

TH
Eb 36

ANTIOCH IN SYRIA
KEYSTONE CITY OF PAULINE MISSIONS
AS A STRATEGIC CENTER IN THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

By
Charles Richard Eberhardt
B.C.S. in B.A., New York University

A THESIS
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for
THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SACRED THEOLOGY
in
The Biblical Seminary in New York
New York, N. Y.

1937

22907

BIBLICAL SCHOOL OF
THEOLOGY LIBRARY
HATFIELD, PA.

To

Dr. Caroline L. Palmer

Dr. Howard Tillman Kuist

Servants of the Lord Jesus Christ

My Friends

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Dr. Caroline L. Palmer
Professor, The Biblical Seminary in New York

For helpful suggestions and comment

To Dr. Howard Tillman Kuist
Professor, The Biblical Seminary in New York

For his guidance throughout the work

To Dr. G. Granville Downey
Archeologist and Research Scholar, Princeton University

For help invaluable in reconstructing ancient Antioch

To Dr. Julius Richter
Professor Emeritus, University of Berlin

For valuable suggestions and interpretations

To Dr. Carl H. Kraeling
Archeologist, Yale University
Professor, Yale Divinity School

For valued help and suggestions

June 1, 1937
21270
Gift
of Charles Richard Eberhardt

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
INTRODUCTION	
1. The General Field of Study—Its Nature . . .	2
2. The Specific Problem and Our Approach . . .	4
3. The Problem—Its Scope and Delimitation . . .	5
I. A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE HISTORY OF SYRIA	
1. Geography of the Land	8
2. Egypt	12
3. Assyria	14
4. Persia	16
5. Macedonia (Alexander the Great)	18
a. The Man	20
b. His Contribution	21
c. As an Inspirer of His Generals	23
II. THE SELEUCID DYNASTY FROM ITS FOUNDING TO THE COMING OF ROME (312-64 B.C.)	
1. Alexander's Death and Heirs	26
a. The Second Phase of Hellenic History	26
b. Consequences of Alexander's Death	27
2. Seleucus Nicator	28
a. The War of the Regents	30
b. Seleucus in Babylonia	31
c. The Situation at the Death of Seleucus Nicator	35
3. The Period of the Early Kings (281-187 B.C.)	38
a. Antiochus I (281-261 B.C.)	39
b. Antiochus II (261-246 B.C.)	39
c. Seleucus II (246-226 B.C.)	40
d. Antiochus III (224-187 B.C.)	41
e. An Interval of Peace	43
4. From Antiochus Epiphanes to the Fall of the Dynasty (187-64 B.C.)	44
5. The Legacy of the Seleucidae	46
a. The Greek Language	47
b. Greek Culture	47
c. As Builders of Cities	49
d. Contact between Jew and Greek	51
e. Summary	52
6. Rome—Its Coming and Its Contribution	54

Chapter	Page
III. ANTIOCH IN SYRIA, THIRD CITY OF THE WORLD, IN THE DAYS OF THE EARLY CHURCH	
1. The Location of Antioch	58
a. Topography	59
b. Site	61
c. Origin	63
(1) Probable Reasons for Choice	64
(2) Seleucus Nicator the Founder	65
d. Summary	67
2. Its Architecture and Plan	67
a. Its Surpassing Architectural Beauty	67
b. Its Walls and Fortifications	73
c. Its Extent	74
d. Its Population	74
e. Its Name	75
f. Its Statuary	76
g. Summary	76
3. Its Peoples	77
a. Indigenous Syrians	78
b. Greeks	79
c. Jews	80
d. Summary	84
4. Its Commerce and Wealth	85
a. Traffic by Sea and by Land	85
b. The Wealth of Antioch	87
c. Conclusion	88
5. Its Environs—Daphne	90
a. Location	91
b. The Waters of Daphne	91
c. Origin of the Gardens	92
d. Temples and Buildings	92
e. Processions and Festivals	94
f. Conclusion	97
6. Religions of Antioch	97
a. Superstitions and Diverse Religions	98
b. The Adonis Cult	99
7. Conclusion	100
IV. ANTIOCH, KEYSTONE CITY OF PAULINE MISSIONS, MOTHER CHURCH OF THE GENTILES	
1. Its Evangelization	103
a. Origin	104
b. Second Phase of its History	107
(1) First Called "Christians"	109
(2) Famine and the Antiochian Collection	109

Chapter	Page
(3) Its Organization	110
2. An Evangelizing Center	112
3. Bousset's Suggestions	114
4. Summary and Conclusion	116
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 119

ILLUSTRATIONS

Map—Antiochiae Ichnographia	Frontispiece
(From Mueller, Karl O.: Antiquitates Antiochenae, Tab. A)	
 Antioch—Wedged between the Orontes and Mons Silpius	
	Following page 56
(From Hilaire Belloc: The Battle Ground—Syria and Palestine)	

.

ΤΗΣ ΚΑΛΗΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΕΙΑΣ

INTRODUCTION

ANTIOCH IN SYRIA
KEYSTONE CITY OF PAULINE MISSIONS
AS A STRATEGIC CENTER IN THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

1. The General Field of Study—Its Nature

The present study comes perhaps a bit prematurely. At Princeton University all the available bibliography, classical and modern, treating the history of Antioch in Syria, has lately been concentrated. Scholars there are classifying and cataloguing all pertinent materials before proceeding to evaluate the discoveries which have been made by archaeologists excavating upon the site of the city of Antioch. There is no doubt that many pertinent and valuable contributions will follow as a result of this commendable work. It is to be hoped that many of the gaps in the chronology of the city's history will be filled; that many incongruities in historical evidence will be adjusted; and that new data will give confirmation, or at least a modicum of credibility, to a history too often derived from myth rather than from accurate documentary or monumental certification.

Our thesis subject, "Antioch in Syria—Keystone City of Pauline Missions—As a Strategic Center in the Early Christian Church," is a historical study. Is the reader abashed at the audacity of an author who sets himself to treat a subject rendered difficult by an inadequate knowledge of its antiquity? The historian, like the archaeologist, seeks in his researches not only to discover new evidence, but so to correlate it with known facts as to present a more accurate, if not entirely different connotation and perspective of historical events.

We shall allow our evidence to speak for itself, and be careful at no point to "assume that which is incapable of proof."¹ The student of history is prone to bemoan the paucity of facts available in his studies of ancient peoples or cities. Too often, too, he is tempted into the unpardonable sin of creating a history based upon his own fancy or another's fiction. We shall be thankful for that which has come down to us, and rejoice in that to which we are heir—where history is silent we too shall be silent. We do not, however, seek to bar interpretation wherever it is impelled by an array of incontestable evidence.

.

1. Lewis, George Henry (quoted from memory)

2. The Specific Problem and our Approach

In our study we start with three known facts. The early Christian church, after the stoning of Stephen and the subsequent persecution, scattered abroad "as far as Phoenicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch."¹ In Antioch this tiny group of believers was first called Christians.² From Antioch, Barnabas and Saul, under the aegis and direction of the Holy Spirit, were sent forth on the first world missionary journey.³

They began their phenomenal work, and one is amazed at the rapidity with which converts were won, preaching a Gospel which now had a universal appeal. For a period a little over a decade the liberal church in Antioch was working toward the liberation of Christianity from the closely circumscribed conceptions of Judaistic legalism which sought to limit the appeal of the Gospel to the Jew.

It was the Antiochian congregation that insisted on discarding the whole farrago of burdensome Mosaic laws. They saw, too, that implicit in the words of Christ was the appeal and the express command that the "Good News" should be proclaimed throughout the

.

1. Acts 11:19
2. Acts 11:26
3. Acts 13:2

world. This Gentile constituency subscribed at Jerusalem to a broader interpretation inherent in the teachings of our Lord, a cosmopolitanization of the Christian message. A need, sharpened discernment, and the Holy Spirit guided their program so that from Antioch, the Mother Church of the Gentiles, the faith in Christ was preached—to Jew, to Greek, to Gentile—a winsome salvation to a yearning, waiting world.

Because of its strategic location, both by land and sea, this city was the natural starting point for the missionary journeys which disseminated the Gospel truth throughout Asia Minor and ultimately to the world. A question presents itself at this point. What was the effect of the "Hellenization" which took place at Antioch, on the promulgation of the Gospel from that point forward? This thesis purports to answer this question.

3. The Problem—Its Scope and Delimitation

The first century was the child and heir of the preceding ages, and reflected decided characteristics of its inheritance. Especially was Syrian Antioch, meeting place of many civilizations, a conglomeration of cultures, and in order to understand its importance we must first study its history and background.

The first chapter of our thesis thus attempts

to sketch briefly the early history of Syria. We watch Egypt, Israel, Assyria, Persia, and Greece as they enter the Levant. To the second chapter we have assigned the task of treating the Seleucid Dynasty from its foundation to the coming of Rome, with special attention to the legacy left by each to the Antiochian city. The third chapter will deal with the character of the city, its architectural history, topography, culture, society, and commerce. An evaluation of the contribution of the Antiochian church to the contemporary and later history of the Christian church will occupy the fourth and final chapter.

For information we draw from a broad field of history and the materials available are copious. We must limit ourselves to the presentation of only such pertinent and essential data as will contribute definitely to an elaboration of the problem at hand—and always to the end that we may better discern the hand of Almighty God as He moves to accomplish His purpose that to all men the glad tidings should be given, ὃ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων!

CHAPTER I

A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE HISTORY OF SYRIA

CHAPTER I

A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE HISTORY OF SYRIA

1. Geography of the Land

"Between the Arabian Desert and the eastern coast of the Levant there stretches—along almost the full extent of the latter, or for nearly four hundred miles—a tract of fertile land varying from seventy to one hundred miles in breadth. This is so broken up by mountain range and valley, that it has never all been brought under one native government; yet its well-defined boundaries—the sea on the west, Mount Taurus on the north, and the desert to east and south—give it a certain unity, and separate it from the rest of the world. It has rightly, therefore, been covered by one name, Syria."¹

In this tiny strip of land was placed a people, whose peculiar propensity to discern God regnant in His universe is only explicable on the ground that religious genius, as all genius, is divinely mediated, not generated by any effort of man. Certainly Providence alone dictated the choice of the locale for its greatest manifestation. Syria—the bridge of the ancient world, the "battleground" of early civilizations; a divinely prudent economy entrusted its revelation to a people situated at the crossroads of the world. It was inevitable that the news of the glad tidings of man's salvation

... .

1. Smith, George Adam: Historical Geography of the Holy Land. Sixteenth Edition, p. 3

should be quickly disseminated from this focal point along the radii which emanated therefrom, by land and sea, in every direction under the sun.

Syria—not only the battleground of impetuous nations, but also of cruel elements. On the edge of the sterile desert it is a fringe of fertility defying the encroaching inferno of drifting sand. On the west an equally inexorable sterility seeks ever to win what habitable land the desert draught has found impregnable. But neither sand nor sea has successfully invaded where only impassioned man has wrested from nature the dispensation of his own and the land's destruction.

From the Gulf of Alexandretta in the north to the Gulf of Akaba in the south, there runs a ribbon-like strip of land "disposed, between the Sea and the Desert, in a series of four parallel lines or bands running north and south":¹

	The	The	The	The	
Sea	Maritime	Central	Jordan	Eastern	Desert
	Plain	Range	Valley	Range	

There are certain modifications of these four 'lines' which tend to complicate the geography of the land, but for the requirements of this thesis the divisions men-

.

1. Smith: op. cit., pp. 48f
George Adam Smith has used the division suggested by Robinson in his Physical Geography, p. 17, and by Henderson, "Palestine," pp. 15-21

tioned above provide an adequate plan for the general topographical scheme of all Syria.

The land is redeemed from absolute barrenness by a series of rivers which flow down through the cleft or narrow valley formed by the parallel mountain ranges on either side. The first of these, and the northernmost, is the Orontes, flowing northward till it passes through a gap in the coast mountains into the Mediterranean; the Litāni, flowing south also finds its way to the Sea; the Abana, running in an easterly direction supplies water for Damascus and its environs; finally, the Jordan, flowing south till it is swallowed up by the reservoir of death at its end—the Dead Sea.

"The Lebanons are the focus of Syria. Besides the many streams which spring full-born from their roots, and lavish water on their immediate neighbourhood,"¹ all four rivers find their source in these majestic mountains. The Lebanon twice reaches approximately ten thousand feet in height, but for the most part the coastal ranges do not exceed four thousand feet. On the eastern borders of Syria we find the Anti-Lebanon terminating in the lifts of lofty Mount Hermon.²

.

1. Smith: op. cit., p. 45

2. Belloc, Hilaire: The Battleground Syria and Palestine, p. 26

Farther towards the south these sharp ridges modulate to become the highlands of Galilee on the west, the upland of the Hauran on the east. The valley of the Jordan, meanwhile, keeps deepening until in the Dead Sea the floor of the cleft is some 2600 feet below sea level.

"Thus then is Syria built, in five layers, each very narrow for its length, and laid along side by side; the string of sea plains in the north, at first no more than river mouths, later, farther south, increasing in size, but nowhere more than a few miles broad; the western highlands; the strange central ravine; the eastern highlands, the edge of the Desert."¹

So we find Syria, the garden of Arabia, the fertile home of the Semitic peoples, the "middlemen" of the East. Primarily, because of their strategic geographic position, they were a merchant class. Their land became from earliest history the clearing house for eastern and western culture.

And yet Syria had her own contribution to make to those who gathered at her marts. Contributing no material gift to civilization, yet through the Israelite she made a more lasting impress upon the motley peoples who trafficked there, for she was their religious tutor, the mediator between God and man.

.

1. Belloc: op. cit., p. 27

2. Egypt

For the earliest written history of Syria we must turn to the Biblical accounts of the Hebrew canon. Abraham takes us back to a period just before 2000 B.C.¹ After 1900 the Biblical account ceases to throw any light on the political history of the land. Our next clue to Syrian history comes when about 1573 B.C. Egypt liberates itself from the control of the Hyksos (Sixteenth Dynasty), under Aahmes (called by various authorities Aohmes, Ames, Amases, Amosis)² who attacked the unwelcome foreigner in the delta and finally drove him out.

"We have for this great soldier whose genius launched the first creative change in Syrian affairs, an approximately accurate date—the first fixed point in Syrian chronology ... subject to an error of very few years. ... Aahmes assumed power over Egypt in 1580 B.C."³

Aahmes himself led an Egyptian army into Syria proper and introduced the first of a series of pilferings which the Egyptians carried on for a period of four

.

1. Says Hilaire Belloc on this date: A comparatively recent discovery in Mesopotamia has made some authorities confident that Abraham's generation is that of the Mesopotamian king Hammurabi, that is, the twenty-first century B.C. The name of an Elamite king appearing in the story of Abraham is the same as that of a personage contemporary, in Mesopotamian record, with Hammurabi." Belloc: op. cit., p. 60. Some archaeologists are of the opinion that Abraham lived between 2160 and 1985 B.C.
2. Cf. Rawlinson, George: A Manual of Ancient History, p. 83
3. Belloc: op. cit., pp. 69ff

hundred years subsequent to this initial invasion.¹

The Egyptian influence in Syria declined after the demise of the Eighteenth Dynasty (1318 B.C.). The intermittent and sporadic visitations of the "African" in Syria were for the purpose of looting. The Pharaohs did not attempt to colonize this area, but acted as a goad to lethargic peoples. Belloc aptly applies to the Egyptian contribution the metaphor of the plough:

"I have called the thing a ploughing ... a making things ready for the sea—a condition if not a cause of life, whence proceeded the new ports of Phoenicia, the new cities of the Philistine coast ..."²

Let us see what seed was planted in the ground so tilled by Egypt.

Were this thesis of a different nature we should give full attention to the entry of the Israelites into Syria. We should watch them lament the departure of their aged leader Moses; thrill to the conquests of Joshua; view with interest the period of the Judges; see the movements of heroic David; marvel at the glory which was Solomon; and stand amazed at the rapid disintegration of the Kingdom immediately after Solomon's death. But we must hurry on, to dwell a moment with the ruthless Assyrian coming to devastate the land of the Levant.

.

1. Cf. Belloc: op. cit., p. 70
2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 76ff

3. Assyria

The first true conquest of Syria begins in 876 B.C., when Ashur-Nasir-Pal crossed the Euphrates and descended as far south as the Nahr-el-Kelb (modern name for the "River of the Dog"). Unlike the Egyptians, the Assyrian left behind him permanent garrisons. Shalmaneser, his son, did even more. He marched on Damascus, hoping that by possession of this strategic center he could control at least all of northern Syria. In 854, however, he was repelled, and again in 848 and in 846; and finally in 842 he found it impossible to capture the city. But already it could be seen that with a superior force the dogged Assyrian would yet enter the gates of Damascus. A century later Tiglath-Pileser accomplished what his predecessors had failed to do. After horribly ravaging the country and decimating its population he conquered the city. Ultimately the new Babylonian power, which had usurped the decadent Assyrian throne, completed the subjugation of the entire Levant, and in 586 B.C. the last defenders of the land, the men of Jerusalem, followed their brothers of the ten northern tribes into captivity.¹

.

1. Cf. Rogers, Robert W.: A History of Babylonia and Assyria, Book 3, ch. iv-xi; Book 4, ch. i-iii

Assyria and Babylonia had attacked and reduced Egypt; "Susiana was subjugated; and in Asia Minor Taurus was crossed, Cappadocia invaded, and relations established with the Lydian monarch, Gyges."1

In spite of its ferocious method and often beastly crudity, Assyria

"especially in its military organization marked a long step forward in that gradual growth of the idea of all-including world power, which culminated at last in the Roman Empire ... (Assyria) created the international situation which enabled the Hebrews to gain the loftiest conceptions of their own God,—conceptions which have profoundly influenced the entire later history of mankind."2

So Syria became Assyrian, and learned from them the art of cruel warfare; and Babylonian, and learned the rudiments of culture from these scholars of the Semitic race. Thus we see how Syria is being cultivated for its mission by warrior, scholar, and Jewish theologian. Antioch in Syria became a city incorporating definite traces of all its progenitors. After Babylon followed Persia, and finally Greece, the immediate precursors of the Seleucids who were the builders of the great metropolis on the Orontes.

.

1. Cf. Rawlinson: op. cit., p. 43
2. Breasted, James Henry: Ancient Times, p. 163

4. Persia

"For the oriental world as a whole, Persian rule meant about two hundred years of peaceful prosperity" (ending about 333 B.C.).¹ She was the first to organize a world empire which was a union of kingdoms and cities ruled, and this was novel, by Persian governors, or satraps.

"The important point is this, that the Persians were the first to take decisive steps towards the creation of a real empire, centralized though heterogeneous, and united."²

She thus paved the way for the Greek Seleucids, and later for the Romans, who likewise ruled a centralized government by means of their unique system of satrapies. Asia Minor, and particularly Syria, prospered under Persian rule. Internal peace brought the development of commerce. Unhindered communication, the introduction of a common coinage, royal patronage of international trade fostered an attitude of submission among the subjugated peoples.

The new rulers were of Indo-European (Aryan) blood. Their language differed from that of Mesopotamia, and, more important, their religion differed from the Semitic religions. For the most part (with the noble ex-

.

1. Breasted: op. cit., p. 194

2. Rostovtzeff, M.: A History of the Ancient World, Vol. I, p. 151

ception of pure Judaism) the Semites were pantheistic worshippers of Baals and Molochs, vengeful bloodthirsty gods. The Persian was naturalistic. Some modern students of comparative religions trace the influence of Persia upon Jewish conceptions in the Hebrew personification of evil as Satan,¹ although this was more probably ancient Semitic as well.

The two centuries of Persian influence, from the initial triumph of Cyrus in 539 B.C. to the fall of the Empire, which quickly followed the defeat at Issus in 333, were of great moment to the later history of the world. An enlightened policy allowed the return of the Jews to their own land. The encouragement of trade brought life again to the seaport towns of the eastern shore of the Mediterranean. Asia Minor and the Aegean peninsulas henceforth exchange products and cultures. Persia emancipated where Assyria had enslaved.

Persia was not, however, satisfied merely to trade with the Aegean peoples on equal terms, and greed for world empire led her to attack a foe who was more than her superior. A rising Greek culture tolerated no Eastern intruder. Darius was defeated at Marathon (490), his son Xerxes was repelled at the great sea battle of Salamis (480), and the progress of the Orient was stopped.

.

1. Hume, David: The World's Living Religions; Clemen, Carl: Religions of the World

Persia now fell into the lethargy of decadence. Her contribution made, she awaited the deathblow to be dealt by Alexander at the battle of Issus, and finally at Gaugamela (331 B.C.).¹

Syria now watches a star rise rapidly in the western sky. The young Macedonian, Alexander, comes with sword unsheathed. But a yet more potent and subtle conqueror follows in his train, a culture which transcends the barriers of race and custom and modifies the character of every people which it touches. The final link between East and West is now forged, and the smith completes the weld on Syrian soil—the natural bridge which spans the gulf between the Occident and the Orient.

5. Macedonia (Alexander the Great)

The death of Philip of Macedon at the early age of forty-seven (336 B.C.) placed great responsibility on his twenty-year old son Alexander. A great empire, but lately and only loosely cemented together, was threatened with immediate disintegration, for both in Greece and on the outskirts of the empire there was much excitement and dissatisfaction. A strong hand was needed to quell any manifestations of rebellion. Alexander moved with quick dispatch. He struck at Thebes, razed the city, and in

.

1. Rostovtzeff: op. cit., pp. 323-332

one bold and mastery¹ stroke gave evidence that he was a man who would not tolerate any disloyalty. Greece accepted him as its leader, and having won the allegiance of his homeland Alexander turned now toward the East, and our drama moves its setting to Asia Minor, Syria, Babylonia, and Persia.¹

At the age of 22 (April, B.C. 334), Alexander left Greece, determined to conquer Greece's traditional foe, Persia. At Granicus he met the enemy and defeated him. From this point on, success attended him in his every battle. He struck the Mede again, this time fatally, at Gaugemela (331) and Greece became the ruler of the East.

"In the few years of his life which remained Alexander extended his domain into India and was, at the time of his death, preparing to enter Arabia."² At 33, in the flush of success, he died, but he had already indelibly engraved his name in the record of passing time.

"He had been less than twelve years in Asia, and he had carried Greek civilization into the very heart of the continent. ... he had founded Greek cities bearing his name and had set up kingdoms which were to be centers of Greek influence on the frontier of India."³

.

1. Rostovtzeff: op. cit., pp. 330f.
2. Price, Rebecca R.: The Contribution of Alexandria to the Preparation of the World for Christianity, p. 14
3. Breasted: op. cit., p. 437

a. The Man

Let Plutarch paint the outlines of our picture:

"Alexander's warm temperament of body seems to have rendered him fond of drinking, and fiery in disposition. As a youth he showed great powers of self control, by abstaining from all sensual pleasures in spite of his vehement and passionate nature; while his intense desire for fame rendered him serious and highminded beyond his years."¹

Here is a man in whom the elements are strangely mixed; on the one hand vehement, fiery, yet by means of strong self-control marshalling his resources to serve his indomitable will to succeed. Passionate in all, he rose to highest fame, and his very intensity of spirit catapulted him to the highest realm of attainment and at the same time so consumed him as to hurry him to an early death. Like the rocketing star that he was, he burned brightly but momentarily, and was gone.

As a military leader, his astuteness in maneuver, and foresight in planning his strategies, is only to be described as genius. Death robbed him, or perhaps was kind to take him at the height of his power, of the opportunity of displaying his abilities of statesmanship.

C. E. Robinson succinctly states his merits as a warrior and statesman thus:

"As a conqueror he was perhaps unrivalled in antiquity; and the genius of his military exploits so im-

.

1. Plutarch's Lives—Life of Alexander, Sec. IV
2. Robinson, C. E.: A History of Greece, p. 409

pressed themselves on Asia that the romance of his career became a fairy tale in the folk-lore of a score of languages. ... But the influence of his constructive statesmanship went deeper still, producing in the history of civilization consequences which he himself for all his powers of vision could never dimly have foreseen."²

b. His Contribution

Alexander is not to be considered only as a military conqueror. Though we must be careful not to credit him with too highly altruistic ambitions, yet he had the determination not only to subjugate, but to saturate his empire with the Grecian culture which he loved so much. He founded at strategic points great cities, monuments to his personal vanity, yes, but more often centers of the Hellenistic culture which like leaven spread to the hinterlands of each metropolis.

"It was through the conquests of Alexander that Greek became the language of literature and commerce from the shores of the Mediterranean to the banks of the Tigris. It is impossible to estimate the effect of this spread of Greek on the promulgation of the gospel."¹

Alexander was not successful in fusing the two races. The Macedonian and Iranian by blood, tradition, and breed were separated by a gulf too deep to span. But where intermarriage failed, Hellenism, "that body of ideas which represented the mental activity of the Greek

.

1. Thomson, J. E. H.: "Alexander," International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Vol. I

people,"¹ conquered the world for Alexander. The Greek language, the autonomous Greek city-state, a booming commerce "bond of nations", roads by land, lanes over trackless sea—here were adequate stimuli for a world awakened. Greek culture and civilization not only stimulated but satisfied. Philosophically and artistically already well-developed, the chaste beauty and proportions of every expression of Hellenic civilization, whether a product of the reason in choice dialectic or rhetoric, or of the emotion and the hand in a Praxiteles sculpture, soon won the admiration of the Oriental peoples.

"Alexander's star flashed out of the western sky and did not set in the east until it had shed its light in every quarter of the world and the horizon was definitely illuminated by its reflection. During the short span of fourteen years, the Macedonian moved across two continents, joining East and West, breaking the barriers of race and custom and changing the character of all that he touched."²

He had moved like the bright flash of lightning. Within a few weeks he had made himself the master of Grecian Asia Minor, after the great Battle of Granicus. Issus (335) secured for him an opening into Syria and Egypt and made possible the siege and capture of Tyre in July, B.C. 332. The Battle of Arbela (or Gaugamela) (B.C. 333) meant death to the Persian Empire, and Alexander controlled the Asiatic world.

.

1. Price: op. cit., p. 25
2. Ibid., p. 20

What definite contribution did Alexander make to Syria? Says H. Belloc:

"Particularly did Greece renew and invigorate Syria, taking root there and making of coast and hills a Grecian thing ... the Greek spirit therein remained one, if not in all Asia, at least from the Tigris to the Mediterranean."¹

c. As an Inspirer of His Generals

The man Alexander was endowed with unusual beauty of facial feature and general physique. The Greeks of that period were always attracted by bodily grace. So men admired, loved, and later worshipped the warrior as a god. Men copied his mannerisms, even aping the slight tilt of his head which he dramatically inclined toward his left shoulder.

The passionate spirit of their leader fired the ambitions and induced every possible sacrifice from his men. We turn our notice, as we close the chapter, to one of his generals, Seleucus. It is Seleucus and the dynasty which he founded who took Greece into Syria; it is Seleucus who founds the city of Antioch on the Orontes.

"It was under the Macedonian kings ... that Hellenism and Israel first came into contact ... under the Seleucids (the Jews come) into contact very far from friendly, resulting in wild explosion which shook the fabric of Seleucid power. It is a meeting of very momentous significance in the history of man, the first meeting of two principles destined to achieve so much in combination."¹

.

1. Belloc: The Battleground Syria and Palestine, p. 144
2. Bevan, Edwyn R.: The House of Seleucus, Vol. I, p. 19

The Jew and the Greek (culturally) meet in Syria, and in a very special and significant way they meet in northern Syria.

"The lands over which the house of Seleucus bore rule, the lands which it overspread with Greek speech and culture, were the lands which the faith of Christ first leavened; in its royal city the word 'Christian' was first uttered. Antioch was the cradle of the first Gentile church."¹

Egypt has plowed; Assyria, Persia, and Greece have sown; we watch now the gardener as he tends and cultivates the growing plant. The Seleucids bring Macedonian civilization to new soil and nurture it until even Hellenism itself becomes the vassal of its newer, unmanageable child, Rome.

.

1. Bevan: The House of Seleucus, Vol. I, pp. 19f

CHAPTER II

THE SELEUCID DYNASTY

FROM ITS FOUNDING TO THE COMING OF ROME

(312-64 B. C.)

CHAPTER II

THE SELEUCID DYNASTY FROM ITS FOUNDING TO THE COMING OF ROME (312-64 B. C.)

1. Alexander's Death and Heirs

a. The Second Phase of Hellenic History

A study of the Seleucid dynasty is in reality a study of the second phase of Hellenic history. In this chapter we shall attempt to estimate the contribution of the Seleucids, which, in a word, was the preservation of the achievement of the Greeks in bringing their civilization to the East and in particular to Syria. Bevan makes this concise statement on this point: "The Greeks brought freedom and civilization into union."¹

It was in the Greek city-state that Hellenism, as its culture may best be referred to, was developed. By building cities of this same type and character, the Seleucids preserved at once the Grecian forms and ideal, an ideal which embodied the principles of democracy or freedom. Typical and representative was the city of Antioch, which became the capital city of Syria, the

.

1. Bevan: The House of Seleucus, Vol. I, p. 3

greatest deposit of westernism in an Eastern land. It was a center of Hellenic civilization which fitted it to be the receptor of the Gospel as it was relayed from Jerusalem and Judaism to Antioch and Hellenism. In Antioch the Jew and Greek met on common ground. Here in a liberal atmosphere a homogenous culture was ready, when the fullness of time came, to liberate the gospel news from any fetters of provincialism. Antioch had blended Jew and Gentile, and the brotherhood anticipated the Christian message, whose basic promise of racial equality was the same as that for which they mutually strove. Jew and Greek had much to offer to each other. One worshipped God, the other Reason. When the two became complements rather than antagonists—and Christianity welded the two forever—these wedded forces proved rich in results for the whole world.

b. Consequences of Alexander's Death

At the death of Alexander (B.C. 323) the fate of all history teetered crazily in the balances of doubt and conjecture. The man who had won a world had been plucked from the scene of his conquest, and no heir but the Macedonian army was left to control the disposition of the vast empire. The great generals of the king now became aspirants to the title. To rule the army was to rule the world. The prize was great and discord appeared immediately. Strangely enough, in the face of the sinis-

ter possibilities which lay in a conflict between claimants, the difficulty was settled without bloodshed.

The claims of Hercules, the illegitimate son of Alexander, were immediately passed over, and Philip Arabideaus, the choice of the infantry, who was at Babylon, was proclaimed king. In order to avoid a conflict with the cavalry, who were determined to await the issue of Roxane, it was decided that Phillip was to rule conjointly with Roxane's child, in the event that he was a boy. At the same time four guardians, or regents, were appointed: Antipater, Craterus, Perdikkas, and Leonnatus.

2. Seleucus Nicator

The settlement and disposition of the Empire was reached at a great assemblage which took place in Babylon in the summer of 323. At the convocation there was one who commands our special attention.

"Among the notable figures of the great assemblage in Babylon that summer of 323, ... (was) ... a robust young officer of good Macedonian birth, of about an age with the dead King, who had come to win honour under Alexander, as his father Antiochus before him had won honour under Philip. This young man's name was Seleucus. He had accompanied the King at his first setting out into Asia in 334. In the Indian campaign of 326 he had been advanced to a high command. ... He was commander of the Royal Hypaspistai, and attached to the King's staff. At the crossing of the Hydaspes one boat carried Alexander, Ptolemy, Perdikkas, Lysimachus and Seleucus—a suggestive moment, if the later history of these five men is considered—and in the battle

with the Paurava king, which followed, Seleucus fought at the head of his command."¹

Seleucus, according to Bevan (who quotes Malalas), was a native of Pella. Born between 358 and 354, he died in 281 B.C.² That he was a general in high command and enjoyed Alexander's favor is shown by the fact that he was close at hand when the Conqueror died, for only his closest companions were suffered to come near the royal pavilion.³ The great marriage festival in Susa (324), where he was given the daughter of Spitamenes, Apama, who was the friend of Alexander's chief queen Roxane, and daughter of Oxyartes, confederate of Spitamenes, also testifies to the popularity of the young general.⁴ Apama became the mother of Seleucus' successor, and it is significant that in this marriage Macedonia and Iran joined, as later in the city of Antioch West and East were likewise wedded.

Seleucus was a man of mixed passion. To obtain his ends, if necessary, he stopped at no treachery. On the other hand his kindness to his enemy Demetrius, who had fallen into his hands, shows a more tender strain in his nature. A brave man, he had won distinction in the Indian campaign of 326, and his later career as retainer

.

1. Bevan: The House of Seleucus, Vol. I, pp. 30f
2. Ibid., Appendix A
3. Plutarch's Lives, p. 377
4. Cf. Bevan: op. cit., p. 31

of Alexander's Eastern empire showed him to be a man of highest qualification. a founder of cities, he displayed a love of beauty and culture which typified the more enlightened Greek. We know but little about his characteristics save what may be inferred from his activities and achievements. Though we lack the details of his personality, we are yet aware of his quick strategy on the battlefield, and his military acumen is undisputed. Seven years after the death of Alexander he is a "landless fugitive"; yet at his death he had become the greatest of those kings "who inherited the Empire of Alexander, the most kingly in his designs, the ruler of more land than any save Alexander himself."¹

a. The War of the Regents

We have seen how the question of a successor to Alexander was settled. The murder of Meleagor by Perdicas left the latter, through his bold strategy, in a position to wrest command of the army from his colleagues. Perdicas represented the central authority; the offspring of Alexander were in his keeping. But his superior position was not long suffered; he soon found that the other Macedonian chiefs would not obey his orders. "The centrifugal force was greater than the centripetal; and the disintegration of the Empire was not to be

.

1. Xenophon: Anabasis, vii.22,5 (Bevan, tr.)

avoided."¹ In 321 B.C. the antagonism broke out in open war. Seleucus was among those who were ready to wrest control from Perdikkas. By some scholars it is claimed that Seleucus had a hand in the murder of the great Regent,² but if so it was only as a military antagonist and aid of Ptolemy. With Perdikkas out of the way, the regency fell to Pithon and Arrhidaeus. These men acted, however, only until Antipater, "the great representative of the old days of Philip, would put everything right."³

The accession of Antipater to the regency brought another resettlement of the Empire which had been united under the control of Perdikkas. At this second partition, at Triparadisus (321), Seleucus was made governor of the Babylonian satrapy. In the gardens of Nebuchadnezzar a Greek walked again.

b. Seleucus in Babylonia

Seleucus began his conquest of the East, but opposition appeared in the person of Antigonus, satrap of Phrygia, who aspired to the title of Alexander. In 316 he had made himself master of all the eastern provinces and had forced Seleucus to flee for his life to Egypt.

.

1. Cf. Rawlinson: A Manual of Ancient History, p. 240
2. See Bevan, Edwyn Robert: "Seleucid Dynasty," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 14th ed., Vol. XX
3. Bevan: The House of Seleucus, Vol. I, p. 36

A landless exile, Seleucus now encouraged Ptolemy to attack Antigonus, and for a period of three years (315-312) a series of battles was fought. Most important to us is the fact that Seleucus regained Babylonia and secured the allegiance of the eastern provinces again. This return to Babylon in 312 B.C. was afterwards officially regarded as the birthday of the Seleucid Empire.

Seleucus acted quickly. He proceeded to wrest control of the neighboring provinces of Persis, Susiana, and Media from the nominees of Antigonus. Demetrius, the son of Antigonus, endeavored to trap Seleucus in Babylon (311), but failed because of brilliant strategy on the part of Seleucus, who merely evacuated his citadel leaving Demetrius to pillage a depopulated city. This incursion accomplished nothing, for Demetrius was obliged to evacuate the territory immediately after occupying it, retreating to the west to meet Antigonus.¹ He had not succeeded in his effort to check the progress of Seleucus. During nine years Seleucus (311-302) brought under his authority the whole eastern part of Alexander's Empire as far as the Jaxartes and Indus. In 305, after the extinction of the royal line of Macedonia, Seleucus, like other Macedonian chiefs, assumed the name of King.²

.

1. Bevan: The House of Seleucus, Vol. I, p. 56
1. Bevan: "Seleucid Dynasty," Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. XX.

In the summer of 302, Seleucus was making his way from the Panjab, marching ever westward over the immense distances which separate India from the Mediterranean lands. In the spring of B.C. 301 he advanced again along the central highway of Asia Minor.¹ Here Antigonus failed to prevent his junction with Lysimachus, and, at Ipsus, he had to meet the united armies of these two kings. Antigonus was slain; his son, Demetrius, escaped and took refuge in Greece. "The victorious kings proceeded to cut up the Empire of Antigonus like a great carcase, taking slices for themselves and adding its provinces to those they already ruled."²

The years subsequent to the battle of Ipsus were no doubt fruitful in the internal development of Syria. Seleucus now established himself in Antioch, the new city he had built on the Orontes (300 B.C.) to replace Antigonina.³ By shifting his capital from Babylonia to Syria, from the Tigris to the Orontes, he sought to strengthen himself against his rivals, Lysimachus and Ptolemy. Perhaps this move was unwise from the standpoint of the later welfare of the Empire, for with the capital so far west he had loosened his grasp upon the more eastern provinces, which were the least Hellenized

.

1. Bevan: The House of Seleucus, Vol. I, p. 59
2. Ibid., p. 61, quoting Plutarch, Dem. 30
3. Ibid., p. 63

and the most apt to revolt.¹

We who perceive the hand of God in history can see that for a much greater reason this removal of the capital of the Seleucidae to Antioch, which meant the centralization of Greek culture in Syria, was of particular moment to the later history of the world.

From Antioch Seleucus surveyed both East and West. A great Empire was now his. About 293 B.C. he installed his son Antiochus as viceroy and prince in Babylon. Demetrius fell in 285, and with the aid of Ptolemy Ceraunus he removed his last rival, Lysimachus, who was defeated and killed at Cor-upedion in Lydia (281).²

"The whole realm of Alexander from Greece to Central Asia and India was fallen to Seleucus, with the one exception of Egypt, and the claimant to the Egyptian throne by natural right was the pensioner of his bounty."³

Seleucus Nicator now turned his eyes to the land of his forebears. In 281 he crossed the Hellespont. His ambitions to seize the land of his birth, however, were frustrated by the treacherous Ptolemy who came from behind to murder him as he prepared to attack Lysimachia.⁴

.

1. Rawlinson: op. cit., p. 248

2. Bevan: "Seleucid Dynasty," Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. XX

3. Bevan: "The House of Seleucus, Vol. I, p. 72

4. Rawlinson: op. cit., p. 250

c. The Situation at the Death of Seleucus Nicator

Over twenty years (323-301) had passed since Alexander had died. It had been a period of war, and the cost in lives and in the dissipation of treasure was immense. Syria, along with Greece, Cyprus, and Asia Minor, suffered especially from this long devastation wrought by those who sought to be conquerors of the world after the manner of Alexander. Continued preparation for warfare left little time for internal improvement or for organization of the several territories.

"The Seleucidae, or dynasty of Seleucus, established themselves in Syria; the Ptolemies or Lagidae, descendants of Ptolemy Lagus, ruled Egypt; while Macedonia, of which Greece was still a dependency, became, after much strife and bloodshed, the kingdom of the Antigonidae, or descendants of Antigonus the One-eyed. ... These powers are commonly called 'Hellenistic,' a term which is applied also to the whole period between Alexander's death and the conquest of the East by Rome."¹

d. The Accomplishments of Seleucus Nicator

As soon as their leader had died, each of the Alexandrian generals had aspirations to political supremacy and world dominance.

"Still, the evils of protracted warfare had been, out of Greece at any rate, partly counterbalanced, ... by the foundation of large and magnificent cities, intended partly as indications of wealth and greatness of their founders, partly as memorials to hand down their names to after ages ..."²

.

1. Cf. Rostovtzeff: A History of the Ancient World, Vol. I, pp. 355f
2. Rawlinson: op. cit., p. 246

Knowledge progressed rapidly, for now the science and thought of the East were revealed to the intelligent Greeks, who set themselves eagerly to cull what good they might from this new and vast culture which hitherto had been unknown. Greek life, with its great love of the good, the noble, and the beautiful, had taken root in western Asia.

W. W. Tarn evaluates the contribution of Seleucus by saying:

"Seleucus and his dynasty ... aimed at Hellenising Asia. ... the Graeco-Macedonian ... was to be the dominant race, and their empire was to rest on a vast network of cities and settlements more or less Greek. ... The vastness of the work that the Seleucids did ... is one of most amazing things in history; and a complete list of their cities and settlements would fill pages."¹

Perhaps it is a bit of exaggeration to say that a complete list of the cities established by the Seleucids would fill pages, but nevertheless their penchant for building great cities was remarkable. For this contribution alone if for no other the house of Seleucus is to be remembered. Especially important—as we have already noted—was their happy choice of a site for the capital of their Empire, Antioch on the Orontes.

Their cities were given a measure of self-government and were in general plan typical of the Greek city-state. "Each city formed a little republic, with

.

1. Tarn, W. W.: Hellenistic Civilisation, p. 131

its local affairs controlled by its own citizens."¹

Belloc adds:

"The Seleucid dynasty took Greece into Syria more thoroughly than did the Ptolemaic dynasty take Greece into Egypt. ... in Syria city after city, groves and gardens, palaces and grottos, got Greece into their very soul. Such was the work of that Seleucid dynasty which has borne so much contempt through its later decay."²

Such was the work, to be sure, to which Seleucus had given himself. But many forces, within and without the Empire, contended with the Seleucidae, gradually weakening the house which, with but a few outstanding exceptions, was represented by insipid weaklings unable to cope with these destructive forces.

The Seleucids found themselves in collision first of all with the Ptolemies whose chief desire was to assure Egyptian trade a free and open market. Both these powers saw the necessity of controlling, and were continually at war to gain and keep such control, of Palestine, Phoenicia, and south Syria; and the Anatolian coast was constantly passing from one rival to the other.

Another source of constant trouble to the Grecian kings was the provincial nobility, who though placated by bribery intermittently confounded the government by fostering intrigue within, and instigating re-

.

1. Breasted: Ancient Times, p. 36

2. Cf. Belloc: The Battleground Syria and Palestine, p. 149

bellion without. Under them the native races which they ruled were kept in a perpetual ferment, and though it was often attempted these natives were never wholly subjugated by the Greeks. On this point Bevan concludes:

"The result, then, of fifty years of Macedonian rule in Asia Minor had not been, as one might have expected, to bring it all under a single strong and systematic government ... when at last the Empire seemed to have become a unity again under Seleucus, once more the fabric had collapsed, and the problem of the barbarian peoples of Asia Minor confronted in its old shape anyone who now aspired to take up the burden of Empire."¹

To the great Seleucus only seven months were allowed, from the Battle of Corupedion to his death, in which to deal with the involved and difficult problems which faced the Empire. When Antiochus came to take his inheritance there were two serious problems which claimed his immediate attention. These were his attitude toward the native kings of Bithynia, Zipoetes and Nicodemus; and to the Gauls who swarmed about the northern borders of his Empire, anxious for invasion and blood.

3. The Period of the Early Kings (281-187 B.C.)

The Syrian Empire never again attained the greatness and splendour it had reached under Nicator its founder. Antiochus I, Antiochus III, and Antiochus Epiphanes later stayed for a time the process of disintegra-

.

1. Bevan: The House of Seleucus, Vol. I, p. 100

tion, but in general it may be said that with the death of Seleucus Nicator the slow decline began.

a. Antiochus I (281-261 B.C.)

No sooner had Antiochus I come to the throne when a revolt broke out, and to strengthen his position he was forced to make peace with his father's murderer, Ptolemy, apparently abandoning Macedonia and Thrace to gain the Egyptian's support. He was unable to reduce the Bithynians or the Cappadocians. In 278 the Gauls broke into Asia Minor and here Antiochus was successful in defeating his adversary. It is probable that his cognomen "Soter" (Savior) originated as a result of this victory. Except for this sole triumph his expeditions were unfortunate; and the Syrian Empire at his death had declined considerably below the point of greatness it had reached under his father.¹

b. Antiochus II (261-246 B.C.)

It was Antiochus II, a young man of about twenty-four, who now came to the throne. Bevan characterizes him as a hopeless drunkard;

"he slept off his morning bouts, only to begin again in the evening. ... Vile creatures ruled him by the most discreditable sort of influence, such as the Cypriot Aristus and his brother Themison."²

.

1. Cf. Rawlinson: op. cit., p. 251
2. Bevan: The House of Seleucus, Vol. I, p. 171 quoting Phylarch, ap. Athen. x. 438c; Aelian Var. Hist. ii. 41

The weakness of his government tempted the provinces to rebel; and the Parthian and Bactrian kingdoms date from his reign. The only success which attended his rule was his recovery from Egypt, after a desultory period of war, of the territory he had previously lost to Philadelphus in Asia Minor. In 246 B.C. Laodice his first wife, doubtful of his constancy, poisoned him and proclaimed her son Seleucus II king.

c. Seleucus II (246-226 B.C.)

The twenty-year reign of Seleucus II was most unfortunate. It was marked by wars with Ptolemy Euergetes, with Antiochus Hierax, his own brother, and with the Parthian king, Arsaces II, in all of which Seleucus met with disaster. His name "Callinicus" is perhaps justified by his unusual ability to resuscitate himself when his fortunes were at the lowest ebb, and though portions of Asia Minor were yielded to Ptolemy and to the Parthians he recovered his losses and left the Empire much as it was at his accession.¹ W. W. Tarn notes that Seleucus II built a third part to the city of Antioch,² to which Bouchier adds the following facts:

"... Callinicus added a third quarter to the future tetrapolis, by building over the island in the Oron-

.

1. Cf. Rawlinson, p. 252
2. Tarn: op. cit., p. 130

tes, to the north of the old town, a quarter apparently completed by his son Antiochus the Great."¹

Seleucus II perished by a fall from his horse (227/226).² His elder son, Seleucus III (226-224) took up the task of reconquering Asia Minor from Attalus, "but fell by a conspiracy in his own camp."³

d. Antiochus III (224-187 B.C.)

On the death of Seleucus III, Antiochus ascended the throne. His long reign, exceeding thirty-six years, constitutes the most eventful period of Syrian history. Antiochus did much to recover, consolidate, and in some quarters even to extend his Empire.⁴

Under the influence of the bad minister Hermias he was forced prematurely to make an attack on Palestine. He proceeded south to meet the Egyptians, but long preparation had made Ptolemy himself ready and Antiochus was defeated—his whole enterprise a fiasco.

Only in Asia Minor, where the Seleucids were represented by the king's cousin Achaeus, was its prestige regained and the Pergamene power driven back to its earlier limits. Antiochus again set out toward Egypt

.

1. Bouchier, E. S.: A Short History of Antioch, p. 30
His source, Strab. xvi. 2, 4
2. Cf. Bevan: The House of Seleucus, Vol. I, p. 203. His source, Eus. i. 251, 253; Just. xxvii. 3, 12
3. Cf. Bevan: "Seleucid Dynasty," Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. XX
4. Cf. Rawlinson: op. cit., p. 253

intending on the way to subjugate the Jews. At Panion, the Caesarea Philippi of the Gospels, he came into collision with Scopas and won a complete victory. Bevan here remarks:

"the battle is the landmark denoting the final and definite substitution of Seleucid for Ptolemaic rule in Palestine. ... The reign of Greek cities east of the Jordan (Batanea, Abila, Gadera) as well as Samaria and Judaea, became incorporate with the Seleucid Empire."¹

In the summer of B. C. 198, Palestine now under his rule, Antiochus retired to winter at Antioch. From 198 the Seleucid capital superseded even Alexandria as a center of Greek culture. With the successful stoppage for the time being of the influence of Egypt in southern Syria, and under the impetus of the successful Antiochus, Antioch became the greatest metropolis of the second century in the East, later surpassed in importance only by Rome itself.

In the spring of 197 Antiochus moved to secure the coast towns of Asia Minor. But this enterprise brought him into antagonism with Rome. With the fugitive Hannibal to urge him on, Antiochus made so bold as to invade Greece (192), but in 191 at Thermopylae he was routed, and was forced to retire to Asia. The Romans followed up their success by attacking Antiochus in Asia

.

1. Bevan: The House of Seleucus, Vol. II, p. 37

Minor, and the decisive victory of Scipio at Magnesia, and Sipylum (190), following on the defeat of Hannibal at sea, gave Asia Minor into their hands.¹

After the battles a peace conference was arranged at Apamea (188). The terms of the treaty forced the Seleucids to relinquish all claims to the country beyond the Taurus, and demanded the payment of a war indemnity to Rome. It was while raiding the oriental temples to collect the indemnity that the king was killed by the revolting Elymaïs in 187.

e. An Interval of Peace

"The history of the Seleucid dynasty up to the battle of Magnesia has been one of almost continuous war."² So Bevan aptly characterizes the period from 301 to 187 B.C. when Seleucus IV (Philopater) came to the throne. For approximately fourteen years after Magnesia there is a lull. The fear of Rome on the one hand, and internal exhaustion on the other hand, produced by costly wars, forced Seleucus to remain quiet. Now Asia Minor is barred to the house of the Seleucidae. In the years preceding Magnesia, Antiochus resided as much in Ephesus as in Antioch. The Empire, which had almost been the empire of Alexander, was become the kingdom of Syria.

.

1. Cf. Bevan: "Seleucid Dynasty," Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. XX
2. Bevan: The House of Seleucus, Vol. II, p. 115

With his death the disintegration of the Seleucid rule is more rapid, and it continues till Rome triumphs in 64 B.C.¹

4. From Antiochus Epiphanes to the Fall of the Dynasty (187-64 B.C.)

The Macedonian endowment towards the maintenance of Hellenic culture in the East is now almost complete. Fool, prince, warrior, statesman, Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) has been castigated or praised by his historians. Bevan refers to him as the "Bohemian," or the "enigma."² His luxurious living and extravagance ruined his empire; his religious intolerance and persecution made him an abomination to the Jews. He is undoubtedly the king characterized by Daniel as "a contemptible person," who shall "obtain the kingdom by flatteries."³ He was no doubt a man of energy and courage, but his foolhardy exploits proved a detriment rather than a benefit to his country.

His importance to us lies in the fact that he may almost be called the second founder of Antioch, to which he gave an impress that subsequent ages have not

.

1. Bevan: The House of Seleucus, Vol. II, p. 267

2. Ibid., pp. 128ff

3. Daniel 11:21. Cf. Pember, G. H.: The Great Prophecies of the Centuries concerning Israel and the Gentiles, pp. 403-413

altogether effaced. He had spent his youth as a hostage to Rome, and later had resided at Athens. It was his boast that he would make Antioch another Athens.¹

He added the last quarter to the Syrian city. He made the gardens at Daphne, Antioch's gorgeous and profane suburb, world famous. Bouchier interestingly points out that "... it is not surprizing that his surname was caricatured into Epimanes."²

His admiration for republican institutions established the city as an autonomy; his enthusiasm for Hellenic culture and art made of it a magnet which drew art treasures from other cities into its own confines. But Epiphanes has little to credit him in the eyes of history. A profligate, he dissipated his own and his people's heritage, and with his passing the decline of the Syrian state begins in earnest.

From the death of Antiochus IV (164) to the final triumph of Rome in Syria (64) there are a hundred years of intrigue, tyranny, and assassination. A period of peace under a tolerable ruler was but a preparation for new bloodshed.

.

1. Cf. Bouchier: op. cit., pp. 31f

2. Ibid., p. 33

5. The Legacy of the Seleucidae

The legacy of the Seleucidae is bequeathed, and we are now in a position to evaluate it. The dynasty is not perhaps important for any material bestowment, for they were on the whole warriors, wasters, not statesmen. Their significance comes from their position in Syria, where they were the protectors of Hellenism against an alien and barbaric people. These uncivilized peoples threatened to root up the Grecian culture which had come in the wake of Alexander. The Seleucids guarded it till Providence brought Rome to restore Antioch, the center of this culture, to its old position as capital of Grecian civilization.

Till the coming of Alexander, the East represented an unprogressive, even barbaric despotism. For a thousand years the land had been rendered impotent by the continued devastations of bloody masters who were thirsty for the spoils of war, anxious for conquest and subjugation. Greece brought freedom to a servile people. A spirit of democracy animated an atrophied civilization and it blossomed rapidly. Where Alexander went there too went the Greek idea of life; Greek institution, and Greek art and culture.

a. The Greek Language

By far the most powerful, though subtle, conqueror of the East was the language of the Greek peoples. It bridged every gap between peoples, transcended every barrier of race and of creed. It became the universal tongue, so that even in the time of the Roman Empire it, rather than Latin, was the official language, accepted as the mode of communication between nations. Thus, when the fullness of time came the Christian message had a ready instrument through which the note of salvation could be proclaimed. The truth of the Cross was not to be impeded by any hindrance, no babel of tongues confused or retarded its dissemination.

b. Greek Culture

Following close upon the heels of language comes the culture which it represents. Hellenic culture united the bonds which the language had wrought. Booth remarks with keen insight:

"More potent than Macedonian spears was the force of Attic culture. For in those centuries that followed Alexander's death, while his political kingdom vanished with his dying breath, the Greek language, Greek art, Greek customs, Greek ideas, achieved with amazing swiftness a real and enduring sovereignty over the mind and life of the whole ancient world."¹

The possession of a common culture inevitably led to the widening of men's sympathies. It dissolved,

.

1. Booth, H. K.: The Bridge between the Testaments, pp.9f

in part, at least, the the distinction between literate and illiterate; provided a wider horizon for thought, and thus stimulated an intellectual awakening in those who yearned to venture forth upon the broad sea of this new culture. Greece had removed the barriers between the East and the West, and man began to grasp a larger vision of humanity. Freed from the restraint of a stagnant civilization, the East groaned, wakened, matured, until through its religions it became master of the West who first had delivered this morbid child from the hand of tyranny.

What can be said of Hellenism can likewise be said of those who guarded and propagated the culture which the Macedonian had introduced. A culture moves but slowly to change a society. For nearly three hundred years the Seleucids jealously nurtured and encouraged their civilization lest it die in a crude and unprogressive environment.

During the period of the Seleucids Asia Minor became literate. The Greek language was the recognized lingua franca of the East. The body of ideas, philosophic and literary, was communicable only to those who mastered the language which was its idiom of expression. Three centuries was time enough for the language and culture to take firm root; time enough for the Syrian to learn it and to become familiar with it.

During this prolonged interval the new Greek philosophy enlightened and stimulated, and was itself embellished by the thought and the accumulated store of Eastern scientific knowledge. In an atmosphere of democracy, oriental habits of servility and adulation could not survive. The attire, the ideas, the modes of life; love of free-spoken independence, the gymnasium, the educational system and its pedagogical method; the patriotism and public spirit—veritably Greece had been transplanted to the Levant. The capacity of the Greek for speculative wonder found rich materials for thought in Christianity, and its constant appeal and truth was easily discernible to him.

c. As Builders of Cities

Perhaps the most important bequest of the Seleucids to posterity was the founding of numerous large and magnificent cities. This peculiar fondness the Seleucids inherited from their predecessor Alexander.

Up until the appearance of the Greek form of government only two political systems were known in the ancient world. On the one hand we find the great Asiatic tyrannies, on the other the small tribal type of the nomadic peoples. In the great Eastern empires all power and political initiative were concentrated in the leader, usually a warrior. The relationship between people and

government was that of master and slave. Bevan well says:

"There is nothing in a despotism to quicken thought, the obedience demanded is unreasoning; the principles of government are locked in the king's breast."¹

Civilization had its abode in the midst of an armed camp. A strong army was its only protection from other armies. Progress had to be sacrificed to the demands of the war god Mars, whose tax upon manpower and treasure was avid and continuous.

The Greek brought a new form of government into the old world. The city-state was a sort of little republic. Its citizens were conscious of their position as members of a free state in which they had a recognized individuality and definite responsibilities. The state claimed the individual body and soul, and won the respect of each citizen not by any resort to force but rather by implanting its ideas in his soul thus fostering a sense of honor and loyalty. Hellenism was a product of the Greek city-state. Progress and culture prospered in such an environment.

In the breast of the Seleucids there was ever the desire to Hellenize Asia completely. The Greek language, culture, race, were to be dominant; their empire was to rest upon a vast network of cities. From the city

.

1. Bevan: The House of Seleucus, Vol. I, p. 9

the new civilization would spread into the countryside which surrounded it. The city attractively located, well appointed and constructed, drew the rural population to its center, for trade, education, or pleasure. As the crowds dispersed and returned again to the hinterland they carried with them, indelibly impregnated, the characteristics of the life and ideals of urban, Greek civilization.

In the founding of Antioch, Seleucus Nicator had unwittingly made his greatest personal contribution to history. Three centuries later it had become the third largest city in the world, the center and point of exchange for the culture and commerce of the eastern and western world. Here the ship of the desert and ships of the sea met to trade cargoes, to return to the lands of the rising or of the setting sun from whence they had come.

d. Contact between Jew and Greek

A center of commerce, Antioch had attracted many Jews. Professor Carl H. Kraeling remarks: "As late as the Talmudic era it was Antioch rather than Alexandria, that represented 'the big city' to the Palestinian and the Babylonian Jew."¹

.

1. Kraeling, Carl H.: The Jewish Community at Antioch, p. 132

Dr. Kraeling comes to the conclusion that:

"With the continued growth of the city in the period of the empire to the point where its population will probably have approached 500,000, a figure approximating 65,000 of Jewish residents will need to be kept in view."¹

In Antioch the Jewish faith and Greek culture met on equal grounds; the contact was beneficial for the Jews for it gave them a broader conception of their religion and its purpose for mankind. The Seleucids welcomed the Jew, and on the whole treated them kindly.

"From the foundation of the city ... individual Jews, as ex-soldiers, could be enrolled in the citizen lists, and after the middle of the second century B.C. a special place was found for Jews as such in the constitution of the polis."²

Though in general they were not actual or potential citizens, yet they were given a tolerable measure of political and religious freedom and moved unimpeded in the liberal and advanced intellectual atmosphere of Antioch. It was perhaps to this mind, which was Judaistic permeated with Grecian philosophy, that some of the earlier Christian evangels from Jerusalem addressed themselves and found their first converts.

e. Summary

"It is not so much the character of the kings which gives the house of Seleucus its peculiar interest.

.

1. Kraeling: op. cit., p. 136
2. Ibid., p. 138

It is the circumstances in which it is placed."¹

The Seleucid kings were Greek kings. They propagated and protected their culture in the land of their adoption, Syria. Grecian culture would never have survived in the land if a strong arm had not been ready to keep out the barbaric and hostile tribes which constantly threatened to inundate and destroy the land of the Levant.

They had established numerous cities as centers of culture dotting the kingdom, and the greatest of these was Antioch. The Seleucids had chosen the site for their capital carefully. The jeweller had set his gem prudently. The House of the Seleucids vanished, but the ideas which it had inculcated remained.

When the Seleucids passed away, Rome came to carry on. Providence was now making ready to consummate its plans for Syria.

"The Macedonian's contribution to the maintenance of Greek civilization in the East was now over. Syria was reverting to native powers, when one of the most wonderful contingencies in ancient history brought forward another nation, not less warlike than the Macedonians, and hardly less susceptible to the superiority of Hellenic culture, now ready to restore Antioch to its old position as the capital of European civilization for another seven centuries, and to roll back the advancing tide of barbarism."²

.

1. Bevan: The House of Seleucus, Vol. I, p. 2
2. Bouchier: A Short History of Antioch, pp. 40f

What Bouchier refers to impersonally, as a "wonderful contingency" we shall call the hand of Almighty God, moving once more to make the world ready for the advent of His Son upon its face.

6. Rome—Its Coming and Its Contribution

The Seleucid dynasty perished, but most fortunately its cities remained. The Roman conquered, and wisely did not destroy. Artistically he added nothing; he adopted Grecian culture in its entirety.

The kingdom of the Seleucidae came to an utter end in the year 64 B.C. The mighty Pompey arrived to establish a strong government, one which could protect the centers of Hellenic culture from barbarian dominion.

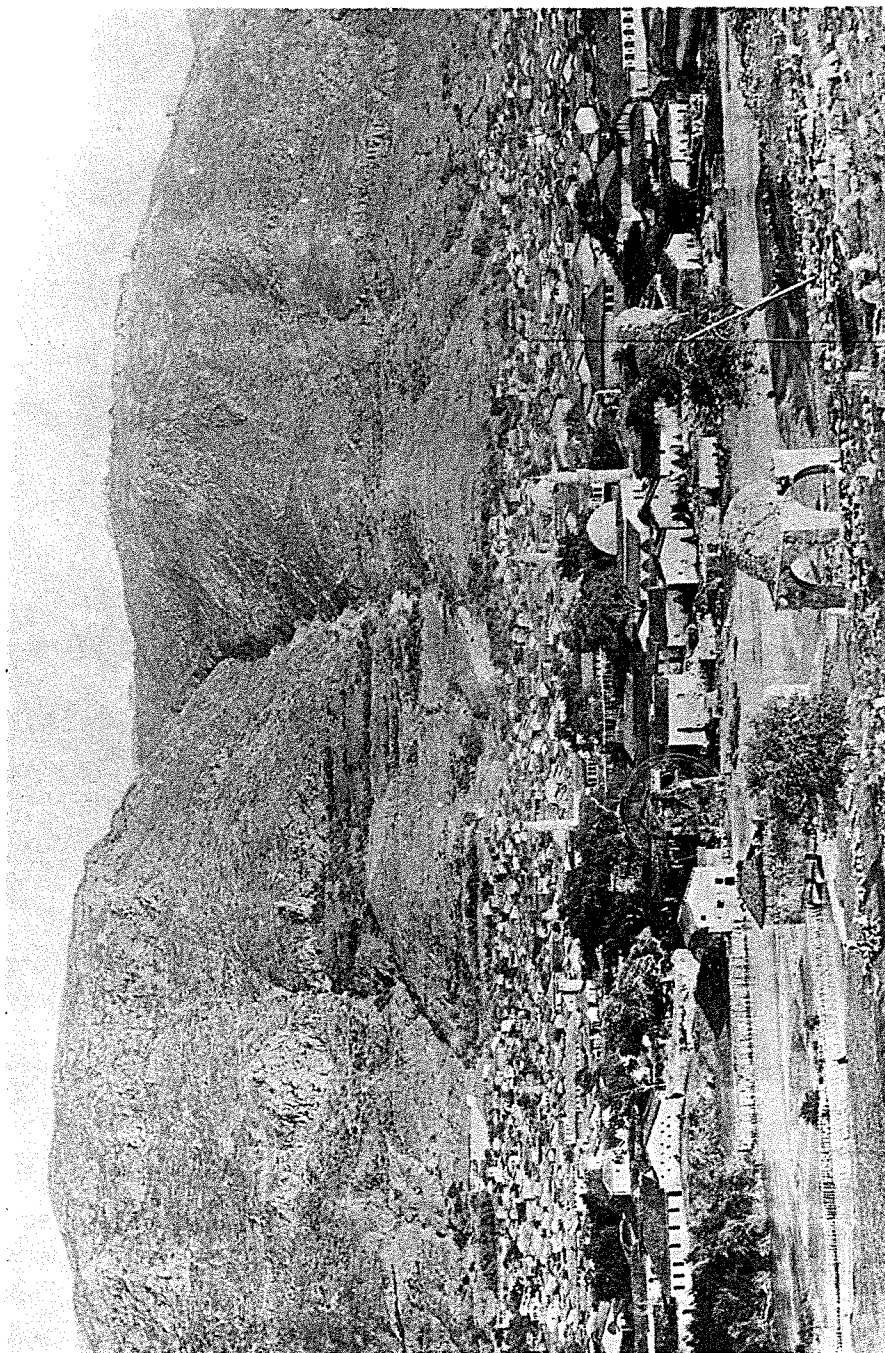
For our purposes it is not necessary to go in to the details of Rome's successful victory in Syria. When she came, she followed to a large extent the principles and forms of the kingdom which she superseded.

The world under the Romans was a united world. The Acts of the Apostles gives a very vivid picture of the freedom of travel in that day. Paul, a citizen of the Empire, could travel over excellently paved roads, or on sea lanes protected by Rome's navy. His plea of Roman citizenship saved his life when angry Jewish mobs threatened him.

Antioch fared especially well during the age of the Empire. The Roman emperors bestowed many favors upon the Queen City of the East, and under their patronage Antioch flourished commercially and artistically. We shall have occasion to speak in greater detail of the Roman additions to the city in the following chapter, to which we now turn in an endeavor to reconstruct the city as it appeared when Paul was ready to set forth on his first missionary journey (c. 45-48 A.D.).

CHAPTER III

ANTIOCH IN SYRIA,
THIRD CITY IN THE WORLD,
IN THE DAYS OF THE EARLY CHURCH



ANTIOCH—WEDGED BETWEEN THE ORONTES AND MONS SILPIUS

CHAPTER III

ANTIOCH IN SYRIA, THIRD CITY IN THE WORLD, IN THE DAYS OF THE EARLY CHURCH

The traveler who visits the sites of the great ancient metropolae, sees only their bones—a few stones, a misshapen pillar, marble chips in the dust. Writ large in these graveyards of civilization are the words of the truth that, "In vain we build our cities, if man the builder dies."¹

The glory of this world is but transient, and nowhere is this more evident than amid the fallen glory of the ghost towns of the ancient world. Ephesus, a bean field; its temple area, a frog pond; Philippi, a jackals' lair; and Antioch, glorious Antioch, a few hovels, a makeshift hotel, a few poor natives, a military outpost, her beauty now that "of sunshine lying over desolate hillsides."²

He who seeks to tell the story of the city of Antioch finds that for the most part he must grope feebly in the dark, or at best can only see dimly as in a fog of

.

1. Edward Markham (From one of his poems)
2. Morton, H. V.: In the Steps of St. Paul, p. 93

uncertainty. The picture drawn is thus a distorted one, for we have but little knowledge of the city's antiquity.

Antioch was the vortex into which were drawn many conflicting civilizations, cultures, languages, and peoples. The Greek, like some subtle weaver who with great craftiness intertwines the warp and woof into cloth of good and homogenous pattern, had brought an ordered society from this disorder. Here Jew consorted with Greek to mutual advantage. The provincial, conservative Hebrew imparted stability to the cosmopolitan, liberal Gentile. The Gentile liberated the Jew intellectually from the stagnation of his self-centered isolation, and from the bondage of a stifling, static legalism.

A religious spirit and an expanding culture produced a new and broader type of man; to this freedman the Christian message had immediate appeal. Antioch became the cradle of the first liberal church because it was first the cradle of a liberal culture.¹

1. The Location of Antioch

For over three hundred years Antioch had been in preparation for its mission. It was now ready to receive the apostle Paul, to accept, support, and send him

.

1. Liberal in the sense that the Christian Church here was freed from the bondage of Jewish legalism.

forth on the first Christian missionary journey. Thus it may justly be called a keystone city, the head of the corner, of the Gentile church.

In this chapter we shall show how Antioch was strategically located to render it important as a center in which and from which proceeded the first Christian missionary enterprise.

It must be borne in mind as we proceed that the peculiar location of the city of Antioch makes any treatment of its history difficult. Repeated and violent earthquakes, coupled with landslides from the hills which surround the spot, have all but obliterated the ancient metropolis. What little remained in the way of monumental evidence has been ravaged by barbaric tribes whose depredations destroyed all but the scantiest artifacts.

a. Topography

A glance at the map of Syria will disclose, north from Damascus, in a horizontal line east from the island of Cyprus, the site of the city of Antioch. It was situated on the River Orontes, about eighteen miles from the Mediterranean Sea and three hundred miles north of Jerusalem.¹

.

1. From G. Granville Downey, Archeologist, Princeton University. Various writers have stated the distance from Seleucia to Antioch as 15, 20, 25, or 30 miles. Such inaccuracies continually evince how superficial the work in this field has been.

At the point where the river bends to run toward the west to flow past the base of Mount Silpius (or Silvius), Seleucus Nicator founded the city on the left bank of the river. To the south towers Mount Casius which faces Mount Amnus on the north, and between the two lies the fertile plain of Antioch.

"It stood almost in the angle which the coast of Syria running northward makes with that of Asia Minor running eastward, having behind it the valley between the ranges of Taurus and Lebanon, through which alone, for many leagues, the trade of the interior could find its way to the coast."¹

Commerce approached from the east over the trunk highways which traversed the plains to the city. Ingress from the west was by boat and road from Seleucia, the port city of ancient Antioch. Built on top of a rocky mountain, Seleucia was an impregnable fortress, the guardian of the mouth of the Orontes. Roman emperors spent vast sums to enlarge this port, which at the time of Antioch's prosperity proved inadequate to handle the enormous commercial traffic which sought entrance.

The mountains in this part of Syria are bleak and bare, but the valleys and the plain of Antioch have even from earliest times been lauded for their fertility. Libanius in his classic oration waxes eloquent on the amiable surroundings of the city: "For our advantage all things vie with each other ... earth, streams, the mild-

.

1. Taylor, W. M.: Paul the Missionary, p. 71

ness of the seasons ..."¹

Seven hundred years later an Arab traveler, Ibn Butlān, adds his plaudits:

"The villages ran continuous, their gardens full of flowers, and the water flowing on every hand, so that the traveler makes his journey here in contentment of mind, and peace and quietness."²

A modern visitor still remarks upon the productivity of the Antiochian valleys:

"The valleys are full of apricot trees, mulberries and vines. Asphodels grow in pale beauty on the hills, bright oleanders on the marshy places ..."³

The banks of the river from Seleucia eastward were lined with beautiful orchards of Syrian fruits and vines, and famous throughout the world was the verdant grove of Daphne located five miles southwest from Antioch.⁴ Milton praises this suburb in classic verse:

"that sweet grove of Daphne by Orontes."⁵

b. Site

Bevan marks the excellence of the site of the new Seleucid city:

"The beauty for which Antioch was notable was derived in part from its setting, the near background of wild mountain contrasting delightfully with the

.

1. Antiochus of Libanius (360 A.D.), Sec. 19
2. Stinespring, William F.: The Description of Antioch in Codex Vaticanus Arabicus 286, p. 2c
3. Morton: In the Steps of St. Paul, p. 115
4. G. Granville Downey. Cf. supra, p. 59, note
5. Milton, John: "Paradise Lost," Book IV, 1-272

rich culture of its well-watered plain. Its position was favourable to growth in greatness and riches. The climate, except in the matter of malignant winds from the north, was excellent; the soil was fertile; and in addition to these advantages, it was admirably placed with regard to the commerce of the world."¹

The town itself was located at a sharp bend in the river and nestled at the feet of the twin crests of Silpius. The rising hills were terraced and great villas punctuated them as they ascended to the Roman citadel on their crests.

Often during the rains, swollen mountain streams caused great havoc as they rumbled down the slopes of Silpius to inundate the city. Earthquakes took their constant toll and the citizens lived in constant and abject fear of them. Mueller says there were at least ten violent quakes between 300 B.C. and 300 A.D. One was so serious that the entire city was destroyed.²

Protected as it was on one side by the river and on the other by the mountain, with a fertile plain reaching out from the mountain's base, Antioch grew to be a great center not only of political life but also of industry and commerce. It became the great mart of luxury, and because of its location commanded the whole trade of the Mediterranean.³ Certainly this terminus of East and West afforded a splendid locale for the first missionary

.

1. Bevan: The House of Seleucus, Vol. I, p. 211
2. Cf. Mueller, Karl O.: *Antiquitates Antiochenae*, p. 218
3. Macduff, J. R. : *Footsteps of St. Paul*, p. 95

outpost of the Christian church!

c. Origin

We can be approximately correct on the date of the foundation of the city. Dr. Downey, after careful consideration, comes to the following conclusion:

"I should myself employ as a date the spring of 300 B.C., characterizing it as 'probable.' There is a difficulty about the month and day; Malalas may not be right, owing to the variation of calendars in antiquity ... Scholars have, I think, been mistaken in accepting the date given in the chronicle of Eusebius as beyond question: this chronicle is often a year or two out, ... the ancient calendars varied, but it is probably, as I say, approximately correct."¹

Dr. Downey marshals the following citations to support his contention:

"In the chronicle of Eusebius the foundation of the city is placed in the twelfth year of Seleucus, 301/0 B.C. (II, pp. 116 f. ed. Schoene); Malalas gives no indication of the year, dating the event only "on the 22nd of Artemisius or May, at the first hour of the day, as the sun was rising" (200.17-18). The foundation is accordingly dated in the spring of 300 by C. O. Müller, Antiquitates Antiochenae (Göttingen, 1839), pp. 24-27; C. F. Clinton, Fasti Hellenici, III² (Oxford, 1851), p. 352, note 1; and M. Erdmann, Zur Kunde der hellenistischen Städtegründungen (Progr., Strassburg, 1883) pp. 27-30. These scholars, who discuss the chronology in detail, are followed by K. J. Beloch, Griechische Geschichte, IV, 1² (Berlin-Leipzig, 1925), p. 255; Benzinger, "Antiocheia," no. 1, R.E. I, 2443; A. Bouche-Leclercq, Histoire des Seleucides (Paris, 1913 1914), p. 33; and V. Schultze, Antiocheia ("Altchristliche Städte und Landschaften," III (Gütersloh, 1930)), p. 25. B. Niese, Geschichte der griechischen und makedonischen Staaten, I (Gotha, 1893), pp. 355, n. 2., and 394, gives the date as 301/0, and E. S. Bouchier, A Short History of Antioch,

.

1. From correspondence, February 1937

(Oxford, 1931), p. 19, gives only 300. The event is placed "immediately after the battle at Ipsus" by V. Tscherikower, "Die hellenistischen Städtegründungen," *Philologus*, Suppl. XIX, 1 (1927), p. 61; he refers only to the passage in Eusebius. Cf. also E. Honigmann, "Seleukeia (Pieria)," *R.E.* II A, 1186 (1921)."¹

Bevan points out that in the spring of 301 Seleucus was advancing again along the central highway of Asia Minor just prior to the battle of Ipsus.² At Ipsus he met Antigonus and Lysimachus and, though we can not be certain, we may yet believe it unlikely that Seleucus returned immediately to found the city of Antioch, especially since we can be sure that the site was only decided upon after a period of exploration and even extended divination. Mueller notes the ancient belief that a witch's oracle indicated the exact site for the foundation. "Omnibus et auguriis."²

(1) Probable Reasons for Choice

There were many reasons which prompted the selection of this site. It was protected, as we have mentioned, by river and mountain. The fertile bisecting plain insured crop and pasture and also provided a ready entrance and exit in and out of the city. Building stone was available both from nearby quarries and from neighboring Antigonía, the city which Seleucus razed to insure the primacy of his new creation.³

.

1. G. Granville Downey (from unpublished article)
2. Mueller: *op. cit.*, p. 228
3. *Ibid.*

Stinespring also succeeds in discovering good reasons for the choice. He points out that at the time of the founding there were at least seven little villages in the vicinity from which a population might be gathered. It was a common practice of the Greeks to populate their cities by destroying the surrounding towns and forcing the vacated peoples to take refuge in the new city.¹

"Codex Vaticanus Arabicus 286" provides us with additional information:

"When Seleucus Nicator founded it (the city) in 301 B.C.,² two small Greek settlements already existed on the slopes above the site. Moreover Antigonía, a town a few miles up the river which had been founded a few years before by Seleucus' rival, Antigonos, was dismantled, its stones sent down the river in boats to be used in building the new city, and its inhabitants transported thither also."³

Though the Arab author of Codex Vaticanus Arabicus 286 is prone to some inaccuracy, it may be that the tradition he gives is correct. It seems altogether likely that such a verdant district should have been well settled.

(2) Seleucus Nicator the Founder

There is no doubt that the aide-de-camp of Alexander, Seleucus I, was the founder of the city. The tradition that an Antiochus, perhaps Epiphanes, built it is not to be credited. The tradition

.

1. Stinespring: op. cit., p. 10
2. A false date; vide supra p. 63
3. Stinespring: op. cit., p. 24

"is a clear example of the Semitic (and especially Arabic) fondness for aetiological explanations of place names. On the other hand every Greek writer who goes into this matter seems to know that Seleucus Nicator founded Antioch."¹

Cardinal Rampolla writes, giving credence to Pausanias the historian:

"Il n'est pas improbable que plusieurs indications, qu'il donne proviennent de l'ouvrage, aujourd'hui perdu, de l'historien cappadocien Pausanias, le quel avait pour titre, 'de la fondation d'Antioche'."²

It is unfortunate that the work of Pausanias has been lost, for it is no doubt the earliest and most accurate source book on this question. Joannes Tzetzes has preserved the reference, however, for us:

"As Pausanias wrote in the Founding of Antioch, Antioch was founded by Seleucus Nicator, according to some in the name of his father Antiochus, but according to Lucianus in the name of his son Antiochus."³

It is true that from the military and administrative standpoint the city was too far west and south to make for centralized control of the great Empire which Seleucus I had won for himself. The history of the Seleucid Kingdom showed this to be true, and before long the eastern provinces, especially Babylonia, the territories in the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates, and the provinces north of the Taurus mountains, revolted and were lost to the Seleucids who had now established

.

1. Stinespring: op. cit., p. 19
2. Ibid., p. 13
3. Tzetzes, Joannes: Chiliades, vii.168-170 (tr. Stinespring)

themselves in their new capital.

d. Summary

It may well be said that Seleucid Syria at the coming of Rome was comprised of Antioch and its environs, for only the beautiful capital remained as a tribute to Seleucus I who unwittingly had provided a stepping-stone from Jerusalem to the world for the evangelists of the Savior. Certainly Libanius does not exaggerate when he says, "... earth, streams, the mildness of the seasons ..." all vied to provide a beautiful geographic setting for the city.

2. Its Architecture and Plan

A mighty and beautiful city indeed must this Queen of the East have been. Lack of information, however, enables us to present at best a totally inadequate and unflattering picture of the Golden Seleucid city.

Like so many other ancient cities, it is but a ghost of the past whose skeleton alone remains to mark its site. In its glory it "yielded with reluctance to the majesty of Rome itself."¹

tr. a. Its ~~Sup~~surpassing Architectural Beauty

At the point where the Orontes breaks through

.

1. Gibbon, Edward: The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Vol. I, p. 187

the mountains, at the stricture formed by the valley between the Taurus and the Lebanons, on the high road to Mesopotamia and Arabia from the sea, the city was founded. It was built on the south bank of the river, but soon encroached upon the opposite bank, and even the small island which lay in the middle of the river. In its greatest prosperity the city slowly pushed its way up the steep and craggy ascent of Mt. Silpius which arose abruptly to the south.

The city, under Antiochus Epiphanes, its most profligate yet artistic king, was a tetrapolis. The first two quarters had been built and peopled by Seleucus Nicator, the founder.¹ Seleucus II (Callinicus) added a third quarter,²

"... by building over the island in the Orontes to the north of the old town, a quarter apparently completed by his son Antiochus the Great."³

Bouchier's conjecture that Antiochus the Great completed the last quarter of the city is open to some question. W. W. Tarn attributes the completion to Antiochus Epiphanes.⁴

Both kings spent vast sums in the adornment of the city, and as the question seems to have little hope for a definite solution we shall dismiss it and concur

.

1. Bouchier: A Short History of Antioch, p. 20
2. Tarn: Hellenistic Civilisation, p. 130
3. Bouchier: op. cit., p. 30
4. Tarn: op. cit., p. 131

with Tarn in his opinion that Epiphanes was most likely the king who ordered and supervised the construction.

The peculiarity of the site, with river, island, and mountain to give incentive to architectural ingenuity, produced astonishing effects. The visitor still sees the outline of gigantic rock carvings on the face of the mountain. A colossal head of Charon, the ferryman of the River of Death, crowned one of the loftiest crags of Silpius and frowned upon the city. It was ordered sculptured by Antiochus Epiphanes during a great plague.¹ This king had a grim sense of humor. The head is now gone, probably having been dislodged by an earthquake. Morton describes certain gigantic rock carvings which still exist, and in his volume provides us with an excellent picture of them. The general outlines of the carving suggest that it is a female head and thus not Charon.²

Perhaps it is a replica of the marble statuette of the Tyche of Antioch. Of this goddess, or genius, Rostovtzeff says in his classification of Hellenistic sculpture:

"Tyche: Marble Statuette of the Tyche (Fortune) of Antioch, the capital of the Seleucids. The original, ... was created in bronze by one of the pupils of Lysippus, Eutychides. It represented the 'Genius' (according to the Romans) or the Tyche, the personification of the city of Antioch. The beautiful majestic woman is seated on a rock, under her feet the

.

1. Macay, H. F. B.: The Adventures of Paul of Tarsus, p. 66
2. Morton: In the Steps of St. Paul, p. 112

river Orontes, on her head a mural crown, in her right hand a bunch of corn ears."¹

The city itself was ornately built and decorated. It reflected the temper of its peoples, who worshipped wealth, material achievement, scientific conquest, and were lavish and sensuous in their taste and display. It was an Oriental-Greek city in an exaggerated way, advanced to splendor by the Seleucidae. Temples, aqueducts, baths, basilicas, the circus—all were found here.

It was a city of aristocrats and nouveaux riches, and of wealthy, retired people who sought here one of the finest climates in the world.² Up-to-date, elegant, and fastidious, the love of the grandiose was commonly expressed in architectural audacity. The main street or Corso of the city was four and a half miles long, and it had a central passage for wheeled traffic and two covered colonnades for pedestrians.

"The covered streets of Antioch had been famous ever since the time of Herod the Great, who had paved a street in Antioch and then built covered colonnades alongside of it ..."³

The city was laid out on the Hippodamian plan, with straight streets intersecting at right angles, those running east and west being roughly parallel to the river. The numerous columns and often the many fountains were

.

1. Rostovtzeff: A History of the Ancient World, Vol. I, Plate LXXXIII, p. 354

2. Morton: op. cit., p. 98

3. Josephus: Wars of Jews, III, 3. 1

gilded or covered with gold leaf.¹ When the sun shone on colored fountains and gilded statuary, on marble colonnades and prancing quadriga, and on the uplifted gold trumpets of victories, the appearance of Antioch must indeed have been superb. When night fell, the enormous city was illuminated with thousands of lights so that business and enjoyment might continue as by day.²

The hippodrome or circus provided one of the chief interests for the pleasure-loving populace. Its exact location can only be surmised, though we know that it was close to the river near the northeast end of the city. The outlines of Diocletian's thermae and the theatre, a three-story affair, can still be traced. Other important buildings were the Nymphaeum; the temples of Zeus Olympus, Hermes, Ares, and Athena. The style of architecture was constantly changing as taste and the desire for more ostentation manifested itself. "... buildings were perpetually being renewed ... to repair the damage caused by earthquakes and landslides."³

The Caesars contributed vast sums to adorn the city to placate the fickle people. Julius Caesar ordered a basilica built as a gift to the Antiochians who had so graciously proclaimed him Dictator.⁴ He also commanded

.

1. Bouchier: op. cit., p. 6, quoting Dion. Chrys. Or. 47
2. Cf. Morton: op. cit., p. 97; Bouchier: op. cit., p. 15
3. Bouchier: op. cit., p. 7
4. Mueller: *Antiquitates Antiochenae*, p. 280

that an aqueduct be raised, carrying water from wells situated along the road to Laodicea.¹

Tiberius Caesar was a patron of the city. Malalas says that Tiberius came to Antioch after his war with the Parthians, but Mueller proves by a study of Roman chronology that such a visit at this time was impossible.²

We know that Herod the Great was the friend of Caesar, "Praeter Agrippan ex amicis Augusti etiam Herodes,"³ and it is manifest that Herod's gifts to Antioch were more to flatter Rome than from any altruistic desire to beautify Antioch. On the occasions when earthquakes destroyed parts of the city, the emperors were quick to provide funds for rebuilding it.

Gaius and Claudius hastened to restore the walls lest the city be damaged beyond repair. Under Roman rule the tall purple marble column was erected on top of which was engraved the inscription "Ἀσειστα ἄπτοτα, i.e. not to be shaken. So the superstitious people sought to warn the gods that another destructive manifestation would earn their displeasure. The pity of it was that the next earthquake cast the exquisite but unavailing advice to deaf gods to the ground and smashed it beyond repair.⁴

.

1. Mueller: op. cit., p. 283
2. Ibid., p. 285
3. Ibid., p. 284
4. Ibid., p. 288

b. Its Walls and Fortifications

One of the most striking features of the city was the ingenious and magnificent embattlements which fortified and protected the city. "Each of the four quarters of the Tetrapolis including the new city or island, had a separate wall."¹ The ramparts climbed precipices and crossed ravines. They bristled with an array of fortified towers and enclosed fortified spaces behind them. "A real master work of military architecture inclosed the summits of the mountains."² The love of invention showed itself in numerous time-saving mechanical devices. The application of levers, cranks, cogs, surprisingly modern, served to make the Antiochians' fortifications exceedingly dangerous and distractive to any invaders.³

We are aware of five principal gates in the walls in addition to the so-called Iron Gate: the Bridge Gate, strongly fortified; St. George's, thru which passed the high road to Laodicea; opposite this on the Aleppo road was the Gate of St. Paul; Justinian had erected one in the north wall, called the Dog Gate (Warfara); and later, after the siege of Godfrey de Bouillon, we hear of the Porta Ducis.⁴ History shows that the fortifications of Antioch

.

1. Bouchier: A Short History of Antioch, p. 9
2. Renan, Ernest: The Apostles, p. 200
3. Cf. Morton: op. cit., p. 99
4. Cf. Bouchier: op. cit., pp. 10ff; also Stinespring: The Description of Antioch in Codex Vaticanus Arabicus 286, pp. 35f

were extremely efficient as long as they were well manned. For hundreds of years they successfully repelled invaders from the surrounding countries and the capitulation of the city was finally brought about by internal decay and indifference rather than by attack from without.

c. Its Extent

The ruins of modern Antioch, now a French sub-prefecture, give little suggestion of the great metropolis of St. Paul's time. In the first century Josephus could write:

"And now Vespasian took along with him his army from Antioch, (which is the metropolis of Syria, and without dispute deserves the place of the third city in the habitable earth that was under the Roman Empire, both in magnitude, and other marks of prosperity,)"¹

The Arabic writers tell us that the circumference of the city was one day's journey; others, two days' journey. Commenting on this point, Stinespring observes:

"Idrīsī and Mas'ūdī gave 12 Arabic miles, which would amount to a little over 7 Roman miles (agreeing fairly well with the text). Modern travellers agree, roughly, also with the text whose 4 Arabic miles would be equal to less than 3 Roman miles."²

d. Its Population

The modern counterpart of Antioch has a population of some thirty-five thousand Moslems, and some thou-

.

1. Josephus: Wars of the Jews, Bk. III, ch. 3
2. Stinespring: The Description of Antioch in Codex Vaticanus Arabicus 286, p. 16. The "text" referred to is this Codex.

sand Latin, Greek, and Armenian Christians.¹

In Chrysostom's Homily on St. Ignatius, the locus classicus for determining the population of the city, we read: "... so great a city, and a citizenry (δῆμος) reaching the number of 200,000."² Renan estimates a total population "of more than 500,000 souls, almost as large as Paris before its recent extensions."³

e. Its Name

"Antioch was in the province of Seleucus called Tetrapolis, from containing the four cities Antioch, Seleucia, Apamea, and Laodicea; of which the first was named after Antiochus, the father of the founder⁴; the second after himself; the third after his wife Apama; and the fourth in honour of his mother."⁵

The Greeks referred to the city as ἡ καλὴ Ἀντιοχεῖα. Athenaeus⁶ has Ἀντ., εὐφροσύνῃ πόλις, and Lucianianus⁷ ἡ καλὴ καὶ μεγάλη. Mueller says it was probably first called Antakie: "... quae nunc Antakie dicitur."⁸

.

1. Morton: In the Steps of St. Paul, p. 93
2. Chrysostom: Homily on St. Ignatius. Migne ed., Vol. 2, Col. 591 (tr. Stinespring)
3. Renan, Ernest: The Apostles, p. 212. His sources, Mueller: Antiquitates Antiochenae, p. 68; John Chrysostom, on St. Ignatius, 4 Copp. t. ii. p. 597, edit. Montfaucon, and on Matthew, Homilies lxxxv.4. (vol. vii. p. 810). He (Chrysostom) estimates the population of Antioch at two hundred thousand souls, without counting slaves, infants, and the immense suburbs.
4. Though we can not be certain whether it was named in honor of his father or his son of the same name.
5. Cyclopaedia of Biblical and Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature. John McClintock and James Strong, edd.
6. l. p. 20b
7. de salt. 76
8. Mueller: op. cit., pp. 205f

The modern counterpart of Antioch is called Antākiyeh.¹

That these appellations were deserved will be obvious from a consideration of the grandeur, architecture, and artistic embellishments of the city.

f. Its Statuary

We have noted in an earlier chapter the fact that, under the patronage of Antiochus Epiphanes, Antioch became an art center, attracting artists from all over the world. Though not of the purest Greek taste, their sculpture was of considerable merit. Only a few specimens have been discovered. At Constantinople a bronze group of wrestlers which shows exquisite technique, is preserved; a white marble statue of an orator reveals good proportions; we have already spoken of the most famous extant statuettes, of the Tyche or Fortune of Antioch.²

g. Summary

We have seen that ancient writers were justified in their appraisal of the city. Antioch was a Grecian city from its foundation. Its immense edifices, noble specimens of Greek architecture and statuary, show that it was artistically Greek. Its peoples, emancipated from tradition, even to the point of fickleness, democratic, scientific, also reveal the fact that it was

. . .

1. Stinespring: The Description of Antioch in Codex Vaticanus Arabicus 286, p. 1c
2. Bouchier: A Short History of Antioch, pp. 8f

philosophically, and in ideals, Hellenistic. This is an important point to bear in mind in relation to the rôle which the city played as a missionary center. We shall show in our conclusion to this chapter that the evangelists coming from Jerusalem were not slow to win converts among the Greeks of the city, a fact of immense importance for the future of the Christian Church.

3. Its Peoples

Lew Wallace, in his interesting and accurate historical novel "Ben Hur", makes this general but probable statement:

"... we come now to July, the year that of our Lord 29, ... the place Antioch, the Queen of the East, and next to Rome the strongest; if not the most populous city in the world."¹

Renan, as we have already noted, estimates the population of Antioch as more than 500,000 souls.² Stinespring comments:

"Other writers taking into consideration the extensive suburbs, have estimated the total population of 'greater' Antioch as high as 800,000. Malalas, p.420, says that 250,000 persons were killed in the earthquake of 526. This seems incredible, but if it is true, the total population before the catastrophe must have been at least twice the number killed."³

In a very picturesque way Renan has admirably

.

1. Wallace, Lew: Ben Hur, p. 148
2. Vide supra p. 75
3. Stinespring: op. cit., p. 2c

summed up what we know of the Antiochian people:

"It was an inconceivable medley of merry-andrews, quacks, buffoons, magicians, miracle-mongers, sorcerers, priests, impostors; a city of races, games, dances, processions, fêtes, debauches, of unbridled luxury, of all follies of the East, of the most unhealthy superstitions, and of the fanaticism of the orgy. By turns servile and ungrateful, cowardly and insolent, the people of Antioch were a perfect model of these crowds devoted to Caesarism, without country, without nationality, without family honor, without a name to keep."¹

Mackay adds significantly, "It was in an opium eater's dream that the Church began her triumphal march."²

a. Indigenous Syrians

Besides the Greek population, which in no city of the East (except Alexandria) was as numerous as here, there were many native Syrians in Antioch.³ These natives comprised the vulgar class, and their degradation was as terrible as it was famous, the world's principal source of a deadly stream of lewdness and profanity. These people were located in suburban villages, Charandama, Ghisira, Gaudigura, and Apate (chiefly Syrian names).⁴

To these Orientals we may attribute the pagan cult worship, the Baal worship, traces of human sacrifice, and the general corruptness and licentiousness of the city. It was difficult to build an empire upon the foundation of such a populace, pleasure loving and superficial, who com-

.

1. Renan: op. cit., pp. 198ff

2. Mackay, H. F. B.: The Adventures of Paul of Tarsus, p.67

3. Renan: op. cit., p. 198; quoting John Chrysostom Ad. pop. Antioch homil. xix. 1; (vol. ii, p. 189). De sanctis martyr. 1. (vol. ii, p. 65)

4. Ibid.; quoting Libanius, Antioch., p. 348

bined Greek lightness and Oriental indolence. Yet in such an atmosphere the Christian church grew and prospered.

b. Greeks

"It is allowed by Malas that a good part of the original colonists were Macedonians. Cretans and Cypriots are also mentioned."¹

The Greek at the time of the early church had lost most of his earlier virtues—honor, self-respect, temperance. Hellene and Syrian found a common ground in their religious which were quite compatible. The Seleucid kings accepted the deification and adulation of the Syrian, and the Syrians were not averse to celebrating the fêtes of Grecian gods and goddesses.

There can be no doubt that there were Athenians in Antigonía and that these came to Antioch when Nicator destroyed their city.² It is equally certain that the Seleucid kings extended special privileges to their fellow countrymen.³

Bouchier makes a shrewd observation when he says:

"The mixed origin of the people—the Macedonian and Oriental elements in it which cared little for city life—the extensive trade and consequent growth of wealth and luxury, the absence of an hereditary aristocracy to provide political leaders, perhaps even the prevalence of destructive earthquakes which encouraged the appetite for momentary enjoyment, all

.

1. Bevan: The House of Seleucus, Vol. I, p. 212

2. Ibid.

3. II Macc. ix.15

produced a lack of character. It lacked earnestness, but was capable of short-lived enthusiasm, ... luxurious, but not inaccessible to nobler motives and often ready to embrace the severest asceticism."¹

Perhaps Bouchier has touched the spot, in his analysis, which the Christian message touched in the Antiochian's heart to win his salvation. Hid in the breast of these men were nobler motives which only awaited extrication from the morass of fleshly lusts by the pure, simple truth to which they aspired but could not attain.

c. Jews

The Jews must have formed a sombre element in this fastidious community. Their colony was one of the most prosperous in the Diaspora. The canny Jew was always attracted to a great trading center, where his genius for commerce and barter soon asserted itself to his own advantage.

Josephus states:

"The Jews also had obtained honours from the kings of Asia when they became their auxiliaries; for Seleucus Nicator made them citizens in those cities which he built in Asia, and in the lower Syria, and in the metropolis itself, Antioch; and gave them privileges equal to those of the Macedonians and Greeks, who were the inhabitants, in so much that these privileges continue to this very day."²

It is undoubtedly true that the superlative opportunities for enterprise attracted the Jews immediately,

.

1. Bouchier: op. cit., p. 23

2. Josephus: Antiquities of the Jews, XII, iii, 1

but Josephus is not justified, in the light of the later history of the colony, in stating that the Jews enjoyed their initial equal privilege "to this very day." They did not always find peace, as we shall soon see.

Although this community was founded later than other Diaspora communities, it flourished and increased rapidly during the Seleucid period, "until it stood among the three ancient cities with the largest Jewish population."¹

An attractive city, located on world trade routes; attractive privileges of citizenship and safety; Seleucid levies of men in Palestine to fill the ranks of the army; Herod's amnesty with Rome; and later the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus; attracted or forced great numbers to come to Antioch.²

The exact number of Jews living in Antioch at any particular time it is extremely difficult to estimate. In general it may be said that in the first centuries of the Christian era the community reached its greatest numerical strength.

Josephus speaks of the fear of the Jews at Antioch, after the fall of the temple at Jerusalem; and comments on the great multitudes congregated there.

"For as the Jewish nation is widely dispersed over all the habitable earth among its inhabitants, so it

.

1. Kraeling: The Jewish Community at Antioch, p. 132
2. Ibid., pp. 131-135

is very much intermingled with Syria by reason of its neighborhood, and had the greatest multitudes in Antioch by reason of the largeness of the city, wherein the kings, after Antiochus, had afforded a habitation with the most undisturbed tranquility."¹

The latter clause suggests that for nearly two hundred years the Jews had lived in peace and amity with the Gentiles in Antioch. Kraeling estimates, conservatively, for ancient authorities allow for larger but exaggerated calculations, that there were about 45,000 Jews in the city in the days of Augustus, and during the period of the Empire approximately 65,000 Jewish residents there.²

The Jews were no doubt considered as foreigners and as such were not genuine or even potential citizens—Josephus' statement to the contrary notwithstanding, for his work is of the nature of propaganda.³

Josephus overlooks the fact that a distinction did exist between a condition of genuine equality,

"conferred honoris causa upon groups distant from a given spot, and a state of toleration between groups of unequal station, established as a means of incorporating in the civic organism of one locality significant but troublesome minorities."⁴

At best, Josephus' statement of equality may be taken as nominal, not actual.

On the whole we may infer that the Jews lived in tolerable unmolestation. The establishment of a Jewish

.

1. Josephus: Wars of the Jews, VII, iii, 3.
2. Kraeling: op. cit., p. 136
3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 138f on Josephus c. Apionem II, 39
4. Ibid., p. 139

πολίτευμα in the city involved the right of the Jews to "follow their own laws" and thus they could preserve their religious and social individuality. These "rights" of the Jews were inscribed on a bronze tablet, and in all probability this also recorded the enactments of the Seleucid period.¹

A survey of the historical references, and of tradition, impels Kraeling to conclude that,

"... it would appear to follow that as early as the first century A.D. there were no less than three Jewish communities in and about Antioch, one west of the city near Daphne, one in the city proper, and one east of the city in the 'plain of Antioch'."²

During the earlier period of Roman dominion, especially in the years of Herod the Great, the friend of the Caesars, the Jews prospered. But their prosperity came to an end during the middle of the first century A.D.

The chain of events which caused this change began in the reign of Caligula, when the depraved emperor ordered his statue placed in the temple at Jerusalem (40 A.D.). Josephus³ tells how Jewish mobs protested at Antioch against this vilification of the temple of God. The rebellion of the Palestinian Jews in 66 A.D. also had its repercussions in Antioch, and after 70 A.D. a shrouded history and lack of information show that the Jews had lost their self-assertiveness; and we know but little of

.

1. Kraeling: op. cit., p. 139

2. Ibid., p. 143

3. Josephus: Antiquities, XVIII, viii

their condition till the fourth and fifth centuries when Talmudic tradition and information from primary sources becomes communicative again.

d. Summary

We have seen that the establishment of the Seleucid communities in pagan Asia was not the outcome of a natural immigration. It was the fixed policy of Greek kings to populate their cities by invitation to their own peoples with incentives in the way of special privilege or by force in the case of natives who formed the major and usually disfranchized part of the population.

The lower classes in Antioch were and remained pagan and barbaric. The Greek formed the liberal, cultured ruling class. The Jew, for the most part, dwelt in peace with the Greek and as usual, because he soon controlled trade and commerce, was able to demand with his wealth the liberties which ordinarily were denied him. The two peoples dwelt in amity. "Multitudes of Greeks" were attracted to the synagogue. Hellenistic culture and thought permeated Jewish living and expression, and tended to liberate the Jew from many of the "prejudices of his conservatism."¹ The Antiochians were characteristically Greek in thought and custom, cosmopolitan in their attitudes. In this atmosphere Christianity was liberated from

.

1. Cf. Kraeling: op. cit., p. 148

Jewish sectarianism and emerged as a religion universal in appeal, as is shown by its rapid growth throughout the world from this point forward.

4. Its Commerce and Wealth

Antioch was excellently located for commercial communication between the East and the West. Connected by river and road with the Mediterranean, and by a series of highways to the east and south, it tapped the utmost reaches of the known world. So strategically located, it rose to become one of the greatest trading centers in the Roman Empire.

a. Traffic by Sea and by Land

The river Orontes which united Antioch to its seaport Seleucia, was made navigable by dredging, and it remained so till the time of Justinian, when neglect caused it to become silted up.¹ Bevan, however, believes that boats could travel up the river as late as the time of the Crusades.²

Traffic was heavy on the river, and the quays along the shores of the river at Antioch were lined with barges and produce, and during the open seasons ships sailed from Seleucia across the Mediterranean to the great ports along its shores on regular schedule.

.

1. Stinespring: The Description of Antioch in Codex Vaticanus Arabicus 286, p. 30

2. Bevan: The House of Seleucus, Vol. I, p. 210

An excellent picture of the busy river, with its colorful fleet and rich cargoes which spoke of a vast and prosperous commerce, is found in "Ben Hur."¹

It is probable that the bridge which hung low over the river below the island upon which Callincus had built his new city quarter, marked the limits of navigation.

We are aware of six gates in the city, through which roads passed in every direction of the compass.² Where the Orontes valley opens up into the great Syrian plains the regular land routes to Babylonia and Iran began.³ Some went to Daphne, to Apamea, and Laodicea; others to surrounding Seleucid cities. We know of a route to Hierapolis and to Aleppo in northern Syria; and of one from Antioch to the Euphrates which crossed the Chalus valley at Beroea, and one more to the south which reached the Euphrates at Barbelissus and which probably tapped the regions of the Tigris and Euphrates valleys, through the road which passed through Thapsacus.⁴ Antioch was surrounded by a network of Greek and later Roman cities, and doubtless these were connected by good roads to the central city.

The wealth and display of the kings and of the rich merchants shows that the trade was extensive and lucra-

.

1. Wallace: Ben Hur, Book IV

2. Vide supra p. 73

3. Cf. Bevan: op. cit., Vol. I, p. 211

4. Cf. Ibid., p. 217

tive. Despite constant war during the earlier periods of the city's history, and continued political troubles during the later epochs, a great trade flourished. The numerous cities founded by the successors of Alexander were located along the routes which brought silk, furs, spices, gold, slaves, and cotton from China, India, Arabia, and the districts of the Caspian and the north Euxine coast. Antioch became a vast entrepôt with a hybrid population which in a century and a half following its foundation twice necessitated extension by the inclusion of new quarters.¹

b. The Wealth of Antioch

W. W. Tarn believes that

"the Seleucids never acquired anything approaching such wealth as the Ptolemies drew from Egypt; they must for one thing have spent more on the country in proportion to their income."²

The long protracted wars which the Seleucids carried on no doubt did drain the national treasury, but with the coming of Rome peace came to Antioch and the attendant of peace is always prosperity. Though essentially Grecian, the Seleucids often resorted to the despotic methods of Oriental potentates in raising revenue. Royal nominees acting as satraps were appointed as overseers of taxes, revenue officers; and the levies for military cam-

.

1. Bouchier: A Short History of Antioch, p. 24
2. Tarn: Hellenistic Civilisation, pp. 128 f

paigns, the sustenance of a profligate and luxurious court, and for extensive building campaigns, necessitated an excessively burdensom taxation.¹

The wealthy class, in their endeavor to make their city famous as an artistic and literary center, subsidized philosophers, artists, and literary men. A royal library existed in the reign of Antiochus the Great under the direction of Euphorion of Chalcis.² But Antioch never attained renown, except for its licentiousness and immorality. Its people were much more intent on the gratification of the flesh, and delighted more in the stimulation and satisfaction of their emotional and sensual appetites.

c. Conclusion

The prosperous trade of the city of Antioch tended to produce opulence or poverty on the part of its people. Wealth allowed every type of excess for those who possessed it, and the poor found the municipal dole of the rich sufficient for as degraded, if not as extensive, pleasures, as their extortionate benefactors.

There can be no doubt that Christianity wrought a rapid and remarkable change in this city of prodigality. Chrysostom, in appealing to his congregation, infers that the early church had diverted its funds to better purposes and pagan wantonness had been turned into generous and

.

1.Bouchier: op. cit., pp. 24f

2.Ibid., p. 25

healthy charity. In recalling the days of the early Antiochian church he says:

"And all this in Antioch where men were first called Christians, wherein are bred the most civilized of mankind, where in old time the fruit of charity flourished so abundantly. For not only to those at hand but also to those very far off, they used to send, and this when famine was expected."1

Perhaps the great church father is referring to the passage in the book of Acts where we read that in the famine, which had been prophesied by Agabus, in the reign of Claudius, that the disciples at Antioch,

"... every man of his own ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Judea: which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul."2

We would say with Chrysostom as we draw our chapter on the city to a close:

"Not the fact that it is a metropolis; nor that it contains large and beautiful buildings; nor that it has many columns, and spacious porticoes and walks, nor that it is named in proclamations before other cities, but the virtue and piety of its inhabitants ..."3

is all-important. The Psalmist sings:

"Except Jehovah build the house,
They labor in vain who build it:
Except Jehovah keep the city,
The watchmen waketh but in vain."4

.

1. Chrysostom—Ante and Post Nicene Fathers. Vol. X, First Series, p. 510
2. Acts 11:29-30
3. Chrysostom: op. cit., p. 455f
4. Psalm 127:1

No greater testimony can be made to the converting and saving power of Christianity than the ability which it has revealed throughout history to change not only individuals, but also groups, societies, cities, yea, the course and destiny of history itself.

5. Its Environs—Daphne

The praises of "that sweet grove of Daphne" have been sung by all who have visited this grove of intoxicating verdure and artistic splendor. In Paul's time it was

"a ten mile pleasure garden devoted to the orgiastic worship of the river god. Priestesses dedicated to his worship presided over temples set on the terraced slopes of hills; slave girls of all nationalities, bought by the hundred in the markets of the East, were presented to the grove by pious citizens of Antioch."¹

Now only bearded Syrian goats and slinking jackals come to pay their tribute and homage to Daphnaean Apollo, the god who inspired this extravagant tribute to man's folly.

The people of Antioch counted its suburb as a paradise, the city's chief glory. They had a saying, "Better be a worm and feed on the mulberries of Daphne than a king's guest."²

.

1. Morton: In the Steps of St. Paul, p. 95
2. Wallace: Ben Hur, p. 152

a. Location

It was situated between river and mountain, some four and a half miles (eight kilometers) west of Antioch, and with its mother city rested on the south bank of the Orontes.

b. The Waters of Daphne

The place today is still notable for its rich greenery and rushing waters, from whence comes its present name, Bait-al-Mā, "House of Rushing Waters."¹

Water was extraordinarily abundant in the Grove, so much so that it was one of the chief sources of supply for Antioch, whither aqueducts carried it. Two of these, of which we have record, were constructed during the reigns of Caligula and Hadrian.² Mueller, referring to Malalas, attributes them to Trajan and Hadrian. We can not be absolutely sure whether Caligula or Trajan was the builder, but opinion generally confirms Hadrian as one of the three emperors who ordered their construction.

In ancient time the springs and streams of the Grove ran through the gloom of giant cypresses which encompassed the temple of the Pythian Apollo. In the shadows of bay and cyprus trees, in gardens of oleanders, on velvet-like lawns of exquisitely tinted green grasses, the peoples of Antioch and of the world spent their hours of

.

1. Stinespring: The Description of Antioch in Codex Vaticanus Arabicus 286, p. 16; Bevan: The House of Seleucus, Vol. I, p. 214
2. Bouchier: op. cit., p. 47

pleasure.

c. Origin of the Gardens

The natural, surpassingly beautiful situation of the Grove must have immediately attracted the attention of Seleucus, the founder of the city and its suburb. He determined to place the principal shrine of Apollo here.¹ Bevan attributes the image of Apollo placed there to the Athenian sculptor Bryaxis.²

Modern archeologists describe the site as an amphitheater in shape, amidst wild, rocky scenery, where numerous streams burst out from a laurel grove and disappear in two cascades overgrown with flowers and vegetation.³

In its glory it must have been a veritable fairyland, and even the most prolific imagination can not hope to recall the beauty which rocks, ravines, cascades, inaccessible caves, and exquisite hanging gardens must have produced.

d. Temples and Buildings

One of the garden streams, probably the one adjoining the temple of Apollo, was called the Castalian; and here was placed the seat of an oracle. The water which surrounded it was believed to be periodically trou-

.

1. Bouchier: op. cit., p. 42
2. Bevan: op. cit., p. 214
3. Bouchier: op. cit., p. 42

bled by the gods; winds and vapors escaped from it and priests were seized with ecstasy as they inhaled these vaporous emissions. Visitors would dip bay leaves in the waters and these would be drawn out, inscribed with prophetic inscriptions.

The temple of Apollo, and it became an asylum for every sort of knave, contained a statue of Apollo and also of Zeus Olympius.¹ The former represented him in his form as Musagates with the lyre, robed in long garments down to his feet.

"The god's hair was of gold intertwined with a golden laurel wreath; his eyes were two jacinths of great size; he wore a long tunic, held a sacrificial bowl in one hand, with the other touched a harp, his mouth open as if singing."²

The temple walls were of bright colored marbles. It was amphiprostyle with rows of columns on two sides, and had other rows in the sanctuary or cella.

The bay tree, from which the place took its name, stood by the shrine of Apollo. A mythological story, of obviously artificial character, related that Daphne, daughter of the Arcadian river god Ladon, pursued by her lover Apollo, was miraculously transformed into this tree.³

A high priest was appointed by the Seleucid kings to officiate as servitor of the temple.⁴ Bevan notes

.

1. Bevan: op. cit., Vol. II, p. 150
2. Bouchier: op. cit., p. 44
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 45
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 49

that Berenice, the tigerish Seleucid queen, sought refuge in a royal palace which the Seleucids had built there.¹

In Roman times, emperors who visited there lived in tents. In the time of Diocletian, a palace was constructed for their use. The age of Trajan and Hadrian was one of great architectural activity at Daphne. Trajan built a temple of Artemis in the middle of the Grove. Hadrian supplied a theater, and the temple of the Nymphs. He changed the Grove into a regular residential area, a wintering place for nobility, and instituted a Festival of the Springs, to be held in June. Later, Diocletian added a regular Olympian race course, and these additions made of Daphne a park some ten miles in circumference.²

To this park men came to find peace without fear. They found, not peace, but forgetfulness in wine and other sensual satisfactions. It was the resort of the indolent and the depraved. "Eat, drink, and be merry," was their philosophy, "for tomorrow we die." And they died—young and miserable, no doubt.

e. Processions and Festivals

Processions were numerous, and at times during the great festivals were seemingly interminable in length, and beyond our wildest dreams in splendor. Chariots with

.

1. Bevan: op. cit., Vol. I, p. 182

2. This figure, given by Bouchier, quoting Anth. Pal. ix. 680, seems exaggerated, but shows the immensity of this paradise of vice.

with trappings of gold, and trumpets of silver, preceded the priest and priestesses. Bands of unclad girls, dancers, and inconceivable and unbridled prodigality outdid itself to make of these parades fêtes of luxurious debauchery.¹

There were many great festivals during the year, and these were famous throughout the Greek world. An annual festival was held under the Seleucid king in Lous, or August, in honor of Apollo. Antiochus Grypus would distribute entire animals, geese, hares, and gazelles at the Paphnaen festivals; while those he entertained at his banquets received gold wreaths, plate, slaves, or horses.

"Some were bidden to mount camels and drink there, subsequently receiving the animal, its equipment, and attendant, possibly an embarrassing gift in some cases."²

In the time of Augustus, the games of the gorgeous Olympian festival began. Diocletian, as we have noted, added an Olympian race course and the athletic events which took place were always attended by processionals from Antioch to Daphne.

We hear of one attempt under Caesar Constantius Gallus to counteract the heathen associations of Daphne. He had the coffin of the venerated martyr Babylus moved to the vicinity of the temple of Apollo, and also set up

.

1. Wallace: op. cit., Book IV, pp.170ff

2. Bouchier: A Short History of Antioch, p. 52

an oratory opposite it, to counteract the insolence and superstition of the Antiochian people.¹

A minute and accurate description has come down to us of a festival which was organized by Antiochus Epi-phanes. This profligate king endeavored to eclipse the splendid games recently given by the celebrated Aemilius Paullus in Macedonia. Both military and religious elements took part, with the intent of showing the military and economic resources of the nation. As it was for purposes of propaganda, and doubtless many of the participants were hirelings and volunteers, it is thus not an accurate barometer of the real wealth of the Syrian Empire. We are told by Polybius that five thousand men armed as Roman legionaries led the way, clad in breastplates of chain mail. These were followed by Mysians and three thousand Cilicians wearing gold crowns. Next came three thousand Thracians, five thousand Gauls, and then, though hardly believable, twenty thousand Macedonians, five thousand armed with brass shields and the others with silver shields. Several cavalry detachments followed, some in complete mail, some wearing purple cloaks shot with gold, others rode in elephant cars, or chariots, "a hundred six-horsed, and forty, four-horsed."

There followed a procession, which even Polybius admits is beyond description, of statues of the gods and

.

L.Bouchier: op. cit., p. 55

heroes, and vessels of gold and silver plate. At the rear, women sprinkled perfumes from golden jars and the great ladies of the city were borne along in litters, "all adorned with great costliness."¹

A month's festivities ensued, with gladiatorial shows and combats in the true cruel Roman fashion. There were magicians, athletes, and, to recall Renan's words, "an inconceivable medley of merry-andrews, quacks, buffoons, magicians, miracle-mongers, etc."²

f. Conclusion

Such was the extent of man's follies at Daphne. Julian came to visit the famous Grove a few centuries later, and found the place so neglected that a goose from the high priest himself was the only offering which Antioch cared to give to honor their protectors, the gods.

The goats jump nimbly over the heads
of broken statues,
the jackals bark sharply,
as if to laugh.

6. Religions of Antioch

It is perhaps wrong to refer to the farrago of cults, of superstitions, legends, and myths, under the head of religion. For the most part they were mere

.

1. Cf. The Histories of Polybius, Vol. II, Book XXXI, pp. 425-428

2. Renan: The Apostles, p. 198

superstitions and only of passing moment. Only one, "the cult of Daphne," as it was called, will be treated in detail.

a. Superstitions and Diverse Religions

We have already had occasion to note how superstitious the people of Antioch were. In order to avert a repetition of earthquakes they erected a tall column warning the gods not to shake it. We also know that this expedient met with no success.

The Antiochenes, as all pagans, believed in the efficacy of charms, incantations, and amulets. Charms efficient to ward off everything and anything from dyspepsia to a prize dog's fleas were known—mosquitos and scorpions included.¹

As in every day, cults and new religions were numerous and unimportant. As we have already viewed the festivities which attended the important cult of the worship of Apollo, we may dismiss the host of other quackeries as irrelevant to our present discussion. Such rites as those practiced at the Delubrum Bacchi² in honor of the wine god Bacchus, or at the Taurum Farnesianum, the bull of Farnesia, where the worship materials of both Antiochian and Roman priests were kept,³ are as nauseous to us as was

.

1. Cf. Bouchier: *op. cit.*, pp. 58-86; an admirable chapter on the Legends, Myths, and Talismans of the Antiochenes.
2. Mueller: *Antiquitates Antiochenae*, p. 286
3. *Ibid.*, p. 287

too much wine to these riotous imbibers who worshipped in drunkenness and riot.

b. The Adonis Cult

One cult is of interest to us, however; that of 'Adonis' worship, which had its center at Daphne.

To anyone familiar with Jewish literature, the subject of the Syrian pagan religion is a familiar one. Each village or district in Syria had its local Numen or Baal, each Baal having a wife Ishta, or Asteroth in Hebrew. Baal means proprietor. The term Lord is not accurate, and rather an undeserved flattery. The Syrians called these local deities Adon, which the Greeks and later the Romans pronounced Adonis. The chief Adonis of Antioch was venerated at Daphne. Though it is known that the inhabitants of the district had recognized their Adon from the founding of the city, the worship did not become popular till Antioch became the actual capitol of the Seleucid Empire in the second century before Christ.

Adonis worship was connected with the seasons. In the spring, when nature wakened from its lethargy, so did the Daphnaean Baal. As the summer sun rose in the heavens and became ever fiercer, Adonis withdrew to await the next spring. In spring he came to life; in the summer he died. His life was short, for the spring time lasts but a few weeks in Syria.

Bousset, in his "Kyrios Christos," says that

here was a mythology which proved valuable to Christian evangelists, whose dying and resurrected Jesus was the counterpart of the dying and resurrected Adonis. We can not treat Bousset's ingenious but sadly erroneous hypothesis in this chapter, but in our concluding chapter we shall discuss his suggestions further.

7. Conclusion

The apostle Paul came to Antioch to find it the third largest city in the world. It was wealthy, indolent, and sensuous. As a center of world trade, it was a city of transients, a Paris of the nineteenth century, a Marseilles, or in some respects a modern New York.

It was a Hellenistic city, and this is important for us to bear in mind. The first evangelists, "men of Cyprus and Cyrene,"¹ preached unto the Greeks, and their work was fruitful. A church grew rapidly, and this group formed the nucleus of a congregation which later (A.D. 45/46) sent Paul forth armed with a now universal Gospel, not only for the Jews but for all the peoples of the world.

We have seen a city of frivolous wastrels, of tawdry splendor. Christianity profoundly changed Antioch, and her infamy ceased. Not many years hence, Chrysostom justly and proudly proclaimed:

.

1. Acts 11:20

"Reverence the city which first proclaimed the
(Christian) name, so lovely and sweet to all. This
city hath been the tabernacle of apostles, the dwell-
ing place of the just."¹

.

1. Chrysostom: op. cit. supra p. 75, p. 355

CHAPTER IV

ANTIOCH IN SYRIA,
KEYSTONE CITY OF PAULINE MISSIONS,
MOTHER CHURCH OF THE GENTILES

CHAPTER IV

ANTIOCH IN SYRIA, KEYSTONE CITY OF PAULINE MISSIONS, MOTHER CHURCH OF THE GENTILES

We are now in a position to estimate the contribution of the beautiful, powerful city of Antioch to the early church. A center of Grecian culture, and thus of western civilization, it was peculiarly fitted to relay Christianity from obscurity to world renown. Because of Antiochene insistence, Christianity discarded the trammels of Mosaic law, and, thus set free, Antioch's strategic location on the crossroad of Asia Minor assured the Gospel message ready access to the Mediterranean world.

1. Its Evangelization

Ramsay approaches the study of the Antiochian congregation with this statement:

"When Acts was written, the Church of Antioch was only about fifty years old, but already its beginning seems to have been lost in obscurity."¹

A few verses in the book of Acts are all we have to throw any light on the early history of the church at Antioch.

.

1. Ramsay, W. M.: St. Paul, the Traveller and Roman Citizen, p. 40

a. Origin

Immediately after the stoning of Stephen (31 A. D.),¹ Christian evangelists "scattered abroad"² and probably within a period of some two or three years arrived in Antioch to preach the Gospel. An infant church had come into being, but of its immediate history we know nothing.

Thomas Lindsay comes directly to the point when he says:

"Its birth is unrecorded; its earliest history unknown, the congregation is in being before the Apostles seem to have heard of it."³

All we may infer is that when the first Christian teachers arrived on the scene they were unusually successful, for within a few years (34/35) Barnabas was sent as an envoy from Jerusalem to survey this new congregation which they had founded.⁴ Mindful of the experiences of St. Peter at Caesarea, the apostles were anxious to judge the merits

.

1. A precise statement of Pauline chronology is impossible. The finding of an inscribed votive tablet at Delphi, (cf. Deissmann, Adolf: Paulus, pp. 159ff., or (English translation) St. Paul, pp. 246ff.) however, has provided us with a fixed date from which we can more accurately construct a chronology. This tablet advises us that Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, by appointment of the Emperor Claudius (his twenty-sixth proclamation) in the year 51/52 A.D. Though scholars still differ on the dating of certain events, the divergence in most cases is not now more than one or two years. The chronology which has been followed here was suggested by Dr. Julius Richter of the University of Berlin.
2. Acts 11:19
3. Lindsay, Thomas: The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries, p. 24
In Acts 6:5 Nicolaus is mentioned as a proselyte of Antioch. Was he not one of the first to return to his native city after the stoning of Stephen, perhaps becoming the founder of that congregation?
4. Acts 11:22

of this new church whose situation was somewhat analogous to that of Cornelius and the Caesarean church.

Barnabas made an interesting discovery there. Some of the disciples had spoken to the Jews at Antioch, and here was an innovation to the Greeks as well, with signal success.¹ This was quite natural, for of the preachers some were of Cyprus and Cyrene, who probably spoke Greek readily, and in Antioch, where their native tongue was the lingua franca of the day, they found a large audience for their message.

Eusebius is wrong, in the light of the Acts, when he says: "They who fled after Stephen went as far as Antioch but did only preach to Jews."² In fact, it is more probable that, even as before, the Jews were found more or less inhospitable and attention was soon transferred wholly to the Greeks.

That Greek was the language of Antioch is now proved beyond a doubt. Dr. Kraeling has in his possession at Yale the fragments of the Dissertation which has its origin in Antioch (c. 100) and is written in Greek, not in Aramaic or Syriac. We have no knowledge that the early evangelists spoke in either of these languages. Luke, the chronicler of the Gentile churches, used Greek naturally, as one would use his mother tongue. We are impelled

.

1. Acts 11:19-20

2. Eusebius—Ante and Post Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Volume I, p. 260

to the conclusion that the appeal, even though at first made to Grecian Jews in the synagogue, soon addressed itself to the more susceptible Gentile Greek. The congregation was thus a mixed body, but its predominant Gentile element is manifest in the agitation which soon evidenced itself to be rid of any Jewish sectarian domination.

Stinespring has discovered an interesting notice on the results of the evangelization of Antioch. The Arab author of the Codex Arabicus Vaticanus 286 speaks of the superstitious peoples and their conversion thus:

"And matters did not cease to run such a course of sacrifices and incense-burnings and festivals in honor of idols, until Christ, the sun of righteousness, appeared and sent his apostles to this city. And they preached in it and its people believed in Christ. Thereupon the power of the demons came to an end, the temples of the idols were demolished, and their vestiges extirpated from the city and its environs and churches and convents were built in their stead."¹

Stinespring, in commenting on this reference to Antioch's conversion to Christianity, refers to the Bodleian Codex which supplies the details, and says:

"It (B) contains about a third more matter after the point at which the Vatican text (Arabicus 286) stops, consisting of the story of the conversion of the people of Antioch to Christianity. Simon and John are sent there, and imprisoned. Paul then joins them from Damascus, and gives himself out as the priest of the chief god of the place. He then offers to contend with Simon and John, and when they open the eyes of the blind, and make the lame walk, he, professedly in the name of the chief god, does

.

1. Stinespring: The Description of Antioch in Codex Vaticanus Arabicus 286, p. 5

the same; but when the Apostles undertake to restore to life the king's son, who has been dead three months, he declares that he can not rival that miracle, and induces the king to accept Christianity.

"This account of the conversion of Antioch was current in the East, and formed the subject of a discourse by Jacob of Sarug (fl. 6th century) which is described by Assemani. *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, I. 133. Practically the same story is told by Arabic commentators on the Koran."¹

The story is Arabic exaggeration in its detail.

We can only say that we can not know at present whether the account is even partially true or not. "Simon and John" are unknown to us in relation to Antioch, and Paul, if St. Paul is referred to, makes no mention of such a conversion in his writings as we have them.

Of the origin of the Antiochian church we can not say more. An infant church had come into being and had prospered. It consisted of some Jews, but later was predominantly Gentile. This church soon attracted the attention of the apostles at Jerusalem, and Barnabas was sent to oversee the work.² We pass to the second phase of the church's history, where we find the Acts a little more suggestive of events which followed the visit of Barnabas.

b. Second Phase of its History

Barnabas' visit revealed that the grace of God had worked to prosper the Christian group at Antioch.

.

1. Stinespring: op. cit., p. 11c
2. Acts 11:22

He immediately encouraged them, and the "result of his course of ministration—*παρεκάλει*, imperfect—was a great increase to the congregation."¹

Barnabas decided that Saul, with whom he had become acquainted, was peculiarly well suited to the needs of this group. He went forth to Tarsus to seek Saul.² In discovering the last great apostle, if for nothing else, Barnabas is to be acclaimed, and for his judgment accredited a position of first rank among the important geni of the early church. The momentous meeting took place in 42/43 A.D.,³ and

"with the advent of Barnabas and Saul, its (the church's) history enters a new phase. It (Antioch) became the centre of progress and of historical interest in the church."⁴

The two friends returned to Antioch and spent the rest of the year teaching and ministering to the disciples there.⁵

Paul had not yet been commissioned to go directly to the Gentiles. In his sojourn at Antioch with Barnabas, was he not preparing himself, by careful study of the characteristics of this predominantly Grecian congregation, for his future work? Their needs were the world's

.

1. Ramsay: op. cit., p. 45

2. Acts 11:25

3. Paul being away some twelve years in Cilicia after his conversion (cf. Ramsay: Pauline and Other Studies, p. 73) makes the year most likely 43 A.D.

4. Ramsay: St. Paul, the Traveller and Roman Citizen, p.45

5. Acts 11:26

need. In order to set the truth of Jesus Christ before the nations he must first learn to present it in intelligible form. When he was prepared by actual experience and contact with pagans in Cilicia and with Gentiles at Antioch, he was ready to answer the call, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."¹

(1) First Called "Christians"

At Antioch the epithet "Christian" was given to the disciples.² The name was of Gentile, not Jewish origin. "If Jews had called the disciples 'Christians' they would in a way have been admitting that Jesus was the Christ."³ Morton suggests:

"It was in Antioch, the home of catchword and nickname, that the term 'Christian' was first used to describe members of the early church."⁴

The name was, no doubt, a popular, slang expression, perhaps even a term of ridicule and disparagement.

(2) Famine and the Antiochian Collection

The great famine in Palestine probably occurred in 46 A.D., as signified by Agabus, in the reign of Claudius.⁵ A collection was undertaken and ultimately sent to Jerusalem by the hand of Barnabas and Saul; and all

.

1. Acts 13:2

2. Acts 11:26

3. Robinson, W. R.: The Life of Paul, p. 69

4. Morton: In the Steps of St. Paul, pp. 108f

5. Cf. Acts 27-30

this was done before the actual famine occurred, the plans for the future being made in full reliance on the prophecy.¹

The help of the Antiochian congregation in this time of need established a firm bond of fellowship between it and the Jerusalem congregation, and helped smooth the road to the unity later attained at the Jerusalem council.²

Robinson notes the significance of this brotherly help, along three different lines: In the direction of a Christian idea of the community of goods; again, every seed planted now yielded sixty and a hundred fold at the conference in which Paul pleaded for the Gentiles; and, finally, the relationship of Barnabas and Paul (and later John Mark) probably hastened the larger missionary enterprise upon which they so soon afterward embarked.³

(3) Its Organization

We have a reference in Acts⁴ which gives a hint of the organization of the church at Antioch. It is to be noted that Luke here for the first time in his chronicle uses the word ἐκκλησία—church. Thus a new stage in

.

1. Ramsay: St. Paul the Traveller, p. 50. We can not be sure that Saul accompanied Barnabas to Jerusalem. Paul makes no mention of a visit there at this time. Cf. Gal. 1:18-2:1. Cf. Robinson: op. cit., pp. 79ff; also Ramsay: op. cit., pp. 61ff.
2. Acts ch. 15
3. Cf. Robinson: op. cit., pp. 70-72
4. Acts 13:1

its development is marked. It is no longer a mere group of disciples, it is recognized as the church in Antioch.

Here are found two groups of workers, prophets and teachers. It is interesting that no mention of Paul, as an apostle, is made. Bishop Lightfoot considers that Barnabas and Saul were not yet elevated to the rank of apostles.¹ Our view concurs with Ramsay's, that Barnabas and Saul were apostles before this.² Saul in Galatians attributes his call to the Lord Himself, and as received at his conversion. Later, at the Jerusalem council, his right to claim apostleship was granted.³ Acts 13:1 merely says there were teachers and prophets at Antioch, and also Saul. In the eyes of the church, at this time the question of Paul's status probably had not arisen, and it is not of any moment to Luke in his narrative, or to us either at this point.

A new start seems to be made by Luke at this place.⁴ Himself a Gentile, the author attaches great importance to this moment when the development of the early churches beyond the borders of Syria was about to begin. Saul started his journey from a recognized church, its standing as such having already been attested. From the

.

1. Cf. Ramsay: op. cit., p. 67, referring to Lightfoot (ed. Galat. p. 96)
2. Cf. Ramsay: op. cit., p. 67
3. Galatians 2
4. "Now ...", Acts 13:1

first a mission church, it ever burned with a zeal to spread the Gospel which claimed her and now motivated its recipients to open the door of the church to the Gentile world.

"Separate me Barnabas and Saul"; world evangelization began at Antioch; it continues, it shall continue, for so the Lord has ordained it.

2. An Evangelizing Center

From Antioch the three missionary journeys of Paul started, and all but the last ended there. The first journey finds Saul and Barnabas successful; "a door of faith unto the Gentiles" had been assuredly opened.¹ At the Jerusalem council, Saul receives the right hand of fellowship and his apostleship, his teachings, and his plans for future missionary work were accepted.²

A study of Paul's plan of missionary procedure shows that he pursued a definite, carefully planned policy. Robinson claims that his ambition involved four things. The first element in his plan was "The selection of strategic points of the Empire as the places of his activity."³ Antioch, located on the high road from the East to the West, with a vast world commerce, was one of these centers.

.

1. Acts 14:29

2. Cf. Acts 15; Gal. 2:9

3. Robinson: op. cit., p. 74

As the point of embarkation, its influence was predominant in directing his activities. Paul had been born and bred at Tarsus, a Hellenistic city such as Antioch; in both he found a compatible environment, one which encouraged his appeals to the Gentile world.

The second principle was that "After selection of strategic points the next step ... was the establishment of Christian Communities ... and the nourishment of them ... to enable them to stand alone."¹ In the case of Antioch, Paul had worked to develop a strong congregation as a supply base, before he began his journeys. Here he had driven the stake, from which point he could return whenever it was necessary for him to do so. Here he was welcome and found the church in accord with his methods and activities.²

"A third item in the program was the leaving of the surrounding regions to be reached from these centers."³ Our thesis has shown that, from a cultural standpoint, Antioch admirably served its hinterland. That it did so religiously is a corollary beyond any dispute.

Finally, Paul's plan "involved the extension of his own efforts through Asia Minor, Greece, Italy, and even Spain."⁴ From Antioch alone could these places be reached. "... the covering of the Empire with a chain of

.

1. Robinson: op. cit., p. 75
2. Acts 14:26
3. Robinson: op. cit., p. 75
4. Ibid.

churches located in strategic centers of population"¹ was Paul's chief motivation. The eye link in this chain of cities was Antioch, in greatness the third city of the Roman Empire, in point of population the most dense next to Rome itself.

Of the growth of the Antiochian church itself we know little. In the early fourth century, Chrysostom says: "I suppose that by the grace of God they that assemble themselves here amount to the number of one hundred thousand."² The church grew slowly and steadily till it became the center of the Syrian church and the great Antiochian theological school.

3. Bousset's Suggestions

Bousset, an exponent of liberal theology in Germany, has evolved a very ingenious theory in an endeavor to explain the rapid spread of Christianity in the first century.³ He views Jesus as a simple carpenter, condemned as a blasphemer, crucified, dead and buried. Bousset strips Jesus of his divinity, and then tries to explain how, after only twenty years have passed, we find the Nazarene proclaimed and accepted by men in the center of the Roman Empire as Savior and Lord.

.

1. Robinson: op. cit., p. 75
2. Chrysostom—Ante and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, Vol. X, p. 510
3. Cf. Bousset, Wilhelm: Kyrios Christos, passim

Bousset tries to solve his riddle in Antioch. Here was the center of Hellenistic and pagan superstition. Daphne was the headquarters for the Adonis cult and of the belief in dying and again-living gods. Each year Adonis would perish and each year rise again, a perennially youthful lord of his cult and its devotees. In such an atmosphere, with a well-established precedent, it was easy to perpetrate a hoax and concoct a story which would seem feasible to a credulous people. Christianity for Bousset is just another Oriental religion among many, with a resurrected lord. Antioch provided the machinery and gave the impulse which sent this myth throughout the Roman Empire where gullible people were easily beguiled into accepting it for truth.

The answer to such an erroneous theory is simple and evident. From the chronological point of view it is absolutely untenable. Immediately after the Lord's resurrection there were believers, teachers, and prophets in Jerusalem. In 31 A.D. Paul was converted, in 49 A.D. Peter and Paul were in agreement upon all the essentials of their faith. Simple historical fact and evidence thus show that Bousset's contentions are totally in error. There was not sufficient time to have developed such a myth. From the first, men who were in a position to examine the evidence concerning the truth of the resurrected Lord, and did so, found it intact in every respect.¹

.

1. Cf. Acts 9:1-9

Bousset tries to explain a unique and tremendous phenomenon with a commonplace, rather makeshift explanation. Sugar and water will not fire a cannon, and a myth will not suffice to explain Christianity. Behind the phenomena of Christian belief there is always the noumena of Christian reality. Antioch did provide the machinery for the propagation of the Gospel, but the fact and message of the resurrection which it contained was the truth and power which set the world afire and turned it upside down.

4. Summary and Conclusion

A strange coalition of circumstances beginning three hundred years before His coming, contributed largely to make the world ready for Christ. Our study of the unique rôle which Antioch in Syria played in this preparation shows that the divine hand had marshalled the forces which were to expedite the dissemination of the news of His Son's advent to a waiting world.

Our first chapter showed how Syria was ploughed by Egypt, Assyria, and Persia to make the land ready for the fruitful seed of Macedonian culture which Alexander planted therein. The history and contribution of the Seleucidae, which occupied our attention in the second chapter, portray them as the guardians and patrons of the Grecian culture which was their heritage and their legacy

to posterity. Chapter three presents the city of Antioch in its position of centrality between the Eastern and Western world, a deposit of Hellenistic civilization which fitted it to be the receptor of the Gospel as it was relayed from Jerusalem and Judaism to the Mediterranean world. Here, too, we saw that Rome protected Hellenism from an ever-threatening barbarism which might have destroyed the city and the culture which it represented.

That the rôle played by Antioch in the early church is an important one, is shown by our fourth and concluding chapter. As the mother of the Gentile church, we find that our religion became as much Greek as it was Hebrew, and thus a philosophy as well as a faith.

As the meeting place of many civilizations, but the guardian of one, and as the locale of the first Gentile church, Antioch has a unique claim upon our interest. The disciples at Jerusalem had been little more than the exponents of another Jewish sect. When Paul, after his conversion, was ready to depart to evangelize the world, he did so from Antioch, where the Gentile church already existed to show that a Gentile world was ready to receive the message he bore.

During a period of some twelve years after the resurrection of our Lord, efforts to liberate the church from the synagogue and Mosaism were being made. Peter had moved in this direction in the baptism of Cornelius,

but it was at Antioch that a democratic, Hellenistic congregation forced the issue and won the freedom which spread Christianity throughout the world.

In the divine economy, the city had been placed in a strategic position, so that from its commanding situation it naturally became the keystone city of Pauline missions and indispensable in the transmission of the Christian message.

Her glory now is more than that of "sunshine lying over desolate hillsides," as Morton has it. We honor Antioch now, for there the Christian name and Christian missions had their birth.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

- The Apocrypha: Authorized Version. University Press, Oxford
- Chrysostom: Vol. XII, 1st Series. Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. Schaff and Wace, editors. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1901
- Eusebius: Vol. I, 2d Series. Idem
- Ignatius: Vol. I, 1st Series. Idem
- The Holy Bible: American Revised Edition. Thomas Nelson and Sons, New York, 1901
- Novum Testamentum Graece: Eberhard Nestle, ed. Novis curis elaboravit Erwin Nestle. 16th ed. Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1936
- Josephus: Antiquities of the Jews. Tr. by William Whiston. Thomas Nelson and Sons, New York, 1886
- Philo: Tr. by Colson and Whitaker. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1929
- Plutarch: Lives. Tr. by Stewart and Long. G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., London, 1924
- Polybius: Tr. by E. S. Shuckburgh. Macmillan and Co., New York, 1889
- Princeton University: Archaeological Expedition in Syria. Report, 1934
- Xenophon: Anabasis

Secondary Sources

- Acton, A. A.: O'er Land and Sea with the Apostle Paul. Fleming H. Revell Co., New York, 1933
- Baumann, Emile: Saint Paul. Harcourt, Brace and Co., New York, 1929
- Belloc, Hilaire: The Battleground Syria and Palestine. J. B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia, 1936
- Bevan, Edwyn R.: The House of Seleucus. Two vols. Edward Arnold, London, 1902
- "Seleucid Dynasty," Vol. XX, Encyclopedia Britannica
- Booth, H. K.: The Bridge between the Testaments. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1929
- Bouchier, E. S.: A Short History of Antioch. Basil Blackwell, London, 1921
- Breasted, James Henry: Ancient Times. Ginn & Co., New York, 1916
- Clemen, Carl: Religions of the World. George C. Harrap, London, 1931
- Gibbon, Edward: The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. John Murray, London, 1887
- Glover, T. R.: The Influence of Christ in the Ancient World. Vols. I and III. Yale University Press, New Haven, 1929
- Gregg, David: Between the Testaments. Funk and Wagnalls, New York, 1907
- Hume, Robert Ernest: The World's Living Religions. Revised. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1930
- Kraeling, Carl H.: "The Jewish Community at Antioch"; Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. LI, Part II, June, 1932

- Lindsay, T. M.: The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries. Reprint. George H. Doran Co., New York
- Macalister, R. A. S.: A Century of Excavation in Palestine. Fleming H. Revell Co., New York, 1925
- Macduff, J. R.: Footsteps of St. Paul. Robert Carter & Bros., New York, 1861
- Mackay, H. F. B.: The Adventure of Paul of Tarsus. Morehouse Publishing Co., Milwaukee, 1931
- Milton, John: Paradise Lost
- Morton, H. V.: In the Steps of St. Paul. Dodd, Mead & Co., New York, 1936
- Newman, A. H.: A Manual of Church History. American Baptist Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1904
- Orr, James: Neglected Factors in the Study of the Early Progress of Christianity. A. C. Armstrong, New York, 1899
- Ottley, R. L.: A Short History of the Hebrews. Macmillan Company, New York, 1901
- Pember, G. H.: The Great Prophecies of the Centuries concerning Israel and the Gentiles. Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1895
- Price, Rebecca R.: The Contribution of Alexandria to the Preparation of the World for Christianity. Thesis; The Biblical Seminary in New York, 1934
- Rawlinson, George: A Manual of Ancient History. Harper & Bros., New York, 1871
- Ramsay, W. M.: Pauline and other Studies. A. C. Armstrong and Son, New York, 1906
- St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1898
- Renan, Ernest: The Apostles. Carleton, New York, 1866

- Robinson, C. E.: A History of Greece. Thomas H. Crowell Co., New York, 1929
- Robinson, W. R.: The Life of Paul. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1918
- Rogers, Robert W.: A History of Babylonia and Assyria. Two vols. 3d ed. Eaton & Mains, New York, 1900
- Rostovtzeff, M.: A History of the Ancient World, Vol. I. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1930
- Sabatier, A.: The Apostle Paul. Tr. by A. M. Hellier. Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1906
- Schaff, Philip: History of the Christian Church. Vol. I. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1904
- Schürer, Emil: The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ. Charles Scribner & Sons, New York
- Smith, George Adam: Historical Geography of the Holy Land. 16th ed. Hodder & Stoughton, New York
- Stinespring, W. F.: The Description of Antioch in Codex Vaticanus Arabicus 286. Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1932
- Tarn, W. W.: Hellenistic Civilization. Edward Arnold & Co., London, 1931
- Taylor, W. M.: Paul the Missionary. Harper and Brothers, New York, 1882
- Thomson, J. E. H.: "Alexander"; International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia
- Wallace, Lew: Ben Hur. Harper & Bros., New York, 1922
- Wheeler, B. I.: Alexander the Great. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1900

Non-English Works

Materials in Latin such as K. O. Mueller's Antiquitates Antiochenae, and others in German and French, have been translated in toto or in part, as needed, into English. I wish to thank all those who have so graciously assisted me in this work.

- Bousset, Wilhelm: Kyrios Christos. Geschichte des Christusglaubens von den Anfängen des Christentums bis Irenaeus. Vandenhoeft & Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1921 (His constructions are subject to revision.)
- Förster, R.: Antiochia am Orontes. Jahrbuch des K. deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, XII, 1897 (A supplement to Mueller.)
- Mueller, Karl O.: Antiquitates Antiochenae. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen 8, 1832-1837 (Basic to any study of this sort.)
- Leclercq, Dom: "Antioche (archéologie)" in Cabrol and Leclercq: Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne, Vol. I, Cols. 2359-2427 (An article dealing largely with Christian antiquities —based in part on Mueller.)

Encyclopaedias

- Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature: John McClintock and James Strong, ed. Harper & Bros., New York, 1871
- Encyclopaedia Britannica: Fourteenth Edition. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., New York, 1929
- International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia: James Orr, ed. The Howard-Severance Co., Chicago, 1930
- Jewish Encyclopedia: Isidor Singer, Managing Editor. Funk and Wagnalls Co., New York, 1906
- Religious Encyclopaedia or Dictionary. Philip Schaff, Ed. Funk and Wagnalls Co., New York, 1882
- Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge: S. M. Jackson, ed. Funk and Wagnalls Co., New York, 1912