

Andrea U. De Giorgi (ed.): *Antioch on the Orontes. History, Society, Ecology, and Visual Culture*. Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press 2024. XXXVI, 512 pp., 78 ill., 6 maps, 4 tables, 20 diagrams, 21 plans, 128 plates. £ 140.00. ISBN: 978-1-108-83399-8.

Andrea U. De Giorgi opens his brief introduction (“Antioch on the Orontes. An Introduction”, pp. 1–5) to this volume with a reference to the catastrophic earthquake that struck the Turkish city of Antakya the year before its publication, highlighting the belief, held by himself and the contributors, that the disasters suffered by the historical city of Antioch did not spell the doom of a “lost city,” but showed the resilience and adaptability of its inhabitants. This belief is, indeed, a thread that runs through what he presents as “a comprehensive treatment of the material culture, ecology, and religion [...] which changed the ancient world in fundamental ways” (p. 2). De Giorgi’s stated intention is to counteract the incoherence of the literary evidence, in which “the voices of the actors that made Antioch are missing” and we have no information about “the daily routines of Antioch’s 99 percent of the population” (p. 3), whereas “the people of Antioch as a body ultimately take center stage in this book” (p. 5). But I doubt that any study of humans in the aggregate can ever answer the questions De Giorgi poses; we can only hope to encounter individuals, and optimally through their own words. After a brief summary of the most prominent past scholarship on Antioch and current projects, he lays out the plan of the present work: “This theme-based survey of Antioch’s society and built environment is a reference work that will supplement the main textual sources. It illustrates key themes, and is both concise and user-friendly; more importantly, it is a versatile compendium for a [...] wide variety of teaching needs” (p. 4). He then gives a list of the twelve main themes of the book, but some of these themes are treated in only one contribution, and there are simply too many to afford the collection as a whole any unity beyond the fact that they are all about Antioch. Despite the commendable aspirations of De Giorgi, this volume is what most collections of papers are: a disparate assortment of contributions of uneven quality and importance, reflecting the varied interests – and abilities – of the individual authors, rather than the synthetic aims of the editor.

In “The History of Antioch: Written Sources: A Survey” (pp. 9–21), Catherine Saliou opens the collection of chapters with a review of the most important textual sources for the history of Antioch, especially its fabric,

from the Hellenistic era to the close of Late Antiquity with the Persian occupation and Arab conquest. She collects the principal testimonies to the foundation, construction, expansion, and rebuilding of the city – as well as the disasters that necessitated these re-buildings – throughout the ancient period. She reminds her readers that, although most surviving works produced in and describing Antioch come from Late Antiquity, they must be handled as products of their own time and not necessarily preferred to earlier but sparser sources. Her chapter is also a warning that this collection as a whole is about the physical setting and structure of Antioch, sometimes as a stage for social drama, but not really about Antioch as a literary and intellectual centre of the ancient Mediterranean world.

Stephen Batiuk's chapter, therefore, "The Geomorphology of the Greater Antioch Region" (pp. 22–30), provides an appropriate second opening to the collection. Batiuk begins with a thorough and precise description of the Antioch region in geological terms, which, I confess, was something of a hurdle for a philologist like me. But the difficulty provided reassurance that I was in the hands of an expert when I turned to his explanations of how the lay of the land has affected human activity around Antioch. Most significantly Batiuk describes how twentieth-century hydrological interference led to the disappearance of the lake and marshes once prominent on the plain of Antioch and a drastic reduction in the fertility of the soil, how the silting of the Orontes delta has turned successive ports into inland settlements, and how sea winds and Antioch's situation in a gorge combine to make it wetter than many Mediterranean cities.

It is probably not unusual to think of Antioch as the capital of the Seleucid kingdom, even founded as the Seleucid capital, but in "Seleucid Antioch: From Colony to Capital" (pp. 31–42) Boris Chrubasik shows that Antioch faced a number of rivals for title of the royal city of the Seleucids and only eventually *became* the capital of the truncated Seleucid realm in the middle of the second century BC. He readily acknowledges that our evidence for this matter – as often for the whole Hellenistic period – is scanty, but skillfully exploits every piece to draw out a timeline and process whereby Antioch achieved pre-eminence amongst Seleucid cities. An assessment of the testimony of the ancient historians on the relation of the Seleucid kings and their courts to the cities within their borders is only his first step; he turns to the archaeological evidence for the socio-economic implications of royal residence in several places, to the distribution of references to Antioch

in the Babylonian Astronomical Diaries, and to a telling inscription from Teos granting citizenship to the people of three Seleucid royal cities, Antioch first among them. The chief sign of Antioch's primacy, however, appears to be the importance of the royal mint located there and its relatively large output. Chrubasik's clincher is that the citizenry of Antioch began to behave like the populace of a capital, acting as kingmakers and expressing popular opinion through riot and acclamation.

Eduardo García-Molina offers a potted history of Antioch's sister city: "Seleucia Pieria in the Seleucid Period" (pp. 43–56). Just as we are apt to think of Antioch as the capital of the Seleucid kingdom, we tend to think of Seleucia Pieria as the port of Antioch, but García-Molina shows that it was an important city in its own right and had the potential to displace Antioch as the capital, if it were not for the Ptolemaic occupation of Seleucia from 246 until 219. The occupation itself is one of many indications that Seleucia Pieria was a desirable piece of real estate: one of the few viable ports on the northern Levantine coast, linking the Mediterranean and the Syrian interior, so at the nexus of extensive trade networks, and an easily defensible fortress thrust into the centre of the Seleucid domains. It was also home to the Nikatoreion, the tomb of Seleucus I and the focus of his posthumous cult. García-Molina is thorough, beginning with the situation of Seleucia Pieria and enumerating its resources, exploiting archaeological, epigraphic, and numismatic, as well as textual, evidence, and tracing known events in and around the port city from its foundation until the Roman conquest, but he is the first to concede that the material we have to work with is scanty so that we must often turn to comparison and supposition to clarify our picture of Seleucia Pieria.

In "The Antioch Mint: From Seleucus to the Roman Period" (pp. 57–77), Kevin Butcher provides an account of the output of the mint at Antioch – as well as, to some extent, the coinage in circulation in the Antioch region – from the city's foundation to the accession of Diocletian, tracing the coins produced first by a royal mint, then an autonomous municipality within the Roman Empire, and a regional centre for the imperial mint. His treatment of the subject, giving a detailed and comprehensive description of the coinage over time, is among the chapters most likely to fulfill the stated intention of the book under review to be a reference volume, but it does not lend itself to generalizations and summary conclusions. Nevertheless, Butcher ventures to remark on the enduring quality of the traditions of the

Antioch mint, which continued to employ the same preferred metals, denominations, and even design motifs (Zeus with Nike, Apollo, the civic Tyche) established in Seleucid times until the third century of Roman rule and beyond.

Grégoire Poccardi's chapter, "Antioch and Its Hellenistic Monuments" (pp. 78–88), uses the word "monuments" in a broad sense to include all of the public buildings and fortifications of the city. But even with this expansive definition, the physical remains of Hellenistic Antioch are, as Poccardi notes, rather scanty. So, for the most part, he conducts a survey of the literary evidence for the built environment of Antioch up to the Roman conquest. A great deal of this evidence comes from much later sources, especially Libanius and Malalas, but Poccardi does not attempt to assess their reliability – an effort that would be too involved and specific for the purposes of his contribution – and restricts himself to drawing up an inventory. This compilation is as thorough as possible. It includes buildings that appear in the myths and legends associated with the site of Antioch before its foundation, and Poccardi regularly proceeds under the not unreasonable assumption that buildings that distant sources credit to later Hellenistic or Roman rulers were actually the restorations of earlier buildings much closer in date to the city's foundation. Readers are presented with a catalogue of the reported buildings of Hellenistic Antioch; what they do with it is up to them.

Elizabeth M. Molacek writes her contribution, "Antioch's Visual Culture and Its Hellenistic Past" (pp. 89–106) on the horns of a dilemma. The material remains of Hellenistic Antioch are too meagre to permit an adequate picture of the city to be developed, but the physical evidence from ancient Antioch as a whole is too copious to be dealt with in a single chapter. Her solution is consistent with the reconstruction of Hellenistic Antioch on the basis of late antique sources: she presents the surviving art of Roman Antioch as the fruit of a persistent tradition that has its roots in the Hellenistic period. She discusses her contention under three heads. The figure of the civic Tyche, she asserts, was especially associated with Antioch and Euty-chides' statue of the Tyche of Antioch was the model not only for many later and lesser examples found at the city, but also for the form of the civic Tyche throughout the Graeco-Roman world. She surveys the mythological themes prevalent on the second to sixth-century mosaic pavements recovered from Antioch and counts them a celebration of the Hellenistic past. She also notes the particular resonance in an Antiochene setting of some of these mytho-

logical subjects, but when she offers water as a localized theme, the reader may have some trouble seeing this as a peculiarly Antiochene motif. Indeed, the reader may suspect that much of what Molacek considers evidence for the perpetuity of Antioch's Hellenistic past was really a participation in Graeco-Roman *paideia*, which was at least as much an element of the world of the Imperial as of the Hellenistic period.

Carlos F. Noreña conducts a rich and stimulating review of the city's place within the framework of Roman administration in "Antioch as a Provincial Capital" (pp. 109–118). He begins by stepping back and considering the nature of the Roman Empire as a prime example of the ancient empire, basically "big and weak" (p. 110), lacking the technology and manpower to exert total control, and so compelled to depend on the potential of armed force and the cooperation of local elites and to concentrate on controlling the sources of material resources, strategically important frontiers, and culturally, commercially, and politically significant centres. Antioch was one of these nodes of control for the Roman Empire. Noreña acknowledges that "provincial capital" was not a designation used by the Romans and reviews the factors that made Antioch the effective capital of Roman Syria. It was, in the first place, the seat of the governor, no matter how peripatetic his administration was. It was also the centre of the imperial cult of the Roman emperor for the province of Syria. Antioch's primacy was reflected in the extent to which the Romans lavished monuments upon the city, from public buildings to canal works on the rivers outside the city. And Antioch celebrated its own Olympic Games from the time of Augustus, signalling its status as a megalopolis. And the honorific title of metropolis spoke greater volumes for the ancients than does our designation of capital to us. Antioch's importance was an inheritance from its role as a royal city of the Seleucid kings, but also a consequence of its role as the hub of Roman military activity throughout the East, both policing the provincials and providing a bulwark against the Persians. On account of its importance, Antioch was governed by Romans of preeminent social and political status. The combination of the distance from the imperial centre, concentration of troops in a strategic position, and presence of powerful and ambitious elites proved a dangerous powder keg on more than one occasion. Antioch was the scene of the quarrel between Germanicus and Calpurnius Piso, made famous by Tacitus, and the headquarters of several rebels and would-be usurpers, as well as at least one kingmaker in the person of Vespasian's ally, Licinius

Mucianus. Altogether, Noreña gives his reader a vivid impression of Antioch's place in the Roman Empire and its continuing importance as a provincial capital.

The chapter introducing the archaeology of Antioch, by Gunnar Brands and Andrea U. De Giorgi, bears a revealing title: "Building Programs and Natural Disasters" (pp. 119–138). This survey of the development of the city of Antioch from Seleucus' foundation to the rebuilding under Justinian is as much about the setbacks to urban growth and embellishment as their advancement and about the gradual diminution of the city. It is, ironically for a discussion of archaeological remains, about what is not there to be seen. The failure of well-funded and well-staffed expeditions to locate the principal public buildings is repeatedly mentioned. And there is throughout an implicit admission that our picture of ancient Antioch depends far more on textual evidence than on what the spade has turned up. But the authors end on a positive note, taking the archaeological record as evidence of the resilience of Antioch's population and their dedication to a site whose shortcomings and dangers were made obvious by their own history.

At least one part of ancient Antioch is still visible today, that is the ruined city walls, although the pictures made by early modern visitors show how much of even these remains has disappeared in the relatively recent past. In a thoroughly detailed and richly illustrated contribution, "The City Walls of Antioch: How Many?" (pp. 139–163), Christiane Brasse examines the archaeological evidence for Antioch's fortifications and identifies no less than five phases of construction from the Hellenistic era to Late Antiquity, with contemporary regional parallels and occasional textual corroboration. The remains of the Hellenistic walls are largely limited to Mount Staurin; the wall ruins of the early Imperial period indicate the city at its greatest extent; and the late antique evidence indicates a contraction of Antioch's population and area, as well as numerous technical improvements. As Brasse indicates, it is not always possible to reconcile the material remains with the testimony of our written sources, but with all the evidence in hand, this effort will no doubt continue.

In a collection of studies on ancient Antioch that aims to highlight how its inhabitants lived their lives, a chapter like Mathias Döring's "Powerful Springs and Dangerous Torrents on Unsafe Ground" (pp. 164–180), detailing the engineering work that supplied the city with water and controlled flooding, is indispensable. Döring's contribution, however, filled as it is with

technical vocabulary and scientific formulae, is a daunting read for the non-specialist. The ample illustrations – maps, diagrams, and photographs of remains – only help so much. A bit of background on the problems and their solutions in layman’s terms might have helped the general reader to share Döring’s admiration for the achievement of the Roman engineers who directed and utilized countless cubic tons of water over centuries. It would also help the philologist to appreciate whether Döring’s references to the mention of various hydraulic works in Malalas’ *Chronicle* are merely speculative attempts to attach archaeological finds to literary evidence or a suggestion of some knowledge of Antioch’s water system on Malalas’ part. The chapter ends with a description of the efforts to keep the harbour of Seleucia Pieria free of sand and sediment – all too brief as the photographs of the diverting channel indicate that it was a truly stupendous work.

In his discussion of the domestic architecture of the Antioch region, “Housing in Daphne: Domestic Architecture in the Making” (pp. 181–206), Eric Morvillez concentrates on Daphne, rather than Antioch itself, because, as he explains, Antioch’s suburb affords more roughly complete ground plans than does the city itself. But even this evidence is fragmentary and resistant to a typology. And to a great extent these plans were produced in the process of an effort to salvage the mosaics on their floors, not to examine the layout of the houses themselves. So, what we have is a sampling of the layouts of houses belonging to the wealthy elite crowded into Daphne’s central residential area and laid out on a seemingly haphazard pattern. It can be hard – especially for anyone used to the regular plan of the Roman *domus* – to relate the plans, photographs, and Morvillez’s descriptions to one another. Nevertheless, he does draw out a progress through space, a traveller passing from the urban mass of Antioch through a verdant countryside to the equally dense concentration on a smaller scale at Daphne, and over time, as the houses of the third century and before were overbuilt from the fourth century on a grander scale, often encroaching on adjacent boulevards.

Nicole L. Berlin and Amy C. Miranda’s “The Antioch Mosaics: History, Chronology, and Theory” (pp. 207–224) is a model introduction for the uninitiated to an important aspect of the study of ancient Antioch. They begin with a painless history of the scholarship on the subject and then turn to a survey of pavement mosaics throughout the ancient Mediterranean, before focussing on Antioch in the second century, when the earliest evidence for mosaic production in the city occurs. They do not broach the question

of whether there was continuity from the Hellenistic period, which cannot be detected because of the paucity of remains from the Seleucid city, or the mosaics represent a Roman introduction. They then point to representative examples of pavement mosaics, century by century, until the Persian sack of 540, after which the tradition ceases for all intents and purposes. These examples are described in detail and bring out the characteristic features of mosaics in each period. The descriptions would have benefited from a greater share of the colour plates. Berlin and Miranda end with a discussion of “‘Ways Forward’” (p. 209), new interpretative approaches to the Antioch mosaics: taking account of the varied perspective of viewers, which acknowledges that the images will be seen and interpreted in different ways, even by the same person, although this does seem to involve a certain amount of guesswork; noting the contrast of geometric and figural designs as a guide not only to the hierarchy of rooms, but also to how spaces were intended to be entered and used; and an appreciation of how the mosaics were experienced, both seen and touched, in an immersive environment that also responded to daily traffic.

Alan M. Stahl’s chapter, “Coinage of and in Antioch in the Late Antique and Early Byzantine Periods” (pp. 225–243), begins with a survey of the activity at the mint in Antioch from the reign of Diocletian until it ceased production with the Persian invasion of Syria in 610, illustrating a variety of representative types. Most of the visual material, which predominates in the contribution, are charts and maps summarizing the findings of the FLAME project – Stahl refers to Princeton University’s “Framing the Late Antique and Medieval Economy” project without explaining what it is. The first set of graphs show that the heyday of the late antique Antioch mint was the fourth century, the only time it produced gold and silver coins, along with quantities of bronze coins, but also the period when it was gradually outstripped by the Constantinople mint, though there was a resurgence of bronze coin production early in the reign of Justinian. Next a series of maps shows the distribution of gold, silver, and bronze coins produced in Antioch in comparison with those produced in Constantinople. Gold and silver Antiochene coins show a movement northwest into Europe, though this may reflect a reporting bias, and Antiochene bronzes are better represented down the Levantine coast, even into Egypt. These patterns are paralleled by Constantinopolitan coins, though these are more widely and variously distributed. The last set of illustrations, plotted maps of Antioch and its vicinity

indicating finds of coins in the excavations, has no clear key and is consequently hard to follow.

Marilena Casella presents a study of “Women in Imperial Antioch” (pp. 247–260), though really it does not extend much beyond the fourth century, which provides the most ample literary evidence. The one concession to the “multifocal approach” (p. 247) she insists on is a glance at mosaics depicting women, from which she concludes that clothing was important to the construction of gender identity and fertility was key to a woman’s social function. For the most part, Casella depends on the testimony of Libanius. She admits at the outset that, in the absence of texts by women, “one must interrogate the writings and artefacts of men for partial information, as if they came through a filter” (p. 247), but does not outline a procedure for counteracting this filter. This would have been particularly valuable in the case of Libanius, who has plenty to say about women, but usually in his highly rhetorical and traditional manner. To what extent is he propounding a literary ideal, rather than reflecting contemporary reality? Casella deals with most of her material under the headings of marriage, household management, motherhood, and occasionally turns to Christian sources, but there is no discernment of any difference between old and new ways. A final section on charity and asceticism mentions only Christian examples. The discussion throughout is largely descriptive, but convoluted legal implications and family relations can at times make it difficult to follow. Despite Casella’s claim to have examined “couples of different social rank” (p. 257), her study suffers from the same limitation as most analyses of ancient Mediterranean society: our evidence comes from the literate and leisured upper classes, and discounts the vast majority of people – women, in this case.

Andrea Pellizzari addresses this neglected stratum of society in “The Middle Classes in Fourth-Century-CE Antioch: Tradesmen and Craftsmen in the Testimonies of Libanius and John Chrysostom” (pp. 261–271). He is upfront about deciphering the attitudes of his upper-class informants – he patronizing Libanius, who perceived an impassable gulf between his liberal vocation and the banausic professions, but still prided himself on his ability to easily socialize with the productive classes; Chrysostom, the preacher addressing a much wider audience, who insisted on the dignity of all honest work and was far more conscious of the poor – so that his contribution is as much a study of the esteem in which various trades were held as their role in Antiochene society. Pellizzari points out (p. 263) that Chrysostom (*Homily*

on *Matthew* 66.3) identifies the segment discussed in this chapter as representing roughly 90 percent of Antioch's population. Consequently, he does not treat this segment as a monolithic bloc of interest and identity, but as a continuum of wealth and prestige between the propertied aristocracy and the desperately poor. So, while Libanius might boast of Antioch's every need being catered to by merchants, the commercial classes were despised in comparison with the craftsmen. And then there is a perceptible hierarchy amongst the craftsmen, ranging from potters up to smiths. Some professions achieved a special position. Supplying a basic necessity and displaying a group solidarity, the bakers were often able to play a pivotal role in times of social and political turmoil. The value of their products gave the goldsmiths access to the highest levels of Antioch's civil and ecclesiastical establishment. Since they worked under government contract at essential occupations, the *monetarii* (mint workers) and *fabricenses* (arms factory workers) received special privileges. Altogether, Pellizzari manages to give a vivid glimpse of how most people lived in late antique Antioch without asking more of his sources than they can actually provide.

Jorit Wintjes examines the relation of Antioch with the army in his provocatively entitled contribution, "Antioch: A Military Metropolis?" (pp. 272–297). He begins by outlining the economic, social, and jurisdictional implications that the presence of a large number of soldiers and their accompanying personnel would have had for any Roman city. Much of this is based on reasonable, if often imaginative, speculation. It might be significant, however, that – despite the fact that the period when Antioch was most steadily used as a military headquarters coincides with the careers of two of our fullest literary sources, Libanius and John Chrysostom – there is little evidence to substantiate Wintjes' conjectures about the impact of a military presence in Antioch. No such objection can be raised to his careful history of the army in Antioch from the Seleucid foundation to the city's fall to the Arabs. Here he not only indicates the frequent occasions when the city served as a staging ground for field armies operating on the eastern frontier, but also attempts to determine whether or not there was a permanent garrison in Antioch and the extent to which the city built up an infrastructure to support the army's logistical requirements. Wintjes concludes by asserting that the gaps in the city's history and the disinclination of what evidence we do have to answer the relevant questions do not allow us to say whether Antioch was "a military city more than [...] other major cities throughout the empire" and

if Antioch remains very much a mystery, “it is a mystery shrouded in a military cloak” (p. 292).

In “Violence in Antioch” (pp. 298–311), Paweł Filipczak offers his readers a potted history of mob violence in Antioch. As he says, our sources provide very little evidence for violent crime on a smaller scale. Instances of mass violence are discussed under a number of heads: circus faction riots, with which Filipczak associates attacks on the Jewish community – it is questionable whether these should be called ‘pogroms’, as he does –, riots due to food shortages, price increases, and tax hikes, the very rare military revolts, and fighting between rival Christian sects. Filipczak provides some final analysis: he notes that high officials were often the victims of violence because they lacked any effective defence (a point which goes to the questions raised by the previous paper); he further asserts that faction riots can be distinguished from food riots because, whereas the latter could be anticipated as soon as it was noted that the harvest was bad, the former seem to have been spontaneous effusions of the enthusiasm of an athletic fan-club.

The focus on violence in Antioch is narrowed by Ari B. Finkelstein in his contribution, “Antiochene Riots against Jews in Malalas’s *Chronicle*” (pp. 312–329). It is somewhat disappointing that this is the only chapter in the entire volume dedicated to a study of what might well be our principal source for the history of Antioch from its foundation – or rather before then – to the end of Late Antiquity. Finkelstein’s essay, however, is not a disappointment at all. He takes as his starting point one of the most repugnant passages in Malalas (Ioh. Mal. 15.15), which records the emperor Zeno’s response to the riots of the Green faction in Antioch: “Why did they burn only the corpses of the Jews? For they should have burned the living Jews as well.” Rather than attempting to determine the historicity of this or other reported incidents of violence against Jews, as previous studies have done, he concentrates on how this passage fits into the broader context of Malalas’ *Chronicle*, especially as an articulation of its main purposes. He shows that this episode provides an implicit contrast between the weak handling of mob violence by Zeno, a bad emperor, and the strong and effective measures taken in the same regard by Anastasius, a good emperor. Perhaps more significantly, the depiction of the Jews as victims, not a force to be reckoned with, is consistent with what Elizabeth Jeffreys maintained was among Malalas’ principal intentions, namely to demonstrate that the seventh millennium had already

begun and to allay the fears of his contemporaries that the strife, disasters, and plagues that they witnessed were signs of the impending End Times.

Christine Shepardson pursues two aims in “Speaking of Jews: Late Antique Antioch’s Shifting Anti-Jewish Rhetoric” (pp. 330–342): to collect the evidence for the actual presence of Jews in Antioch from the fourth to the sixth century and to assess the mention of Jews in the sermons of John Chrysostom and Severus of Antioch. The two objectives are necessarily interconnected, since, apart from the oratory of the pulpit, the traces of Antiochene Jews are decidedly scant, occasional references in Libanius and the Talmud and a few widely scattered inscriptions. Shepardson presents John Chrysostom’s eight *Adversus Judaeos* homilies as the reaction of a leader of the Christian community to the easy cohabitation of Jews and Christians in Antioch, an expression of the dismay with which he beheld his flock celebrating Jewish holidays, showing reverence for synagogues and frequenting Jewish healers – all evidence for a vibrant Jewish community as much as the conditions that gave rise to anti-Jewish rhetoric. A century or so later, the Jews Severus of Antioch mentions in his sermons are not the neighbours of his audience, but the opponents of Christ and the Gospel in the Bible or the analogues of contemporary heretics in their doctrine and hermeneutics. While Shepardson is right to discount the historical reliability of the accounts of anti-Jewish violence in the *Chronicle* of John Malalas and see them rather as an extension of the rhetoric of Antioch’s bishops, her attempts to treat Malalas as an author we can know as well John Chrysostom and Severus – identifying without qualification his birthdate and ecclesiastical adherence, which we simply do not know – underscore the absence of a separate treatment of one of our principal sources on the history of Antioch. She ends her contribution on an apposite note: “The story of late antique Jews in Antioch is, thus, increasingly the story of how Christian authors spoke about Jews while evidence for a historical community of Jews in the city was fading from view” (p. 339).

In an admirably synthetic overview, “Antioch and the Political Economy of Empire in the Age of Justinian” (pp. 343–355), Peter Sarris establishes the place of Antioch in the movement of money and resources in the Roman Empire and beyond, especially in the first half of the sixth century. He begins by setting Antioch in the context of its own hinterland, noting that the archaeological evidence from the Syrian Limestone Massif has often been treated in isolation from Antioch and its wealthy citizens, who must have

had an interest in its agricultural production. He also traces the transition from a local agricultural economy largely owned and controlled by the Antiochene civic elite to one largely in the hands of the new administrative and senatorial elite of the Empire as a whole, observing that the Antiochenes were not necessarily losers in this transition, but often managed to integrate themselves successfully within the new systems of power and prestige. Antioch was also a hub for the international trade in luxury goods, especially silk, which benefited from Persian efforts to direct imports to the Mediterranean along overland routes. This benefit, however, was slender compensation for Antioch being the primary target of Persian military incursions. Antioch became the centre of Roman defensive efforts on the eastern frontier, resulting not only in enhanced fortifications for the city and surrounding towns and forts, but also a reorganization of administrative and military structures. Perhaps more than any other factor, though, as Sarris details, it was Antioch's prostration before repeated and devastating calamities – earthquakes, invasion and conquest, plague, and consequent famine – that drew the attention of imperial authorities and made Antioch and its environs “a net recipient of imperial tax revenues in the age of Justinian” (p. 349) in marked contrast to other regions, such as Egypt. These disasters also made Antioch a city with a substantially smaller population that “may have been not only especially economically vulnerable, but also especially socially volatile and politically restless” (p. 353).

In “The First Christians of Antioch” (pp. 359–370), Carson Bay traces the importance of Antioch to the early development of Christianity. Antioch, as Bay describes it, provided an ideal location for this development because it lay at the hub of several important routes of trade and travel, enjoyed security and stability due to the outsize military presence in the city, and had a large and established Jewish population. He further presents Antioch as the setting of the early Christian movement's most important initial interactions not only with Jews, but also with Greek culture and the Roman state. Jewish Christians in Antioch were the first to include Gentiles in their group and they, in dialogue with the Christian community in Jerusalem, made decisions about the extent to which a Jewish identity would be imposed on converts to Christianity. But even if we can say that Antioch was where Christians learned to distinguish themselves from others and to live within the broader society, Bay is careful to note that we often have more questions than answers about the nascent Antiochene Church's interaction with Jews, Greeks,

and Romans. As Bay outlines, Antioch offered a number of formative influences to the early Church: from the integration of the distinct leadership styles of Peter and Paul into the office of the bishop to the impetus for far-reaching missionary efforts, from bishops and martyrs who were heroes for generations of Christians to the heresiarchs and false teachers who were the most insidious villains of their stories, as well as important contributions to the early Christian literary genres of martyrology, apologetics, and hermeneutics.

Constantine A. Bozini's "Christian Antioch: A Portrait of the Bishops of the Local Church" (pp. 371–390) is a paean to the bishops of Antioch who were also productive literary figures. His piece describes the careers of these writer-bishops and their contributions to development of the early Church's community and thought, treating in turn Ignatius, Theophilus, Paul of Samosata, Eustathius and Meletius, Flavian along with his disciple John Chrysostom, and Severus. Bozini writes from the perspective of Chalcedonian Orthodoxy, so some of these men are treated as heresiarchs, though even their genius is admitted. This chapter offers a worthwhile introduction to each of the figures discussed, but especially in a collection of this sort it is curious that none of them are really treated in their Antiochene context or in regard to the distinctly Antiochene character of their contributions. A further irony is that while Bozini sets out to describe a Christian Antioch in contradistinction to the Hellenic city extolled by Libanius in the *Antiochikos* (p. 372), he often speaks of his subjects' engagement with Graeco-Roman culture, be it Ignatius' adoption of civic rhetoric and secular administrative structures for the government of the Church or the carefully calibrated and well-informed apologetics of Theophilus.

The Achilles' heel of Bernadette Cabouret's "Julian in Antioch" (pp. 391–405) is evident from the outset. When she enumerates our sources for Julian's reign and especially his visit to Antioch, there are the writings of Julian himself and his supporters, such as Ammianus Marcellinus and Libanius, and then there are the Christian authors, who "provide very critical, if not downright biased" (p. 391) views. All of our sources on Julian are, of course, biased, some in favour of the emperor and some against him. If Cabouret wishes to add to the catalogue of *laudes Juliani*, she will find herself in some good company, as the Apostate has hardly ceased to be a lightning rod for partisan comment since he took the throne, but her paper can hardly be expected to contribute to real historical understanding. Another problem

reveals itself when Cabouret goes looking for Julian's material contributions to Antioch in terms of construction and rebuilding – indeed, asking if we might “speak of a ‘Julian topography’ within the Syrian capital” (p. 395). Even she concedes that much of Julian's building program in Antioch must be considered imaginary and illusory, but the premise behind her investigation is dubious. During his reign, Julian spent more time in Antioch than in any other major city, but he was only there seven or eight months. Antioch was important to Julian, but Julian was not necessarily important to Antioch. When Cabouret queries Julian's place in the religious life of Antioch, her answers are predictable. She is defensive about all of Julian's measures and dismissive of all of the complaints of the Christians. Why? Because “the pagans, whose sources are less numerous but very close to the facts and events, [...] give a more nuanced picture of Julian's stay” (p. 400).

Wendy Mayer's “The Churches of Antioch in the Life of the City” (pp. 406–419) may be read as a prolegomenon to the study of the social and architectural history of the church buildings of Antioch. She summarily reviews the archaeological and textual scholarship on the topic, indicating that progress in the field has been sluggish. She provides three useful catalogues: a list of all the churches referred to in Antioch and its suburbs from the early Christian to the Crusader periods to the number of fifty-four, a reign-by-reign chronology of activity related to the physical edifices of churches in Antioch from Constantine to Heraclius, and a series of chronologies for individual churches covering the later period after the initial Arab conquests. Then she propounds a number of generalizations that must be borne in mind when examining the evidence for Antioch's churches: the multiple identities that would go along with the “polysectarian” (p. 406) nature of the Christian community of Antioch; the divergence between the creeds of the ecclesiastical elite, which insisted on definitions and distinctions, and the often indiscriminating and practical interests of much of the laity; the fact that churches were not merely locations of formal worship, but could serve many different functions. But Mayer never really offers a comprehensive picture of the churches of Antioch; that would seem to await some future publication.

The doctrinal disputes that are such a significant part of the life of the Church, society, and politics in Late Antiquity can be confusing for theologians, let alone laymen who simply wish to navigate their way through this period. So it is to Frédéric Alpi's credit that in “Who is Jesus Christ?

Theological Controversies in Antioch (Fourth to Sixth Centuries)” (pp. 420–429) he offers a fairly comprehensible overview of these disagreements from the perspective of Antioch, which city and its bishops often found themselves at the very centre of the dogmatic maelstrom. It is necessary for Alpi to condense his discussion of a sprawling and complicated topic, so that important issues receive only a very brief explication. For instance, Apollinaris of Laodicea, who espoused a subtle and complex teaching in regard to Christ that might be described as either a precursor of Miaphysitism or the first great Christological heresy, is simply described as “a Nicene theologian with dubious Christology” (p. 422). Nevertheless, Alpi manages to indicate how doctrinal debates were influenced by such factors as the distinctive hermeneutic traditions of Antioch and Alexandria and the intervention of the imperial government. If the theological controversies of Late Antiquity remain confusing, however, that is due to Alpi’s subject, not his straightforward presentation of some very difficult material. Anyone seeking a brief and clear introduction to the topic could do far worse than turning to this chapter.

As the author himself indicates (p. 447), Antioch offers a particularly rich abundance of textual and archaeological evidence for the occurrence of earthquakes in an ancient city, and so Jordan Pickett’s “Earthquakes and State Response at Antioch: Hellenistic to Early Byzantine” (pp. 433–450) should offer some important insights on its chosen topic. So much space is taken up with expressions of dissatisfaction with the available data for the purposes of modern investigation, a catalogue of seismic activity in Antioch from the Hellenistic through late antique periods, and a discussion of the accuracy and reliability of the testimonials to these earthquakes, however, that the stated subject receives only perfunctory treatment. The measures taken by various emperors after an earthquake, such as the remission of taxes and donations of money, are regularly described as “typical” (p. 438), but, while there is in at least one instance an attempt to determine if these measures were sufficient, there is no real examination of *why* they should be typical. The conclusion is just general and intangible enough to raise the suspicion that this paper was first written with a different scope and intention and then repurposed to fill a particular gap.

Merle Eisenberg’s “Disasters and Divine Wrath: Antioch in the Homilies and Histories of Late Antiquity” (pp. 451–463) focuses on how what he labels “the disaster-divine wrath discourse” (p. 453) was deployed at Antioch.

Eisenberg glibly asserts that this discourse “followed a three-step process” (ibid.) involving the sin of the community, disaster as punishment for that sin, and a call to repentance to atone for sin. He sees this discourse as evidence of the Christianization of late antique society, but precedents for the basic pattern could have readily been found well back into pagan antiquity. Concentrating on authors working in and around Antioch, he finds this stereotyped discourse fleshed out in the sermons of Isaac and Severus. He then goes looking for it in the histories of John Malalas, Evagrius Scholasticus, and Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, though it is never very clear whether he is discussing the adoption of a homiletic framework and its imposition on an historical narrative or a social assimilation of patterns inculcated by preachers as evident in actual events accurately recorded by these historians. Considering the topic of this chapter, the complete neglect of the work of Jonas Borsch (and Laura Carrara), who wrote the book or rather books on earthquakes in the ancient Mediterranean, “Erdbeben in der Antike. Deutungen – Folgen – Repräsentationen” and “Erschütterte Welt. Soziale Bewältigung von Erdbeben im östlichen Mittelmeerraum der Antike”, is remarkable.¹

In “Infectious Disease and Its Repercussions in Sixth-Century Antioch” (pp. 464–488), Lee Mordechai examines the evidence for epidemics in sixth-century Antioch including and after the so-called Justinianic Plague of 542. He begins with a review of the literary testimony to “disease events” (p. 465) included in two earlier catalogues prepared by other scholars and tries to assess them in terms of the identity of the disease the witnesses discuss, of their chronological certainty, and whether or not the epidemic reached Antioch. This survey is confused by the fact that Mordechai uses the general term ‘plague’ to refer to the bubonic plague specifically, though he never makes this clear – nor whether he was on the hunt for instances of the bubonic plague in particular or epidemics of any sort all along. From a long list of sources, Mordechai then turns to Evagrius Scholasticus, our most eloquent witness to the ravages of plague in the Antioch region, and uses some rather arbitrary and subjective criteria to downplay the seriousness of the impact of the plague on Antioch as compared to its effects on Constantinople. He finally turns to the evidence for epidemics and their consequences

1 J. Borsch/L. Carrara (eds.): *Erdbeben in der Antike. Deutungen – Folgen – Repräsentationen*. Tübingen 2016 (Bedrohte Ordnungen 4); J. Borsch: *Erschütterte Welt. Soziale Bewältigung von Erdbeben im östlichen Mittelmeerraum der Antike*. Tübingen 2018 (Bedrohte Ordnungen 11).

in the numismatic and epigraphic record. Considering Mordechai's careful scrutiny of the reliability of the evidence offered by texts, the absence of any discussion of the limitations and qualifications on the evidence for disease we can derive from coins and inscriptions is remarkable by its absence – especially when Mordechai notes that very little discernable correlation can be observed between the chronologies of disease events and coin and inscription production respectively. This equivocation makes Mordechai's willingness to conclude “that plague and other infectious diseases were not massively destructive or lethal in Antioch over the mid [*sic*] and late sixth century” (p. 483) all the more surprising.

The collection of essays ends with “Memory and the City: Reflections from the Post-Interesting on Islamic Antioch” (pp. 489–506), a title whose meaning is incomprehensible, in which A. Asa Eger urges the reader to take an interest not so much in the history of Antioch after the Arab conquest as in accounts of Antioch's past generated in the Islamic world. Eger does not, however, make a very persuasive case for doing so. He begins by setting out the details of several medieval accounts of Antioch's foundation – one set of which he leaves entirely unidentified – which on the whole appear to be murky legends. We should attend to authors who diverge from the standard historical record, but a detailed explanation of the motives and circumstances behind their deviation is what makes them interesting, and no such analysis is undertaken here. The same goes for the next section on the reputed activities of the Christian Apostles in the memory of Islamic Antioch, which concentrates on two Qu'ranic passages that were interpreted as being set in Antioch and the tombs venerated in Antiochene mosques. A third section deals with sites that connected the region of Antioch to the lives of older figures from Jewish history, especially the Maccabean martyrs and the coupling of Moses and the mysterious Green One, al-Khidr. Eger shows that themes from ancient accounts of Antioch recur in Islamic texts, but he does not demonstrate their value to students of either the history or historiography of Antioch.

This volume represents a worthwhile addition to the scholarship on Antioch, but it is also a collection of contributions of uneven value and significance. Some provide summaries of ground-breaking comprehensive studies or offer valuable new insights into specific topics, others represent lacklustre and disappointing efforts to cover all the ground in an ambitious survey. On the whole, however, De Giorgi is to be commended for bringing together an

assortment with more gold than dross. Nevertheless, one of the most troubling things about this book is that it serves as a reminder that academic books published in English must, at some point, receive the attention of an editor who is perfectly fluent in English and preferably a native speaker. At best, the reader of this volume has to feel some embarrassment for a number of contributors, who eloquently convey their erudition in their own languages, but are made to seem inept when compelled to write in English without the guiding hand of a competent editor. At worst, it can be impossible to determine the author's intended meaning. There is some difference between the leeway that can be granted by the audience of a conference paper and the demands of readers of a published volume, especially one intended to be read by students.

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Empfohlene Zitierweise

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