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ANTIOCH IN LATE ANTIQUITY*

Gunnar Brands: *Antiochia in der Spätantike. Prolegomena zu einer archäologischen Stadtgeschichte*. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter 2016 (Hans-Lietzmann-Vorlesungen 14). IX, 116 p., 31 fig. € 24.95. ISBN: 978-3-11-044323-3.

Silke-Petra Bergjan/Susanna Elm (eds): *Antioch II. The Many Faces of Antioch. Intellectual Exchange and Religious Diversity, CE 350–450*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2018 (Civitatium Orbis Mediterranei Studia 3). XIII, 506 p., 7 fig. € 139.00. ISBN: 978-3-16-155126-0.

Andrea De Giorgi: *Ancient Antioch. From the Seleucid Era to the Islamic Conquest*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2016. XV, 226 p., 67 fig. £ 77.00. ISBN: 978-1-107-13073-9.

*Late Antique Antioch has long been a key site to which scholars turn when trying to unpack the religious, cultural and social dynamics of the fourth and fifth century Roman world.*¹

This sentence very aptly summarizes the fascination that this multiethnic, multireligious city holds for scholars of (not only) Late Antiquity; Antioch offers fields of interest and research for a wide variety of studies. The challenge for any research on ancient Antioch lies in the contrast of the rich array of literary sources, most notably Libanius and his younger Christian antagonist John Chrysostom, but also historians such as Ammianus Marcellinus, Eutropius and Festus (see below), and the archaeological record that is scant and often difficult to interpret.² Antioch saw an enormous amount of archaeological activities in the 1920s and 1930s on which De Giorgi 2016, 13–32, provides a very informative overview. The most important excavations

* This review has been written in the context of my work in the CRC 1136 “Education and Religion” (project A 02) of the University of Göttingen.

1 Watts in Bergjan/Elm 2018, 221.

2 The exhibition of 2000/2001 has the telling title “The Lost Ancient City” (Ch. Kondoleon [ed.]: *Antioch. The Lost Ancient City*. Princeton 2000). On the methodical problems especially of surveys see De Giorgi 2016, 116.

were conducted by Princeton University and the Musées de France;³ their most spectacular findings were close to 300 stunning Late Antique mosaics of exquisite craftsmanship with mostly mythological scenes. The handling of these finds has been (rightly) criticized, and how to use the data collected at that time for present research is still a matter of debate. All the mosaics were “lifted without adequate consideration and description of their original physical and cultural settings, let alone of the surrounding topography”⁴; but the ultimate damage was done when the whole collection was hastily sold and dispersed after the Second World War.

The best introduction into Antioch in Late Antiquity and the state, challenges and perspectives of research, is the slim volume of Gunnar Brands, the leading specialist of which a short summary follows: Antioch was founded around 300 BC and became the residence of the Seleucid kings from the middle of the third century BC onwards. The position of the city was strategically advantageous,⁵ but the river Orontes constituted a constant danger; floods and earthquakes destroyed almost all traces of the early period of the city, as even Libanius, who was very proud of his native city, bemoaned.⁶ Because of its situation, the city had always been important for the army, and at the end of the third century AD, it became an imperial residence, not least because of its vicinity to the Persian front. During the fourth and fifth century AD an economical and demographical boom followed that made Antioch one of the big *μητροπόλεις* of the empire. The history of Antioch was one of constant rebuilding, even more than in other ancient cities (5). The first great phase of reconstruction occurred under the rule of the tetrarchs and under Constantine (7–15): The public space of what was now a *sedes imperii* got a thorough restructuring of which the most important feature was the imperial palace in the north of the city⁷ that occupied the entire urban

3 The documentation of the campaigns is collected in the “Antioch Archive” of the Princeton University, see Brands 2016, 7 with n. 23.

4 De Giorgi 2016, 28; cf. Brands 2016, 67; see especially also G. Brands: Review of: S. Redford (ed.): *Antioch on the Orontes*. Istanbul 2014. In: *Gnomon* 90, 2018, 73–74.

5 For a careful account of the founding, planning of the city and its urban grid see De Giorgi 2016, 35–65, for the foundation myths *ibid.* 164–172.

6 Liban. or. 15,16; see Brands 2016, 2–4. The remains of Antiochus’ palace now lie probably in the sediments of the rivers Eastern bank, De Giorgi 2016, 56.

7 Liban. or. 11,205–207. About the interior of the palace nothing is known.

quarter between the riverbank and the hippodrome. The latter, immediately at the Eastern side of the palace, provided an important stage for imperial appearances, as e.g. in Constantinople. A monumental temple about 150m further to the East was probably also part of the residence. The emperor Julian who stayed in Antioch between July 362 and March 363 had big plans for the city and started by ordering the restoration of the sanctuary of Apollo at the suburb of Daphne (Julian. Imp. ep. 12); his sojourn in the city, however, was too short and his relationship to its inhabitants too disastrous (15–19; see also below on the contribution of Claudia Tiersch) to allow him to achieve anything. It was the Christian emperor Valens who began to realize the “city of marble” Julian had dreamt of (20–30). His most important endeavor was a new *forum* at a prominent place, where the main road from north to south met the axis from east to west. Older buildings, including pagan temples, were integrated and thus in a way ‘musealized’: they were no longer considered a threat, but witnesses of a great past and monuments *ad usum publicum*.⁸ His successors expanded the city further, especially Theodosius II. A whole new residential area was built in the south (30–37). In the following centuries, however, disaster struck: There were severe earthquakes in 447, 458, 526, and 528, and in June 540 the Persians under their king Khosrau II conquered the city and destroyed what was left or had been rebuilt (37–58). It was a blow for the Roman prestige that even endangered the legitimation of Justinian’s government. Two years later the plague that devastated the East also hit Antioch; all these events led to a shrinking of the population and therefore of the area of settlement. Next to nothing was left of the great city who had been renamed by the survivors of 528 into “Theupolis”. Justinian had the city walls repaired and in many places completely rebuilt, including new gates. The water supply was ensured by the so-called Iron Gate, a sluice dam at the narrowest place of the gorge of the Parmenios (44–45).⁹ It is difficult to assess the building program within the city, since remains are scarce and Procopius (aed. 2,10,19) is very vague; Brands gives a careful description of what can be determined with certainty and the state of research (45–58). The area of the palace was certainly given

8 See for this phenomenon the fundamental study of G. Brands: Die spätantike Stadt und ihre Christianisierung. In: G. Brands/H.-G. Severin (eds): Die spätantike Stadt und ihre Christianisierung. Symposium vom 14. bis 16. Februar 2000 in Halle/Saale. Wiesbaden 2003 (Europa, frühes Christentum, Byzanz. B 11), 1–26.

9 The Iron Gate, a major feat of engineering, is described by Procop. aed. 2,10,15–18.

up, including the big hippodrome that probably served as a quarry for the new city gates. But the old street grid was kept and thus also the arrangement of the *insulae*. On the Forum of Valens, paving dated to the epoch of Justinian has been found. Since five baths were located in the now abandoned area of the city, it is a reasonable assumption that a replacement for them must have been created. The two theatres of the city had probably remained in use after the earthquakes; in any case there were spectacles in Antioch until the end of the sixth century AD (Evagr. Schol. h. e. 6,7). Almost certainly, many churches were constructed as a kind of compensation for all the devastation, but from the 24 churches of Antioch and its suburbs that are known from literary sources, only two have yielded archaeological remains (53–54; 58–64). The private houses are even more difficult to assess, but the finds of imported ceramics bear witness to functioning urban structures far into the seventh century AD. It is also clear from the finds that copies of classical statues were produced and collected until the fifth century AD and that there was no end of the ancient ‘Idealstatue’ in Late Antiquity, as has often been claimed (68–72). Brands states very clearly, that in view of all the difficulties mentioned above a reliable history of Antioch in Late Antiquity is not likely to be written soon, but while the archaeological research remains a challenge, it also offers immense perspectives.

A wide range of subjects concerning Antioch in Late Antiquity are elucidated in the volume “Antioch II” (the third one in the series *Civitatium Orbis Mediterranei Studia*). It consists of four sections¹⁰ and is – apart from the archaeological overview of Gunnar Brands (“Preservation, Historicization, Change: Antioch A.D. 350–450”, 13–33)¹¹ – devoted entirely to the literary sources. Not surprisingly, eight contributions are dedicated to Libanius and/or John Chrysostom: the rhetor and the preacher show us the city through very different lenses, although they are sometimes surprisingly united, for example in their condemnation of all manifestations of public entertainment.¹²

10 The Many Layers of Antioch: Topography (13–71); The Many Layers of Antioch: The Imperial City (75–189); Visions of Antioch Painted with Words (193–278); The Antiochenes – Creating Communities (281–420). The contributions are discussed here not in the order in which they appear in the book; I have instead put together those that deal with the same ancient authors.

11 This chapter will not be summarized here as much of it can be read in Brands 2016.

12 Hahn in Bergjan/Elm 2018, 221.

Libanius gives a picture of the city in his *Antiochicus* (or. 11), a speech he (partially) presented at the Antiochene Olympics in 356. The games took place every four years partly in Antioch, partly in the luxurious suburb of Daphne that accordingly plays an important role in the speech. Libanius' aim was clearly to portray Antioch as the ideal city, but, as Catherine Saliou ("Libanius's *Antiochicus*, Mirror of a City? Antioch in 356, Praise and Reality", 13–52) correctly asks: what belongs to the norms of rhetoric, and what reflects the specifics of Antioch? While porticoes, baths, and aqueducts are a kind of stock feature of rhetorical handbooks for 'how to praise a city', they are nevertheless also confirmed by the archaeological remains. Saliou claims that Libanius created a kind of "magic mirror" (52) by using the neutral term *ἱερόα* that could denote churches as well as temples and sanctuaries, making it thus possible also for Christians to connect with his descriptions. But Libanius seems to me to avoid any allusion to Christianity altogether, and he does not mention single buildings; what he creates seems more a decidedly pagan ideal city.¹³

Jan Stenger ("Healing Place or Abode of the Demons? Libanius's and Chrysostom's Rewriting of the Apollo Sanctuary at Daphne", 193–220) deals with the famous suburb of Daphne, where theatre spectacles and festivals, especially the Olympic games, took place and which boasted a temple of Apollo constructed already in the Seleucid era that made the place immensely important in religious terms not only for Antioch, but also for the whole Greek East.¹⁴ But it was also a very worldly place, where the luxurious *villae* with their famous mosaics were situated. In the middle of the fourth century the Caesar Gallus decided to relocate the remains of the Christian martyr Babylas into the very precinct of Apollo, from where they were removed by the emperor Julian on the 22 October 362; immediately after, the temple of Apollo burned down (194–195); the evil-doer was never identified. Libanius's (not fully preserved) or. 60, composed immediately after, tries to come to terms with this shocking event; he uses all the "pathos techniques" to convey the emotions of loss and despair (200–205), but in fact, as Stenger puts it, the sophist was speechless. More than fifteen years later, there was a kind of response by his pupil John Chrysostom, who was also a deacon of

13 See also Brands 2016, 59 with further literature in note 259. Libanius is not really interested in individual buildings, but rather in a way of life, see Brands 2016, 2.

14 For the topography and archaeological remains De Giorgi 2016, 150–162 should be consulted.

the bishop Meletius, an energetic promoter of the cult of Babylas; in his *Panegyricus in Babylam et contra Iulianum et gentes* he uses similarly vivid, graphic language to describe the impression the still standing ruins made on the visitor. But what he delivers is a kind of “forensic speech” (204–218) where Libanius (still alive and productive at this time) is cross-examined as a chief witness to prove the inconsistency of the pagan accounts. The climax is the claim that the fire was brought about by Babylas, the saintly envoy of God. Both speeches show that Daphne was in the fourth century a focal point of religious struggles, but John Chrysostom’s replacement of Libanius’s account with his own version over a decade after the fire also shows the enduring visual impact of the ruins (218–220).

The view of Antioch and its inhabitants from the different, one might almost say opposite, perspectives of Libanius and John Chrysostom are also the subject of Blake Leyerle (“Imagining Antioch or The Fictional Space of Alleys and Markets”, 255–278) and Jaclyn Maxwell (“The Voices of the People of Antioch in John Chrysostom’s Sermons and Libanius’s Orations”, 281–296). Like Catherine Saliou (see above) Leyerle deals with Libanius’s or. 11; she also asks about the conventions of *ekphrasis* and the messages conveyed by visual images, but she sees more idealization in the description than Saliou, not least of the magnificent colonnaded streets (of which she also provides several depictions in the mosaics of Antioch) that are places of business as well as of leisured conversation (257–267). This picture is rejected by John Chrysostom in his sermons *De statuis*, delivered 387 (267–276) that convey the clear message that the dignity of a city lies not in its buildings, but in the virtue of its inhabitants. He clearly aims to redirect the citizen’s views to this one true durable good by showing them the side-streets full of beggars and even the market-place as place of want. In this context the contribution of Maxwell is also very interesting – can we actually get a glimpse of the ‘ordinary Antiochenes’ by the mode Libanius and John Chrysostom speak of their concerns and activities? Although the highly intellectual sophist and the ostentatiously anti-intellectual Christian cleric addressed different audiences they shared some surprisingly similar issues: Both are aware of the importance of good relations with the public (Libanius is especially proud of his good reputation among the workers), but both also complain of their audiences: The students as well as the church-goers lack attention, are more occupied with games and business than with listening and do not always like what they hear. While their interests differed, both

Libanius and John Chrysostom attended to the masses, and similar issues – related to economic disparity and social – tensions are visible in their speeches resp. sermons. They both tried to defend the poor against the abuses of the wealthy, and it can be seen that the Antiochenes' daily life was not dominated by religious issues, but by the much more pressing ones of daily life and (economic) survival.

Edward Watts takes a closer look at Libanius himself in his older age (“Old Age in Antioch in the 390s: A Reappraisal of Libanius’ Last Collection of Letters”, 221–233), i.e. the often neglected corpus of 272 letters (nos 840–1112) he wrote in the years 388–393. Politicians, rhetors and other prominent figures had different interactions with the city at different ages (221–222), and there were models by imperial authors how the old should behave (222–225) of which Libanius was clearly aware. Although he follows these rules in a way, by complaining about maladies and deaths of friends and next of kin in his letters, he is clearly striving to remain “in the game” in a city of intense social and political competition. But while the older Libanius retained his literary and social authority, as his letters to Tatianus, the praetorian prefect of the East, show, the status of the city of Antioch was changing, as Watts argues (332–333): with the Theodosian dynasty increasingly embracing Constantinople as center of imperial power, the visits of prominent people in Antioch became much rarer.

Two further contributions focus exclusively on John Chrysostom’s homilies in the context of the multicultural city of Antioch.

Rudolf Brändle (“Die Reden *Adversus Iudaeos* [386/387] von Johannes Chrysostomos im Kontext der multikulturellen Metropole Antiochien”, 296–316) shows that Antioch in the fourth century AD was still profoundly pagan (298–301): temples were restored, even by Christians¹⁵ and educated Jews, Christians and Pagans had a lot of common ground, in spite of John Chrysostom’s polemic. In 386 Christians amounted to about half of the population, but the position of the church was not yet stabilized. It was the respectability and attractiveness of the Jewish religion (oaths in synagogues were

15 This is a common phenomenon also in other Late Antique cities, see e.g. G. Kalas: *The Restoration of the Roman Forum in Late Antiquity. Transforming Public Space*. Austin 2015 (Ashley and Peter Larkin Series in Greek and Roman Culture), 125–140; cf. also the review by B. Bähler in *Plekos* 20, 2018, 457–462, URL: <http://www.plekos.uni-muenchen.de/2018/r-kalas.pdf>.

considered effective, as well as Jewish magic practices) that alarmed John Chrysostom, who saw Christian identity in peril. Therefore, he wanted to sharpen the boundaries and to separate Christian sympathizers from the Jews. His polemics, however, do not seem to have had immediate effects; the Jewish community in Antioch continued to retain an important position (315–316).

Yannis Papadogiannakis (“Prescribing Emotions, Constructing Emotional Community in John Chrysostom’s Antioch”, 339–360) focuses on the emotional aspects of various sermons of John Chrysostom. He shows how John Chrysostom actively employs emotions to strengthen his communities’ cohesion by investing rituals, especially the Eucharist, with sacral awe, not hesitating to shame the congregation for failing to feel appropriately. While John Chrysostom evokes in his sermons enthusiasm and spiritual joy in vigils and saints’ feasts (343–351), Papadogiannakis also stresses that fear was used “pedagogically”, as a buffer against sin, but also (by descriptions of the final judgement) to induce the community into practicing piety, almsgiving and compassion towards the poor; he especially explores those feelings in the sermons *De statuis* that were addressed to a city that was fearfully expecting severe imperial punishment after riots (351–354). In the same way, controversial emotions as hate, shame and disgust could be employed against non-Christians and heretics (359–360).

Another means of John Chrysostom to draw a boundary between Christian and the Hellenic *παιδεία*, the values of the (pagan) Late Antique Antiochene society, was his pointed anti-intellectualism, as Wendy Mayer (“A Son of Hellenism: Viewing John Chrysostom’s Anti-Intellectualism through the Lens of Antiochene *Paideia*”, 361–82) shows. Yet it should never be forgotten that John Chrysostom was raised in Greek *παιδεία*, perhaps a pupil of Libanius and master of all rhetorical techniques.¹⁶ He clearly embraces Hellenic tradition within a Christian framework, not least by casting the Christian preacher as psychagogue and medico-psychological therapist (364). The medical language that John Chrysostom often uses, e.g. by calling sin a sickness (*πάθος*), is striking. His description of *γνώμη* as the ruling faculty of the

16 On the question whether he was a pupil of Libanius, see H.-G. Nesselrath: *Libanios. Zeuge einer schwindenden Welt*. Stuttgart 2012 (Standorte in Antike und Christentum 4), 114–115; idem: *Der Heide Libanios und der Christ Johannes Chrysostomos – Lehrer und Schüler?* In: T. Georges/J. Scheiner/I. Tanaseanu-Döbler (eds): *Bedeutende Lehrerfiguren. Von Platon bis Hasan al-Banna*. Tübingen 2015, 153–177.

soul and the possibility of every person to master it and make progress through *ἀσκησις* is taken from Greek *παιδεία*, not Christian Scripture. John Chrysostom's "pastoral care" is not to be understood in a modern sense but in terms of the classical Greek world, as care for the health of the souls, for whom the church has now become a clinic (371–381).

Three other contributions focus on sources for Antiochene Christianity in the fourth century; they all show also divisions and dissensions within the community and an atmosphere of intense contest for influence: Adam M. Schor ("Instituting Clerical Expertise: *The Apostolic Constitutions* in Socio-Cultural Context", 317–37) and Silke-Petra Bergjan ("Konkurrenz unter den Nizänern. Die Christen Antiochiens im 4. Jahrhundert", 383–420) both deal with testimonies of Christian life in Antioch in the late fourth century. The so-called *Apostolic Constitutions* are a text written in Antioch in the 370s/380s in eight books about clerical organization and behavior in which nearly all the material is borrowed from records of the synods of the third and fourth century. The compiler presents it as "teachings from a council of Apostles" (318–320). While the work addresses all baptized Christians, the implied first audience is the clergy, mainly the deacons, whom the author means to train and inspire (324–327). According to Schor, the anonymous compiler paints an idealized and archaizing picture of the clergy whose importance he wants to reassert in the competitive environment of Late Antique Antioch, where different groups of experts vied for influence, students and funding (337). Bergjan shows how much conflict there was among different Christian groups by her in-depth treatment of the so-called Antiochene Schism that began when Paulinus became bishop of the Niceses in 362 (399–405). Sometimes the lines between personal and dogmatic reasons of disputes were blurred (390–399). Bergjan convincingly dates the *Tomus ad Antiochenos*, written under the guidance of Athanasius, in the 370s (not a decade earlier, as several other scholars). In spite of the union of the different Nicene parties after 410, the plurality of the Antiochene Christian community remained also in the fifth century.

Christine Shepardson ("Bodies on Display: Deploying the Saints in the Religious Competitions of Late Antique Antioch", 235–253) demonstrates the increasing worship of relics in the fifth century AD, a kind of "material turn" of Christianity whose saints became more visible while the old temples also still remained in public view. This simmering competition grew into an open conflict between martyr (Babylas) and god (Apollo) in Daphne (244–245;

see also above). Another prominent feature in the Roman East are the extreme ascetics¹⁷ (amusingly called “relics-in-training” by Shepardson, 248) whose way of life blurred the line between life and death and whose bodies also played an important role. Especially John Chrysostom highlights the significance of the saints’ remains (252–253): as the statues of the old gods increasingly became ‘idols’, powerful human bodies came to the fore.

But Antioch was not only a place of religious disputes, but also an imperial residence (see above); what this might have meant for the population in general is explored by Jorit Wintjes (“Die unbekannte Metropole – Antiochien und die römische Armee”, 75–102). The significance of the army in Antioch was certainly enhanced when the city became imperial residence and office of the *comes Orientis*. The army was employed in restoration works in the city already in the third century AD, and in the fourth century it was in charge of the repairs of the harbor of Antioch, Seleucia Pieria, which clearly shows the importance of the place.¹⁸ Already in the second century AD it harbored a division of the *classis Misenensis*, and from 339 on it was main base for military operations against the Sassanians. The great impact – Wintjes estimates that at the time of Valens there must have been more than 10000 soldiers in the city (97) – of the army’s presence on the economy and the life of Antioch has not yet been fully researched; the reactions of the inhabitants depended mainly on the social group they belonged to (79–90).

An especially interesting episode of Antioch as an imperial residence is explored by Claudia Tiersch (“A Dispute – About Hellenism? Julian and the Citizens of Antioch, 103–136) who analyses the – utterly failed – relationship between the emperor Julian and the Antiochenes; the emperor expressed his frustration in the bitter reckoning of the *Misopogon*. At first glance, this seems surprising, since Julian aspired to transform the city into one of marble (see above), perhaps even make it the linchpin of his restorative religious policy.¹⁹ So why did the traditional inhabitants of whom the greater part was still pagan, not enthusiastically embrace his plans? One reason probably was the

17 A. Westergren: Monastic Space: The Ascetic Between Sacred and Civil Spheres in Theodoret of Cyrrhus. In: J. Day et al. (eds): Spaces in Late Antiquity. Cultural, Theological and Archaeological Spheres. London/New York 2016, 48–65 situated the ascetics between the humane and divine realms.

18 For Seleucia Pieria see De Giorgi 2016, 135–144.

19 Brands 2016, 19–20.

emperor's inability to solve the severe grain crisis that had the city in its grips in 362/363 AD, but, as Tiersch convincingly shows, there was another problem, the failure of communication and the completely different expectations of both sides: Obviously the refined, urban Antiochenes perceived the ascetic emperor and his habits as "peculiar rather than traditional" (130) – already his unkempt appearance declared him to be ἀπαίδευτος. His aim to force his ascetic, philosophical lifestyle of self-restraint and sexual renunciation – which was closer to the lives of Christian saints than to classical παιδεία – on the whole population was met with total incomprehension. For his part (124–136) Julian was disgusted with the Antiochenes' love for fun, games and entertainment, which he considered effete and disorderly; in turn, the emperor's absence from the much-loved games was felt to be an act of disrespect against the urban tradition. As Johannes Hahn ("The Secularization of the Antiochene Olympics in Late Antiquity", 53–71) showed, religion played no longer a decisive part in the games; cult elements and religious contents were increasingly disappearing (63–64).²⁰ Not surprisingly, Julian's insistence on cultic activities, especially on excessive offerings (in a city struggling with food shortage) was met with a complete lack of response that in turn was considered by Julian as an act of disobedience. And his removal of the relics of Babylas from the precinct of Apollo at Daphne served only to unify the various Christian factions against him. Tiersch presents a fascinating case-study; she shows that while 'Hellenism' was a common cultural code, especially in the East, there were many competing interpretations of this concept. Clearly, those of Julian and the Antiochenes did not agree.

Gavin Kelly ("Ammianus, Valens and Antioch", 137–162) analyses what the historian Ammianus Marcellinus, either a citizen or a long-term resident of Antioch (143–145), tells about the emperor Valens who had such a great impact on the city (see above, Brands 2016, 19–39). Ammianus, however, is astonishingly silent on the building programme of the emperor whom he obviously despises (138–143). Valens moved from Constantinople to Antioch in 371;²¹ the historian's main interest is the treason trials Valens held in

20 But even when they had definitely become secular, civic celebrations in the beginning of the fifth century AD, they remained of great importance and could not be cancelled because of lack of funds (66–69).

21 Kelly painstakingly sorts out the chronological confusion about Valens' movements in the years before (145–152).

Antioch in 371 (155–159),²² for which the emperor is implicitly punished in the last book of Ammianus' work. The historian tells less than might be expected about Valens' stay in Antioch; he mainly wanted to show the discrepancy between Valens' militaristic propaganda and what he had in fact achieved.

Susanna Elm ("Death and the Tigris: Does Later Roman Historiography Present an Antiochene Agenda? [Eutropius and Festus]", 163–189) shows the different reactions to Julian's death in battle. Julian's ill-fated campaign of 363 was the first full-scale military response to the Persian strikes under Shapur II that had led to the destruction of Amida. The first section focuses on Libanius and Gregory of Nazianzus (167–175): the former's *Monody*, written in the aftermath of the catastrophe, leaves no doubt that the emperor had been victorious and then been killed by a Christian of his own ranks. Yet even here (as already in the *Hypaticus*, a eulogy on the occasion of Julian's fourth consulate on January 363) there is some criticism about the emperor's lack of moderation and his rejection of the embassy of Shapur II. Gregory's or. 5 *Against Julian* is a direct response: for the church father, Julian's crossing of the Tigris and attack of Ctesiphon showed delusions of grandeur (which, in fact, comes close to the misgivings that even Libanius had about the enterprise).

The *Breviaria*²³ of Eutropius and Festus (177–183) were both written around 369/370 AD. Both used the same sources; Eutropius, however, writing at Valens' request, wrote chronologically *ab urbe condita*, while Festus arranged his history according to geographic principles. As for Gregory and Libanius, the Tigris is a conceptual as well as an ideological border whose crossing by Julian was rash and excessive (although Eutropius paints him as an otherwise exemplary ruler).

22 Also sometimes called "trials on magic"; they had started as a reaction to a conspiracy against Valens and had soon turned into a general investigation of suspicious religious activity throughout the Eastern empire, see D. Rohmann: *Christianity, Book-Burning and Censorship in Late Antiquity. Studies in Text Transmission*. Berlin/Boston 2016 (*Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte* 135), 64–69, cf. also the review by B. Bäbler in *Plekos* 19, 2017, 493–498, URL: <http://www.plekos.uni-muenchen.de/2017/r-rohmann.pdf>.

23 Curiously Elm always uses a plural *Breviarii* for these works, although she uses the neuter singular form *Breviarium*.

It might be said that all four authors in their different aims represent a kind of Antiochene perspective (187–189): They all resided in the city, and all agreed that Persia was of supreme importance for Antioch. Rather surprisingly, all of them, even Libanius, judge Julian's Persian ambitions rash and excessive²⁴ and advise restraint and diplomacy: Jovian's treaty with Shapur is considered shameful, but necessary.

De Giorgi's work takes a completely different approach: It puts the city of Antioch into a broader picture, by analyzing the landscape around it, and looking at settlement structures, economical functioning and the connections and network between the city and its surroundings. The surveys and research of the 1920s and 1930s often led to the assumption that there were no settlements in the surroundings of Antioch. This picture has now changed dramatically thanks to several new survey projects (8), not least the Amuq valley Regional Project (AVRP) since the 1990s (19–21).

After an introduction presenting the history of archaeological research on Antioch and the surroundings (13–35; see above) and on the foundation and growth of the city itself (35–65), De Giorgi focuses in the first part on the Plain of Antioch and the Amuq Valley (66–96) in the North and east of Antioch, an area that was intensely cultivated and contained numerous settlements in Late Antiquity. Sources of income were the limestone quarries, but also fishing and fish farming in a big lake that was drained by the Turkish government in 1960. When Antioch became bigger and more important in the early Roman epoch, the density of settlements also increased (80–87). De Giorgi points out the importance of Antioch's position within the system of roads: The city lay on the route to Aleppo and Chalcis (in northern Syria) as well as to Nicopolis and Samosata. The road system was continuously expanded in Roman times which in turn generated numerous minor urban centers that were relatively independent and became foci of local micro-economies (88–92). In the fourth century AD the settlements reached their highest density and the economical focus started to shift increasingly towards the highlands (that are treated in the following part: 97–132). In this region there had been settlements since the Hellenistic period, but a new wave took place in the Roman epoch. They subsisted mainly by copper-

24 But in spite of some misgivings about the military campaign, the death of Julian was clearly one of the biggest blows of Libanius' life: see Nesselrath, *Libanios* (above n. 16) 83–94.

mining and the products of the orchards on the terraces of the hillslopes; moreover, there was “a myriad of oil-farms on the limestone ranges” (116) that provided material for the nocturnal illumination of Antioch.

The “Massif du Bélus” (119–24) constitutes the south-eastern frontier of Antioch’s territory and was settled mainly from the first century AD onward, with its peak in the fourth to the sixth centuries AD. The owners of the land lived probably in the city and grew rich from the production of oil and wine for the market in Antioch; their grave-stones show Greek, Roman, but also Semitic names. A similar pattern – the beginning of settlements in the first century AD, and their peak in the fifth and sixth centuries AD – can be seen on the Jabal ‘Al-Akra (124–132) where 53 small farms have so far been accounted for; this is the highest density of settlements in the surroundings of Antioch and rather surprising given the inhospitality of this area. Oil and wine were produced, and obviously more than was needed in Antioch, for the locally manufactured amphorae made their way as far as Constantinople. In this area even mosaic pavements were found; De Giorgi (126–131) supposes this region might have been the origin of the prominent families that started to gain seats in the Roman Senate from the first century AD onward and built the luxurious *villae* at Daphne in Late Antiquity.

The Western Antiochene area from the Orontes Delta to Daphne (133–162) provides only few archaeological data from the settlement history, but it is obvious that significant landscape modifications took place under imperial initiative between the late first and the sixth centuries AD. Through the building activities of the Flavians Seleucia Pieria became an appendix of Antioch²⁵ (135–144) and the two cities were practically united. With this harbor, Antioch effectively controlled one of the most sensitive regions of the empire (see also above the contribution of Jorit Wintjes). While the port of Seleucia Pieria played a key role in the Romans’ Eastern campaigns of the third century, its importance began to dwindle since the reign of Diocletian and in the sixth century. Earthquakes and the invasion of Khosrau II brought life in Seleucia Pieria to an end. It was succeeded by the small fluvial port of Bytyllion.

25 Pretty much like the harbor of Piraeus to Athens; it had at first been an independent city, founded by Seleucus Nicator in 301 BC after his victory over Antigonos (De Giorgi 2016, 136).

There are no traces on Mount Casius (144–148) of the temple of Zeus Kasios from whom the Cassiodori derived their name and to whom the emperors Trajan, Hadrian and Julian sacrificed, only the church of St. Barlaam from the time of Justinian. The extent of ancient settlements on the mountain is unclear. A more robust framework of settlements, however, can be located in the south-western Orontes valley (148–150). On the *mons admirabilis* (θαυμαστόν ὄρος²⁶) about 18 km to the West of Antioch Symeon Stylites (521–592) dwelt on his column; the place became later a sanctuary.

In the following chapter (150–162) De Giorgi focuses on the research at Daphne; while the stunning mosaics of the third to the fifth centuries AD are world famous (“House of Menander”, “House of the Buffet Supper”, the villa at Yakto), the topography of the place was largely neglected in the excavations (see above and n. 5). It has to be reconstructed mainly by means of the pipelines and water distribution system. There were at least seven springs, connected through aqueducts with Antioch; the suburb was moreover connected to the capital via a colonnaded street. (For the importance of Daphne as a center of religion, festivals and games see above). In Late Antiquity the landed resources were increasingly in the hands of the new imperial aristocracy, and the new wealth was concentrating in Daphne.

De Giorgi ends with a look at Antioch’s inhabitants and their shared myths (163–177). This part is a very interesting addition to the contributions on this subjects in the COMES volume that analyze these subjects almost entirely from the literary sources. Here the inscriptions, not least of the funerary *στῆλαι*, are treated as an equally important source. There was definitely no divide between a ‘sophisticated’, Hellenized city and a Semitic, peasant hinterland. As there was a variety of languages and ethnicities within the city, there was bilingualism also in the countryside (even after the Muslim conquest).

The upheavals and changes led to constant adjustments and realignments but not to fundamental modifications of Antiochene identity. The layouts of their *villae* show a blend of western and eastern traditions, the iconography of the mosaics originates from Hellenistic models. De Giorgi assumes that there may have been a feeling of discomfort with Roman authority at all

26 De Giorgi writes *oron*, but the Greek word (τὸ) ὄρος (for “mountain”) has no form ὄρον.

times (171). In any case, Antioch's city walls did not separate town and country; Antioch's main thoroughfare linked also the main cities in the region. De Giorgi's book is a brilliant and innovative study; a perspective from the context of the city that should absolutely be read and taken into account when talking about Antioch.

All three books are very carefully produced with almost no misprints and extensive indices. The best pictures are in Brands 2016. To get a picture of Late Antioch, these should best be consulted together. In the COMES volume the sections about visions of Antioch or the creation of communities are devoted almost entirely to Libanius and John Chrysostom. They are towering figures indeed, but do we get the whole picture from them? We tend to get the impression that this was a city of eternal struggles between Christians and pagans (and among different Christian factions). If we hear anything about the Jewish community at all, it is through John Chrysostom's polemics, yet they had a prominent synagogue at Daphne, a place that was considered together with Antioch a station of the Babylonian exile.²⁷ Only one of the 17 contributions (Brands) in the COMES volume deals with the archaeological remains; the mosaics of Daphne serve merely as an illustration for Libanius' speech. Yet archaeology often corrects the literary sources: the Christianization of the city went probably not as smoothly as John Chrysostom would have us believe.²⁸ Of course one could always wish for more, and these minor criticisms do not in any way diminish the immense value of the volume. On the contrary it only shows that this endlessly fascinating city continues to invite research and study. It is necessary, however, to take into account also the archaeology of the city and the geography of its surroundings, although because of the relative scarcity of sources they certainly present the greater challenge than the vast amount of literary sources. Yet the focus on the preserved ancient literature tends to convey the image of a place that was busy mainly with religious squabbles. The work of Brands and De Giorgi show impressively that there was much more to Antioch than that.

27 See De Giorgi 2016, 53 for the Talmudic tradition.

28 Brands 2016, 59–60 (on the church buildings in Antioch).

Balbina Bäbler, Göttingen
bbaebler@gmx.de

www.plekos.de

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