INTRODUCTION

> *Today Antioch is still inhabited by a few communities that either dwell among the ruins or in habitations that they made for themselves within the gardens that cover the city, for almost no ancient house or building outside the walls is still standing. Near the place where we lodged the Turks showed us a site by the name of "Paulos of the Christians", presumably a church dedicated to St. Paul. Yet the ruins were such that I was not able to either see or realize what it was. With nothing else that remained to be seen, three hours before nightfall we got up to take leave.*[1]

Thus wrote the traveler Pietro della Valle after his brief sojourn in Antioch during the summer of 1625. At that time the city lay in ruins, and gardens had crept into most of the urban space. An eccentric Roman aristocrat with an extraordinary bent for exotic voyages and good anecdotes who styled himself "the pilgrim," Pietro was of low erudition and hardly an antiquarian. He had longed to see Antioch and its relics, but much anticipation soon turned to disquiet. Within hours of arriving in the city, Pietro and his party were back en route to the Amanus Mountains, leaving behind the apparent wasteland that they found at Antioch; not even the locals squatting amid the ruins piqued his curiosity.

It may, however, be excessive to fault della Valle's brisk treatment of the city. Records show that at the time of his visit Antioch lay in a sorry state. By the seventeenth century, after three hundred years of political marginalization, Antioch was at its nadir. A popular Damascene jab at Antioch styled as *la pisseuse* had come to its full realization.

Pietro della Valle was not alone in his delusion. His experience of Antioch resonates in vis à vis encounters, then as now. Today, developments in

0.1. Mt. Silpius and Antakya's Roman bridge before its destruction in 1955

Antakya, the modern capital of Hatay, bury a renown that spanned centuries, and Antioch's textual visualizations conform more to the conventions of medieval *Mirabilia* than to any sense of concrete topography. Whatever happened to the Hellenic metropolis, the virtual capital of the Roman orient in the third century, the host to a vibrant intellectual community, locus of countless fierce Christological debates, seat of the count of the east, and hub of the Islamic *thughūr*?

Truth be told, Antioch's antiquities suffered greatly as a result of modern Antakya's expansion. The haste with which the last surviving Roman bridge on the Orontes was demolished in the 1960s to make way for the current Atatürk Köprüsü illustrates a common collision between old and new in urban environments, whereby respect for ancient monuments yields to the impulse to modernize (Figure 0.1). Today, conspicuous Byzantine walls on the upper city and a few of their weathered stretches on the plain are the last witnesses to the city's ancient heyday; altogether they convey a sense of antiquity that is at odds with a modern urban fabric that so optimistically looks forward.

Disheartening though this picture may appear, Antakya still preserves a few riches. As one approaches Hürriyet Caddesi and enters the oldest quarter of the city, Ottoman houses and austere edifices of the French Mandate period (1920–1939) frame the incessant traffic of bazaar-goers as they stroll on cobble-stone alleys in the early hours of the day, laden with the fruits and produce of the land. The heady fragrance of fresh *ekmek* pervades this neighborhood as the

bells of the nearby Orthodox Church of Sts. Peter and Paul strike the tempo of ancestral routines. Overall, this picture of an Antakya *d'antan* invariably leaves any visitor in awe. And Antioch, in turn, keeps enticing a multitude of scholars.

With this book, I investigate the narrative of settlement that led an unassuming Seleucid foundation to rise to the highest profile during the third and fourth centuries of our era. As the reader will recognize, I call into question a most common stereotype by which Antioch is held as an unknown entity, practically invisible; to be sure, its archaeological record, albeit complicated, makes it now possible to move above and beyond the fictive and imaginary reconstructions that are rooted in late antique literary descriptions. For all their wealth of information, these writings modestly illustrated the actual fabric of the city, suspended, as it were, between ekphrastic undertones and episodic zooming in. With my book, I merge old and new archaeological data to build a novel, holistic analysis of Antioch that brings into focus the city's formative processes. No study has hitherto fused the aggregate evidence of Antioch's town and country with a view toward building a concrete picture of the city and its symbiotic relation with its hinterlands. As I show in the following chapters, the history of Antioch is the history of its landscape. Since its foundation, the city was equipped with a halo of rural settlement key to its sustenance; this unity of city and hinterlands was cemented by conspicuous infrastructural systems. Being part of the same whole with the urban core, this landscape reverberated with the socio-political realities of the city and responded to them in ways that can still be read on the ground. Each of the ecologies comprised within the territory of Antioch was manipulated, often damaged, but most fundamentally built over in consequence of, or in harmony with, the construction programs and cultural transformations that unfolded in the city.

It may appear obvious to the reader that the analysis of a city goes hand in hand with that of its territory, but only in relatively recent times has the scholarship of the classical world accepted that the study of landscapes is the *sine qua non* for the comprehension of the urban realities of antiquity.[2] Lukewarm enthusiasm for regional-scale analyses and interests predicated on the "fashion show of cities"– as Purcell and Holden style it – that is the evolving style of the urban décor as made manifest by their architectural idioms, have limited the study of the classical city.[3] Antioch is no exception. The seminal 1930s excavations went after the monuments within the city walls to no avail, while the recovery of hundreds of startling pavements served to strengthen the myth of the "apex of the East." Antioch has since traditionally been relegated to its role of prominence without due attention to the archaeology of its nucleation and growth, let alone to the complexity of its relations with a vast territory. Added to this picture are occasional glimpses of rural idyll gleaned from the orations of Libanius and Tchalenko's survey of the Massif Calcaire. These images assume, or suggest, the existence of a loosely defined Antiochene countryside.

In taking up these issues, my study shows that the landscape that surrounded Antioch was not a vacuum occasionally punctuated by sparse settlement, as echoed in much modern scholarship. Rather, the archaeological record from plain, rolling hills and highlands lends credibility to the existence of a continuum of settlement and to a community whose expansion and pulsing energy could not be halted by Antioch's city walls.

A further issue that this book calls into question, and that has affected for decades the field of Levantine archaeology, is the chasm between mounds synonymous with Near Eastern Archaeology and upland classical and post-classical, falling under the interest of the classical archaeologists and Byzantinists working in the Greek East. In particular, the divorce between these two universes is made manifest by archaeological surveys in the Bika Valley of Lebanon and the Orontes basin.[4] The territory of Antioch was populated by hundreds of mounds that had witnessed the rise and fall of several city-states during the Bronze and Late Iron Age. Although the majority of these sites were shunned for settlement during the classical and post-classical ages, a few witnessed durable occupation and accommodated sizable communities. What the inhabitants of Antioch made of these obtrusive features in the adjacent plain and whether they would investigate their nature cannot be established. Nevertheless, it can be inferred that these mounds were deeply ingrained in the topography of Antioch's territory and served as landmarks to articulate many of the itineraries and routines that the following chapters set out to explore.

As for the chronological format of the book, the title highlights two typical- and indeed convenient-yardsticks that demarcate the parabola of "classical" Antioch. A general frame of reference is in order, as the book reckons with evidence that is strewn from the Seleucid period to the seventh century. Yet it is clear that the cultural processes and settlement trends that this book is concerned with are more fluid than any fixed dates, and I hope to be excused of my frequent forays into eras that either preceded or followed the unfolding of Hellenistic/Roman Antioch. More fundamentally, in no way do I advocate for a fissure with the Islamic epoch, when a brand new city, albeit not a capital, flourished from its Hellenistic foundations. We have come a long way from the days of Sauvaget when the superimposition of the Islamic urban décor onto Greco-Roman cities signified decline and degeneration from an age of order.[5] Novel interpretative frameworks show us the mechanisms with which the cities of northern Syria, and not least Antioch, transitioned into the Middle Ages;[6] it is my hope that this book opens a novel dialog with these.

I have not attempted to produce a new topography of Antioch, nor have I engaged with the discussion of building programs and their ancient literary descriptions–except where relevant to my argument. The archeological/historical literature already offers ample insights into Antioch's cityscape in antiquity. Instead, the book delves deeply into the genesis and formation of

one of the greatest urban systems of the Roman era, one which spanned from the Syrian limestone highlands to the Mediterranean coast. I highlight the modalities, agencies, subsistence bases, ecological adjustments and, in particular, the ebb and flow of settlement that demarcated this human landscape. The dazzling surround of Antioch's visual culture provides a unique and altogether fundamental corollary to this project.

It is no overstatement to say that within a few centuries after its Seleucid foundation Antioch transformed the ancient world. The city spurred an eastward tilt of the *Oikoumene* that Constantine the Great eventually brought to completion. By the days of the Flavians, the vast sweeps of the Orient and the shores of the eastern Mediterranean were sewn together thanks to the mediation of Antioch and of its territory. As Roman provincial capital, the city heightened its profile; more importantly, it attracted new constituencies, moved actors across a vast landscape, and offered exciting economic opportunities. Emperors resided on the shores of the Orontes for decades. Indeed, a history of the world and cosmological narratives could be told from the point of view of Antioch; centuries of extraordinary events authorized the apparently hyperbolic *Chronographia* of John Malalas, written in the days of Justinian.

Throughout the text, I provide a visual and spatial dimension to a narrative of urban growth, probing a vast and complex landscape that witnessed centuries of human activities. I have attempted to move beyond the essentially atomistic treatment of Antioch and its vicinity, both textual and archaeological. To that end, the book gleans evidence from a century of fieldwork conducted in the Hatay region and Syria, piecing together a vast and diverse body of archaeological realities and records. Excavation and survey data, textual sources, as well as a modest corpus of inscriptions illustrate the formation, consolidation, and gradual entwining of Antioch's town and country during the Roman period. For all its wealth of information, however, this aggregate evidence is far from homogeneous and comes with its own limitations. The different analyses that each chapter features, with some dwelling more on socio-historical phenomena and others instead grounded in the analysis of the archaeological data, indeed reflect the convoluted, variegated nature of the evidence. All in all, the autopsy of 4,000 sq. km of a topographically diverse landscape takes center stage in this work. Ultimately, it is my hope to give flesh and blood to Antioch's *ebullient countryside*, as Peter Brown put it.[7]

But, this is not merely the description of a built landscape. It is my belief that narratives of settlement not only move forward the discourse of ancient Antioch as agent of transformation, but also limn new vistas over the city and the relentless transformation of its physical fabric. From the early days of Antiochos IV Epiphanes to the initiatives under the patriarch Ephraem, and down to the Crusader epoch, Antioch and its territory were the locus of a

continuous, drastic manipulation of landscapes and mobilization of communities. With their corollary of baths, pagan shrines and churches, the suburbs at Daphne, and the villages of Narlıca, Pagrae, and Gephyra, in particular, reflect the cultural tensions and religious orientations that shaped the city's physical fabric, while also serving as outlets for the city, which in the early fifth century Theodoret of Cyrrhus described as suffocating.[8] Changes in the physical and social fabric of Antioch echoed throughout its landscape, channeled as it were by the city's main axis of traffic. This colonnaded boulevard cemented the symbiotic relationship of Antioch's town and country; more fundamentally, it formed the backbone of a vast territory, the spine that connected the Syrian highlands to the sea.

Beyond the analysis of the urban fabric in and out of the city, this study also grapples with the agencies involved in the realization of the Antiochene microcosm. How Antioch's actors operated in an environmentally complex landscape, and more to the point, how they modified the landscape – and were, in turn, modified by it in the practice of everyday life are two important questions at stake. The abundance of data drawn from pathways, rural settlements, churches, roads, pagan shrines, and magnificent villa sites is harnessed to tease out the settlement strategies and cultural outlooks that shaped the region during the Roman era. Yet, it is a phenomenological approach that is keyed into the historical datum. How this dynamic landscape was negotiated, traversed, and harnessed as the city changed its profile over the course of the centuries is the main narrative that this book explores.

This study opens with an examination of Antiochene antiquities and the realities of the archaeological record (Chapter 1), with a focus on the material evidence from almost a century of fieldwork, and in particular from the 1920s and 1930s. At that time, a remarkable constellation of archaeological projects centered in the region. Yet, we shall see that the political imbalance and rifts that loomed large in the region (at that time under the jurisdiction of the Sanjak of Alexandretta) had important bearings in the unfolding of archaeological research, acquisition of archaeological data, and ultimately in the narrative of ancient settlement that they produced.

Chapter 2 undertakes a journey along Antioch's main axis, the colonnaded street that identified the city, as well as pacing its actors and traffic. I will discuss the genesis of the city, its fusion of Mesopotamian and Hellenic accents in its plan, and not least the survival of a Seleucid visual rhetoric, as manifest in the urban décor of the city in the Roman and Late Roman periods. The dialectic between the built environment and its actors in and out of the city is particularly emphasized. I have investigated how boulevards and buildings altogether fostered a sense of a shared past while dictating daily routines. Thus crowds, traffic, and incessant movement are woven together in the making of an urban space that had broad regional implications. It is helpful to remind

readers that at its peak, Antioch's metropolitan area may have tallied 500,000 inhabitants. Indeed, contrary to modern, positive narratives of the city in antiquity, Antioch was no Hapsburg Vienna. Like most metropolises of the classical world, chaos and overcrowding loomed large. Antioch was so congested that two oxcarts couldn't pass at the same time on the main boulevards, as Libanius remarked.[9] All in all, the Rome of Juvenal may seem a fitting parallel to the city on the Orontes.

Yet, this cramping of space fueled the spreading out of suburban and rural settlements in the Early Roman period. Simply put, much settlement in the hinterlands of Antioch was a direct response to the substantial growth of an urban community that the old Seleucid armature could hardly hinder. A sense of compression and consequent unleashing of energies brought to bear the formation of a countryside that was the de facto extension of Antioch's urban fabric. By the second century CE a mesh of sites tessellated the plains, mountains and valleys around the city, with neither breaks, nor limits. Apparently, Antioch's territory was not demarcated by boundary markers.

A survey of the Lake district follows next in my analysis (Chapter 3). Here, in the central district of the Amuq Plain we are best able to appreciate the appearance of new settlements and landscape modifications within a complex ecosystem. The much praised yet marshy districts of the Lake of Antioch by the days of Libanius may have hardly looked like the Shangri-La that the rhetorician describes. This chapter articulates two lines of investigation: first, the fluctuations of settlement in relation to the city and its politics. Second, it brings to the fore the issue of a hierarchical system of settlements that the city spawned in the Roman period.

In Chapter 4 we turn to the highlands: the Amanus Mountains and the northeastern districts of Antioch's territory, with special emphasis on the Syrian Jibāl, the region typically referred as the "Dead Cities" near Aleppo. In antiquity a large tract of this region was integrated into Antiochene territory. With this research avenue, I lift the thick veil that has more often than not separated the Turkish and Syrian halves of Antioch's landscape, thereby allowing a fuller engagement with one of the region's most salient features, the olive oil and wine industry.

Chapter 5 examines the spatial relationship between Antioch and the Mediterranean, casting light onto its former sister city and port, Seleucia Pieria. Although initially designated as the capital of the Seleucid consortium of cities known as the Tetrapolis, Seleucia grew to become the seaboard appendix of Antioch. For most of its history, it served as an outlet whose fortunes were intimately tied to those of the city on the Orontes. During the Flavian dynasty, a most ambitious plan for the manning of the low Orontes Valley did indeed bolster a sense of unity. But, how this dynamic link between Antioch and Seleucia blurred into an unequal dependency has focused my

interest. The nonchalance with which in the late fourth century CE governor Modestus disposed of Seleucia and pillaged its colonnades for his own ends is, in my view, representative of a pervasive Antiochene attitude of condescension toward its sister city, one which was especially intense, as I show, throughout Antioch's southwestern districts.

Yet, this is also a landscape that conferred a sense of belonging, and shaped the identity of those who lived, operated, and died in the region. In the fourth century CE, gravestone inscriptions found in northern Italy proudly boasted the names of obscure villages (*komai*) in the territory of Antioch. How an awareness of a local identity was attained and negotiated within the conglomerate of ideologies and ethnicities that lived in this patterned landscape is the main thrust of Chapter 6. In short, who were the Antiochenes? To use a poignant formula minted by Bas ter Haar Romeny: were Antiochenes (in the wider sense) Syrians in Greek garb or vice versa? Can the archaeological datum cast light on the aspirations, struggles, accomplishments and overall cultural outlook of these communities?

Finally, by way of epilogue, Chapter 7 pulls together the main threads.

At this juncture, however, it is fitting to situate this study in the broader panorama of Antiochene studies. As it stands, this book grows out of a burgeoning interest in Antioch on the Orontes and the Greek East more largely. The establishment of the *New Committee for the Excavations of Antioch and Its Vicinity* at the Princeton Museum of Art, the *Lexicon Topographicum Antiochenum*, and not least the publication of the Syria installment of the *Tabulae Imperii Byzantini*, are projects that attest to a new vitality in Antiochene studies, a field that seemed to have lost its momentum after the 1970s seminal studies by Liebeschuetz and Lassus. Of course, it should be underscored that between 1940s and the 1990s no systematic archaeological exploration took place in the Hatay region in consequence of the logistical and environmental factors that had severely limited the efficacy of the 1930s Princeton excavations. What is more, Antioch's topography remains essentially unknown. From Müller's site-plan in the *Antiquitates Antiochenae* to Glanville Downey's signature map of the city, Antioch's maps invariably illustrate urban configurations that are plausible, not real.

Yet, a wealth of fresh archaeological data stemming from surveys conducted during the last ten years affords new insights into the ancient city's layout as well as Antioch's territory beyond the Amuq Valley. The Amuq Valley Archaeological Survey under the auspices of the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago, as well as the recent architectural surveys of Mt. Silpius' fortifications by Gunnar Brands and Christiane Brasse attest to the possibility of inserting Antioch in a wider territorial and supra-regional context while at the same time removing the city from the abstract reconstructions that have long affected its study.

The year 2000 witnessed the remarkable *Antioch, the Lost Ancient City* exhibit. Curated by Christine Kondoleon, it brought together a stunning sample of Antiochene visual culture, while re-uniting after almost seventy years several mosaics and their respective domestic contexts. The event was tremendously energizing, as it illustrated the pavements' potential for future research and the possibilities for moving beyond the authoritative guidelines traced by Doro Levi in 1947.

Indeed, contrary to the exhibit's slogan, Antioch is far from *lost*. The shape of this book is determined overall by my desire to call into question the modern generalizations that often pervade Antioch's profile. In particular, the late antique adages about the sophisticated city reflect individual perceptions and attitudes that fall short of informing us about the way the city functioned, grew, and reinvented itself through the ages, while conferring a distinct identity on its populace.

I have sought to go beyond the ancient and modern literary trappings: through this regional, inward perspective it is now possible to analyze epiphenomena such as the appearance of the so-called villae, in the second century CE, and the expansion of rural settlement on the limestone hills during late antiquity in relation to the social and environmental pressures of the day. What is more, the book brings to the fore the actors and the conglomerate of ethnicities that shaped the fabric of Antioch. Their tenacity in laboring on the space is highlighted in my analysis. Indeed, this process has yet to come to a halt; Antakya (Hatay province) develops at the expense of its ancient predecessor. Nor is the rest of Hatay exempt from drastic modifications; large warehouses and developments now punctuate the north and northeast highways that depart from Antakya. Their numbers grow by the day; sites that this study brings into focus may be gone by the time of publishing. In the plain, altogether, the implementation of an airport, wind-mills, quarries, and extensive cotton plantations have greatly altered the configuration of this ancient landscape. Special contractors in Hatay are now in possession of mechanical equipment that razes mounds and ancient sites to the ground (Figure 0.2); much destruction was already under way at the time of the author's archaeological survey in the Amuq Plain during the early 2000s. At the same time, floods occasionally wreak havoc in Antakya and its environs just as befell Antioch for centuries before.

Keeping with a tradition of millennia of human modifications, this landscape continues to serve as locus for a complicated dialog between ecosystems and communities. How this relationship was balanced and ultimately led to the formation of a vast human landscape with a distinct, Antiochene imprint during the Roman era is ultimately the question that this book sets out to explore.

0.2. Contractors in the Amuq Plain advertising their mound-razing equipment

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study incubated for several years and involved a great number of people all equally essential to its completion. I am deeply indebted to each one of them, and the easiest way to acknowledge them all is to hark back to the very onset of this project. My journey to Antioch began with Tony J. Wilkinson and Jesse J. Casana inviting me to join in the Amuq Valley Regional Project of the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago. While on this archaeological survey, I began my collaboration with Asa A. Eger, friend and partner in crime of many years of research in Hatay and Cilicia, as well as scrupulous reader of many of my writings; I've learnt from him – and still do – beyond measure. For two seasons the Tell Tayinat project provided me with the most gracious hospitality for the study of the Amuq Valley archaeological collections. Tangentially, Tim Harrison and Stephen Batiuk taught me the urban culture of the second millennium in the Amuq Valley. Stephen is also the author of Maps 1–3; words fail me to express gratitude. Marie-Henriette and Charles Gates showed me the "other" side of the Amanus; working with them at Kinet Höyük was a treat.

A number of institutions supported my fieldwork in the Amuq: the Kress Foundation, the Whiting Foundation, and, most importantly, Bryn Mawr College. The General Directorate of Cultural Resources and Museums of