

Downey's Antioch: a Review

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A History of Antioch in Syria from Seleucus to the Arab Conquest,
by Glanville Downey. Princeton University Press, 1961. xvii,
752 pages, 21 illustrations. \$15.00.

A DETAILED MONOGRAPH ON ANTIOCH has long been needed, and Glanville Downey was the man to produce it. He took part in the excavations inspired by C. R. Morey, to whose memory the work is dedicated, and he has published a stream of *Vorarbeiten*. The present volume fulfils the expectations which these have raised and is a mine of information, much of which must have been very hard to track down. Downey has not only tracked it down but also interpreted it with originality and energy. The use of numismatic evidence is one of the features to be emphasized, and the handling of Malalas is another. That author's understanding of his material sometimes reminds one of Trimalchio's presentation of Greek myths in Petronius 52, but the material itself includes much that is of value, and Downey has striven manfully to extract the alluvial gold from the mud.¹

Our information about Antioch prior to the fourth century of our era relates mainly to the foundation story,² the record of the buildings which successive rulers and other people constructed (as also of the earthquakes which destroyed them), the other doings of Seleucid and Roman rulers, the fortunes of the Jewish community, and the rise and development of the Christian community. All this Downey presents with thoroughness, critical sense and sympathy: of necessity what follows must be mainly concerned with points on which I venture to differ from him, but when I do differ I do so with respect and gratitude.

¹ Cf. M. van Esbroeck, *Anal. Boll.* 80 (1962) 202ff.

² I agree with C. G. Starr, *AJA* 66 (1962) 120 in rejecting legends about an earlier Greek settlement.

Isopoliteia and the Jews

Thus, with reference to the Jews, I must enter a caveat against an idea (80, 107, 116) which is current, that they had *isopoliteia* in the sense that (Downey indeed says "probably") any individual Jew who was willing to conform with Greek religious practices had a right to citizenship. This idea has been countered by Mason Hammond (*HSCP* 60 [1951] 169), V. Tcherikover-A. Fuks (*Corp. Pap. Iud.* 1 [1957] p. 40 n. 101),³ and E. Mary Smallwood (*Philonis Alexandrini Legatio ad Gaium* [1961] 10), but I may be allowed to add some remarks. Firstly, the *isopoliteia* which we know from inscriptions is something granted by one city to the members in general of another city (sometimes on a reciprocal basis) or to an individual—the *unconditional*⁴ right to enter the citizen body on taking up residence. Secondly, III Maccabees 2:30 (*cf.* 3:21) tells how Philopator enacted that any Jews who chose to join with those initiated in the mysteries should be *isopolitai* with the Alexandrians. As Miss Smallwood remarks, to be *isopolitai* is used in the sense of promoting the Jews to Greek citizenship: it is implied that no such option was available to Jews previously. Furthermore, as the story goes on, divine intervention causes the king to repent of his conduct, to feast the Jews handsomely, and to permit them to slaughter such of their brethren as had apostatized. But there is no word of their then being made *isopolitai*; legend here gives way to fact. Thirdly, individual Jews enjoyed full citizenship without leaving the ways of their fathers. Such were the two Jewish *alabarchs* at Alexandria.⁵ Again, Acts 21:39 makes Paul describe himself as "a Jew, a

³ *Cf.* II (1960) p. 53 for the crucial point that the Letter of Claudius shows clearly that Jews did not have the right to make their way into gymnasium life at Alexandria. On the whole situation *cf.* Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (1959) 296ff.

⁴ *Cf.* now C. B. Welles, *Et. Pap.* 9 (1962) 8. Aristotle *fr.* 575 has a story of how the Samians in a time of pressure gave *isopoliteia* to their slaves in return for a payment of 5 staters. This is offered as an explanation of the line which we know as Aristophanes *fr.* 64: *Σαμίων δὲ δῆμὸς ἔστιν ὡς πολυγράμματος* (which probably means something different). Citizenship was freely extended in an emergency, as at Ephesus *ca.* 85 B.C. (*SIG* 742), and came to be sold (*cf.* L. Robert, *Hellenica* 1 [1940] 37ff). *Isopoliteia* here means simply *politeia*.

⁵ Smallwood, *op.cit.* 4. One argument must indeed be dropped, the interpretation by H. Box, *Philonis Alexandrini in Flaccum*, xxif of *Quod omnis probus liber* 6 as referring to the position of the Alexandrian Jews. Philo speaks of the absurdity of applying the name of exile to men who not only live in the heart of the city but also sit on the Council and serve as jurors and members of assembly and at times shoulder the burden of acting as clerk of the market and gymnasiarch and perform the other public services. At this time Alexandria had no Council, and in any event Colson is manifestly right in maintaining that this statement, like those which follow, represents "the views of the unphilosophical common man" (like the centurions of Persius 5.189), as against the paradox that only the Sage is truly a citizen (*cf.* Plat. *Theaetet.* 174f). It is general, not specific.

man of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city." If, as I have become convinced, the author was in fact a travel companion of the Apostle,⁶ he cannot have been ignorant of his *état civil*. Henry J. Cadbury (*The Book of Acts in History* [1955] 32ff) supplies an ideal commentary on this phrase and its context, stressing Luke's precision in terminology. No doubt Paul was on the city's roll (*πεπολιτογραφημένος*). Further, Antioch itself provides a relevant datum, in the statement of Malalas (p. 290.14ff) that under Didius Julianus the Plethri(o)n was built on the site of the house of "Asabinus of the Council (*πολιτευομένου*), a Jew by religion."⁷ One cannot imagine why this should have been invented. May it not be that a rich and acceptable Jew who had inherited or acquired Antiochene citizenship was by tacit consent allowed to absent himself from such parts of Council business as would be against his scruples?⁸

In view of these instances of the compatibility of Jewish practice and Greek citizenship, we do not need the hypothesis of a conditional *isopoliteia*—available to Jewish residents in general in a Greek city—and a hypothesis it is, arising from modern thought about the implications of the Greek way of life. For the Greeks indeed religious practices were an integral part of civic life, but they were taken for granted and there was no occasion for theorizing about it. It can hardly be supposed that the monarchs who established the internal structure of Alexandria or Antioch envisaged such problems as arose later⁹ and devised so refined a solution.

⁶ *Gnomon* 25 (1953) 502f.

⁷ Downey 499 speaks of a synagogue named for Asabinus, but this is a conjecture based on "a synagogue named Savinian" in the Church Slavonic version (p. 111 Spinka-Downey).

⁸ *Mon. As. min. ant.* 3 no. 262 has *κωρυκιάτου βουλευτοῦ* on a sarcophagus bearing a seven-branched light. J.-B. Frey (*C. Inscr. Iud.* 788) suggests that *βουλευτοῦ* might refer to a function in the Jewish congregation; but the reference to a *ducenarius* which follows seems to me to tell the other way. On the other hand, Jewish ephebes such as are attested in Robert, *Hell.* 3 (1946) 100f would have had to "bow down themselves in the house of Rimmon." The gymnasium was a center of active paganism; cf. *CR* 57 (1943) 80f, and now J. Delorme, *Gymnasion* (1960) 337ff. R. Gamaliel would not have defended entering here as he did defend entering the bathhouse of Aphrodite (*Mishna Aboda Zara* iii.4 with S. Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* [1950] 132). For a statuette of Aphrodite in a bathing establishment cf. G. Daux, *BCH* 84 (1960) 658ff.

⁹ We do indeed have a protest against one alien cult, probably Idumaeen (F. Zucker, *Abh. Berlin* 6 [1937] 13ff) but the Jews stood alone in their known unwillingness to share in traditional rites. Now the early Jewish arrivals in Alexandria and Antioch alike must have been predominantly Aramaic in speech (the Jew of Clearchus *ap.* Josephus *C. Ap.* 1.179f, "Hellenic not only in speech but also in soul," being, as H. Lewy remarked [*HTR* 31 (1938) 222] "an invention of the author") and the question of civic rights or anything like them could not have arisen.

Social History

We could wish for much more information about the people of Antioch themselves, but Downey does not seem to make quite as much as he might of what we do have. An instance in point is Lucian, *de Saltatione* 76, on the witticisms directed at pantomime dancers by the folk of "a very talented city which especially honors the dance."¹⁰ The "laughter-loving people" (Julian 345D) did not reserve its sarcasm for rulers alone.¹¹ For such things you still must turn to V. Schultze, *Altchristliche Städte* 3 (1930) and to G. Haddad, *Aspects of Social Life in Antioch in the Hellenistic-Roman Period* (Chicago 1949), with his spirited defense of the city against exaggerated censure.

Downey has some interesting remarks on the cultural level of ancient Antioch (7f). On this, reference might be made to Nilsson's remarks on the Seleucid kingdom in general, *Gesch. gr. Rel.* 2², 33ff. Let me note two points. First, Ammianus Marcellinus was an Antiochene, but his remarks about Alexandria (22.16.17f) show that he not only admired that city's glorious past but also ascribed to it a special distinction in things of the mind in his own time, just as Libanius (42.16) says "those who hand down the teachings which make men more than men and blessed, an area in which the city of Alexander particularly excels others . . ."¹² Strabo mentions philosophers from Apamea (753), Sidon and Tyre (757), Ascalon (759), but none from Antioch: a notable contrast is his picture of Tarsus (673). I do not, of course, suggest that in so large a community there were not people with a concern for philosophy; while we hear of no Antiochene counterparts of Philo or even of Aristobulus, the Jewish prayers incorporated in the *Christian Const. Apost.* 7/8 may well come from Antioch¹³ and do show the influence of Greek thought. But Antioch was clearly not a center of philosophy. Secondly, while Libanius was clearly the leading rhetor of his time, Antioch does not otherwise figure in the history of the Second Sophistic.¹⁴

¹⁰ D. S. Robertson, *Essays . . . William Ridgeway* (1913) 180ff has made a strong case for the view that *Salt.* was written at Antioch between 162 and 165 when Verus and Panthea were there.

¹¹ The people in Syria who coined the nickname Rhododaphne (*Pseudol.* 27) are presumably Antiochenes (cf. 20).

¹² Cf. earlier Menander Rhetor 3.360 Spengel, p. 61 Bursian (*Abh. Munich*, 1882).

¹³ On these see now Massey Shepherd, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 15 (1961) 33f, in his important paper (23ff) on the Antiochene liturgy.

¹⁴ Cf. K. Gerth, *RE Supp.* viii, 779. Note also A. F. Norman, *JHS* 80 (1960) 122ff on the book trade in fourth-century Antioch.

The Transition to Christianity

We have come now to Libanius and the period in which Antiochene society can be known at first hand. Downey refers to Petit's masterly studies and rightly refrains from restating their results in detail. But might we not have a little more to illustrate the ethos of the time, as distinct from governmental actions and Church Councils? Downey speaks (395) of the Antiochenes as rejoicing at Julian's death; let us be told rather, as his sources say, that they danced (Libanius *Ep.* 1220.2)—in the churches and at the shrines of the martyrs, adds Theodoret *H.E.* 3.28.1 (p. 206 Parmentier).¹⁵ A. J. Festugière's profound and perceptive *Antioche païenne et chrétienne* (1959) was not indeed available in time for Downey to use in this book.¹⁶

Apropos of the transition from paganism to Christianity, one detail may be mentioned. The celebration of the Olympia at Daphne was not discontinued till 520 (Downey 518), and the celebration, as now conducted, was from a religious standpoint neutral;¹⁷ cf. the enactment in 399 (*Cod. Theod.* 16.10.17) *ut profanos ritus iam salubri lege submovimus, ita festos conventus civium et communem omnium laetitiam non patimur submoveri*. It was otherwise with the Olympia at Chalcedon.¹⁸ The festival had been discontinued by Constantine, but in 434/5 the prefect of Constantinople attempted to restore it. He desisted in face of the furious opposition which the monk Hypatius made despite his bishop's injunction. Hypatius had acted on a partial hearsay knowledge of the Olympia and was eager to know what the precise iniquity of the festival was; so one Eusebius, who was perfectly informed on the matter, was divinely sent to him and told him that it was the height of idolatrous madness and gave him a description in writing.¹⁹

Sed haec hactenus. Downey modestly states (ix), "I hope that the

M. N. Tod's collectanea on philosophers in Greek inscriptions, *ib.* 77 (1957) 132ff give for Syria a reference to Taurus of Berytus alone. It may be noted that an Antiochene writer on dreams, called Phoebus, is mentioned several times by Artemidorus.

¹⁵ Cf. C. Andresen, *Z. Kirchengesch.* 1961, 251.

¹⁶ His review of it in *AJA* 64 (1960) 303 suggests that he does not fully appreciate its value; contrast J. Stevenson, *JHS* 81 (1961) 232ff.

¹⁷ P. Petit, *Libanius et la vie municipale* (1955) 213.

¹⁸ To be added to L. Ziehen's list, *RE* xviii 45ff.

¹⁹ Callinicus V. *Hypat.* pp. 69ff (Teubner ed.): A. J. Festugière, *Les Moines d'Orient* 2 (1961) 57f.

work may serve as a guide and a source of information on which others may build."²⁰ It is much more than that.

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²⁰ Let me refer also to the review by Morton Smith, *J. Bibl. Lit.* 80 (1961) 377ff.

On the burning of Apollo's temple at Daphne (388), cf. now *AJA* 66 (1962) 307ff. On the visit of the alchemist John Isthmius (514) reference might be made to Nöldeke's observation (*Gött. gel. Anz.* 1905, 83) that the sobriquet *bagoulas* given to him by the Antiochenes is Syriac (cf. Haddad, *op.cit.* 97 on nicknames for kings).

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