

VII.—Strabo on Antioch: Notes on His Method

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This paper is a study of the literary form of Strabo's account of the foundation and growth of Antioch (16.2.4, p. 750), and the relation to this literary form of the amount and kind of information which Strabo gives. A note is appended on Diodorus' reference to Antioch as a tetrapolis (scholia on Strabo, 6.2.4, p. 270).

I.

Strabo's account of the foundation and growth of Antioch has given trouble to modern scholars for a variety of reasons. An important part of his account disagrees with a statement of Malalas, whose information should carry weight. Strabo does not mention the island, which formed a part of the city, and that part of his account which might be taken to apply to it disagrees with what Libanius says about the island. Again, scholars have sometimes been led, by a natural eagerness to obtain as much information as possible from the passage, to attempt to utilize it for the information which they would like to find in it, and have not always taken into account the nature and extent of the limitations as a source of topographical and historical material to which it might inherently be subject. As a result, scholars have debated the information which the passage ought to give, instead of studying its background and context and determining whether these have any bearing on the amount and kind of information which can actually be recovered from what Strabo says.¹ Points which were self-evident to Strabo and his contemporaries are no longer clear to us; and if we can sift out these points, and try to see what is really at stake in them, there will be some gain, even if we cannot settle all the difficulties which the passage of time and the loss of knowledge have created for us.

Strabo purports to describe very briefly the foundation of

¹ Almost exactly the same thing has happened with Procopius' passage on Antioch, with resulting misinterpretation and confusion; see G. Downey, "Procopius on Antioch: A Study of Method in the *De Aedificiis*," *Byz.* 14 (1939) 361-378. For recent maps of the city, see C. R. Morey, "The Excavation of Antioch-on-the-Orontes," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 76 (1936) 638, and *Antioch-on-the-Orontes, II: The Excavations, 1933-1936*, ed. by R. Stillwell (Princeton, 1938), 215.

Antioch and its enlargement by a succession of its rulers. He writes:²

Antioch is likewise a tetrapolis, since it consists of four parts; and each of the four settlements is fortified both by a common wall and by a wall of its own. Now Nicator founded the first of the settlements, transferring thither the settlers from Antigonia, which had been built near it a short time before by Antigonus; the second was founded by the multitude of settlers; the third by Seleucus Callinicus; and the fourth by Antiochus Epiphanes.

Malalas declares in two places (in his account of Epiphanes' reign, and in his description of the work of Tiberius at Antioch), that Epiphanes did not build a wall about the quarter which he founded, but that this was done by Tiberius.³ And Libanius says that the island (which Strabo does not mention) was founded by Antiochus the Great, who built a wall about it; he does not mention Seleucus Callinicus as the founder of a part of the city.⁴

Carl Otfried Müller⁵ followed Strabo and thought that his account proved that Malalas was wrong, since Strabo says that already before the time of Tiberius, Antioch was a tetrapolis, surrounded by a common wall, with each of its parts, in addition, enclosed by its own wall. This is the opinion also of Wilhelm Weber⁶ and Alexander Schenk von Stauffenberg.⁷

The disagreement with Libanius has been as easily disposed of. Droysen, for example, rejected Libanius out of hand and followed Strabo, who he considered had greater authority in such a matter.⁸ The alternative, adopted by Müller,⁹ is to combine the accounts and conclude that the settlement of the island was begun by Seleucus and finished by Antiochus.

Students have had to be content with these solutions, and have had to suppose that either our information or our understanding of it is deficient. If one studies the passage in its context, however, a much more satisfactory view of it can be found. The passage on

² 16.2.4, p. 750, transl. of H. L. Jones in the Loeb Classical Library.

³ 205.21; 233.22, Bonn ed.

⁴ *Or.* 11.119.

⁵ *Antiquitates Antiochenae* (Göttingen, 1839) 54.

⁶ "Studien zur Chronik des Malalas," *Festgabe für Adolf Deissmann* (Tübingen, 1927) 28, note 1.

⁷ *Die römische Kaisergeschichte bei Malalas* (Stuttgart, 1931) 455-456.

⁸ J. G. Droysen, *Gesch. des Hellenismus*, ed. 2 (Gotha, 1877-1878), 3.2.15, note 4.

⁹ *Op. cit.*, 51, followed by R. Förster, "Antiochia am Orontes," *JDAI* 12 (1897) 120.

Antioch follows a description of the Seleucis, the region of Syria in which Antioch lay. Here Strabo writes as follows: ¹⁰

Seleucis is not only the best of the above-mentioned portions of Syria, but also is called, and is, a tetrapolis, owing to the outstanding cities in it, for it has several. But the largest are four, Antiocheia near Daphne, Seleuceia in Pieria, and also Apameia and Laodiceia; and these cities, all founded by Seleucus Nicator, used to be called sisters, because of their concord with one another. Now the largest of these cities was named after his father and the most strongly fortified by nature after himself, and one of the other two, Apameia, after his wife Apama, and the other, Laodiceia, after his mother. Appropriately to the Tetrapolis, Seleucis was also divided into four satrapies, as Poseidonius says, the same number into which Coele-Syria was divided, though Mesopotamia formed only one satrapy. Antioch is likewise a tetrapolis, since it consists of four parts; and each of the four settlements is fortified both by a common wall and by a wall of its own. Now Nicator founded the first of the settlements, transferring thither the settlers from Antigonía, which had been built near it a short time before by Antigonus; the second was founded by the multitude of settlers; the third by Seleucus Callinicus; and the fourth by Antiochus Epiphanes.

This sounds well enough, in fact it is very neat; and if the passage is examined, it will be found that it is rather too neat. A. H. M. Jones has at last placed this account in its proper perspective; he writes as follows: ¹¹

Strabo, on the authority of Poseidonius, who should have known the facts seeing that he was born in Apamea and lived there during the last days of the Seleucid dynasty, states that correspondingly to the tetrapolis—of Antioch, Seleucia, Apamea, and Laodicea—the Seleucis was divided into four satrapies. An examination of the map, however, shows that it cannot have been true, for all the four cities of the tetrapolis are crowded into one corner of the Seleucis. The explanation probably is that the words ‘correspondingly to the tetrapolis’ are not quoted from Poseidonius, but are an inference by Strabo—the Seleucis was often known as the tetrapolis from its four great cities, Poseidonius says it was divided into four satrapies, therefore each of the four cities was the capital of a satrapy. All that we know from Poseidonius is, then, that Seleucid Syria was divided into four satrapies. An inscription shows that one of these had its capital at Apamea. It is *a priori* highly probable that Antioch was the capital of another. The other two probably comprised the eastern part of Syria.

¹⁰ *Loc. cit.* (note 2).

¹¹ *The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces* (Oxford, 1937) 242–243.

It seems plain that one of the major difficulties in Strabo's account of Antioch—his failure to mention the island, and his statement that the whole city was surrounded by a common wall (which could hardly have included the island as well as the remainder of the city)—shows that what Strabo writes about Antioch is an equally rhetorical complement to his rhetorical statements about the tetrapolis of Seleucis and its four satrapies. The connection is shown by the words *ἔστι δ' ἡ μὲν Ἀντιόχεια καὶ αὕτη τετράπολις*. Antioch, Strabo had read (possibly in Poseidonius), had four quarters, or four foundations; therefore it was a tetrapolis; and therefore (in view of the nature of a *polis*) each of its quarters had its own wall. Plainly Strabo was not attempting to give a strictly factual account of the development of the city, but rather was anxious to fit his account into the literary scheme which he had hit upon in describing the Seleucis. If Strabo thus viewed what he had to say about Antioch simply as a pendant to what he had already written about the Seleucis, we have no right to attribute to his statements any authority except in so far as they can be shown to be independent of their rhetorical coloring; and if his statements disagree with those of other sources, they must be examined from the point of view of the literary purpose with which Strabo wrote them.

One of the most obvious effects of Strabo's artificial procedure appears in what he says about the walls. One wonders whether he knew that one of the city's quarters was built on the island, but actually this question is not vital. If he knew about the island, it would seem that he suppressed a reference to it in order to compose, as a pendant to his mention of the four quarters, the literary phrase *τετείχισται δὲ καὶ κοινῷ τείχει καὶ ἰδίῳ καθ' ἕκαστον τὸ κτίσμα*—a statement which is, of course, either absurd, since the island could not have been included in the common wall of the whole city (if *κοινῷ τείχει* means, as one should expect, the wall about the whole city), or misleadingly condensed, if *κοινῷ τείχει* means only the wall around that part of the city which stood on the mainland—a meaning which would of course be intelligible only to people who knew Antioch either personally or from other descriptions. If, on the other hand, we give Strabo the benefit of the doubt and suppose that he did not know of the island's existence, then the phraseology of his description of the walls is even more plainly a literary pendant to his

description of the four quarters, designed to give an impression of their symmetry.

The working of the same literary scheme can be seen in the reference to the mysterious second quarter, that of the *πλῆθος τῶν οἰκητόρων*, which had no royal founder. In the first place, the phrase *πλῆθος τῶν οἰκητόρων* can, especially in a context such as this, be remarkably ambiguous. The *οἰκήτορες*, as the use of the word in connection with Seleucus' first quarter indicates, should apparently be taken to mean "settlers" rather than "inhabitants." The phrase then could apparently mean either that this second *ktisma* consisted of the overflow of the *ktisma* of Nicator, or that it contained the majority¹² of the population as it was at that time (i.e. that this quarter was larger than Nicator's). Or again, *πλῆθος* might be used here in the sense in which it is employed in an inscription of Panamara in Caria, where it designates a collection or assembly of the people larger than the *demos* proper;¹³ this second quarter, then, might have been composed of a mixed population consisting of both citizens and native Syrians who did not belong to the *demos* of Antioch. Evidently something like this last explanation is the true one. Quite aside from the way in which Strabo describes the quarter, the fact that it had no royal founder (or at least that Strabo could assign none to it), would suggest that this quarter was not founded later than Nicator's *ktisma*, and did not represent an expansion of the population, but was founded at the same time as Nicator's *ktisma*. Thus it would not have been built to receive an overflow, and would not have contained the majority of the population of the city as it then was. The important point is that Strabo includes this *ktisma* along with the royal foundations—in order to get the number four and make Antioch a tetrapolis. The fact that he could not assign a royal founder to this *ktisma* must have been a blow to Strabo's scheme, but he worked it into the list anyway, for it was, in spite of this, a separate quarter (if not really a *ktisma*), and thus fitted Strabo's literary purpose.¹⁴

¹² Cf. the use of *plethos* in this sense in the anonymous continuator of Dio, *FHG* 4.192.

¹³ J. Hatzfeld, "Inscriptions de Panamara," *BCH* 51 (1927) 63, no. 6, line 12 = *Année épigr.* 1928, no. 58 (where the reference to p. 69 is a typographical error). The text dates from the last third of the first century after Christ. The word might have the same sense in D.Chr. 47.1 (ed. von Arnim.).

¹⁴ The ultimate significance of the reference to the *πλῆθος τῶν οἰκητόρων* will be discussed at the end of the paper.

Again, it could be inference that is responsible for what Strabo says about the work of Epiphanes and Seleucus Callinicus. Without considering the correctness or incorrectness of Malalas' reiterated assertion that Epiphanes did not build a wall about the quarter which he founded, it is easy to see, in the light of what has already been discovered about the account, how Strabo's statement that the quarter was walled could represent simply the reasoning that Antioch was a tetrapolis, one quarter of which was built by Epiphanes; therefore, since a *polis* must have a wall, Epiphanes' quarter was enclosed by a wall, which Epiphanes must have built because it was his quarter.¹⁵

The disagreement between Strabo's statement that Seleucus Callinicus was one of the royal founders and Libanius' attribution of the island quarter to Antiochus the Great could likewise be characteristic of Strabo's literary method as it has been emerging from this examination. Beyond the passages in Libanius and Strabo we have no record of the ancient tradition with regard to the settlement of the island. A statement by Libanius on a matter such as this has great authority, but there must have been some basis for Strabo's assertion that Callinicus "founded" a quarter of the city. There is good reason to believe, from the history of the period, that Callinicus had occasion to develop the island as a quarter of the city; and since in addition Antiochus the Great had settlers whom he may well have wished to establish in the city, it seems reasonable to conclude, with Müller and Förster, that Antiochus continued the development which had been begun by Callinicus. Antiochus' work in this respect was evidently so important that he was regarded (at least in the tradition which Libanius represents) as the founder of this quarter.¹⁶ Callinicus could at the same time, however, be technically called the founder, since he had inaugurated the work. If the island was first settled under Callinicus, who laid out a plan and began to build public buildings there, and then was enclosed in a wall by Antiochus,

¹⁵ Or Strabo's reasoning may have proceeded in the opposite direction: Epiphanes was the founder of one of the quarters; Antioch had four of these quarters, and so it was a tetrapolis; and so Epiphanes' quarter was enclosed by a wall. Malalas' polemical declarations would be directed against such an assumption as Strabo's account represents.

¹⁶ On the history of this period at Antioch, see the present writer's article, "Seleucid Chronology in Malalas," *AJA* 42 (1938) 109, and the studies cited there. Consult also A. H. M. Jones, *The Greek City from Alexander to Justinian* (Oxford, 1940) 16.

either ruler could be regarded as the founder. Strabo and Libanius followed different traditions, or had different sources which adopted divergent points of view. Or if two founders were reported in the tradition, Strabo would choose the earlier—after all a logical procedure—since all that he wanted was to give the name of a founder for the third quarter.

Strabo's account may now be examined in the light of Malalas' statements that Epiphanes did not build a wall about the section of the city which he founded, but that this was first done by Tiberius. It is at least very possible, as has been seen above, that Strabo's statement that Epiphania was walled represents an inference from the tradition that Epiphanes founded this quarter, or from the circumstance that it was called a *polis*. Malalas' polemical tone suggests that there was a controversy on this point; he may well have been combatting a tradition such as that represented by Strabo.¹⁷ On the other hand several considerations make it impossible to judge between the two authors at once and to accept Malalas' assertions without hesitation. One immediately becomes suspicious in a case like this because of the characteristic understanding and use by Malalas and other chroniclers of the term "to build."¹⁸ According to this usage the "builder" of a work was not necessarily the man who first constructed it, but might be only a man who rebuilt or repaired or completed it. Thus Strabo and Malalas may each have been right, according to his own light, and Tiberius may have completed or extended a wall which had been begun or built by Epiphanes. Malalas evidently did not have, for the Seleucid period at Antioch, as complete or detailed material as he did for the Roman period.¹⁹ Thus he may have had no evidence that Epiphanes built a wall about his quarter, but he may have had a statement, in a source which was primarily concerned with the Roman period, that Tiberius "built" a wall, and he may have had reason to believe that this was the original construction. The rest of the work at Antioch which is attributed (by Malalas) to Tiberius is so extensive that a Roman source would naturally regard him as the initiator and guiding force of everything

¹⁷ That Malalas knew Strabo directly seems unlikely, but the question is not of vital importance.

¹⁸ See G. Downey, "Imperial Building Records in Malalas," *ByzZ* 38 (1938) 1-15, 299-311.

¹⁹ See Downey, *op. cit.*, and in *AJA* 42 (1938) 106-120.

with which his name was associated, while a Greek source (especially if it were written with an anti-Roman bias) would as naturally be anxious to vindicate the work for the Seleucid ruler.

A final resort is to try to discover whether there is anything in the history of Epiphanes' reign which gives reason to think that he did or did not build a wall about Epiphania. It would seem unlikely that Epiphanes would develop a new quarter of Antioch, and adorn it with costly public buildings, and then leave it unprotected by a wall. The logical procedure would seem to be to build the wall first, and then erect the buildings. But Epiphanes' plans and undertakings were not distinguished by their logic. Moreover, his reign was an unbroken story of frenzied finance in which display in festivals, luxurious living and magnificent building undertakings reached giddy proportions. He brought back much treasure from his triumph in Egypt in 169,²⁰ and he confiscated large amounts of wealth from various temples.²¹ He spent much money in truly regal manner, as Livy says, in *urbium donis et deorum cultu*.²² But it is characteristic that some of his building projects remained unfinished. The most notable example of course is his work on the temple of Olympian Zeus at Athens. At Megalopolis he began, but did not finish, the construction of a wall about the city, and a marble theatre which he began to build at Tegea likewise remained uncompleted.²³ These undertakings, it is true, all lay outside his own domain, and one would perhaps expect that in his capital city at least Antiochus would leave nothing unfinished, and indeed would not undertake any major project for which complete provision was not made. With Epiphanes, however, one cannot assume that such a sober and prosaic scheme would have been followed. The spendthrift king may well have begun his new quarter at Antioch with the public buildings and temples—which were so much more interesting, and so much more impressive, than a mere wall—and may have left the wall to the last. Then he might have been unable to build the wall, or possibly he died before the work could be started; and his successors were all so poor that the completion of such a project may well have been beyond their

²⁰ E. R. Bevan, *The House of Seleucus* (London, 1902) 2.141.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 156–157, 160; cf. also A. Bouché-Leclercq, *Histoire des Séleucides* (Paris, 1913–1914) 281.

²² 41.20; the information comes from Polybius.

²³ Livy, *loc. cit.*; cf. Bevan, *op. cit.* 2., 148–149.

means. In any case they all had more pressing affairs to concern them.²⁴

Tiberius' work at Antioch, on the other hand, following as it did upon the important building operations which the Romans inaugurated as soon as they occupied Syria, seems to have constituted a veritable transformation of Epiphania. His operations may well have been such that they entailed, if not a new wall, at least an extension or a rebuilding of an old one if such existed.²⁵

While it is apparent that the evidence is not enough to furnish a decisive answer to the question of the authorship of the wall of Epiphania, the present investigation has tended to show that Epiphanes did not necessarily build a wall about his quarter of the city. Certainly it has become plain that it is difficult to attribute to Strabo's account any value beyond that which it can reasonably claim as a brief and palpably stylized account of a long process which (as Strabo himself would no doubt have recognized) was not really to be described completely and accurately in a few words. Strabo certainly had no intention of falsification, but his account must not be taken for more than it was intended to be—a literary passage in which only a certain amount of information, of a not too specific nature, needed to be given.²⁶

II

There remains to be considered Diodorus' reference to Antioch as a tetrapolis. This is preserved in the scholia on Strabo's description of Syracuse, in which Strabo says that the city was a pentapolis

²⁴ There is no evidence to show at what time during Epiphanes' reign the work at Antioch was carried out. Livy (*loc. cit.*) does not mention a wall built at Antioch by Epiphanes; but this cannot be taken as evidence that he did not build a wall, for Livy is listing only a few notable examples of the king's work. He does not in fact even mention that Antiochus enlarged his capital; in any case he would regard the construction of a wall in a place such as Antioch as a purely utilitarian work to be taken as a matter of course. Livy evidently mentions the wall at Megalopolis only because it was unfinished and because it lay outside the Seleucid territory. Antioch received few public buildings from the kings who followed Epiphanes, and the work attributed to the Romans makes it evident that the city's public buildings had fallen into grave neglect and disrepair in the last years of the dynasty. See Müller's account of this period, *op. cit.* 62–70, 75–77, also G. Downey, "Q. Marcius Rex at Antioch," *CPh* 32 (1937) 144–151.

²⁵ See above, note 18.

²⁶ For a recent evaluation of the *Geography*, see E. Honigsmann, *op. cit.* 92. A new bit of evidence concerning Strabo's veracity has recently emerged from a Latin inscription of Seleucia published in *Antioch-on-the-Orontes, III: The Excavations, 1937–1939*, ed. by R. Stillwell (Princeton, 1941), p. 107, no. 231.

"in olden times" (τὸ παλαιόν). Here the scholiast writes: ²⁷ Διόδωρος ὁ ἱστορικὸς τετράπολιν φησι Συρακούσας ἐν οἷς ἀφομοιοῖ Ἀντιόχειαν τὴν πρὸς τῷ Ὁρέντῃ ταῖς Συρακούσσαις. Diodorus' source here may have been either Poseidonius or Agatharcides.²⁸ Förster points out that it appears from this fragment that Diodorus was writing not of his own day, but of earlier times, and that Evagrius²⁹ mentions Diodorus among those who had treated the colonization of Antioch in detail (περιέργως).³⁰

One might be inclined to suppose that Diodorus' statement serves to support Strabo's description of Antioch as a tetrapolis, and to lend authority to Strabo's belief concerning Epiphanes' wall. In the light of what has already been seen concerning Strabo's information about Antioch, however, it seems difficult to assign all of this value to this fragment of Diodorus. The chief point is that there is no indication that Diodorus believed or had any information that Epiphanes' quarter was walled. It would have been perfectly possible for Diodorus or his source to say that Antioch was a tetrapolis simply because they had read that it contained four principal quarters. All that one can safely and reasonably conclude from this fragment of Diodorus is that it is evidence that there were four principal quarters at Antioch—and of this, of course, there can be no dispute. While Evagrius' reference to Diodorus makes it possible that his remark about Antioch being a tetrapolis was made in an account of the colonization of the city, there is no proof, and indeed no necessary reason to believe, that this was actually the case; he might very well have made a remark like this in some other connection.

It is worth noting, finally, that this fragment of Diodorus does not furnish any evidence that Strabo, instead of being governed, in composing his description of Antioch as a tetrapolis, by the rhetorical scheme which has been suggested above, took his information, and his rhetorical pattern, from a source (the same which Diodorus would have used). The principal result of Strabo's procedure as it has been reconstructed here was the statement that Epiphania was

²⁷ Str. 6.2.4, p. 270. The passage is quoted by Müller, *op. cit.* 54, note 5, and by Förster, *op. cit.* 118. Dindorf prints it among the fragments of Book 26 of Diodorus (no. 19) in his edition in the Didot series (Paris, 1855).

²⁸ See Förster, *op. cit.* 118, note 69, also *FHG* 3.251. For the possible use of Agatharcides, Förster cites Runge, *Quaest. Strabon.* 54, which has not been accessible to the present writer.

²⁹ *Hist. Eccl.* 1.20.

³⁰ Förster, *op. cit.* 118.

walled, and no suggestion or implication to this effect can be found, or need be found, in what the scholiast says about Diodorus' statement.

III

One aspect of Strabo's account which has been touched upon only lightly above is the reference to the *πλῆθος τῶν οἰκητόρων*. It was pointed out that the use of the word *οἰκήτορες* could be taken to mean that these were the "settlers" or "inhabitants." This does not mean much. More important is the meaning of *πλῆθος*, which is evidently a quite technical term here. The use of this word might show that this quarter contained the "majority" of the population as it was at the time. Or again, it has been pointed out, *πλῆθος* might designate a collection or assembly of people larger than the *demos* proper.³¹

The opinion of the best students is that this was the quarter of the native Syrians;³² Tarn suggests³³ that the people in this section "formed a *politeuma* of their own, like the non-Greek *politeumata* at Alexandria." ³⁴

Here, as Tarn and Jones recognize, we have a suggestive indication of the policy of the Successors with regard to the place which the natives should occupy in the new political order which they were introducing.³⁵ We may also have here, in Strabo's words which seem so remarkably ambiguous and non-committal to us, an indication of a certain delicacy or hesitation, in the Rome of Strabo's day, to recall, in any too precise language, the original status of the natives in that Greek East which Rome had lately acquired and now had to rule. It would be instructive to know how Strabo himself felt about these matters; how far he felt himself obliged to conform to the correct official opinion of his surroundings, and how far, in fine, his words represent a discreet acknowledgment of this opinion.

³¹ See above, notes 12-13.

³² W. W. Tarn, *Hellenistic Civilization*, ed. 2 (London, 1930) 138; Jones, *The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces* 244.

³³ *Loc. cit.*

³⁴ It may be noted that the passage in Josephus which Weber (*op. cit.* 51, note 3) cites in connection with the phrase *πλῆθος τῶν οἰκητόρων* actually throws no light on the meaning of the words here. Josephus merely says (*AJ* 18.28) that Philip gave a certain village the rank of a city "because of the number of its inhabitants and its importance in other respects" (*πλήθει τ' οἰκητόρων καὶ τῇ ἄλλῃ δυνάμει*). Bouché-Leclercq (*op. cit.* 522) concluded that the second quarter was formed of an overflow from the first. He does not, however, state the reasons which led him to this opinion, and in view of what has been said above, his interpretation seems hasty.

³⁵ The main lines of this policy are well brought out by Jones, *The Greek City*, 4-5.