project from 1999 to 2001 and in 2002 became independent.

These projects have revealed the importance of considering the pre-Hellenistic landscape of the Amuq Plain as a palimpsest of *longue durée* dominant capital cities in most every period. Excavations at the major Chalcolithic (4500–3300 BCE) site of Tell Kurdu, the Middle and Late Bronze Age (2100–1200 BCE) regional capital city of Tell Atçana (Alalakh), the Early Bronze (3300–2100 BCE) and Iron Age (1200–539 BCE) capital city of Tell Tayinat, the Iron Age settlement of Çatal Höyük, and the multi-period site of Tell Judaidah reveal that the Amuq Plain was a focal point of human settlement, economy, and power.[17] By the Hellenistic period, however, these cities and most of the Bronze and Iron Age tell sites on the plain had been abandoned. A new settlement system began to appear – that of a dense network of small, dispersed rural farms and cultivated lands connected to a large city. By the time of the Seleucid founding of Antioch, the plain had come to be dominated by a large standing lake, noted by authors such as the fourth-century CE rhetor Libanius as key to the fertility and transportation of agricultural products

and a natural resource itself. As Libanius boasted in his Oration *in Praise of Antioch* (*Antiochikos*):

> The river and the lake are a source of profit to the city not merely in that they provide fare for our tables, but also because all the produce of the soil comes into the city's possession through the ease by which it is transported, for the import of corn is not reduced to the meager amount brought in by pack animals. The countryside is divided up between them; the river flows through the areas which derive no assistance from the lake; similarly, the lake extends over those areas where there is no aid from the river. By lake and river craft they empty the countryside of its produce and transport it to town. The first stages of transportation are separate, but then, instead of both being used, the river acts as host for the convoy of lake-borne goods as well as of its own, and brings them into the center of the city.[18]

As we will see, throughout much of its history, Antioch benefited from this breadbasket outside its gates.

Seleucid Antioch (303 BCE–64 BCE), therefore, on the one hand represents a continuity as the successor capital of the Amuq Plain yet also demarcates a significant change in the relationship between urban and rural sites and, accordingly, the city's dependence on the productivity of the plain. This arrangement remained a key infrastructure for the city in the Roman (64 BCE–193 CE) and the successive Late Antique (193–458 CE) and Early Byzantine epochs (458–638 CE). While Antioch remained the dominant city of the plain from this period onwards, its dependency on its rural hinterland broke down beginning in the sixth century and continuing throughout the Islamic period. From that point until the early twentieth century, the city became more self-sufficient and ruralized as parts of it were given over to cultivation within its own walls, while farms in the plain aggregated together into small towns of importance. This transformation in the way the city related to the plain has traditionally been regarded by scholars as one of the major signposts of Antioch's decline. Yet in the larger scheme, Antioch's role in the larger region remained as an important frontier town between the Islamic and Byzantine lands, as a local center and production node for the surrounding frontier villages and towns, and as an entrepôt between the Islamic and Byzantine empires.[19]

Themes

A resilient city

There is no possible conclusion to the biography of a city still densely inhabited, vibrant, and dynamic. We offer, however, four themes that repeat themselves from period to period as hallmarks of Antioch, something quintessentially Antiochene, perhaps. The first, that of the city's resiliency, presents a contradiction to the important role played by the landscape in creating a fertile and prosperous hinterland. By

all rights, like its conquest, a near-biblical series of natural disasters that afflicted Antioch and are known from descriptions in textual sources – earthquakes, famine, plague, and river flooding (Figure 0.2) – ought to have broken the city a dozen times over and decimated its population. Antioch, straddling the northernmost fault line of the Dead Sea/Great Rift Valley, has been especially earthquake prone. Nearly 60 earthquakes are recorded in the city's history, about ten of which caused extreme damage and loss of life and would have scaled more than 7 in today's magnitude measurements. For comparison, the 2010 earthquake that devastated Haiti had a magnitude of 7. Further, many of these major ones have often clustered together, for example in the sixth, twelfth, and nineteenth centuries, making recovery challenging. Yet the city has survived period after period, down to the present day. To be sure, these disasters had some effect: the double earthquakes in the sixth century appear to have altered the composition of the classical city permanently and ushered in its medieval transformation. Similarly, the wave of strong earthquakes in the twelfth century stretched the city's resources thin, allowing only the most important features – walls and key churches – to be rebuilt, leaving the rest of the city heavily damaged. This in turn may have facilitated the ease of the 1268 siege by the Mamlūks, who had no interest in restoring Antioch to its former size and glory but rebuilt the city as a town on a much smaller scale that was built up internally but remained physically contracted for another 500 years. Other disasters, like fires, plagues, and famine, were sometimes tied to earthquakes and sometimes to changes in climate. River flooding was a near annual occurrence that was managed in many periods but not always. Indeed, the Princeton excavators had to deal with flooding of the mountain streams and Orontes as a feature of seasonal occurrence that frustrated their excavations occasionally. But disasters, like conquests, become tropes and part of the city's lore. The real effects of these were likely not as extreme as depicted, as the city and its residents endured, though with hardship and loss, every time. In many ways, this is an encouraging historical example of resilience, particularly as the world, at the time of publishing this book, is going through a global pandemic of the coronavirus COVID-19, alongside a host of other worldwide natural disasters such as wildfires in California and Australia, an uptick in

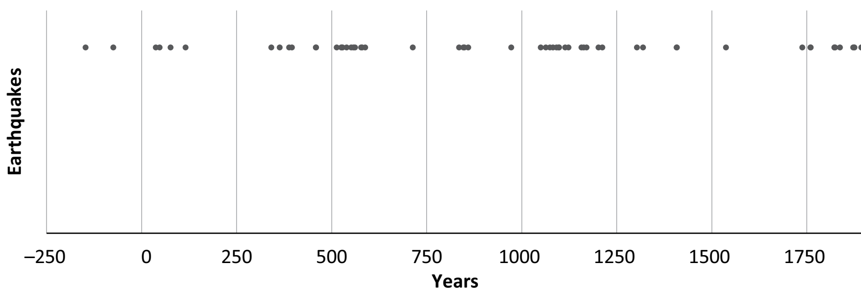

FIGURE 0.2 Antioch earthquakes by year, 250 BC to 1900 CE

powerful hurricanes and monsoons, and earthquakes, as well as humanitarian crises in Yemen and Syria, huge refugee movements in Central America, Burma, and the Mediterranean, social justice protests in Hong Kong, racial justice and police reform protests in cities throughout the United States and other world cities, the storming of the U. S. Congress building by right-winged insurrectionists, and, of course, a comet and a great conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn. Indeed, it seems, as many Muslim and Christian writers in the Near East wrote in the seventh century, that the apocalypse is nigh. Studying Antioch through all of its ages, replete with crises and transformations, teaches us a valuable lesson on the capacity of a city and its citizens to rebuild and to be resilient.

One interesting outcome is how the city and its inhabitants reacted to these disasters. The current global pandemic is showing us how nearly all aspects daily life and economy have been overturned and have necessitated dramatic social changes. In premodern (and pre-internet) Antioch, where hygiene and sanitation were far less than what they are now, we can be sure that these disasters had profound physical and psychological effects on the population. Yet while population fluctuated, the city was never abandoned. This is a significant point, in that many cities of the classical world were eventually abandoned by the medieval period, if not earlier. Antioch has been continuously inhabited. Further, calamities such as earthquakes and fires can be seen as allowing for new growth. The ancient and medieval city is often envisioned as clean, museified, and antiseptic, when in fact cities were the reverse; we have to imagine porticoes, streets, and alleys as cluttered, stinky, noisy, and teeming with crowds of people and animals. Thus, a disaster and clean-up in its aftermath could also expose and remove clutter such as old, abandoned, or disused structures and spaces, and allow for reshaping. Archaeological evidence for Antioch indeed reflects this continuity, showing much rebuilding and restructuring yet very few instances of destruction.

A conquered city

The second theme, accordingly, is that of conquest. Nearly every period in Antioch's history begins with a conquest, many of which are elaborately described in the sources, such as the almost legendary Crusader and Mamlūk sieges and those of the Persians, Arabs, Byzantines (their reconquest), and Saljūqs. These conquests in many ways bear striking similarities, as the enemy was nearly always kept at bay by the sheer impenetrability of Antioch's walls, and so the city had to be taken by treachery. That the city's taking had to be an inside job – a Trojan horse if you will – attests to its strength and invincibility. Often the access point was from the summit of the mountain (as in the sixth-century Persian and Middle Byzantine conquests), farthest from the city itself. This points to a general weakness of Antioch – that the mountains are steepest within the city, but the slopes eastward are more gradual. After the Middle Byzantine period, the citadel on Mt. Silpius featured prominently during sieges, often creating in effect two cities, with either the conquerors holding down the citadel and attacking the lower city or vice versa,

with the remaining town taking refuge in the citadel. The conquests also frequently involved bloody massacres, and a good number of the town's citizens were killed and buildings destroyed. But however graphic these descriptions are, the overarching narrative of continuity compels us to question how transformative or devastating these sieges initially were, as the city's history following each conquest was quite active and rich. The archaeological evidence also supports the argument for continuity, failing as yet to show any evidence of conquest. The Mamlūk conquest, of all of these, might have come closest to greatly diminishing Antioch. If at any point the city witnessed a substantial "decline" in the sense that it was dramatically reduced in physical size and depopulated, it was following the Mamlūk conquest of the city in 1268. Yet even this perceived nadir cannot be considered a decline; just months after the siege, the city was the subject of significant royal patronage with the establishment of six to eight mosques and four bathhouses, it was a home to intellectual communities, and it continued as a center for trade. Antioch's importance was unwavering.

A cosmopolitan city

Seemingly at odds with the theme of conquest is the continued heterogeneity of Antioch's population in language, ethnicity, and religion. Indeed, this has been a matter of pride for the city to this day. This third theme, the city's cosmopolitan nature and diverse communities, appears in every period. We see strong representations of Persians, Greeks, Roman colonists, orthodox Chaldean communities and Melkites who spoke Arabic, West Syrian Orthodox/Jacobites and Armenians, Arabs and Zuṭṭ, and Jewish communities earliest of all. Indeed, today the pluralism and tolerance of Antioch's many religious and ethnic communities are cited as a model for Turkish cities. Present throughout nearly all periods of Antioch's history was also an intellectual community of scholars, some of whom lived there, others who passed through and temporarily resided. To this we can add that Antioch, despite its many foreign or outsider rulers, was largely run by the nobles of the city from at least the sixth century onwards through the Islamic period. Such diversity makes talking about the Antiochenes, if we can use this term, rather problematic in any period. Although we will mention whenever possible which specific group was involved in any aspect of the city's history, the ancient and medieval sources themselves did not always distinguish among the peoples of Antioch, frequently lumping them together, and in such cases we will follow suit. But though social tensions were ever present in the city and we highlight them frequently, they remain beyond the focus of this volume.

Yet despite the city's diversity and tensions, its citizens repeatedly came together and acted in unison to protest against officials and rulers they did not approve of or even shake off foreign conquerors and governors. Whether it was the Emperor Julian, the Saljūqs, the Crusaders, the Hamdānid Sayf al-Dawla, or various local officials, the Antiochenes' exertion of their own power over whom they supported to govern them is notable, particularly given the number of foreign

attempts to conquer the city. In doing so, they reinforced the Antiochene local identity and their efforts to act as an autonomous community. This theme also challenges the narrative of a city in decline and ruin, besieged and conquered, its population massacred. Rather, it shows how the city was able to survive each conquest and produce narratives of local resistance steeped in its own rich socio-cultural, economic, religious, and built environment.

A celebrated city

The final theme is that of foundation and legacy. Antioch's foundation is shrouded in myth and legend, from its Seleucid beginnings through the Ottoman period. Even in the Middle Byzantine, Crusader, and Ottoman periods, the story of Seleucus I Nicator was remembered and woven together with talismans and images around the city, such as the iconic Tyche (divine fortune) of Antioch, as well as important figures in Antioch's own spiritual landscape. These were not necessarily proper gods – like Apollo, whose oracle resided in the suburb of Daphne – but patron saints who became divine. They include St. Peter and St. Paul, who brought Christianity to the city; St. Ignatius, St. Babylas, whose burial in pagan Daphne, one of the earliest instances of a cult of relics, later defied an emperor and started a revolt; St. Barbara, St. Luke, St. Symeon Stylites the Younger, the influential Church Father John Chrysostom; and the Patriarch Christopher, whose murder ignited the Byzantine reconquest of the city. Habīb al-Najjār, a carpenter, was its most famous Islamic resident, identified often as a hero of the Qur'ān, and likely one of its first citizens to accept monotheism. The continuity of the recollection of persons throughout its entire history lent Antioch and its diverse population an elevated status *sui generis*, making it a city worth visiting and conquering. The walls of Antioch, depicted so carefully in the fifth-century Byzantine Peutinger Table map (Figure 3.10), are their own legendary site, a wonder of the world, and the city's star attraction. Indeed, as the city's biography shows, they were as much centers of action, or *omphaloi* of the city, as they were its edges. The city remained powerful and tantalizing in the eyes of rulers and ruling dynasties and numerous travelers: pilgrims, merchants, academics, and explorers, all of whom wished to reengage with its profound past. In fact, in every period after the Islamic conquests, the city was regarded as legendary – the place where true monotheism took root, where prophets and apostles were buried, and where relics were enshrined. It was the invincible city with impenetrable walls, a town steeped in history and antiquity that continuously beckoned visitors and conquerors alike. In many instances, the city's classical past is evident in its medieval and early modern incarnations, consciously expressed, remembered, and etched into the buildings and walls themselves. This constant awareness of Antioch's history was for some periods a longing for the past, for others a legitimizing of its importance in the present. Thus, not only is the city of Antioch like a palimpsest, where the past is visible, but throughout its history it has also

consciously connected with its past, including rather than rejecting it while at the same time rewriting it.

A few more words

Presenting the full history of Antioch has been no easy task. Condensing information culled from many primary and secondary sources written over the city's 2,324-year history into a book of this size is not for the faint of heart. Therefore, this book presents an enormous wealth of information on the city, some of it for the first time, including new and reinterpreted archaeological results along with material culture and numismatic studies and new translations. Moreover, much of the material is combined together for the first time and done so in a contextualized way set against a proper and full chronology. We have done this also by deliberately sidelining the main capitals of our periods such as Rome, Constantinople/Istanbul, Baghdad, and Jerusalem. These have received sufficient scholarly attention, and Antioch has always appeared as peripheral to their stories. Therefore, this narrative seeks to invert that hierarchy and foreground the life of Antioch as main actor and the imperial/caliphal cities as support. Our presentation of Antioch is intended for a broad readership; we have tried to write a compelling and rich narrative that effectively weaves together our own arguments and descriptions in book form. To that end, we have limited the citations of primary sources while directing the reader toward essential scholarship. So, too, we have often chosen to cite a translation of a source in a modern language, where possible, so as to encourage more accessibility to general readers. We have also trimmed the use of excessively technical terms while also providing Greek, Latin, Arabic, and Ottoman Turkish translations, some of which may seem obvious to more expert readers.

No doubt this book will need revising as publications on the Princeton excavations are systematically reanalyzed, textual sources reveal more clues as to the city's topography, and new excavations and surveys – conducted mainly by Mustafa Kemal University and the Hatay Archeological Museum – are published. At present, it is our hope that this volume will be helpful both to researchers familiar with the city and to newcomers visiting it for the first time. It is also certain that the scholarly landscape of the city will transform and evolve much as the city itself has, from period to period.

With this book we also continue our own long history of affiliation with Antioch and its community, and we take this opportunity to express gratitude to all of our friends in Hatay. This book has depended on the kindness and generosity of many colleagues and friends to come to fruition, indeed a pantheon in their own right. We would like first to thank Alan Stahl and Charles Gates for reading the manuscript and providing invaluable feedback, and also Darby Scott, Charlie Bloom, Scott Redford, Tasha Vorderstrasse, Malike Dekkiche, Alyssa Gabbay, Derek Krueger, Scott Kennedy, Fahri Dikkaya, Rick Barton, Robyn LeBlanc,

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Note on style and transliterations: We use Antioch throughout, even when the city was referred to in the Islamic periods as Anṭakīya and in Turkish as Antakya; similarly, we use Orontes River (rather than ʻAsī, Maqlūb, etc.). Names, terms, and toponyms, with the exception of major cities, are transliterated in Arabic and Ottoman Turkish following IJMES style except Appendix 2; however, the majority of well-known cities also retain a standard non-transliterated name in every period. We also use Julian-Gregorian dating throughout, not the Islamic calendar or any other.

Notes

1. Harawī 2004.
2. *Antioch V*, 3–12. Particularly for sector 17-O, as we shall see in this volume.
3. Becker and Kondoleon 2005; Kondoleon 2000; *Levi, Pavements*.
4. See the recent catalog of the 2014 exhibition of photographs from the Princeton excavation, Redford 2014.
5. Brands 2016a.
6. *TIB*; also Bergjan and Elm 2018.
7. These have been presented at a three-year panel at the Annual Meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research (2016–2018) and will be published in a volume, still in progress.
8. *Downey, History* De Giorgi 2015, 11.
9. De Giorgi 2017; Najbjerg and Moss 2014, 34. There is no other chapter on Antioch's history after this time range.
10. Zambon et al. 2000.
11. Horden and Purcell 2000; McCormick 2002; Wickham 2005.
12. Kennedy 1985a; Guidetti 2010.
13. Eger 2014b, 95–134.
14. Lopez 1976; Thomas 1997.
15. Abu Lughod 1989.
16. Yener et al. 2005; *Braidwood, Mounds*; Casana 2004, 2007.
17. Haines 1971; Gerritsen et al. 2008; Pucci 2019; Osborne et al. 2019.
18. Lib. *Or.* 11.260–262.
19. Eger 2012, 2015.

1

THE EAGLE OF ZEUS ARRIVES (303 BCE–64 BCE)

> Even without seeing it, one can have full knowledge of it from hearsay, for there is no corner of land or sea to which the fame of the city has not spread.
>
> – Libanius, *Oration 1*

Introduction

Why Antioch was founded on a rather unpromising site, how its community developed an urban infrastructure, and how it grew to become a capital under the Seleucid kings are the main themes of this chapter. The political instability in the aftermath of Alexander the Great's unexpected death in 323 BCE and the establishment of the Seleucid dynasty are, however, the fundamental antecedents to the city's foundation. In this vein, we cannot separate the analysis of Antioch's genesis and growth from presenting the agency behind it or the motives that prompted the formation of an enclave of Greeks along the riverbanks of the Orontes.

Upon Alexander's death, the vast empire he had conquered was carved up by his leading generals, who established their own kingdoms and dynasties; among these was Seleucus I Nicator (305–281 BCE), whose far-flung Seleucid Empire stretched from the furthest reaches of Alexander's conquests in modern-day Pakistan back through what is today Afghanistan, Iran (Persia), Iraq, Syria, and into central Turkey. The recent burgeoning interest in the Seleucid monarchy has brought into sharper focus the political and cultural outlooks of this dynasty.[1] The nature of its rule, suspended between Greek and Persian paradigms, has drawn interest from scholars of various learned traditions (Figure 1.1).

More to the point, a wealth of studies have debunked the myth that the Seleucid world was peripheral to Greece and Persia, bringing more and more into focus the centrality of the kingdom's mechanisms, above and beyond the questions of what

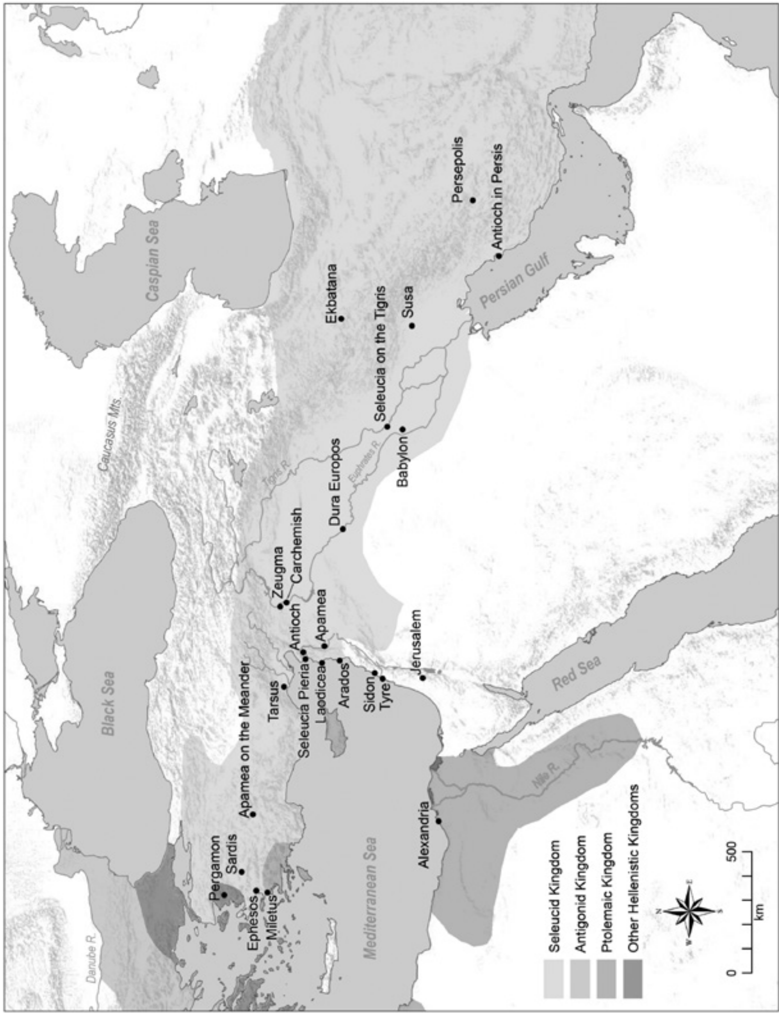

FIGURE 1.1 The Hellenistic kingdoms

Source: Created by Claire Ebert

is Western and what is Eastern.[2] How the Seleucids effectively negotiated realities of power and forged a novel monarchic discourse through local allegiances and universalistic aspirations is a question that continues to be vigorously debated.[3] Indeed, the patchy and skewed textual records of the Seleucids have failed to hamper a growing scholarly veering toward the Hellenistic kingdoms. The biased, pro-Roman voices of Polybius, Livy, and Appian, to name but a few, remain nevertheless key to reconstructing the historical discussion of the Seleucids. In particular, emphasis on the lives and deeds of Seleucus I Nicator, Antiochus III the Great, and Antiochus IV Epiphanes illustrates the role of the kingdom as it forged its own concept of "state" and made its mark on the political realities of the time. Antioch is typically foregrounded in much of this scholarship, for the city was central in Seleucid politics and indeed transformed the Hellenistic East in fundamental ways.[4] Yet much as the ancient accounts contribute to the discourse of the city coalescing and rising to unexpected heights under these monarchs, the dearth of textual and epigraphic sources has hindered analysis of the city's socio-political configuration. One can only lament the epigraphic habit of the city, the condition by which the local culture minimized the dissemination of its public records, constituting a hurdle that ultimately frustrates insights into the lives of Antioch's inhabitants. But disquieting though the picture might seem, new archaeological and numismatic data offers ways to further our understanding of the city's history and materiality.

Topography

Antioch on the Orontes lies at the junction between the southernmost extension of the Amuq Plain (Amik Ovası) and the slopes of Mt. Staurin and Mt. Silpius (Kusseyr Dağı, Habib Neccar Dağı, part of the Jibāl al-Aqra); here the Orontes River (Asi River, also known in antiquity as Drakon or Typhon)[5] bends its course southward as it points decisively toward the Mediterranean coast. Crucial though it was for providing the region with plenty of water, the Orontes also dictated the shape and conditions of the ancient settlement (Figure 1.2). In particular, its unpredictable regime, affected as it was by climatic, hydrological, and, indeed, anthropogenic factors as well as propensity to flood, greatly affected the topography of Antioch. Any facile determinism aside, the river commanded Antioch's nucleation as well as urban development for centuries.

Indeed, Antioch's location was completely ill suited for urban expansion; hemmed in between the Amanus Mountains (Nur Dağı), the river, and the slopes of Mt. Silpius and Mt. Staurin, the city from its outset had to reckon with conspicuous runoff from the mountain massifs and the capricious regime of the Orontes, such as when fall and winter rainstorms gusted through the region, causing rivers and streams to swell beyond measure. The rushing waters would spill over their banks, inundate homes, and sweep away livestock, mills, and bridges, flooding freshly tilled fields. In the city, people would often resort to jars, buckets, and sponges to bail out their shops and houses.[6] All the same, a complex system of conduits, dams, and aqueducts attests to the tenacity with which the Antiochenes

FIGURE 1.2 The Orontes River and Antioch

Source: Declassified Corona imagery, 1967

coped with this frail ecology and sought to control the impetus of seasonal streams from the adjacent mountains. In particular, the Antioch excavations in 1937 recovered what the archaeologists referred to as a Hellenistic system of tunnels designed to impound inflows and channel them under the main thoroughfare.[7] The reign of Justinian in the sixth century saw the consolidation of the so-called Iron Gate, incorporating centuries of waterworks and man-made modifications planted deep in the gorge between Mt. Silpius and Mt. Staurin. Serving as both gate and dam, it was the city's most spectacular effort to curb the erratic waters of the Parmenios, a torrential stream flowing into the Orontes and also known as the Onopniktes or "donkey drowner" (and today, Haci Kürüş Deresi).[8] Yet even the Iron Gate and its infrastructure of canals and tunnels could only partially contain the seasonal impact of the streams: thick gravel and cobble alluvial fans accumulated for centuries at the foot of the two mountains and now bury large tracts of the ancient city under meters of sediment.

The role of the Orontes, inasmuch as it shaped the local topography, has not been sufficiently brought into focus by previous scholarship.[9] Erratic in the extreme, 30 to 35 meters wide, with an average discharge of 11 cubic meters per second, the river rises in the Lebanon mountains near Hermel and enters the plain of Homs in Syria via the Wadi al-Rablah, then driving north past Homs and Hama and turning decisively west.[10] From Syria, the Hatay corridor drives the Orontes into Turkey, eventually bending west at the modern village of Demirköprü, ancient Gephyra. Some 15 kilometers southwest the Orontes waters the site that, poised

on the slopes of Mt. Staurin and Mt. Silpios, accommodated the foundation of Antioch. Because of its endemic propensity to change course, today the Orontes skirts the northwestern sector of Antioch, no longer forming the Island, that is, the "city within the city," which retained its centrality for centuries. Further south, the river skirts the Daphne plateau on its left and then continues its course all the way to the Mediterranean coast, emptying its waters some 22 km from Antioch. The Tyche (deity of fortune) of Eutychides of Sykion (Figure 1.3), showing the divine fortune of Antioch with turrite crown, holding a sheaf of grain and sitting on the

FIGURE 1.3 The Tyche of Antioch by Eutychides, Roman copy

Source: Photo Copyright Governorato SCV-Direzione dei Musei Vaticani

rock of Mt. Silpius with the personified Orontes swimming at her feet, lulls us into believing the harmonious unity between the city and the river. The sculptural group was commissioned by Seleucus Nicator and executed by Eutychides, a pupil of the great artist Lysippus.[11] A mid-third-century CE coin depicts on the reverse the Tyche under the baldachin of a four-column shrine (*tetrakionion*), which is the building that accommodated Eutychides's statue at least until the sixth century CE,[12] though where this shrine was located cannot be established. But the truth is that the Orontes compromised the fortunes of the city time and again; its tendency to swell in the winter season – when sheets of rain pummel the region – led conspicuous alluvial debris and sediment to accumulate along its course, as attested by the disappearance of the ancient Island in the late medieval era.[13]

An urban port presumably existed in the vicinity of the Philonauta Gate, where the Orontes bends slightly eastward (near sector 21-H), and riverine transport once connected Antioch to the Mediterranean; a day of navigation, it seems, led from the city to sea outlets in the vicinity of Seleucia Pieria, one of Antioch's twin cities. To that end, the good health and taming of the river were crucial, and for centuries emperors and city administrators saw to the upkeep of the Orontes' drainage and navigability in ways reminiscent of waterworks on the Tiber in Rome.[14] Whether for the hauling of goods or the convenient drowning of political enemies,[15] the life of Antioch was thus braided together with that of the river.

A similarly relentless negotiation with the forces of nature occurred, albeit on a larger scale, in the greater territory surrounding Antioch, a topographically diverse basin loosely corresponding to the Amuq Valley. Central in it is the plain of Antioch, known today as the Amik Ovası; in antiquity as today, it functioned as a hinge between the Mediterranean and northern Mesopotamia. The plain was long dominated by the conspicuous Lake of Antioch (Amik Gölü), which seemingly began to form during the late Bronze Age as a result of the aggradation of the Orontes floodplain;[16] presumably the basin reached its maximum capacity during Late Antiquity, as rates of sediment aggradation reached their peak.[17]

Framed by the metalliferous Amanus Mountains to the west[18] and hill systems jutting from the Syrian Jibāl to the east, this region was the locus of an impressive mesh of sites dating from the Chalcolithic era (roughly 4500–3300 BCE) down to the Ottoman age (Figure 1.4).

But this is not all, for Antioch and its territory lay on the northernmost extension of the Dead Sea Rift Valley, the zone of faults between the convergence of the African and Arabian Plates that gave rise to the long streak of earthquakes that wreaked havoc in the city, especially during the sixth century CE, and almost led to its wholesale demise at least twice, in 113 and 519 CE. "Wretched Antioch" reads one of the Sibylline Oracles.[19] Whether spurious or not, this text nevertheless introduces a characterization of the city that oozes time and again in the textual sources of the Late Roman Empire and medieval periods. Yet the misfortunes and calamities punctuating the city's history hardly outweigh the trajectory of a community that with a good deal of pride, and indeed legitimate claim, styled itself as the center of the Greek world and rose to the highest plateau of prominence.

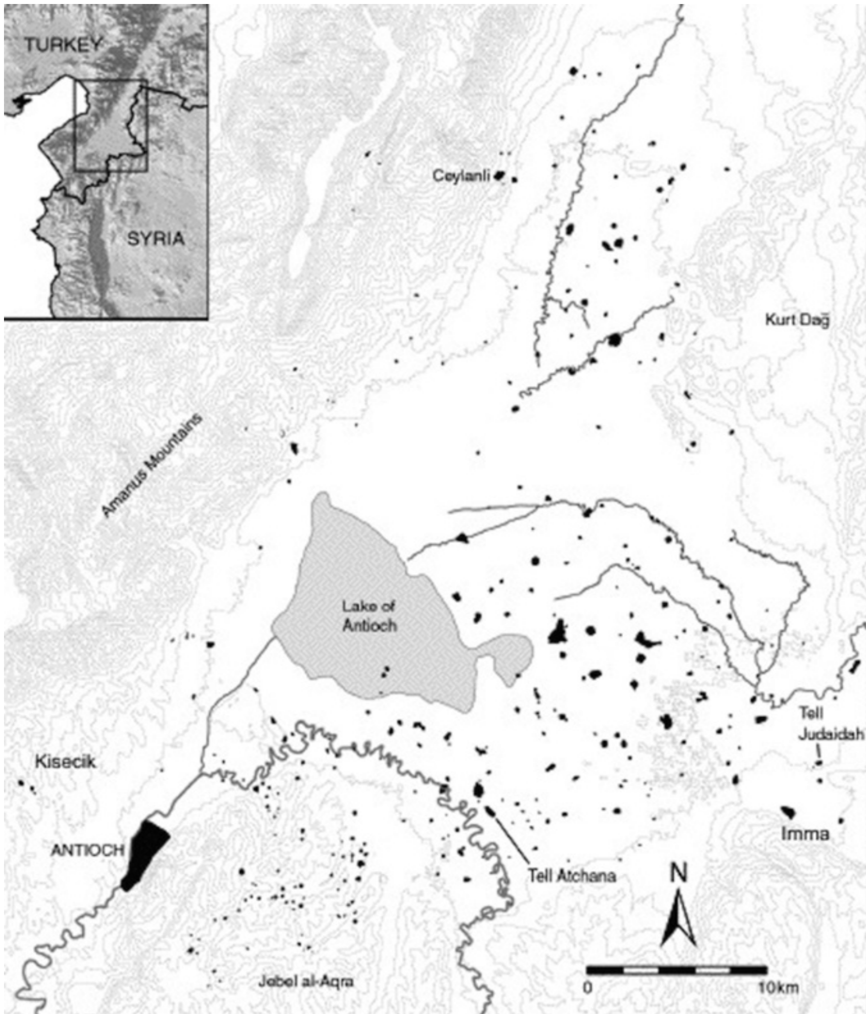

FIGURE 1.4 The Amuq Valley Regional Project survey 1999–2004

Source: Courtesy of the Amuq Valley Regional Project, Oriental Institute, University of Chicago

The early landscape

The Seleucid foundation of Antioch was grounded in a landscape that had been in use from time immemorial, as revealed by decades of archaeological research conducted in the Antioch plain.[20]

The settlement systems of the Late Bronze Age–Early Iron Age, as well as their web of interconnected foci, trade routes, and canals, were instrumental in building the armature underpinning the urbanism of later epochs. The formation of the kingdom of Alalakh in the late Bronze Age is a good case in point.

Seminal excavations conducted by Sir Leonard Woolley in the 1930s at the site of Tell Atchana, some 20 miles northeast of Antioch following the road to Aleppo, revealed parts of Alalakh's sacred architecture as well as sectors of a palace.[21] Woolley's excavations also yielded caches of cuneiform texts, most of which date to circa 1600 BCE and attest to a dominant Hurrian culture, albeit tinted with Canaanite accents. Of course such cultural commingling has significant bearing on the study of the Hebrew Bible, and studies on Alalakh's personal names and social practices also resonate in Genesis and Exodus.[22] The cultural diversity of this landscape in the middle-to-late second millennium BCE, however, needs to be highlighted, traversed, and experienced as it was by western Semitic, Anatolian, and Syrian communities. In tandem with that, in following centuries the expanses of territory from the Mediterranean coast to the Syrian rolling hills were transformed into engineered landscapes demarcated by boundaries, axes of traffic, and canals seeking to prevent the flooding of fields and settlements. The kingdom of Alalakh, overlooking the Amuq Plain from its conspicuous mound and fortifications, typifies these trends and is the manifesto of a culturally defined basin as early as the second millennium BCE.[23] The region's crossroads character, permeability to other cultures, and firm control of the land and its resources continued well into the Iron Age: recent textual and archaeological and epigraphic evidence from the nearby site of Tell Tayinat (Kingdom of Kunulua) resonates with the political tensions of the early seventh century, amid the rise of the Anatolian powers, the divided kingdom of Israel, and the consolidation of Assyria.[24] Here the discovery of palaces, a large temple, and beautifully carved stone reliefs document the rise to prominence of the capital of the kingdom of Patina/Unqi.

While the material and historical records for the Persian period and the Archaic era remain poorly known, it is nonetheless accepted that the Amuq Plain and the upper Orontes Valley heightened increasingly their role as a link between the Levantine peoples of the eastern Mediterranean and the Aegean world, as attested by the finds at Tell al-Mina on the Mediterranean coast, six miles south of the Orontes delta. The agency behind the establishing of this trading post has long been a matter of dispute, amid hypotheses of founders hailing from the Greek mainland or of mixed Levantine and Hellenic constituencies.[25] Telling though Tell al-Mina's material culture may be, with its rich repertoire of Greek imports of the eighth and seventh centuries, it more fundamentally signals the rise and fall of a hub that propelled far-flung, large-scale trade and commercial exchanges between the delta of the Orontes and regions such as Attica in Greece. Whether the presence of Greek ethnic elements can legitimately be read through the lenses of some ethnic brewing that preceded the establishment of Seleucid colonies is a possibility entertained in the past.[26] By this view, Antioch's founding myths and the role of the Greeks were not mere exercises of etiology but episodes grounded in concrete evidence. It is perhaps safer, however, to consider the extraordinary degree of connectivity and crosspollination that pervaded the eastern Mediterranean in the Iron Age, stimulated as they were by flows of goods and information radiating from Greece, the islands, and the coast of the Levant.

From the Seleucids to Antioch

It stands to reason that by the time the Seleucid surveyors reached the region during the last decade of the fourth century BCE, a thriving constellation of communities was apparently in place. In the closing years of that century, Seleucus Nicator secured his northern Syrian holdings through a cluster of new urban foundations.[27] These sites varied greatly in size and topography, at times consisting of *ex novo* foundations or, conversely, exploiting previously occupied tells (mounds). All the same, the landscape that Seleucus so thoroughly intended to urbanize was hardly a blank canvas. As mentioned, small kingdoms, cities, and their infrastructure had created a vast network of roads and sites for the exploitation of resources and the simple channeling of traffic into the heart of Mesopotamia or toward the Mediterranean. Indeed, the existing infrastructure facilitated Seleucus's work; in his mind, northern Syria, a district loosely defined as the Seleucis, was to become the heart of the kingdom.[28] Put simply, the establishment of the dynastic resting place and, more subtly, a reconfiguration of Seleucus's territorial holdings around this new regional pivot let the king's intentions be known. Capillary control of the territory was the main impetus of this operation; to that end, old arteries of traffic, the Mediterranean seaboard, and riverine basins witnessed an almost synchronic flurry of new establishments and urban effervescence.[29] Many of the sites and toponyms carried either dynastic names or replicated the nomenclature of places in Greece and Macedonia in an effort to both draw upon a glorious past and assert the new world order. A mesh of sites carrying the names of members of the royal family or reminiscent of a Greek/Macedonian ancestry thus spanned Asia and Persia, signaling the new realities of power. Rural districts adjacent to these foci, by turns, underwent dense occupation by a peasantry that remained amenable to serving in the royal army as the situation arose.[30] The case of Europos (Carchemish), for instance, illustrates well the functioning of these settlements, equipped with a halo of small sites, presumably small villages and farmsteads gravitating toward the urban center.[31] Other foci like Dura Europos and Jebel Khalid, conversely, declared the essentially military nature of their settlement, poised as they were on the Euphrates.[32]

More ambitious still, however, was the establishment of the so-called Tetrapolis:[33] a system of four sibling cities, two on the Mediterranean coast (Laodicea and Seleucia Pieria) paired with two inland (Antioch on the Orontes and Apamea) that was intended as the centerpiece of Seleucid rule over northern Syria. Much has been written on these putative twin cities;[34] although the textual sources offer a narrative of synchronic settlement, the archaeological record seems to suggest a great degree of diversity in setting, size, and outcomes. Hardly matching the scale, prestige, and accolades of Antioch, these other sibling cities nevertheless remained tied to the city on the Orontes for the rest of their history by indissoluble links, their relationship characterized by episodes of brotherhood, fierce competition, open conflict, and submission. All the same, these four cities were equally implicated in the extraordinary narrative of settlement, growth, and evolution that

occurred on the shores of the Orontes and that led to realizing one of the greatest cities of the ancient world. Earthquakes, too, inflicted equal shares of destruction to the four cities of the Tetrapolis.

Antioch's establishment in the textual record

Antioch was not, however, meant to retain any primacy in Seleucus's project, for it became the fully fledged capital of the Seleucid kingdom only in the second century BCE.[35] Instead, Seleucia Pieria had apparently been designated as a royal mainstay, accommodating as it did the mortal spoils of the king and his successors. Antiochus III (223–187 BCE), also known as the Great, brought to completion the gradual transformation that was to change Antioch's course of history. The gradual increase of production in silver tetradrachms in Antioch (of the Apollo sitting on the Omphalos type, with the prominent cone representing the navel or the mythical center of the world) at the expense of Seleucia in the aftermath of Seleucus's death may bear witness to this phenomenon of gradual political reorientation (Figure 1.5).[36] But let us now return to the city's foundation, conventionally dated to 300 BCE, and its implications.

The Greek geographer and historian Strabo informs us that the growth of the city consisted of four major stages, each carried out under a Seleucid king, namely Seleucus I Nicator, Seleucus II, Antiochus III the Great, and Antiochus IV Epiphanes.[37] The ill-promising site did not curb the zest of the kings in concentrating their efforts and energies here. In particular, John Malalas, a

FIGURE 1.5 Tetradrachm of Antiochus III. Obverse: diameded head of Antiochus facing right. Reverse: Apollo seated on Omphalos, testing arrow and resting left hand on grounded bow; ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ

Source: Courtesy of the American Numismatic Society, ANS 1944.100.75135, Edward T. Newell bequest

sixth-century CE historian and native of Antioch, implied that Seleucus's surveyors were aware of the environmental challenges, and not least the torrential runoff, brought by situating a foundation at the foot of Mt. Silpius and Mt. Staurin.[38] Whether any prudence was exercised is a matter of dispute; the will of the gods prevailed, and Seleucus Nicator made no attempt to shrink from the divine plan. Accordingly, he placed the new community on the valley floor, where the Orontes River bent forming the Island, in the vicinity of a village known as Bottia.

The existence of a predecessor to Antioch remains a thorny issue, for the archaeological record hampers any safe reconstruction. Nor is the textual record less murky. For all its wealth of information, the chronicle of John Malalas offers a perspective on historical events, recent and old, redolent with anachronisms and historical inaccuracies. As for the circumstances of the foundation, Malalas claims that after defeating his enemy Antigonos I Monophthalmus, another of Alexander's successor generals, at Ipsos in 301 BCE, Seleucus established a first foundation at Seleucia Pieria, which would become Antioch's port.[39] The modality of the foundation followed a three-part template that applied to the other cities of the Tetrapolis as well: (1) sacrifices to Zeus Kasios/Keraunios, (2) an eagle appearing and snatching the sacrificial meats, and (3) dropping of the same meats at the site that was to become the new city. The implications of the eagle's presence, symbolizing Zeus and echoing the myth of the foundation of the Serapeion in Alexandria by Alexander the Great, informed the royal propaganda that imbued these foundations.[40] As Daniel Ogden has noted, the lamination between Seleucus and Alexander the Great could not be more apparent, as the former exploited the well-known iconographies of thunderbolts, eagles, and heads of Zeus into the coinage of Antioch and Seleucia from the early days.[41] Not surprisingly, the city of Antioch was not slow in developing monumental programs celebrating the same visual symbols of the foundation and the royal family. Eagles, the gods who attended to the foundation, and Tychai (images of the city's divine fortune), among other symbols, punctuated the sculptural townscape of Antioch from its establishment and identified urban landmarks like towers and street junctions for the successive centuries.[42]

According to Malalas, Antioch's site of choice was that of the village of Bottia, opposite the site of Iopolis, situated somewhere on the slopes of Mt. Silpius near an altar dedicated to Zeus. The two enclaves may thus have been separated by the course of the Orontes. Pleased with their plan, Seleucus and his loyal priest Amphion laid the grounds for the new foundation. The vagaries of Malalas's text frustrate any attempt to establish a firm sense of topography, let alone any historical coherence. Nevertheless, it is likely that Antioch's foundation aimed at defining a new urban base at a site built upon previous settlements. This was, however, a somewhat crowded landscape, and careful choices had to be made as far as incorporating old establishments went. In particular, the plan for the new city had to avoid encroaching on the one urban community that powerfully signaled Seleucus's

enemy, namely, Antigonos. In fact, a city boasting a 70 stade (about 13 km) perimeter named Antigonia had been previously founded by Antigonos himself somewhere between the slopes of the Amanus Mountains and the Lake of Antioch, presumably near the outlet to the lake of the Kücük Asi River, known as the ancient Arkeuthas or Iaphta.[43] It stands to reason that in the immediate aftermath of Antigonos's defeat at Ipsos, Antigonia was fully dismantled; its materiality and memory could neither survive nor compromise Seleucus's new project. Ironically, though, in the thirteenth century the account of Ibn al-'Adīm still stressed the fact that Antigonia was the material predecessor of Antioch, while also attesting to the durable legacy of the Seleucid foundation.[44]

The defeated city's Tyche, however, survived the pillaging. In a unique transfer of religious prerogatives, she was handed over to the new community, thus signaling the appropriation of Antigonia's most intimate religious essence. More concretely, the story of Antigonia's Tyche is reminiscent of the trope of spoliation that defeated cities typically had to undergo during the third century BCE. The description of the 212 BCE capture and plunder of Syracuse by the Romans, as penned by Plutarch, Livy, and, partially, Polybius, balanced between moralistic overtones and the extolling of the winner's magnanimity, may have served as a viable textual template for the Late Antique presentation of the theme.[45] Indeed, it appears that the spoils of the entire disgraced city of Antigonia were relocated – whether forcibly or not we cannot tell – to the new city on the Orontes. All in all, the staged destruction of Antigonia, the human sacrifice of a young girl (Aimathe, designated as the new Tyche of the city), the establishment of a temple dedicated to Zeus Bottios, and, lastly, the definition of the city's perimeter all characterized the beginning of Antioch's urban narrative. That the name Antioch was that of Seleucus's father (Antiochus) rather than of his son is now accepted; all the same, the nomenclature of the city reflected once again the dynasty's attention to toponyms in this region.[46]

But John Malalas is not the only voice that informs us of Antioch's early days. The narrative of Libanius – the fourth-century sophist who was a major intellectual figure of his time and, not least, a native of Antioch – in his oration *Antiochikos* affords insights into the unfolding of the events and the founding myths of the city.[47] Originally penned for the 356 CE Olympic Games in Antioch, this text has been heavily treated by modern historians in an effort to glean its validity as a topographic and historical excursus of the city.[48] The text is complicated; suspended between aspirations of a victory ode and the partisanship expected of a true son – and indeed broker – of Antioch, it offers important insights into the life and topography of the city, to be treated here in subsequent chapters. Suffice to say for now that Libanius narrates at length the vicissitudes leading to Antioch's foundation, substantially underpinning the story as presented later by Malalas, although the latter's account varies in several instances.[49]

More to the point, Libanius's text is paramount for any reconstruction of Antioch's foundation and urban growth, for he surveys both town and country and altogether draws on a vast body of poorly known scholarly traditions on the city. His allusion to a "mass of past history" is especially telling.[50] In particular, the oration's different sections individually shed light on the city, its surroundings, and local society. The second section is particularly relevant, since Libanius describes within it the panoply of settlements preceding Antioch's foundation as well as their mythical framework. In particular, it explores the migrations of the Argives from Greece who, under the leadership of the demi-god Triptolemos, wandered in the quest of Io, a hapless Argive princess loved by Zeus but transformed into a white heifer to protect her from Hera's jealous wrath, who in turn sent a tormenting gadfly that compelled her to roam the earth. Attracted by the beauty of the land, the Argives went on to settle at Iopolis, establishing a temple dedicated to Nemean Zeus. Then entered King Casos from Crete who, under the whims of Zeus, joined the Argives, founded one Kasiotis (a refoundation of Iopolis?), and invited a contingent of Cypriots led by Amyke, the daughter of King Salaminus of Cyprus and immortalized in the name of the Amuq Plain. The Heraklidae, descendants of the demigod, and a group of Eleans from Greece seemingly established their own enclave of Herakleia, a new appendix to the city that cannot be safely located. The Persian king Cambyses and Alexander the Great, too, are not spared by this narrative, for the latter, according to Libanius, initiated the settlement that foreshadowed the official foundation by Seleucus. In particular, the great king established the temple of Zeus Bottios and the citadel of Emathia. This whirlwind of heroes/heroines, demigods, and, indeed, deities, follows the convention of Greek mythography. Put simply, Libanius not only writes of scores of people involved in city's making but also braids a teleological structure into stories of dispossession and migration. Fundamentally, the narrative reaches its apex with the grand moment of Antioch's foundation, with elephants at each corner of the delineated space sanctioning the layout of the future city.[51] It should not be ruled out that the so-called Tetrapylon of the Elephants, the monumental four-arched passageway of unknown layout and décor that spanned the main street intersection on the Island with its bays,[52] may have commemorated this particular event.

Much emphasis in Libanius's text, however, is also accorded to the foundation of Apollo's sanctuary at Daphne, Antioch's picturesque southern suburb (modern Harbiye).[53] Today, this heavily built development, crammed with tall concrete buildings and densely populated by restaurants and hotels, hardly reflects Daphne's ancient splendor. In antiquity, this plateau overlooking the Orontes Valley owed its renown to the springs and the sanctuary of Apollo and its sacred grove of laurels and cypresses.[54] The beauty of the place in antiquity, it seems, had no match. Its description by Edward Gibbon, eighteenth-century author of

the monumental *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, is particularly poignant:

> The temple and the village were deeply bosomed in a thick grove of laurels and cypresses, which reached as far as a circumference of ten miles, and formed in the most sultry summers a cool and impenetrable shade. A thousand streams of the purest water, issuing from every hill, preserved the verdure of the earth, and the temperature of the air; the senses were gratified with harmonious sounds and aromatic odors; and the peaceful grove was consecrated to health and joy, to luxury and love.[55]

Notably, Antioch during the Hellenistic era was often referred to as "Antioch near Daphne," and her characterization "on the Orontes" appeared only at a further point in the Roman era.[56] The ties between the two communities remained indissoluble until Daphne's abandonment in the late Middle Ages. Allegedly, it all began with Seleucus's serendipitous discovery of one of Apollo's sacred arrows the god had shot after the loss of the beloved nymph Daphne as she transformed into a beautiful laurel tree. Seleucus then dedicated the site to Apollo and built a sanctuary that rose to unparalleled centrality. John Malalas substantiates the Daphne foundation myth, inferring that the king planted cypress trees right where Heracles had established the enclave of Heraklea.[57] Be that as it may, the original laurel tree remained as testament to this miracle for centuries to come.[58] Divination, politics, and the tenets of Greek religion thus coalesced into a cult that played a paramount role in the fortunes of the Greco-Roman world, with kings and emperors going to the lengths of traveling to Daphne to consult the god. The great, oracular milieu of Apollo in Delphi, Greece, now had its doppelgänger in the Greek East. Castalia, the name of one of the springs, powerfully conveyed this wholesale replica of Delphi's religious prerogatives in this suburb of Antioch.

In more mundane terms, however, the myths of Daphne, Apollo, and tangentially King Seleucus resonated in the visual culture of the city, appearing as it did in numerous media, from mosaic pavements to portable commodities.[59] These myths, as with the founding myths of Io, Triptolemos, and Heracles, are ones that with their emphasis on migration, quests, and divine implication shaped the cultural outlook of the city and reverberated in its festivals and religious parades, as, for instance, attested by an annual celebration of the search for Io.[60] Whether serving religious purposes or as a simple attestation of belonging, these images inform the durability of these foundation myths.

Yet Daphne was also a milieu that had long accommodated a sizable Jewish community and, plausibly, the Matrona, one of the main synagogues, a temple that was "as profane as the sanctuary of Apollo and populated by demons," according to John Chrysostom, the bishop of Antioch between 386–397 CE and, ultimately, a key figure among Church Fathers.[61] As with any other sacred building in Antioch, this synagogue remains elusive both in location and layout; its shape, décor, and

fruition are matters of guesswork. But it was not built in a vacuum. In particular, Talmudic traditions contend that the settlements of Hamath and Ribla preceded that of Antioch and Daphne, while also serving as stations of the Babylonian exile.[62] Nor may it be too far-fetched to think that *Ex praeda Iudea* (From the booty of Judea), the celebratory inscription on the theater built by Titus in Daphne, above and beyond its rhetoric, was a manifestation of rulers fundamentally pitted against a community that had a firm foothold on that plateau. Overall, the piecemeal archaeological investigation of Daphne inhibits the clear definition of these problems, as the following chapters will show.

Traces of substantial quarrying operations that plausibly preceded the installation of the elegant houses and amenities of the Roman period suggest that the Daphne plateau may also have supplied the stone for the monumental programs of the early Seleucid kings.[63] Regrettably, though, the quest for Daphne's most famous site – the temple of Apollo and its surrounding cluster of other pagan sanctuaries – remains illusory. The Caesarea Cup (Figure 1.6), a fourth-century CE bronze vessel now at the Louvre, may offer a rendition, albeit on a small scale, of the prostyle building with two columns on the front, four slender fluted columns on the side, exquisitely carved Corinthian capitals, pediment, and a cella with a frieze of garlands and a sequence of three niches.[64] As for the temple's archaeological evidence, examining the systems of terracotta pipelines that tapped into five springs, the 1930s archaeologists noted trajectories that seemingly skirted a mound-like prominent area. Strewn with broken column drums and other fragments of monumental architecture, the site appeared as a promising area for the location of the great temple of Apollo. Its archaeological inspection, however, was not added to the excavation agenda, with the Daphne exploration soon veering toward safer targets, and not least the mosaics.[65] As a consequence, the temple's architectural configuration, both in its original Seleucid plan and Roman imperial overhauls with gardens, porticoes, and baths cannot be determined. Nor does the picture of Seleucid religious monuments in the region offer any support to a speculative plan;[66] the two known Seleucid temples of Seleucia Pieria and Jebel Khalid (Syria) are rare examples of a religious architecture that, in the early Hellenistic period, sought to reconcile Greek architectural idioms with oriental accents. Yet these buildings differ greatly in size, aesthetics, and cultic practice, so that the eclecticism of their Doric style defies the notion of a fixed architectural module applying to Seleucid sanctuaries.[67] Though patchy, the textual sources are a redress for the loss of the temple of Apollo. They extol the magnificent décor, with the statue of the god as centerpiece. It was made of marble and wood by the hand of the great Athenian artist Bryaxis, who owed his renown to previous work at the island of Rhodes. The rhetorician Libanius offers a gripping description of the statue, seemingly portraying the god in the act of singing while holding a lyre.[68]

Ultimately, how the oracle of Apollo operated and how space around it framed its consultation are the crux of the problem. The Caesarea Cup, is by all accounts the only visual rendition of the religious mysteries that unfolded at Daphne, with the god Apollo sitting in the front of the sacred laurel and the temple in Daphne,

FIGURE 1.6 The Caesarea Cup

Source: Musées du Louvre, Courtesy of ART RESOURCE

as the divine fortune of Caesarea (the Tyche of Caesarea) with turrite (in the shape of walls and towers) crown and in the garb of an amazon receives the oracle (Figure 1.6).[69]

The establishment of the oracle of Apollo during the early days of the city also spearheaded the appearance of other cults: the successive addition of the temple of Zeus is a good case in point. That one priest presided over the functioning of all the sanctuaries at Daphne is also a concrete possibility. An inscription dating to the days of Antiochus III makes plain that an unknown priest supervised all the cults and was presumably chosen by the king.[70]

The foundation of Antioch was thus predicated on episodes of migration and wanderings, with the uncanny horizon of quasi-divine beings, heroes, and supernatural events. The project, however, more fundamentally mobilized a presumably considerable number of settlers, most of whom were enlisted in the Seleucid army. Athenians, Thracians, Macedonians, Cretans, Cypriots and Jews were but some of the constituencies that apparently landed on the shores of the Orontes and built a conglomerate of ethnicities.[71] As already mentioned, many of these groups migrated from Antigonia; it is plausible that the setting up of a large bronze statue

to Athena in Antioch was an act of piety by the very Athenians who were relocated from the city of Antigonos. Whether fiction or a *captatio benevolentiae* seeking to capture the audience's goodwill, almost eight centuries later the empress Eudocia, wife of Theodosius II (408–450) recognized and boasted of Antioch's Athenian legacy in a public speech that, if anything, attests to the durability of these founding myths as well as the cultural positioning of the city.[72] Athenians aside, mercenaries and soldiers represented the bulk of the new settlers at Antioch. But their identity can hardly be established, nor do we have any names of individuals who can be assigned to this enterprise. Nevertheless, two stelae found in the vicinity of the city and now in the Hatay Archaeological Museum in Antakya offer a glimpse of these early settlers (Figure 1.7).

These sculptures, bearing the names of Aristophanes and Polemos, are considered as the earliest in a collection of mostly unprovenanced funerary reliefs now on exhibit at the Turkish museum.[73] Their iconography is quite remarkable: a small shrine with gable and slender columns frames the visual presentation of the deceased. The stele of Aristophanes, in particular, offers a plastic rendering of the human silhouette, with emphasis on posture and treatment of the garments. This type of imagery can be safely assigned to the early Hellenistic period, and it fits the cultural horizon of early Antioch. Further, the stele of Polemos, of presumably similar chronology, showcases a warrior in full military paraphernalia

FIGURE 1.7 The gravestones of Aristophanes and Polemos

Source: From De Giorgi 2019

sporting an assault posture. This iconography is well known throughout Asia Minor and the Greek East. One painted stele from Sidon (Lebanon), that of Dioskurides, a soldier – from Balboura, Pisidia (a mount-region of southwestern Anatolia) – illustrates perhaps the best rendition of this visual template.[74] Overall, it can be surmised that similar images, redolent as they were with allusions to the military sphere, found a fertile territory in the area of Antioch, where throngs of veterans had just settled with their families. Funerary stones of this kind would have no doubt found the appreciation of those who fought for the establishment of the city and hoped and aspired to the memorialization of their services.

To sum up, Antioch was not built in a day: it rose from the ashes of Antigonia and occupied the small swath of land left as the river Orontes encroached upon Mt. Silpius, the massif overlooking the city. A spate of settlements with evocative names – Bottia, Kasiotis, Iopolis – seemingly preceded the royal foundation or coalesced within it. They can be reasonably linked to constellations of sites archaeologically known in the environs of Antioch. In concrete terms, however, Antioch was planned in a way that would exploit the potential of the Orontes to the fullest, adjusting its layout to the river and setting the urban fulcrum on the plain near the highway running southwest-northeast and connecting the Mediterranean to the heart of Syria.

The foundation's physical appearance

Geopolitical and religious concerns thus coalesced in the plan developed under the guidance of Seleucus; from the very outset Antioch occupied the northern sector of what became "classical" Antioch and was presumably equipped with a system of defenses. The nucleation and successive growth of the city in the following centuries and its inhabitants' ability to adapt to a complex environment illustrate the character of this foundation. Seleucus himself, though warned by his entourage, adamantly moved forward with the foundation, its importance demanding the utmost attention.[75] Its legacy remained ingrained in the visual culture of the city, as attested by numerous mosaics in which the personified foundation, the *Ktisis*, appears in all her splendor.[76] But amid environmental pressures, historical conundrums, and religious preoccupations, the question remains: what did the city of Seleucus look like? Above and beyond the textual accounts, what can we infer about the city's materiality in the aftermath of its foundation? Wolfram Hoepfner has suggested that Antioch's establishment must be seen in the context of a response to Alexandria;[77] by this rationale, he observes it to be no coincidence that the two cities equally occupied a surface of approximately 600 hectares. But two problems arise: first, the topographies of the two cities are in no way comparable, and second, at least in the initial plan, Antioch's foundation was not pitted against the great city of Alexander the Great, nor meant to be vying with it. Antioch grew organically in the following centuries, with the fortifications of Tiberius,

Theodosius, and Justinian eventually girding an expanse that neared Alexandria's measurement.

It is now apparent that the city's first settlement occupied the northern, level space between the Orontes River and the slopes of Mt. Silpius and Mt. Staurin (Figure 1.8). While this is conjectural, the material evidence seems to corroborate this possibility. In particular, the presence of third-to-second-century BCE coins is suggestive of patterns and accumulations that may not be haphazard.[78] As for the urban amenities and administrative buildings that were part of the original plan, we can infer that the main thoroughfare served to order space. It also created a grid that, oriented northeast to southwest, was demarcated by city blocks following the axis of the Parmenios and Phyrminos (Hamşen Deresi) mountain torrents. As for the size of these city blocks, they measured on average 120 by 60 meters, figures generally in line with the evidence from two other cities of the Tetrapolis, namely Apamea and Laodicea.[79] Whether there was one or more than one agora remains difficult to answer.[80] Glanville Downey modeled the layout of Antioch as that of Dura Europos and proposed the existence of an agora replicating the size of that in the city on the Euphrates. As recent studies have shown, however, the urban fabric of Dura needs to be situated in the second century BCE.[81] A more fitting template may be found at Seleucia on the Tigris, the early capital of the kingdom, established around 306 BCE and consisting of two, possibly three large plazas connected to the main canal. In a similar vein, it may be suggested that Antioch's early agora lay near the gate that in the days of the emperor Jovian was referred to as the Philonauta Gate, which may have demarcated the zone of a riverine harbor near where the Orontes shifted its course from south to southwest. While this is speculative, the topography makes plain this was an ideal site where the main thoroughfare, the river, and the highways radiating from Antioch met. Further, in the late fourth century CE, the incident of the bishop Meletius rushing to leave the city from a gate adjacent to the agora, amidst an angry mob, corroborates this possibility.[82] All the same, it is possible that within a few generations this agora turned out to no longer meet the needs of the locals, and so new public spaces were added by Seleucus and his successors. Downey also inferred that the city had to be equipped with a theater,[83] but while plausible, and indeed the topography was suited for one, no material evidence has supported this hypothesis.

Another piece of infrastructure that cannot be firmly established is an alleged early wall of Seleucus. Walls better than any other architectural feature capture the might and the whims of the ruling power that commissioned them. That Antioch was girded by a monumental enceinte from its early days is thus likely.[84] Downey proposed a system of linear defenses following the long artery of traffic around which Antioch grew, thus marking the eastern extent of the settlement (Figure 1.8). He was not too off the mark, it seems.

The city wall, comprising at least eight different building phases and numerous repairs and dating from the early days of the city to the Crusader phase, remains an object of debate.[85] While the 1930s excavations identified no trace of Seleucus's

FIGURE. 1.8 Map of Antioch by Wilber and Downey

Source: Courtesy of the Antioch Expedition Archives, Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University; Princeton

wall lining up with the main thoroughfare, it is plausible that some of the fortifications on Mt. Staurin, especially a few stretches of polygonal masonry on its eastern flank, effectively date to the city's early Hellenistic phase, if not from the days of its foundation.

Christiane Brasse's study in particular shows two key trends. First, some of these early works appear to have been later incorporated into the Roman and Byzantine defenses (Figure 1.9). Second, stand-alone wall segments run southeast-northwest on the slopes of Mt. Staurin, following an axis parallel to the main thoroughfare, while others punctuate the saddle between that mount and Mt. Silpius. These may identify walls designed to enclose discrete settlements, as will be discussed in greater detail. Worth noting is that Seleucid fortifications at Seleucia Pieria, Ibn Hani, Cyrrhus, Apamea on the Orontes, Apamea on the Euphrates, and Jebel Khalid, to name but the best known, utilized seemingly heavy polygonal masonry and negotiated the local rugged topography in similar fashion. What is more, the inclusion of a fortified citadel, as in the case of Cyrrhus, should not be ruled out, though the archaeological evidence has not shown any evidence for it.[86]

In sum, putting together the textual sources and the archaeological datum, it can be surmised that the polygonal walls on Mt. Staurin may actually have been part of the original defenses of the city, aligned as they were with the main thoroughfare. This defensive circuit apparently had to negotiate the asperities of the rocky terrain and the presence of deeply cut gullies, as attested by the southeastern sharp turn of the section, plausibly to allow the presence of a gate. On these grounds, it is now possible to visualize the armature of the early city plan, as in Figure 1.9. The existence of gates, however, is still a matter of guesswork. All the same, Malalas remarks that Seleucus placed a statue of the seer Amphion at the site later to be occupied by the Romanesia gate, which in the fourth century connected the Island to the vast Amuq plain.[87] While the account cannot prove the existence of a Hellenistic predecessor of the Romanesia gate, it nevertheless enriches the picture of a city skyline punctuated by dozen of images stemming from the glorious days of Antioch's foundation. That of Amphion, however, may have triggered in the beholder a sense of localized historical memories as well as leaving testimony of the great unique story that spawned from the vision of the seer who accompanied the king.

Seleucus also saw to the completion of all stringent practicalities entailed by a large-scale urban project; his architects completed the first network of aqueducts that, tapping water from the Daphne springs, fed the city and may have contributed to realizing a sewage system.[88] Indeed, the siphoning off of water from Daphne initiated a pattern of exploitation that continued in the course of antiquity. Daphne was not only the seat of Apollo, and later a resort where affluent Antiochenes would escape the scorching heat of the summer months, but also the key strategic partner that contributed fundamentally to Antioch's growth, thanks to its abundant water supply.

FIGURE 1.9 Antioch and its fortifications. Highlighted are the early perimeter and a possible location for Epiphaneia

Source: Adapted from Brasse 2010; courtesy of Stephen Batiuk

Elusive though early Antioch may seem for the disquieting absence of concrete information, the city was essentially a space shaped by the royal institution, with prominent institutional buildings and statues of kings, eagles, and horses signaling the extent of the urban expanse.[89] The lack of archaeological data does not hamper

the possibility of visualizing early Antioch based on the social relations it engendered, the sharing of space, or the commemoration of the local collective memory. The main thoroughfare, the city grid, and the celebration of Seleucid military achievements all held this ambitious project together.

New expansions

Under successive kings, Antioch raised its profile, for the city plan was plausibly enlarged to accommodate new settlers,[90] a phenomenon that could be filed under the city's second expansion. At that time, however, the city became entangled in a long struggle for hegemony between the Seleucids and another of the rival dynasties of Alexander the Great's successors – the Ptolemies of Egypt. In particular, the mandate of Antiochus II Theos (261–247 BCE) inaugurated a season of insecurity. Libanius's ambiguous reference to Antioch's "difficulties" at that time[91] may indicate mounting political tension in the region, as the following developments suggest. In particular, the Egyptians and their occupation of large tracts of Syria, and not least the city of Seleucia Pieria, exerted pressure on the kingdom of Seleucus II Callinicus (246–226 BCE). The so-called Gourob papyrus offers documentary evidence, albeit complicated, of the days of Seleucid faltering in front of the Egyptian royal house, with a Ptolemaic delegation and army making it all the way to Antioch after having presumably followed the course of the Orontes sometime in the year 246 BCE, that is, during the Third Syrian War.[92] Patchy and poorly preserved, the text also contains a reference to a lofty reception that the Antiochene officers offered to Ptolemy III and a bewildered Egyptian delegation outside the city walls. Impressed by the monumentality of the city, the Egyptians were met in front of an unknown monumental gate: a curtain of walls, it seems, girded the city at that time. What gate the text specifically alludes to is impossible to determine. All the same, Seleucus II, in 244 BCE, succeeded at driving the Egyptians out of Antioch and parts of Syria. Seleucia, however, remained in foreign hands until 219 BCE.[93]

The loss of what soon became the Attalid kingdom in Asia Minor and attempts to regain a firm foothold in Parthia further led to a significant channeling of resources into Antioch and the reconfiguration of the monarchic role in the city, as manifested by an ambitious new urban expansion on the Island, formed by the Orontes northwest of the original settlement.

This third great expansion, which significantly enlarged the original nucleus of the city, as suggested by Strabo, took place under Seleucus II (and his successor Antiochus III). Further, this project brought about a wholesale reorientation of the city's topography, both in the new itineraries it imposed and in leadership. Put simply, while the project led to the city's enlargement and responded to necessities that were most likely demographic, the establishment of a new constellation of buildings on the Island – not least a royal palace (Basileion) under Antiochus III[94] – informs both the heightening of Antioch's role and a new idea of monarchy, one defined by the perimeter of the royal residence and its infrastructure of streets, bridges, and annexes. A system of defenses strengthened the fabric of the royal enclave; in their

flurry of activities, the Princeton excavations of 1932 identified in sector 5-O, an area that now lies right under the modern course of the Orontes, a short stretch of dry-laid ashlar block wall of rather impressive proportions (Figure 1.10).

Although hastily excavated, this flimsy evidence illustrates the presence of ramparts that defined the northernmost perimeter of the Island and its monumentalization. As often happened with the Princeton excavations, however, this dig was rapidly jettisoned. What matters here is to underscore how this building project signaled a new phase for Antioch: the arrival of new settlers, all of Greek origin, Libanius implies;[95] the increase of rural settlement across the plain of Antioch; and overall economic prosperity, as possibly indicated by the unflagging pace at which the local mint apparently issued coins of the king. At that time, the city struck coins at a sustained pace, thus confirming its role as capital of the western Seleucid world. Gold octadrachms of the Apollo of omphalos type and silver tetradrachms of the same iconography stand out in this production. Further, the king may have reformed the mint upon his return to the city on the Orontes in

FIGURE 1.10 The 1932 excavation on the Island of Antioch: sector 5-O

Source: Courtesy of the Antioch Expedition Archives, Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University; Princeton

204 BCE, introducing a new portrait with mature features and less godlike appearance. That these octadrachm issues were meant to celebrate specific events is a grounded possibility.[96] It is likely that the losses in Asia Minor, turmoil in Greece, and overall reconfiguration of the Seleucid universe that occurred under Antiochus III spawned episodes of migration toward the rapidly growing capital.[97]

The intellectual stature of the city, it seems, was also a preoccupation of the king. To heighten Antioch's profile, Antiochus III established a great library, directed by Euphorion of Chalcis,[98] who seemingly wrote a now-lost history of the city on which Posidonius of Apamea greatly drew for his narrative. The competition for primacy with Alexandria (and its own renowned library), at that time one of the greatest cities of the ancient world, cannot be more obvious. The state treasury lavishly funded building programs and urban décor, while games and festivals contributed to enhancing the city's centrality; evidence for games in 197 BCE is attested by the epigraphic record.[99]

Political structure and economy

By the second century BCE, Antioch, seat of the Seleucis satrapy and the royal court,[100] had outgrown every other city in the area, becoming one of the most prominent cities of the kingdom.[101] As we shall see, during the civil wars and strife of the late second century BCE, when the kingdom was essentially reduced to Syria and Phoenicia, the possession of Antioch was key for a ruler to lay his claim and be recognized as the legitimate Seleucid king.[102]

Worth noting is that the Seleucid state had a somewhat peculiar configuration, consisting of a highly centralized government of a loosely Persian matrix and a network of local governors who enacted the king's policies. At times the king himself would personally deal with the cities, especially when granting special rights, civic charters, and tax exemptions. This dense administrative web was superimposed on the individual poleis, which in turn were governed through the political apparatus of Greek tradition and referred to themselves as independent. Based on their independence, they would negotiate agreements with the king on a broad range of matters, from fiscal regulations to military expectations. They also negotiated with other communities and poleis for religious and political purposes;[103] many inscriptions pertaining to these transactions and treaties illuminate the relationships among the polities of Seleucid Asia Minor.[104]

Antioch's political conduct plausibly followed these lines, and both king and city were legitimized by a common set of values played out through a shared language of honors and *euergetism*, a well-known practice in the Greek East whereby grandees and notables would distribute part of their wealth to local communities in the form of public buildings, doles, and moneys.[105] That said, coercion and exorbitant extraction of surplus through taxes were key to the kingdom's survival, and the most prominent cities and communities were obliged to feed the state coffers and sustain military expenditures. The contemporary, rival Ptolemaic kingdom had a system of revenues that, in all likelihood, was predicated on similar mechanisms.