

CHAPTER 1



Antioch: The City and Its People

Ignatius

The Life and Times—a well-worn but appropriate enough title for the biography of most characters of note from the past. But not so for Ignatius of Antioch, famous bishop and early Christian martyr. We know almost nothing about Ignatius's life. We do not know when or where he was born and in what cultural context he was raised. The best guess is that he grew up in Antioch in a pagan home, but he could have been born and raised in any Greek city,¹ and it is possible, although perhaps unlikely, that he was raised as a Christian.² We know nothing about his family, whether he was married, and at what occupation he worked for

¹Ignatius's language is Greek. Many scholars think that urbanism and the Greek language went hand in hand, with native languages having the monopoly of the countryside. But the sharp distinction between the urban and the rural has perhaps been overstated in terms of language and of culture more broadly, for the lines between city and countryside were often somewhat ambiguous. City and country were interwoven in a way that prevents definition of neat boundaries. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill calls attention to the tendencies in modern scholarship to reject older theories of stark divisions between town and country (Introduction to *City and Country in the Ancient World* [ed. John Rich and Andrew Wallace-Hadrill; Leicester-Nottingham Studies in Ancient Society 2; New York: Routledge, 1991], ix). See also Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987), 40–46. Further, the effort to specify the characteristics of an ancient Greek city often depends on Pausanias's list of urban features: theater, agora, gymnasium, government buildings, fountain (*Descr.* 10.4.1), but Pausanias probably captures the ideal rather than the reality. John D. Grainger raises relevant questions about the varied use of the term *polis* (*The Cities of Seleukid Syria* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1990], 63–65).

²There probably were fourth-generation Christians in Antioch at the time of Ignatius. The church was established there in the first decade of the Christian movement, about seventy-five years before Ignatius. Speculation about Ignatius's childhood and religious upbringing is, however, unproductive. A story that he was the child whom Jesus blessed (Mark 9:36) circulated in the ancient period, but it looks like the stuff of legend. Most serious reconstructions of Ignatius depend almost entirely on what we can glean from the seven letters Ignatius wrote in the last weeks of his life. These provide no glimpses of childhood memories or even reflections on his conversion and Christian life. Ignatius is God's dying disciple; it is martyrdom about to be grasped that marks almost all of Ignatius's personal reflections.

most of his life.³ Nor do we know how old he was when he died or why he died a condemned criminal of the Roman justice system. Indeed, even the most common title by which Ignatius is identified, “bishop of Antioch,”⁴ raises questions about whether he was, in fact, the bishop in any meaningful sense and, if he was, how he came to that position in Antioch⁵ and how long he had been a member of the Christian assembly there and held the chief office.⁶ Christine Trevett captures this paucity of evidence: “Ignatius of Antioch, bishop, letter-writer and martyr, appears on the scene like Melchizedek . . . without father, mother, genealogy or beginning of days.”⁷ In similar vein, J. B. Lightfoot speaks of the “pitchy darkness” surrounding Ignatius’s life and work.⁸

We must not despair too much because of these large gaps in our knowledge of Ignatius’s life. To only a slightly lesser degree, we encounter such scarcity of information regarding most of the notable characters of the earliest Christian centuries.⁹ Even about leading individuals such as Paul, whose writings are often

³Harald Riesenfeld (“Reflections on the Style and Theology of St. Ignatius of Antioch,” in *Papers Presented to the Third International Conference on Patristic Studies Held at Christ Church, Oxford, 1959* [ed. F. L. Cross; 4 vols.; *Studia patristica* 3–6; *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur* 78–81; Berlin: Akademie, 1961–1962], 2:317) has suggested that Ignatius perhaps had been an advocate or a politician before his conversion, on the basis of what appears to be a rhetorical education.

⁴See the discussion in ch. 3, pp. 95–99.

⁵Some scholars argue that the office of bishop was itself new, having been instituted by Ignatius himself to gain control of the church in Antioch. Walter Bauer, *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum* (BHT 10; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1934), put the matter sharply and influentially, but his work was not translated into English for almost forty years (*Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* [ed. Robert A. Kraft and Gerhard Krodel; trans. a team from the Philadelphia Seminar on Christian Origins; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971]). I have challenged some of Bauer’s main conclusions in Thomas A. Robinson, *The Bauer Thesis Examined: The Geography of Heresy in the Early Christian Church* (SBEC 11; Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen, 1988), 163–205.

⁶It is perhaps a safe guess that Ignatius had lived in Antioch for some time, for he had come to hold the chief position in the church there, or could credibly present himself as head of the church there, even against some in Antioch who may have resented or challenged his claim. Some scholars have suggested that Ignatius rose to high office in the church shortly after his conversion, mainly as a consequence of his rank in the larger secular society before he converted (Theodor Zahn, *Ignatius von Antiochien* [Gotha: F. A. Perthes, 1873], 403). There were cases where pagans of status, such as Cyprian and Ambrose, quickly gained high church office after their conversion to Christianity, but we know nothing of Ignatius’s background that would permit us to say that such was the case with him.

⁷Christine Trevett, *A Study of Ignatius of Antioch in Syria and Asia* (SBEC 29; Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen, 1992), 1.

⁸J. B. Lightfoot, *S. Ignatius, S. Polycarp* (2 vols. in 3; part 2 of *The Apostolic Fathers*; 2d ed.; London: Macmillan, 1889–1890), 2.1.31.

⁹“Our information with respect to these early ages of the Church is singularly defective and capricious” (Lightfoot, *ibid.*, 2.1.15). Lightfoot’s reconstruction of the period

quite autobiographical, little is known, and even the details that appear in his writings and associated literature are often the subject of considerable debate.¹⁰

That said, we do need to be a little more careful in reconstructing our portrait of Ignatius than that of most other characters from Christian antiquity. We have an unusually narrow window on Ignatius's life—a few days at most and under extreme conditions: difficult travel, with hungry beasts and martyrdom at the end of the trip; far from home and without the usual resources of friends, colleagues, and family that normally would have supported him.¹¹ Further, although seven of Ignatius's letters have survived¹²—a fairly rich body of literature from any person of that time—they represent only one glimpse, not several, into his life, for all the letters were written within days of each other (perhaps four of them on the same day) and they address the same concerns.¹³ Also, the letters may provide a

is carefully guided by this recognition; not all historians after him have read the silences as cautiously.

¹⁰Paul explicitly states that he was raised as a strict Pharisee (Phil 3:5) and that he persecuted the church (1 Cor 15:9; Gal 1:13; Phil 3:6). In various passages, he outlines his involvement in the Christian community (Rom 15:14–16:23; 1 Cor 1:14–17; 2:1–5; 4:14–21; 9:1–7; 16:1–11; 2 Cor 1:8–10, 15–16; 2:12–13; 7:5–6; 9:1–5; 11:21–12:10; 13:1–3; Gal 1:13–2:14; Phil 1:7, 12; 2:19–24; 4:10–18; 1 Thess 2:1–2, 18; 3:1–6). Other biographical hints can be culled from these letters or from the more disputed Pauline writings.

¹¹This mention of family is not intended to suggest that we know that Ignatius had close living relatives in Antioch, although it is more likely than not that he did. But whether he had close relatives there or not, there would have been individuals in Antioch with whom Ignatius had intimate ties. My primary point is that Ignatius was torn from all such associations and our only glimpse of him is some weeks after that painful separation. Granted, Ignatius has a remarkable ability to identify quickly with, and draw strength from, new acquaintances along the way (Ign. *Eph.* 2.1; 5.1; Ign. *Magn.* 2.1; Ign. *Trall.* 12.1; Ign. *Rom.* 10.1; Ign. *Phld.* 1.1–2; Ign. *Smyrn.* 12.1; 13.1–2; Ign. *Pol.* 8.2). Yet he must have felt the loss of those who had been his daily associates and supporters for many years. When we meet Ignatius, he is removed from that warm, familiar, and supportive circle, however much he was able to create new circles of support along the way.

¹²We do not know whether Ignatius wrote other letters on his fateful journey. He intended to write others (Ign. *Eph.* 20.1; Ign. *Pol.* 8.1). Later, a number of letters and versions of letters claimed his authorship. The work of Theodor Zahn and J. B. Lightfoot established the authenticity of what is called the “middle recension,” and few have challenged their conclusions. For a review of the debate regarding the authenticity of the Ignatian letters and a discussion of recent challenges to the middle recension, see Trevett, *A Study of Ignatius*, 9–15; C. P. Hammond Bammel, “Ignatian Problems,” *JTS* 33 (1982): 62–70; William R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch: A Commentary on the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 3–7.

¹³Four letters (to the Ephesians, the Trallians, the Magnesians, and the Romans) were written in Smyrna while Ignatius awaited boat passage to Rome. Three letters were written from Troas, where his journey experienced a short delay. Except for that to the Romans, the letters address similar concerns: the unity of the church behind its bishop,

distorted portrait of Ignatius, for they were written during an extremely difficult situation, under armed guard and on his way to execution. Even the concerns that Ignatius so keenly addressed in these letters may not illuminate much of his environment: some scholars argue that these letters deal more with the concerns and themes of the recipients in Asia Minor than with the Antioch-centered interests of Ignatius himself.¹⁴ Whatever the case, the letters are rarely explicit about the situation in Antioch. In general, only by reading between the lines will we learn about the beliefs and practices of the Christian community in Antioch¹⁵ and the relationship Christians had with the Jewish community there¹⁶ and with the larger pagan society. Further, except for a few comments about Ignatius by Polycarp, everything that has come down to us about Ignatius is either legendary

heresy and schism, Ignatius's approaching martyrdom, and the validation of suffering and the Christian sufferer. Virginia Corwin contends that failure to note the closeness in time of the writing of these letters has sometimes created a caricature of Ignatius's concerns (*St. Ignatius and Christianity in Antioch* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960], 20–21).

¹⁴An unresolved debate in the field of Ignatian studies is whether Ignatius's letters reflect the situation in Antioch (Ignatius's hometown) or that in the province of Asia (the area to which his letters were addressed). It is obvious to me that the letters reflect both environments. The question is, Which situation is reflected in specific comments? Even this question, although often puzzling enough, should not be exaggerated. Whether a particular comment applied specifically to either Ignatius's situation in Antioch or his readers' situation in Asia Minor, both parties would have mainly understood what was being said. Most of Ignatius's responses suggest developed reflection on the matter, and indeed, some of his counterarguments—his status as prisoner and his quest for martyrdom—are tied to a situation that originated in Antioch. Although Ignatius addresses the crises in the Asian churches in a specific and informed way, he can do so only because he has ready-made arguments at hand. C. K. Barrett reads the matter differently. He thinks that Ignatius encountered a group of heretics in Asia and that Ignatius was caught off guard by their arguments and stumbled in his reply to them (in Philadelphia), which suggests that their views were not something he had encountered in Antioch ("Jews and Judaizers in the Epistles of Ignatius," in *Jews, Greeks, and Christians: Studies in Honour of W. D. Davies* [ed. R. Hamerton-Kelly and R. Scroggs; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976], 240). Ignatius may have been caught off guard by one of their arguments. This, however, would indicate only that Ignatius was unfamiliar with that particular spin, not that he was unfamiliar with the overall beliefs of the group.

¹⁵Ignatius does go into some detail on how the church hierarchy should be structured: one bishop at the head of a subordinate council of elders, assisted by a number of deacons. Some scholars have argued that Ignatius's portrait is, at best, ideal and obscures the opposition to monarchical bishops, a position that I have argued against in Robinson, *The Bauer Thesis Examined*, 163–205.

¹⁶This study will examine at various places the relationships between Jews and Christians in Antioch in the time of Ignatius. Ignatius leaves tantalizing clues, but nothing as specific as we would like. Presumably, a range of relationships existed, from sympathetic to hostile. Ignatius's relationship with Judaism and with Judaizers is heated and hostile. What his relationship was with individual Jews is another matter, as is the attitude of other Christians in Antioch to Jews and Judaism.

or clearly dependent on Ignatius's letters.¹⁷ We know little, then, about Ignatius's life except for a brief glimpse of the man under the most trying circumstances.¹⁸

Why, then, dedicate a full monograph to Ignatius? There are two reasons. First, Ignatius's writings speak forcefully to almost every issue in our contemporary debates about the early Christian movement, from the shaping of Christian self-understanding and its perception of the "parting of the ways" from Judaism to the question of the diversity of early Christian assemblies, to the numerous developments that came to characterize the Christian movement by the mid-second century. Unfortunately, Ignatius's relevance to these matters sometimes has been unfairly compromised by unattractive portraits of Ignatius promoted by modern scholarship, from suggestions that Ignatius had become insane from the pressures of his approaching martyrdom¹⁹ to suggestions that Ignatius had been shamed and discredited by his failure as leader to maintain peace in his church in Antioch.²⁰ Such negative portraits, which misrepresent a leader well respected in his own time, have worked to make Ignatius seem a more peripheral or abnormal player than he was.

In particular, recent scholars have become convinced that they have resolved one central matter related to Ignatius: the cause of Ignatius's plight as a convict of the Roman justice system on his way to execution in Rome. The near-consensus opinion is that the Roman authorities were bit players; the principal controversy was an internal church conflict that Ignatius could not control and for which he

¹⁷We learn from Polycarp that Ignatius stopped in Philippi (or, more likely, its port at Neapolis), and that he had assistance from the church there (Pol. *Phil.* 1.1; 9.1–2). We learn, too, that his letters were preserved by the church in Smyrna and copied and circulated from there (13.2).

¹⁸Trevett reviews some of the speculative attempts to fill in the gaps of Ignatius's life (*A Study of Ignatius*, 1–2).

¹⁹For many scholars, Ignatius's detailed reflection on his death and on Christian martyrdom can help little to understand either Ignatius himself or his times. According to this perspective, Ignatius's reflection on these themes developed late, under the gravity of his recent trial and death sentence. If this is so, it is argued, the theme of martyrdom does not portray Ignatius's thinking under normal conditions. Some have even suggested that Ignatius had cracked under the strain and that this accounted for what appeared to be bizarre statements he made about his approaching martyrdom (P. N. Harrison, *Polycarp's Two Epistles to the Philippians* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936], 102). Lightfoot, with his characteristic balance, dismisses such assessments as "cheap wisdom" (*S. Ignatius, S. Polycarp*, 2.1.38). Lightfoot notes that much of the language used in later reflection on martyrdom has its first parallel in the letters of Ignatius, although he recognizes that it is quite possible that Ignatius "adopted language already familiar when he wrote" (*ibid.*).

²⁰Trevett, for example, calls Ignatius "a man who was profoundly dissatisfied with himself," and says that his self-deprecatory language "is less suggestive of modesty than it is of guilt" (*A Study of Ignatius*, 59–60). See ch. 5 for a discussion of Ignatius's sense of unworthiness.

held himself accountable. Either Ignatius offered himself up willingly to execution to take the heat off the rest of the assembly or his opponents in the church fingered him as the culprit when the authorities came to investigate an internal dissension that had come to public notice and complaint. This study will attempt to show that this much-repeated view of Ignatius's final days is a distortion of Ignatius's predicament and of the wider world in which he lived.²¹

The second issue of focus in this monograph is the shaping of the distinctive identity of the Christian movement as separate from Judaism. Ignatius's sense of the matter will be addressed in detail. It is my contention that the distinction between Judaism and Christianity is sharper than the trends in the current debate have admitted, and that Ignatius's pointed assessment of Judaism is much more dismissive and uncompromising. Further, I contend that Ignatius represents a mainstream position; he is neither a lone nor a novel voice.

This study will not address every aspect of Ignatius's theology and ecclesiology, which are quite validly the foci of some studies on Ignatius. Such matters concern this investigation only insofar as they illuminate Ignatius's church situation and the relation of Christianity to Judaism in the period. The primary concern here is to show where treatments of Ignatius need to be disregarded or refined, and thereby to add to our understanding of the development of the early church.

The City of Antioch

We are hardly in a more data-rich environment when we turn from Ignatius's life to his times. Ignatius differs considerably from other characters in early Christian history, whose cities of residence usually have rich extant data, both literary and archaeological. The only locale of any significance we have for Ignatius is Antioch itself, and we know almost nothing of Antioch in this period, let alone of Ignatius and the Christian assembly within it.²² Frederick Norris cautions:

Antioch on the Orontes was no less than the fourth largest city of the Mediterranean world behind Rome, Alexandria, and Seleucia on the Tigris. Yet information about its entire history is sorely lacking. Theodor Mommsen indicated that inscrip-

²¹ See ch. 5.

²² Ignatius would have passed through several cities in western Asia Minor. He visited churches along the way (Philadelphia, Smyrna, and Philippi) and met with delegates from some cities off the main route (Tralles, Magnesia, and Ephesus). We know, too, that he died in Rome—a conclusion based on Ignatius's own writings, which indicate that he was on his way to martyrdom in Rome. There is little of credible comment in the tradition that refutes this, although one late tradition, from the Byzantine historian John Malalas, does have Ignatius martyred in Antioch rather than in Rome. For a discussion of the evidence, see Lightfoot, *S. Ignatius, S. Polycarp*, 2.2.436–48.

tions from greater Antioch were worthy of a small North African town. . . . The great Hellenistic histories of the city are lost. Most of our written sources deal only obliquely with Antioch as they tell of other things.²³

Scholars have tried to fill some of the gaps. For example, in situations involving the Jewish community, the tendency is to use the experiences of Jews in other cities of the empire, where the information is richer. Historians often use this technique to help make sense of specific situations. But some caution should be exercised. The warning of John D. Grainger deserves attention both because the general caution needs to be repeated frequently in historical work and because Grainger's concerns stem specifically from treatments of Syria:

It is one of the temptations, and one of the problems, of Hellenistic history, to make up for the paucity of evidence in certain areas (of which Syria is emphatically one) by referring to other places and drawing parallels. In the case of cities, the practice exists of referring to old Greece for information on subjects for which Syrian sources are lacking. It is my contention that this procedure is wrong, that it is bad historical practice, and that it should not be indulged in. . . . The urban development of Syria took place in a Syrian context above all, and references to the history of Egypt or Asia Minor or old Greece can only mislead and distort, as well as discounting the individuality of all these areas.²⁴

For the current study, such caution is particularly necessary. Since our focus is on Ignatius, we are dealing with a time when Christianity was young and its relationship with Judaism and the larger society was still uncertain. Further, the Jews of Antioch may have been in a unique situation for a Diaspora community, a matter that will become clearer in the discussion that follows. Thus appeal to other Jewish communities or even to a later, more Christianized Antioch might be misleading and so will be kept to a minimum.

This chapter now examines Antioch itself and the peculiar features of this city that inform us of Ignatius's religious and political environment. We will not examine every feature of life in Antioch; that would be neither possible here nor necessary for understanding the world of Ignatius. Rather, we will look at events affecting the city around Ignatius's time and affecting Ignatius as a resident there. Some broader introductory material regarding Antioch is necessary, however, to set the stage. We will thus begin with the founding of the city about four hundred years before Ignatius. The relevance of this earlier history will become clearer

²³Frederick W. Norris, "Artifacts from Antioch," in *Social History of the Matthean Community* (ed. David L. Balch; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 248. Strabo, writing a century before Ignatius, lists these four cities (*Geogr.* 16.2.5). Fergus Millar attributes some of the loss of materials from Antioch to the silting of the Orontes River (*The Roman Near East, 31 B. C.–A. D. 337* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993], 259).

²⁴Grainger, *The Cities of Seleukid Syria*, 3.

when we consider the Jewish presence in the city and the rights claimed and tensions aggravated by the Jewish community in Antioch about the time of Ignatius.

The Founding of Seleucid Antioch

Antioch on the Orontes was founded during the politically charged situation that developed after the death of Alexander the Great and the breakup of his empire.²⁵ For a few years, the dynasty of Alexander survived, but more in name than in substance. Neither of Alexander's heirs was fit or ready to govern, thus prominent generals from Alexander's army acted as regents and governors.²⁶ Some of these men had ambitions of their own. Rather than promoting the survival of the grand empire of Alexander the Great under his unimpressive or "half-Greek" heirs, they saw themselves, tested and proven in battle, as more deserving heads of a grand empire. In the long struggle for control, Perdiccas, one of Alexander's generals and the appointed guardian of Alexander's heirs, was

²⁵Antioch on the Orontes, sometimes called Antioch by Daphne, is often identified simply as Antioch, since it was the most prominent of the cities bearing that name. Seleucus built fifteen other Antiochs, so naming them to honor his father, the otherwise little-known Antiochus. Seleucus's firstborn son and successor, a half-Iranian prince from Seleucus's marriage to a Bactrian princess from the far northeastern part of his empire, also bore the name Antiochus, as did nine others in that dynasty. The major study addressing Antioch during our period of interest is the sweeping work of Glanville Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria from Seleucus to the Arab Conquests* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961). Parts of other books are useful: Markus N. A. Bockmuehl, *Jewish Law in Gentile Churches: Halakhah and the Beginning of Christian Public Ethics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 49–83; Irina Levinskaya, *The Book of Acts in Its Diaspora Setting* (vol. 5 of *The Book of Acts in Its First-Century Setting*; ed. Bruce W. Winter; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 127–35; Frank Kolb, "Antiochia in der frühen Kaiserzeit," in *Geschichte-Tradition-Reflexion: Festschrift für Martin Hengel* (ed. H. Cancik, H. Lichtenberger, and P. Schäfer; 3 vols.; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1996), 2:97–118; Robert R. Hann, "Judaism and Jewish Christianity in Antioch: Charisma and Conflict in the First Century," *Journal of Religious History* 14 (1987): 341–60; John M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE–117 CE)* (Hellenistic Culture and Society 33; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 242–45, 249–58; Carl H. Kraeling, "The Jewish Community in Antioch," *JBL* 51 (1932): 130–60; E. Mary Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule: From Pompey to Diocletian* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), 358–64; and Aryeh Kasher, *The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt: The Struggle for Equal Rights* (TSAJ 7; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1985), 297–309. J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Antioch: City and Imperial Administration in the Later Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), covers the later period.

²⁶Alexander's illegitimate half-brother, Philip, was mentally handicapped and epileptic; Alexander's child by Roxane, a Bactrian princess, was yet unborn. Even though Roxane's pregnancy was to produce a son and thus a proper heir, opposition to this half-barbarian claimant could have been expected from elements of the Macedonian army. The two heirs briefly shared a dual kingship under the names Philip III and Alexander IV.

assassinated, a fate that later befell Alexander's heirs themselves.²⁷ The generals who had been assigned the care of parts of the empire now felt little restraint on their own imperial ambitions.

These generals were called the Diadochi ("successors"). Various alliances and power struggles followed, with a final settlement recognizing the Seleucid, Ptolemaic, Antigonid, and Macedonian kingdoms as the primary realms, with Greece becoming a less important player. Seleucus,²⁸ one of the Diadochi, had been assigned the charge of the most eastern part of Alexander's conquests, but by the time of Seleucus's death, he had come to control the largest territory—a vast sweep of lands from the borders of India to the coast of the Aegean Sea.²⁹

Some of Seleucus's territory had come from the partition of the territory of Antigonus, the strongest of the Diadochi. The other Diadochi had formed an alliance against and defeated Antigonus and divided the captured lands among themselves.³⁰ The territory along the eastern Mediterranean coast, called Coele-Syria,³¹ which included Palestine, fell by default to Seleucus, since it was contiguous with Seleucus's other holdings. It had been originally assigned to Ptolemy

²⁷Perdiccas was assassinated in 321 B.C.E., two years after the death of Alexander. Philip III was killed in 317; Alexander IV was killed in 309.

²⁸Seleucus is often referred to as Nicator ("conqueror"). Arrian, who wrote nearly a half millennium after Alexander, refers to Seleucus as the greatest king to have succeeded Alexander (*Anabasis* 7.22.5).

²⁹Seleucus's success had come only after considerable reverses and losses. In 316 B.C.E., five years after Alexander's death, Seleucus was ousted from all his holdings by another of the Diadochi, Antigonus, whose primary holdings had been in Anatolia and the eastern coast of the Mediterranean (Coele-Syria). Seleucus had to flee to Egypt for safety under Ptolemy, another of the Diadochi. Because of the aggressive maneuvers of Antigonus and what appeared to be a plan to bring all of Alexander's vast conquests under his control, the other members of the Diadochi formed a successful coalition against Antigonus. By 312 B.C.E., Seleucus had regained Babylonia, and the coalition had driven Antigonus back to his original borders. However, suspicions about the ambitions of Antigonus continued, and a series of battles marked the next decade. Finally, in 301 B.C.E., Antigonus was killed during the defining battle against a second coalition at Ipsus.

³⁰This was not the end of the matter. Seleucus then attacked Lysimachus, who had received a large part of Asia Minor as his reward in the victory over Antigonus. Seleucus captured most of Lysimachus's land, reaching to the shores of the Aegean by the time of Lysimachus's death in 281 B.C.E. Now that he had reached the Aegean Sea, Macedon itself stood as Seleucus's next and final goal—a reasonable ambition with Lysimachus, the master of Thrace, now dead. But it was a fatal goal, for Seleucus was assassinated within the year by a son of Ptolemy I (Ceraunus), who, cut off from the succession in Egypt, had ambitions of his own regarding Macedon.

³¹The etymology of the name Coele-Syria is uncertain; a common explanation is that it means "hollow Syria," so named for the prominent valley in Lebanon called al Bīqā', or the Bīqā' Valley. As a label to identify a specific political or geographical area, the term displays some elasticity among its ancient users, and so the etymology of the term is of little use for determining the precise area an author intended by the term.

before the battle with Antigonus.³² Ptolemy had “missed” that crucial battle, and his colleagues felt justified in cutting him off from the booty. Ptolemy, however, simply disregarded the terms of settlement and seized Coele-Syria as rightfully his.

From this point on, the Seleucid and Ptolemaic kingdoms viewed each other with distrust. The disputed territory held by Ptolemy reached as far north as the Eleutherus River, near Tripolis, two-thirds of the way up the eastern Mediterranean coast, almost like a spear pointed at Seleucus’s realm. Further, Ptolemy already had control of Cyprus and some cities on the south coast of Asia Minor, and these were threats to Seleucus’s new holdings and his increasing western ambitions.

Seleucus immediately undertook a massive building program designed to guarantee his hold on the newly acquired territories. He had already established a capital on the Tigris River in 305 B.C.E., which he named Seleucia, and in 300 B.C.E., within months of his conquest of Syria and Armenia, he founded several cities in Syria,³³ including a capital at Antioch.³⁴

The founding of Antioch is to be understood in light of the highly charged political reality that had just unfolded. On the speedy founding of a series of cities in Syria, of which Antioch was central, Grainger comments,

These city foundations did not occur as an act of generosity on Seleukos’ part, nor were they a mere whim. They were, rather, a coolly calculated political device, designed to establish his political authority firmly in his new territory, and to provide a firm foundation for further expansion.³⁵

One crucial consideration in the choice of location for the new city of Antioch must have been its closeness to the disputed Coele-Syria territory, which the Ptolemies held but Seleucus claimed.³⁶ The timing and the location of the founding of Antioch could not have been simply coincidental. And as argued later

³² Ptolemy, a Macedonian general under Alexander the Great, became the master of Egypt after the death of Alexander. He declared himself king in 304 B.C.E. His dynasty was to last until the death of Cleopatra (30 B.C.E.). See Walter M. Ellis, *Ptolemy of Egypt* (New York: Routledge, 1994). For a quirky and novelistic, but still useful, recent popular account of the Ptolemies, see Duncan Sprott, *The Ptolemies* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004).

³³ Grainger, *The Cities of Seleukid Syria*, discusses in minute detail Seleucus’s founding of cities in Syria.

³⁴ There is some debate about which term best describes Antioch’s status. The term “capital” must be seen against a structure where multiple capitals were possible and where a roving capital was likely, shifting locations with the king as the occasion demanded. Grainger argues that Antioch was not capital until 188 B.C.E. (*ibid.*, 122, 124–50).

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 54; see also 58.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 58–60. Grainger views Apamea as a first line of defense for Antioch, and he describes Antioch as the “lynch-pin of the whole structure” (60), ideally located as the key communications center.

in this study, the crisis environment provided an ideal setting for considerable rights to be extended to Jews at the time of the founding of the city.

As the Seleucid Empire expanded westward by wrestling Anatolian land from Lysimachus, Antioch found itself at a most central location in the empire, and the juncture of major east-west and north-south trade routes there heightened the importance of its location. This enhanced Antioch's prestige and increased the city's importance in the Seleucid Empire.

The Booms and Busts of Antioch

Almost from Antioch's first days, the empire of which Antioch was a featured part began to crumble. Rarely at peace after its dramatic thirty-year expansion from India and the Persian Gulf to the Aegean Sea, the Seleucid Empire steadily shrank. From the outset, Seleucid control of its westernmost territories in Anatolia was challenged. The Gauls were a frequent problem, settling in the central area of Asia Minor (Galatia) by 275 B.C.E. The kingdom of Pergamum expanded considerably, defeating the Gauls and seizing all of the Seleucid lands in Asia Minor in 230 B.C.E., although some of this territory was regained by 223 B.C.E.³⁷ As Seleucid land was being lost in Asia Minor, a similar threat to the Seleucid possessions in the east was developing. By 247 B.C.E., the Parthians had begun to take land from the Seleucids there.

Military crises near the center of the empire hindered adequate response to these matters on its periphery. Wars against the Ptolemies to capture the disputed lands of Coele-Syria marked much of the Seleucid Empire's first century.³⁸ Ptolemy III captured Seleucia and Antioch in 246 B.C.E. He held Antioch only for a few months—long enough to clean up a political mess there, but he retained Seleucia, Antioch's port fifteen miles to the west on the Mediterranean coast. The loss of Seleucia worked to the advantage of Antioch: with close-by Seleucia now in the hands of the Ptolemies, Antioch had to be strengthened, and this new political development assured that Antioch would quickly become the key

³⁷ A. H. M. Jones, *The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces* (2d ed.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), 40–41.

³⁸ Five main wars mark the first century of the Seleucid-Ptolemaic conflicts: (1) In 275 B.C.E., Ptolemy II invaded Seleucid lands. In 261, Antiochus II invaded Ptolemaic lands. (2) In 252, a peace treaty was sealed by the marriage of Antiochus II and Berenice, the daughter of Ptolemy II. But Antiochus II and Berenice were murdered in 246 by partisans of Antiochus's first wife, Laodice, and her son Seleucus. (3) This provoked Ptolemy III to invade Syria to avenge the death of his sister. (4) In 218–217, Antiochus III (the Great) invaded Ptolemaic territories but was defeated. Matters then deteriorated in Egypt, particularly under Ptolemy V, a mere boy when he came to the throne. (5) Civil war broke out in Upper Egypt, and Antiochus III invaded again—this time with better success, finally gaining the long-disputed Coele-Syria territories.

city for the Seleucids. According to Strabo, Antioch underwent expansion after coming back into Seleucid hands—a reasonable conjecture even without Strabo's witness.³⁹

The first and only substantial expansion of the otherwise shrinking Seleucid territory came when the Seleucids, under Antiochus III (223–187 B.C.E.), were finally able to make good their hundred-year-old claim to the Coele-Syria territory in 200 B.C.E. But almost immediately the Seleucid fortunes suffered further reverses elsewhere as Rome began to expand eastward and as revolts broke out in various areas of the far-stretching empire.⁴⁰ The problems on the periphery of the empire would not necessarily have affected the fortunes of Antioch initially. As the borders of the empire weakened, the center of the empire had to be strengthened. Whatever decline Antioch may have experienced, it is unlikely to have been nearly as serious as the decline of the empire itself.

More destabilizing for the Seleucids than the troubles on the periphery of the empire were the struggles by rival claimants for the Seleucid throne. Civil war became a mark of Seleucid politics from about the middle of the third century B.C.E., weakening the empire to such a degree that various native powers, of whom the Maccabees in Palestine were but one, were able to wrest their homelands from Seleucid control. Groups seeking independence could play off one rival Seleucid claimant against another to obtain the best possible deal for their homeland, as the Maccabees, for example, did.⁴¹ Each successful revolt damaged the shrinking Seleucid Empire until, by the end of the second century B.C.E., the empire boasted little more than the immediate territory around Antioch. Even then, Antioch retained a measure of prestige, for, as Grainger points out, the legitimacy of the rival claimants to the Seleucid throne was enhanced if they held Antioch.⁴²

Antioch could not escape forever the decline that devastated the empire, and its inhabitants came to identify more with their city than with the evaporating empire of which they had been the prominent part. In one instance, at the time of the Maccabean crisis, the residents of Antioch showed displeasure with

³⁹Strabo, *Geogr.* 16.2.4; see also Grainger, *The Cities of Seleukid Syria*, 123–24.

⁴⁰In the eastern part of the Seleucid territory, the Arsacid (Parthian) dynasty established itself ca. 251 B.C.E. This power was to last for five hundred years, and was a frequent thorn in the side of the Seleucids and of their successors, the Romans. By 126 B.C.E., the Parthians had taken Babylonia. In the western areas of the Seleucid territories, Pergamum, Pontus, and Cappadocia established independent states in the early 200s B.C.E. soon after the battles among the Diadochi. Rome then came on the scene. As early as 189 B.C.E., long before the Roman conquest of Syria, Rome had started its subjugation of Seleucid territory in Anatolia, defeating Antiochus III at Magnesia and taking as hostage the future Antiochus IV. The kingdom of Pergamum was willed to Rome by its last leader, Attalus III, in 133 B.C.E. The territory became the Roman province of Asia in 129 B.C.E.

⁴¹Josephus, *Ant.* 13.35–42.

⁴²Grainger, *The Cities of Seleukid Syria*, 125.

both claimants to the Seleucid throne, and even proclaimed the Ptolemaic king, Philometer, as their own king.⁴³

The residents of Antioch came to feel isolated, surrounded by a hostile native Syrian population whom they once had dominated. Matters had deteriorated so gravely as a result of Seleucid infighting that Seleucid cities often lacked the services and defense that cities had come to expect from the national government. In order to safeguard their city, the residents of Antioch invited the Armenian king to become their protector in 83 B.C.E. Twenty years later, the Romans were on the scene, and Antioch became part of the Roman world.⁴⁴

Roman Antioch

Antioch had declined considerably before the arrival of Rome, and Rome was unable to give the city its immediate attention. Civil war among the Roman generals kept the focus on military matters.⁴⁵ As the situation stabilized, Rome had to decide on a center for the administration of the Seleucid territories. Initially, areas other than Antioch may have been of interest to the Romans. Rome established a colony at Berytus (modern Beirut), and there is some ambiguity in the evidence regarding the status of Antioch in the early Roman period.⁴⁶

Whatever the case during the initial years of Roman rule, Antioch soon came to play a significant role in the Roman system, especially as Rome clashed with Parthia, whose border lay nearby. Parthia had presented an obstacle to Rome's eastern ambitions from the time of Rome's first presence in the area, when some Jews in Palestine aligned with the Parthian-supported Hasmonean claimant against Rome's Hasmonean ally. Rome's victory in that showdown resulted in the rise of the Herods, a puppet dynasty of the Romans. The threat from Parthia continued, however, although a measure of quiet had been negotiated by 37 or 38 C.E., with Armenia serving as somewhat of a buffer.⁴⁷ But suspicion lay close to the surface. Finally, in the second decade of the second century C.E., politics gave way

⁴³Josephus, *Ant.* 13.113–115. Josephus explains that Philometer declined the honor out of concern that this might offend the Romans.

⁴⁴"Syria had broken up into a medley of warring cities and principalities long before Pompey formally abolished the shadow of Seleucid rule" (Jones, *The Greek City from Alexander to Justinian*, 26).

⁴⁵From 53 to 31 B.C.E., Rome endured the Wars of the First Triumvirate and the Wars of the Second Triumvirate until Octavian, as Augustus, became the sole emperor of the Roman Empire.

⁴⁶Fergus Millar speaks of the "slowly emerging role of Antioch as a secondary Imperial 'capital'" (*The Roman Near East*, 105).

⁴⁷Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.58; 13.7; Josephus, *Ant.* 18.96–98. According to Josephus, the pact happened under Tiberius rather than the more likely Gaius (see Millar, *The Roman Near East*, 58, n. 7; 66).

to conflict. Rome annexed Armenia, and Parthia and Rome were immediately at war. The emperor Trajan seized Mesopotamian lands, but the victory was a hollow one. Jews and others revolted in wide areas of Rome's eastern holdings (Cyrene, Egypt, Cyprus, and Mesopotamia), and Trajan died shortly afterwards, in 117 C.E. The new emperor, Hadrian, withdrew from the newly acquired lands to a more secure border near Antioch.⁴⁸ Such activity on the eastern front made Antioch the imperial residence for extended periods on several occasions about the time of Ignatius, establishing it as a crucial city in the Roman machinery of government in the east.

This is only a brief sketch of the fortunes of Antioch during its first four centuries, up to the time of Ignatius. It is not the concern in this study to determine every nuance of the status of Antioch in the Roman world or the various shifts in imperial favor that affected the fortunes of the city. These matters have had their debates in the scholarly literature, and many issues remain unsettled.⁴⁹ It is enough to establish that the city was a dominant one in the eastern Mediterranean, and whatever its technical status as capital of the Roman province of Syria, it was possible for informed people writing at the time of Ignatius to speak of Antioch as the capital, without their having to defend that use of the term, and to describe Antioch as one of the greatest cities of the empire.⁵⁰ Whatever Antioch had lost in its last days under the Seleucids, it soon regained under the Romans.⁵¹

The Population and Cultural Mix of Antioch

Determining the size of the population of the Roman world, of cities within the empire, or of ethnic groups within these cities is fraught with difficulties. The population estimates for Antioch at its height range from a low of 100,000 to a

⁴⁸ Millar, *The Roman Near East*, 100.

⁴⁹ For a summary, see Robyn Tracy, "Syria," in *The Book of Acts in Its Graeco-Roman Setting* (ed. David W. J. Gill and Conrad Gempf; vol. 2 of *The Book of Acts in Its First-Century Setting*; ed. Bruce W. Winter; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 236–39.

⁵⁰ Josephus describes Antioch as the third-ranking city in the Roman Empire in extent and wealth at the time of Vespasian (*J. W.* 3.29).

⁵¹ Shortly after the Roman capture of Antioch, Herod the Great, Rome's puppet king, began a series of building projects both inside and outside Palestine, including the temple in Jerusalem. One of Herod's projects directly benefited Antioch—a major renovation of its central thoroughfare, a striking feature around which the renewal of Antioch blossomed. It was six times longer than the later, better-known Arcadian Way in Ephesus. Although Josephus attributes the project solely to Herod (*J. W.* 1.425), both Herod and Emperor Tiberius contributed (see Glanville Downey, "Imperial Building Records in Malalas," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 38 [1938]: 299–311; Corwin, *St. Ignatius*, 37, n. 24).

high of about 800,000. J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, a modern authority on Antioch, opts for a range from 200,000 to 390,000,⁵² although he notes other ways of determining population, some of which give different results.⁵³ Downey, another authority on Antioch, puts the population of free inhabitants at 300,000. He thinks it impossible to determine the number of slaves and residents who did not have citizenship.⁵⁴

Whatever number we accept, the population of Antioch at the time of Ignatius may have been near its peak, although we cannot be certain.⁵⁵ Antioch certainly was the significant center of the northeastern area of the Roman Empire at the time of Ignatius, and it was becoming increasingly important as tensions heated up on the borders with Parthia, a mere hundred miles to the east. According to Josephus, writing around this time, Antioch was the metropolis of Syria, and “without dispute” it deserved “the place of the third city in the habitable earth that was under the Roman empire, both in magnitude, and other marks of prosperity” (*J. W.* 3.29). There is no reason to disagree with this description, but to say anything beyond this about the size of Antioch at the time of Ignatius is to engage in unproductive and unnecessary speculation.

The ethnic mix of the city is probably more important for our purposes than questions about the size of the population, but equally difficult to determine. As one of the major cities of the Mediterranean world, lying at the crossroads of trade routes, founded by diverse peoples in the midst of a foreign population, Antioch became a destination for peoples from far and wide. Its population was probably almost as diverse as most large cities in the twenty-first century and certainly as diverse as any city in the Roman Empire. As Libanius, a leading citizen of Antioch in the fourth century, noted:

Indeed, if a man had the idea of travelling all over the earth, not to see how cities looked, but to learn their ways, our city would fulfill his purpose and save him his journeying. If he sits in our market place he will sample every city, there will be so many people from each place with whom he can talk . . . the city loves the virtues

⁵²Liebeschuetz, *Antioch*, 93.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 92–100.

⁵⁴Glanville Downey, “The Size of the Population of Antioch,” *TAPA* 89 (1958): 86.

⁵⁵Frequently numbers are offered without any comment regarding the period for which they are relevant. Populations, however, fluctuate. If the size of the population is important in our consideration of an issue, it is crucial to determine not the population of a city at its height but at the time of the events we are examining. But it is almost impossible to specify the size of any ancient city at any time, let alone to chart the size during the various booms and busts in population over time. Indeed, the main tool by which urban populations are determined—the city walls—tells us little regarding how crowded or deserted areas of the city were at any given time. The wall was a fixed feature; the population within it changed with the fortunes of the time. See Downey, “The Size of the Population of Antioch,” which attempts to trace the population of Antioch over its history.

of those who come to it exactly as it does the virtues of its children, imitating the Athenians in this also.⁵⁶

Antioch's location on a key trade route, with a Mediterranean port, Seleucia, on the coast about fifteen miles away, made the city a key commercial center. Its strategic location, at the center of the Seleucid Empire and later at the eastern edge of the Roman Empire, made it an important military base also. At times, Antioch served as the functioning capital of the Roman Empire, when emperors made it their home, often for years, while they dealt with matters in the eastern empire.⁵⁷ Its pleasant climate made it a holiday destination as well, and its "Olympian" Games became famous, enduring well into the period of the Christian empire.⁵⁸

Antioch's intellectual tradition was equally rich. Cicero spoke of the city as "the seat of learned men and of liberal sciences."⁵⁹ According to Justin, Samaritan gnostic teachers made the city their home and gained a considerable following there.⁶⁰ In the various Christian debates, Antioch developed such a rich theological tradition that modern scholars often speak of Antioch and Alexandria as the two great centers of Christian learning, although the contrast between the theological traditions of the two cities, once routinely assumed, is now judged to have been too sharply drawn.⁶¹

The Religious Milieu of Antioch

Given Libanius's depiction of the city, Antioch was probably as religiously diverse as any city in the empire. It formed a crossroads for ethnic and cultural

⁵⁶Libanius, *Orationes* 11. This oration, in praise of Antioch, provides a rich description of major aspects of life in the city. Although Libanius's assessment was made about two and a half centuries after Ignatius's time, nothing suggests that Antioch's makeup differed much from the earlier time.

⁵⁷Warwick Ball offers a brief survey of imperial residence in Antioch (*Rome in the East: The Transformation of an Empire* [New York: Routledge, 2000], 155–56).

⁵⁸An endowment from Augustus established the games. At first they were regional, but they grew in popularity. When Emperor Theodosius outlawed the original Olympic Games in 393 C.E., the games at Antioch continued, matching the games once held at Olympia. They ended in the early 500s after riots between rival parties, the "blues" and the "greens." See Glanville Downey, "The Olympic Games of Antioch in the Fourth Century A. D." *TAPA* 70 (1939): 428–38; Liebeschuetz, *Antioch*, 136–44.

⁵⁹Cicero, *Pro Archia* 3; Pausanias, *Descr.* 8.33.3.

⁶⁰Justin, *1 Apol.* 26.

⁶¹See, for example, Mary Cunningham, "The Orthodox Church in Byzantium," in *A World History of Christianity* (ed. Adrian Hastings; London: Cassell; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 70. For a more cautious assessment of the "two schools" idea, see Rowan Williams, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 158–59.

interchange: a Macedonian/Greek city in origin, established in the midst of a Syrian countryside, under Roman rule, and with various immigrant populations, including Jews and Samaritans, who would have congregated in substantial numbers.

Like any Greek city, Antioch had its patron god—Apollo, the patron god of the Seleucids.⁶² Other Greek gods and goddesses were also associated with the city; Tyche, for example, was honored prominently.⁶³ In addition, the gods of the various elements of the mixed population would have had their abode there too. As immigrants made the city their home, so would have their gods. This is how gods traveled—in the suitcases of devotees who left their native land but not their native world, taking with them their beliefs, cultural behaviors, and gods, and settling in neighborhoods composed of fellow countrymen.⁶⁴

The ancient world, even at its skeptical best, was largely religious, and we can assume that most of the inhabitants of Antioch had some religious sensibilities. In this population, Jewish and Samaritan religion would have been represented, perhaps in their considerable diversity. Unlike the early Christian apologists who were soon to appear after Ignatius and confront Greco-Roman religion head on, it is Judaism against which Ignatius distinguishes and defines Christianity. Yet the larger religious world could not have escaped Ignatius or members of the early Christian community in Antioch. Indeed, perhaps most members of Ignatius's assembly converted to Christianity from paganism—perhaps even Ignatius himself.⁶⁵

⁶²Myths grew up associating Apollo in a special way with the area. A temple of Apollo stood in Daphne, a rich suburb of Antioch. According to Greek mythology, Apollo fell in love with Daphne, a beautiful river nymph, after he was struck by Cupid's arrow. But Daphne spurned his advances, for she had been hit by an arrow from Cupid that caused her to find Apollo's interest repulsive, a situation created to frustrate Apollo for his mockery of Cupid. Apollo's continued pursuit forced Daphne to plead to the gods for escape. Just as Apollo was about to reach her, she was turned into a laurel tree. The laurel leaf, then, became a symbol of Apollo, and Daphne was thick with laurel trees.

⁶³Downey, *A History of Antioch*, 216–17.

⁶⁴Ramsay MacMullen offers evidence of this kind of religious dispersion, where gods traveled in the company of immigrant people and took up their abode wherever their devotees settled in sufficient numbers to support a temple (*Paganism in the Roman Empire* [New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981], 112–30). He argues against reconstructions that read evidence of religious *dispersion* as proof of the *conversion* of native populations to recently introduced gods. Given the ancient expectation that people would be loyal to their native gods and traditions, MacMullen interprets religious dispersion as evidence simply of the movement of peoples with their native gods rather than of a movement of people from their old gods to new ones.

⁶⁵Chapter 2 argues that proselytes and God-fearers are unlikely to have been a significant component of Ignatius's assembly. One might wonder whether Ignatius had any affiliation with Judaism before joining the Christian movement. He certainly does not strike one as somebody steeped in Judaism.

Religion shaped Ignatius's life and death. Membership in one religion over against another was a matter of concern for him. The definition of the boundaries separating one religion from another was a pressing and necessary business for him. His reflection on these issues is perhaps his most important contribution to the development of the Christian movement.

The Jews of Antioch

The primary evidence for the Jewish situation in Antioch about the time of Ignatius comes from the writings of Josephus. Whatever we make of Josephus as a historian and however difficult it is to determine his sources at times, he is a near-contemporary witness to the time of Ignatius, and he comments on the Jewish situation in Antioch as a relatively informed observer. Josephus has no hesitation in describing Antioch as the significant city in Syria and indeed as one of the most significant cities in the Roman Empire (*J. W.* 3.29). He describes it, too, as a major center for Jews.⁶⁶ Neither point is disputed. But when he describes Jewish-Gentile relationships in Antioch, some scholars think that he is spinning the story somewhat.⁶⁷ And when he contends that Jews had citizenship in Antioch, most think that his information was wrong, perhaps intentionally.⁶⁸

As noted earlier, it is difficult to be precise about the size of the population of Antioch at its height or at any other point in its history. Determining the size of a particular ethnic element in Antioch is equally difficult, yet attempts have been made, particularly regarding the Jewish component of the city. Beloch, who performed much of the early work on population figures, places the number of Jews in Antioch during the time of Augustus at forty-five thousand,⁶⁹ and Kraeling accepts that number.⁷⁰ Some scholars reduce the number by half, but even the lower number makes for a sizeable Jewish community.⁷¹

⁶⁶Josephus says that although Jewish populations are found throughout the world, Jews are particularly numerous in Syria and especially in Antioch (*J. W.* 7.43).

⁶⁷Chapter 4, below, deals at length with the matter of Jewish-Gentile tensions.

⁶⁸Josephus wants to make a solid case for Jewish rights in Greek cities. This chapter will discuss the matter in detail.

⁶⁹J. Beloch, *Die Bevölkerung der griechisch-römischen Welt* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1886). For a detailed critique of Beloch's work, see Elio Lo Cascio, "The Size of the Roman Population: Beloch and the Meaning of the Augustan Census Figures," *JRS* 84 (1994): 23–40. For a review and critique of older and newer methods to determine ancient population statistics, see Tim G. Parkin, *Demography and Roman Society* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

⁷⁰Kraeling, "The Jewish Community at Antioch," 130–60.

⁷¹Wayne A. Meeks and Robert L. Wilken settle for twenty-two thousand (*Jews and Christians in Antioch in the First Four Centuries of the Common Era* [Society of Biblical Literature Sources for Biblical Study 13; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1978], 8).

The attempt to be specific about population statistics for the ancient world is risky and often little better than guesswork, even when ancient texts themselves provide precise numbers.⁷² No such precise numbers exist for Antioch, although Josephus noted and tried to explain the considerable size of the Jewish population there. If Josephus felt compelled to address the size of the Jewish community there, it is likely that it was noticeably large, and it is equally likely that the size of the Jewish community in Antioch had not escaped the notice of the non-Jews there.

Perhaps the safest method for determining the size of the Jewish population in Antioch is an impressionistic approach. No one disputes that Antioch was one of the largest centers of Diaspora Judaism. We can safely say that Antioch and its surrounding area had a Jewish population larger than that found in most other Diaspora cities, Alexandria probably being the only exception. More precision than this is probably impossible and, for most questions, unnecessary.

Proximity to Palestine and Mesopotamia (the second center of Judaism in the ancient world) may help explain the size of the Jewish community in Antioch. Indeed, this is what comes to mind for Josephus when he attempts to account for the number of Jews in Antioch (*J. W.* 7.43). Other factors have been proposed, but Josephus's simple explanation of the proximity of Antioch to Palestine and Mesopotamia has perhaps the most merit.⁷³ As a booming city on the route between the two primary areas of Jewish concentration, Antioch would have been an attractive and convenient home for Jewish immigrants from both lands.

Given the difficulty of determining with any accuracy either the size of the city or the size of the Jewish component within the city, an attempt to establish the precise proportion of the Jewish element in Antioch would be equally futile. Fortunately, these are not issues important for our concern to understand Jewish-Gentile relationships in Antioch. More important is the recognition that the *proportion* of Jews to Gentiles would have shifted from time to time, sometimes quite dramatically. Such shifts in the complexion of Antioch's population could have upset the equilibrium (or appeared to do so, which would have had the same impact). These changes may have created tensions because of either real or perceived losses and gains. The key to understanding the nature of Jewish-Gentile relationships in Antioch, then, is not the mere presence of a Jewish community in Antioch, or even the size of the community; rather, the shifts in the ratio of the populations or perceived changes in privileges or power are probably most important.

⁷²Even when ancient texts offer numbers, we generally should consider the numbers as impressionistic, rhetorical, or propagandistic. This does not mean, however, that we should discard all such information as unreliable. Although impressions may be mistaken and rhetoric and propaganda may often mislead, they can have some roots in reality. Nevertheless, ancient population numbers generally do not provide any more precision than we would have without them.

⁷³See the discussion below on the question of Jewish family size and the impact of abortion and exposure of the newborn as factors in family size.

In the modern world, immigrant communities often settle in their own ethnic enclaves, where they have the comfort and support of a familiar community. The same was true for at least some immigrant communities in the ancient world. Jews lived primarily in two sectors of Alexandria, although they were also scattered throughout the remainder of the city.⁷⁴ The same clustering of families appears to have been the case for Jews in at least some of the other settlements in Egypt.⁷⁵ Rome, too, seems to have had one area where Jews were known to dwell in large numbers.⁷⁶ It is more difficult to determine the situation of Jews in the area of Antioch. There appears to have been one grouping of Jews within the city walls close to the gate leading to the suburb of Daphne, and some Jewish settlement in Daphne, but Jews made their residence in other areas also.⁷⁷

The other sources regarding the Jewish presence in Antioch at the time of Ignatius are Christian. Ignatius's letters are primary, but the book of Acts may offer useful material. Many scholars argue that other Christian documents, particularly the Gospel of Matthew⁷⁸ and the *Didache*, reflect the situation in Antioch

⁷⁴Philo, *Flaccus* 55.

⁷⁵Louis H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 63–65.

⁷⁶Philo, *On the Embassy to Gaius*, 23.155.

⁷⁷Downey, *A History of Antioch*, 206. Kraeling locates Jews in three areas: a southern Jewish quarter within the walls, the suburb of Daphne, and perhaps to the north of the city (“The Jewish Community at Antioch,” 140–43). John Malalas mentions a synagogue in Daphne (*Chronographia* 10.45; Johannes Thurn, ed., *Ioannis Malalae Chronographia*, Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 35 [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2000]). John Chrysostom speaks of synagogues in Daphne and Antioch (*Adversus Iudaeos* 1.6; 6.12). Although such evidence is late, these communities may well have remained in the area of their founding.

⁷⁸The Gospel of Matthew, in particular, has been assigned an Antiochene, or at least a Syrian, milieu. Matthew's connection to the area is strong. It appears that Ignatius either used Matthew's Gospel or drew from the same oral tradition; see Charles Thomas Brown, *The Gospel and Ignatius of Antioch* (Studies in Biblical Literature 12; New York: Peter Lang, 2000), 1–6; Christine Trevett, “Approaching Matthew from the Second Century: The Under-Used Ignatian Correspondence,” *JSNT* 20 (1984): 59–67; Raymond E. Brown and John P. Meier, *Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity* (New York and Ramsey, N.J.: Paulist, 1983), 45–72; Édouard Massaux, *The First Ecclesiastical Writers* (vol. 1 of *The Influence of the Gospel of Saint Matthew on Christian Literature before Saint Irenaeus*; trans. N. J. Belval and S. Hecht; New Gospel Studies 5.1; Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1990); Michelle Slee, *The Church in Antioch in the First Century CE: Communion and Conflict* (JSNTSup 244; London: Sheffield University Press, 2003), 118–55. No examination of the parallels between Ignatius's writings and the Gospel of Matthew should be attempted without first reading Robert M. Grant, “Scripture and Tradition in Ignatius of Antioch,” in *After the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress: 1967), 37–54. An even stronger case for Matthew's Syrian or Antiochene origins can perhaps be made if Ignatius did not use a copy of Matthew's Gospel but each author drew independently from the same oral traditions. Such sharing would suggest a common locale in

or Syria.⁷⁹ They contend that a weighty enough case can be made for these documents' Syrian or Antiochene milieu that they should not be excluded from reconstructions of early Christianity in the area. A few scholars have argued that other documents also may be from Antioch.⁸⁰ Examination reveals that every Christian document associated with Antioch puts the Jewish factor into prominent focus and suggests a tension between the Christian community and Judaism (although we perhaps can say this of most early Christian literature).

Christians would certainly have lived somewhat in the shadow of Judaism during Ignatius's time, and it is unlikely that we can understand Ignatius without understanding something of the relations between Christians and Jews in Antioch. Few Ignatian scholars, however, have addressed the matter directly; most have simply investigated Jewish Christians or Judaizing Christians in that city. Even these investigations frequently have muted the force of Ignatius's comments about Judaism and Judaizers, finding in other opponents, such as Gentile Judaizers and particularly the Docetists, Ignatius's more serious and irreconcilable enemy.⁸¹

But Ignatius's writings present a much starker view of the matter. Christianity and Judaism stand in sharp tension. Ignatius saw no remedy for this other than on completely Christian terms. There could be no reconciliation or fellowship, and those on the Christian side who encouraged such alliances were dangerous and perhaps damned. The two movements were fundamentally different, and Ignatius uses the terms "Christianity" and "Christian" to signify and secure the

which certain stories were prominent in the oral tradition. The assumption here is that, at least in part, the memory of the church (where the oral tradition had its life) would have featured a range of material best suited for its particular needs and that different locales would have reflected somewhat different needs and interests. Regarding the Jewish factor in Matthew, it is clear that Jews feature prominently in all the Gospels, but Matthew's Gospel is particularly sensitive to the matter. What this sensitivity implies is debated: some scholars think that the Matthean community is still associated with the synagogue; others argue that the community is in the process of breaking away; still others, that the break is in the past and reconciliation is not possible. The debate is addressed at a number of levels in David L. Balch, ed., *Social History of the Matthean Community* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991). Of the articles there, Robert H. Gundry, "A Responsive Evaluation of the Social History of the Matthean Community in Roman Syria," 62–67, makes the most compelling case. See also K. W. Clark, "The Gentile Bias in Matthew," *JBL* 66 (1947): 165–72.

⁷⁹The *Didache* is sometimes assigned to Syria, and it shows Jewish influence. It, too, draws many of its traditions from the same pool as Matthew and Ignatius, and it likewise has a particular sensitivity to Judaism. See Slee, *The Church in Antioch, CE*, 54–116.

⁸⁰Reginald Fuller, *A Critical Introduction to the New Testament* (London: Duckworth, 1966) 107, places the Gospel of Mark in Antioch. Some scholars place the *Acts of Peter* there (Harry O. Maier, *The Social Setting of the Ministry as Reflected in the Writings of Hermas, Clement, and Ignatius* [Dissertations SR 1; Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1991], 151).

⁸¹See the section "Ignatius's Opponents" in ch. 3, pp. 113–26.

new self-understanding of the Christian movement against identification with, or absorption into, Judaism.

Ignatius's hostility toward Judaism⁸² and his intentional differentiation of Christianity from Judaism demand that any attempt to understand Ignatius take into consideration the Jewish factor in Antioch.⁸³ The need for such attention is heightened when we note that every mention of Antioch in the Christian literature prior to Ignatius either highlights or implies a tension between Jewish and Christian belief and practice.⁸⁴ Thus Ignatius is not eccentric, standing alone in his critique of Judaism; he reflects a tension that goes back, it seems, to the first days of the church there.

The Status of Jews in Greek Cities

Too often scholars of the early church assume that most Jews of the Diaspora were urban.⁸⁵ Sometimes related to this assumption is the belief that Jews were to some degree prosperous. For example, Trevett thinks that the Jews in Antioch "fared well" and had "opportunities for commerce."⁸⁶ Zetterholm implies a similar situation, where the Jewish synagogue was able to supply for the needs of its own community but also had sufficient surplus to aid non-Jewish newcomers to the city who required assistance.⁸⁷ The reality, however, was probably quite different. Even if urban life presented opportunities for prosperity, most Jews would have

⁸²The language that Ignatius uses against Judaism is undeniably harsh (see esp. ch. 3, pp. 102–4). As with most matters related to Ignatius, a range of hypotheses vie for attention, from seeing an ugly anti-Semitism in Ignatius's words to contending that Ignatius had no gripe with "orthodox" Judaism at all but only with docetic Gentile schismatics who misused the Jewish tradition. These matters will be addressed below in several places.

⁸³A still standard treatment is Kraeling, "The Jewish Community in Antioch," 130–60.

⁸⁴See the section "Jewish-Christian Relations in Antioch" in ch. 4, pp. 141–53.

⁸⁵W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 30–43; Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983), 34; Meeks and Wilken, *Jews and Christians in Antioch*, 1; Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 57; S. W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* (2d ed.; New York: Columbia University Press, 1952–), 1:170.

⁸⁶Trevett, *A Study of Ignatius*, 38; see also Colin J. Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting* (JSNTSup 11; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986), 160. Meeks and Wilken speak of the Jews of Antioch as being "more affluent" than rural Jews (*Jews and Christians in Antioch*, 10), suggesting some degree of economic success. They also mention, however, that Jews were of all social levels and, "for the most part, they were poor" (p. 12).

⁸⁷Magnus Zetterholm, *The Formation of Christianity in Antioch: A Social-Scientific Approach to the Separation between Judaism and Christianity* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 125–27.

been unable to take advantage of such situations.⁸⁸ Many would have been slaves; many, agriculturalists; many, day laborers; many, poor; and perhaps most, rural.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ See Mikael Tellbe, "The Temple Tax as a Pre-70 CE Identity Marker," in *The Formation of the Early Church* (ed. Jostein Ådna; WUNT 183; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005): 32, n. 55. Tellbe points to works by G. LaPiana, H. J. Leon, Leonard Victor Rutgers, and M. H. Williams and cites Williams's comment that "not a single rich or even moderately prosperous Jew is found in all the literature of the late Republic and the early empire" (M. H. Williams, "The Expulsion of the Jews from Rome in A. D. 19," *Latomus* 48 [1989]: 781–82).

⁸⁹ The rural element of Diaspora Judaism has gained some recognition. Frend admits that "there may have been something that could be termed a rural Dispersion" ("Town and Countryside in Early Christianity," in *The Church in Town and Countryside* [ed. Dekker Baker; *Studies in Church History* 16; Oxford: Blackwell, 1979], 35). A few other writers are less equivocal. Martin Hengel argues that for the early Hellenistic period in Egypt, Jews were "predominantly a peasant people" (*Jews, Greeks, and Barbarians: Aspects of the Hellenization of Judaism in the pre-Christian Period* [trans. John Bowden; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980], 87), and he provides a brief discussion of the character of Diaspora Judaism in his chapter titled "Jews in a Greek-Speaking Environment: Mercenaries, Slaves, Peasants, Craftsmen, and Merchants." This is a far more nuanced and adequate treatment of the Jewish Diaspora than is reflected in the sweeping statements, often confidently made, about the urban character of the Jewish Diaspora. Hengel (p. 91) further points to Josephus's comment that Jews were not merchants but peasants (Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 1.60). Jacob Neusner contends that rabbinic literature arose in the town and village, not the city, and that most Jews were rural in Palestine and Mesopotamia at least ("The Experience of the City in Late Antique Judaism," in *Studies in Judaism and Its Greco-Roman Context* [vol. 5 of *Approaches to Ancient Judaism*; ed. William Scott Green; BJS 32; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985], 37–52). Neusner dismisses the city/country dialectic as not of much significance (pp. 44, 46). Tessa Rajak recognizes that although we "cannot say much about rural settlements," it is clear that there were rural Jews, though all numbers are "highly speculative" ("The Jewish Community and Its Boundaries," in *The Jews among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire* [ed. Judith Lieu, John North, and Tessa Rajak; New York: Routledge, 1992], 10). Victor Tcherikover believes that Jews were spread throughout Egypt, and he offers evidence for Jews in villages there (*Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* [trans. S. Applebaum; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1959], 285–86). S. Applebaum thinks that for Pamphylia the evidence suggests that "a considerable part of the Jewish population of the region was rural, and unattached to city communities" ("The Organization of the Jewish Communities in the Diaspora," in *The Jewish People in the First Century: Historical Geography, Political History, Social, Cultural, and Religious Life and Institutions* [ed. S. Safrai and M. Stern; 2 vols.; CRINT 1; Assen, Neth.: Van Gorcum; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974–1976]: 1:486). For almost every other area of the empire, Applebaum's conclusion is the same: Diaspora Jews had a considerable rural contingent (S. Applebaum, "The Social and Economic Status of Jews in the Diaspora," *ibid.*, 2:701–27). Smallwood comments that most of the Jews of Palestine were agricultural rather than commercial in the first century, although she does not carry this observation over to the Diaspora (*The Jews under Roman Rule*, 122). Most recently, Stephen Mitchell, who, in his detailed study of Anatolia, questions the supposed urban character of Diaspora Judaism, comments, "The conventional picture of diaspora Jews as a distinct urban minority group, which earned a living from crafts and trade, has never

More important than the economic condition of Jews has been the question of the status of Jews as citizens. Although the nature of Jewish rights in Hellenistic cities is debated,⁹⁰ this much is agreed upon: Jews had long been residents of some of the cities, where they constituted a significant and identifiable segment of the population. Further, they claimed and possessed special rights. These rights were begrudged enough for enemies of the Jews to seek to curtail them and valued enough for the Jews to defend them.

Much of the modern debate over the status of Jews has focused on the nature of the Greek city (*polis*). This focus may be somewhat misdirected. Grainger warns that we should not be thinking in terms of the Greek *polis* in our discussion of citizenship. He points out that the cities of Seleucid Syria were not Greek cities, but *Macedonian*, and he questions efforts to define the Seleucid cities in terms of the *polis*. These cities were framed to suit the needs of Seleucus and the Seleucid state; none fit exactly the definition of *polis*, a term that itself was not fixed.⁹¹ This recognition removes some of the barriers that had restricted the debate over the nature of the status of Jews in cities such as Antioch.

Some scholars have argued that part of the reason for the confusion about Jewish rights is that different sets of rights may need to be distinguished.⁹² There is the right of citizenship in a Greek city (the *polis*), but there are also rights specifically assigned to particular groups within a city by powers superior to the local city authorities—that is, by the Macedonian rulers who succeeded Alexander’s empire and by the Romans who replaced these dynasties. Although these rights would not technically have been rights of citizenship in the local *polis*, they could have been substantial.

Regarding the question of citizenship, two main lines of argument have been relied on to establish that Jews, as a group, did not have such privileges.⁹³ The first argument asserts that the religious scruples of the Jews and the civic obligations

carried much conviction” (*Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor* [2 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1993], 2:35). He reminds us that the Jewish settlers under Antiochus III were “first and foremost farmers” (p. 35) and offers a range of evidence for rural Jewish presence in Asia Minor (35–37).

⁹⁰For a brief summary of some of the issues, see Zetterholm, *The Formation of Christianity in Antioch*, 32–37. See also Aryeh Kasher, *The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt*; and idem, “The Rights of the Jews of Antioch on the Orontes,” *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 49 (1982): 69–85.

⁹¹Grainger, *The Cities of Seleucid Syria*, 54–55. Downey made a similar point earlier (*A History of Antioch*, 114–15). Zetterholm, however, thinks that the organization of Antioch reflected the traditional structure of the polis (*The Formation of Christianity in Antioch*, 44, n. 27). Grainger’s position was worked out earlier by a number of scholars. For an overview of the evidence, see Kasher, “The Rights of the Jews.”

⁹²Kasher, “The Rights of the Jews.”

⁹³For a brief review of the matter, see Zetterholm, *The Formation of Christianity in Antioch*, 32–37.

of citizens would have clashed. The typical Jew, considered to be pious and observant, would have been unable to shoulder the responsibilities of citizenship in Hellenistic cities, which presumably would have included at least token recognition of the pagan gods.⁹⁴ Those who so argue usually admit that certain Jews (most probably apostate) could have gained full citizenship, and typically a number of examples are pointed out.⁹⁵ The second line of argument puts forward the *politeuma* (πολίτευμα) as the formal association of Jews in Greek cities. This structure supposedly allowed particular ethnic groups who were resident in a city but not entitled to citizenship to live in the city mainly according to their ancestral traditions.

Both assertions contain elements of weakness. Given that the status of Jews in the Diaspora is, admittedly, complicated and sometimes frustratingly ambiguous, the precise status of the Jews in Hellenistic cities is likely to remain a topic of debate for years to come.⁹⁶ There is enough evidence, however, to raise questions about the common assumptions just mentioned.

Jewish Religious Scruples

The clash between Jewish religious scruples and the obligations of citizenship in Hellenistic cities probably has been drawn too starkly by those who dismiss the likelihood of full citizenship rights for Jews.⁹⁷ Indeed, the possibility of a collision

⁹⁴Smallwood (*The Jews under Roman Rule*, 359–60), following closely the view of Downey (*A History of Antioch*, 79–80), cautions against the conclusion that the original Jewish settlers of Antioch had full rights as citizens. She argues that the obligations of such citizenship would have entailed religious duties that could not be performed by observant Jews. Smallwood therefore expects that if full citizenship was extended to the original Jewish settlers, few would have accepted it. She thinks it more probable that Seleucus simply extended the right of citizenship to Jews who individually requested it, rather than making a blanket inclusion of the entire Jewish community. Smallwood sees the clash of obligations occurring for Jews not just in Antioch but in any Hellenistic city. See also Lester L. Grabbe, *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 2:405–9.

⁹⁵These examples include Antiochus of Antioch (Josephus, *J. W.* 7.47) and Tiberius Julius Alexander, a nephew of Philo, who was Roman governor of Palestine and Egypt (Josephus, *Ant.* 20.100). Surely there were countless more. See Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World*, 79–83.

⁹⁶Applebaum comments that the “problem of Jewish status in the cities of the Hellenistic kingdoms is perhaps one of the most complicated in Jewish history” (“The Legal Status of the Jewish Communities in the Diaspora,” in *The Jewish People in the First Century: Historical Geography, Political History, Social, Cultural, and Religious Life and Institutions* [ed. S. Safrai and M. Stern; 2 vols.; CRINT 1; Assen, Neth.: Van Gorcum; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974–1976], 1:434).

⁹⁷For recent scholarship on the subject of the status of Jews in Hellenistic cities, see Erich S. Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews amidst Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2002), 126–31. In ch. 2, Gruen discusses in detail the

between Jews' religious and civic obligations does not seem to have occurred to observant Jews of the period.⁹⁸ Josephus argues that Jews had full citizenship rights in cities such as Antioch and Alexandria, and he assumes it for Jews in many other Hellenistic cities.⁹⁹ For our purposes here, it does not matter whether Josephus was correct or mistaken about the status and rights of Jews. The telling point is that a Jewish author—and, we assume, his readers—were able to think in terms of Jewish citizenship in Hellenistic communities without any sense of the supposedly impossible religious predicament that modern scholarship contends must have confronted these Jews.¹⁰⁰ Consider, too, the comment in Acts

situation of Jews in Alexandria (pp. 54–83). See also Applebaum, “Legal Status of the Jewish Communities,” 420–63; idem, “The Organization of the Jewish Communities in the Diaspora,” 464–503; Tessa Rajak, “Was There a Roman Charter for the Jews?” *JRS* 74 (1984): 107–23.

⁹⁸What it meant to be an observant Jew in antiquity is a matter of debate. See p. 61, n. 60.

⁹⁹Josephus is the main source for information about the citizenship claims of Jews. Although Philo's comments are less clear, it appears that Philo's family had citizenship in Alexandria and that he experienced no clash between religious sensibilities and civic duties (see Lester L. Grabbe, “The Hellenistic City of Jerusalem,” in *Jews in the Hellenistic and Roman Cities* [ed. John R. Bartlett; New York: Routledge, 2002], 18).

¹⁰⁰A passage frequently cited to demonstrate that citizenship in Greek cities entailed activities in which the pious Jew could not participate is 3 Macc 2:30. Given that the context is Ptolemy IV Philopator's exceptional hostility and resentment of the Jews, stemming from Jewish attempts to bar him access to the Jerusalem temple, we must be careful not to take the conditions of citizenship expressed here for Alexandria as definitive for all Greek cities or even for Alexandria when relations between Jews and Greeks were less strained. A more detailed description of how Jews might accommodate the demands of citizenship within the obligations of Judaism appears in 2 Macc 4:7–22. This passage recounts Jason's gaining the high priesthood and enrolling the people of Jerusalem as citizens of Antioch in the early years of the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (see Grabbe, “The Hellenistic City of Jerusalem,” 6–21, for a full discussion). What is most telling about the description of activities under the new status is that there is no significant change in the religious activities: pagan rites do not replace the rites of Judaism. Although it is true that the author is offended by the diversion of the attention of some priests from their temple duties to the entertainment of the gymnasium, it is not a change in religion that has occurred; it is, rather, a change in the *careful* performance of the rites. The author of 1 Maccabees reports a starker departure from the practices of Judaism. He notes that some removed the marks of circumcision (1 Macc 1:15). His other comments are of a general nature: Jews “abandoned the holy covenant” and “sold themselves to do evil.” Such comments may reveal more about the author's perception of the situation than the concrete changes in practice. Had such radical departure from Jewish rites followed from the enrollment of Jews as citizens of Antioch, the author of 2 Maccabees would have made this a significant point of his critique. Indeed, the author notes how Jews handled one situation of potential conflict so as to keep their Judaism intact (2 Macc 2:18–20). Later, under Antiochus, Judaism was outlawed, but this had nothing to do with the question of citizenship and its obligations (1 Macc 1:41–50; 2 Macc 6:1–11).

about Paul's citizenship in Tarsus (Acts 21:39). Again, it does not matter whether the author had his facts right about Paul's status. The point is that a writer, well acquainted with Judaism and the world of the Diaspora, could speak naturally of a pious Jew's citizenship in a Greek city.¹⁰¹

Our perceptions about what constituted the duties of citizenship do not seem to mesh with what the ancient Jews themselves understood citizenship to entail. Some ancient Jews, at least, seem to have understood the loyalties demanded by citizenship in Greek cities and faithfulness to Judaism as generally compatible, not competitive. It appears not to have been an issue for Jews generally and thus not a matter of focus in Jewish literature of the period. In light of this, arguments that build on the supposed clash of Jewish scruples with obligations of Greek citizenship must be set aside or more carefully qualified.

What is perhaps most significant about the supposed clash of Jewish piety and civic responsibilities is that, according to Josephus, generally neither Greek citizens nor Jews themselves raise the matter. Rather, it is raised by groups who are themselves seeking citizenship or Greeks who appear to be attempting to curtail rights that Jews already possess.¹⁰² At least, that is the situation in the passage to which appeal is most often made. Despite Josephus's apologetic spin here, the details of his account deserve consideration. In Alexandria, Egyptians, some of whom did not have citizenship in Alexandria but were trying to make their case for inclusion, were the ones who brought into the debate the incompatibility of Jewish obligations. Thus these opponents of Jewish citizenship are better viewed as advocates for their own claim for citizenship than as perceptive commentators on Jewish rights and obligations. It appears that these Egyptians attempted to strengthen their case by disputing the qualifications of a group already having citizenship rights, the Jews. By raising the issue of religious obligations, they introduced a matter that might be problematic for Jews but not for Egyptians. Granted, this suggests that some saw the issue of obligations as having potential to sway the debate; it does not indicate, however, that it was the decisive factor or that such a matter complicated Jewish citizenship before this incident. Indeed, Josephus implies that a clash of Jewish loyalties had never been an issue with the Greeks and Macedonians. That is not to say that issue could

¹⁰¹ For a brief comment on Jewish participation in the larger society without a clash of loyalties, see Paula Fredriksen, "What 'Parting of the Ways'? Jews, Gentiles, and the Ancient Mediterranean City," in *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (eds. Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed; *Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum* 95; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 44–46; see also John C. Lentz Jr., *Luke's Portrait of Paul* (SNTSMS 77; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 34–43.

¹⁰² Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.69–72. Philo also points to the "Egyptian" character of the opposition to Jews in Alexandria (*Flaccus* 4.17).

not be raised by Greek citizens themselves, and such appears to have happened in an incident in Ionia.¹⁰³

When Josephus discusses Jewish citizenship, he never hints at a clash of obligations. This would be puzzling if such an issue were the barrier that long had restricted Jews from access to citizenship. It appears, then, that a clash of religious obligations may not have been a primary issue in the debate over citizenship.

Politeuma

The *politeuma* theory proposes that Jews (and other ethnic groups) were recognized as self-governing communities, or *politeumata*, within Hellenistic cities. It was in such a structure that Jews had their status defined and their rights maintained.¹⁰⁴

Not everyone accepts this popular hypothesis. Constantine Zuckerman offers a forceful critique of this theory and discusses some of the literature in his review of *The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* by Aryeh Kasher.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, Gert Lüderitz, who has provided a detailed analysis of the use of the term *politeuma*, concludes that the term had a variety of meanings and that the meaning that attached itself to the discussion of Jewish status in Hellenistic cities is, at best, forced.¹⁰⁶ If these objections to the *politeuma* theory should gain wide acceptance, the older theory of Jewish citizenship in Hellenistic cities is likely to receive new life, although other reconstructions certainly may be possible, given the ambiguity of much of the evidence.

The attractiveness of the *politeuma* thesis is that it provides a category of enough ambiguity to help explain why there could have been a debate over the rights of Jews. If the status of Jews was clear-cut, one wonders how there could have been a debate at all: either Jews were citizens or they were not. If, however, the status of Jews was connected to the *politeuma*, then there may have been

¹⁰³ Josephus, *Ant.* 12.125–26.

¹⁰⁴ Applebaum tries to refocus the debate, suggesting that scholars have rejected the likelihood of Jewish citizenship in Greek cities because of “too exclusive a preoccupation with the issue in relation to Alexandria,” which in turn has led to a dismissal of Josephus’s witness regarding these rights in other cities (“Legal Status of the Jewish Communities,” 434).

¹⁰⁵ Constantine Zuckerman, “Hellenistic *politeumata* and the Jews: A Reconsideration,” *Scripta classica israelica* 8–9 (1985–1989): 171–84. Feldman comments that Zuckerman “has pointed out the rather astounding fact that there is no mention of a *politeuma* of this nature in Philo, Josephus, or the *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*, or, for that matter, in any of the statements of the anti-Jewish bigots, who supposedly fought to abolish these Jewish organizations” (*Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World*, 92.).

¹⁰⁶ Gert Lüderitz, “What Is the *Politeuma*?” in *Studies in Early Jewish Epigraphy* (ed. Jan Willem van Henten and Pieter Willem van der Horst; Leiden and New York: E. J. Brill, 1994), 182–225.

debate over what rights within the *politeuma* corresponded to the rights of citizenship. Before we could build much on the *politeuma* thesis, however, we would need more convincing evidence that the *politeuma*, as understood in modern scholarship for defining the status of Jews, ever really existed.

The Status of Jews in Antioch

Whatever the case regarding the status of Jews in many Greek cities, Jews in Antioch may have had a particularly strong case for status as full citizens. Seleucus had founded Antioch with Athenian and Macedonian soldiers.¹⁰⁷ Josephus adds a third founding people, Jewish mercenary troops, and he is explicit about the status of Jews in Antioch: (1) they represented one group in the population of the original city when Seleucus I founded it in 300 B.C.E., and (2) Jews had full rights as citizens.¹⁰⁸ The value of Josephus's statement is debated, given the apologetic nature of many of his comments.¹⁰⁹ But this in itself is not sufficient grounds to dismiss his statement outright.

The situation Josephus describes, in which Jews received full rights as citizens in Antioch, fits well the historical situation for the founding of that city. The objection usually raised against this possibility is that Jewish religious sensibilities would not have permitted Jews to participate in the cultic obligations of a citizen, but this argument is not compelling for the period of the founding of Antioch, whatever the case may be for the later period.¹¹⁰ For one thing, it is unlikely that all Jews were equally "observant"—if this term has any meaning for the period about 300 B.C.E., when so much of the character of a "common Judaism" had

¹⁰⁷ Antiochus III added settlers from Aetolia, Euboea, and Crete in 189 B.C.E. (Jones, *The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces*, 242). The Macedonian component could not have been large. Jones notes that Alexander had only fifteen thousand Macedonian troops with him, and these had to be shared among the successors. Strabo speaks of a "multitude of settlers" in Antioch (*Geogr.* 16.2.4); only a few of these could have been Macedonian.

¹⁰⁸ Josephus, *Ant.* 12.119; *Ag. Ap.* 2.39.

¹⁰⁹ Although Josephus is explicit that Jews constituted part of the original population of Antioch, many studies of Antioch's foundation pass over this comment in silence. Grainger, for example, does not mention Jews at all in the founding of Antioch, nor does he mention the service of Jews as mercenaries in Seleucus's army (*The Cities of Seleukid Syria*). Cummins reviews the debate (*Paul and the Crucified Christ in Antioch*, 141–42). Kasher has attempted to make a case in support of Josephus's statement (*The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt*, 298–99).

¹¹⁰ Josephus, *Ant.* 12.125–126; *Ag. Ap.* 2.39. It is possible to accept Josephus's comment that Jewish settlers were part of the original inhabitants of Antioch and at the same time not be convinced that they had been granted full rights. R. Marcus, for example, does not think Jews in Antioch gained special rights until the time of Antiochus Epiphanes; see appendix C in Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* (LCL; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1943), 7:739.

yet to be worked out. Even if Jewish mercenaries were generally observant, it is improbable that Seleucus would have been aware of the scruples connected to observant Judaism or that the Jewish mercenaries would have understood every obligation of citizenship. For that matter, we cannot be sure that these issues had yet been fully worked out in the minds of the new Macedonian masters. The establishment of new Hellenistic communities, made up of quite diverse groups, was a new phenomenon, unexplored and, in its initial stages, probably provisional. Boundaries may yet have had to be fully drawn, sensibilities may yet have had to shape themselves to the new situation. Grainger's reminder is important: the cities of Seleucus were more Macedonian than Greek, and the structure was tailored specifically to the needs of the Seleucid regime.¹¹¹ It is not at all certain, then, that Jews would have encountered a clash of loyalties in accepting citizenship in Antioch.

At the same time, we cannot merely take Josephus's word on the Jewish component of the city's founding population. He was himself an apologist for Jewish rights in Antioch, and early rights for Jews going back to the establishment of the city would have helped his case. Is there reason to believe that Jews were, as Josephus says, part of the original settlers in Antioch? Were conditions such that Seleucus would have wanted to include Jews as an essential element of his new city and grant them full privileges?

As noted above, Antioch was founded within months of Ptolemy's seizure of land that had been assigned to Seleucus. As a result, Ptolemy's new borders came threateningly close to the major routes by which Seleucus's territory was held together. Antioch was one of four cities strategically founded north of the new borders, serving as a center from which Seleucus could resist further expansion from Ptolemy and protect the new territories he now held in Asia Minor and Syria.¹¹² Given the charged political situation during which the site was chosen and the city built, is there reason to think that an element of Jewish mercenaries would have been an attractive component, in Seleucus's mind, for his new city? There is.

The value of Jewish settlers is particularly enhanced by the taint on almost every other group that was incorporated into the new city. Grainger points out that not just the threat from Ptolemy's new borders would have concerned Seleucus; internal tensions also would have jeopardized the general security of Seleucus's new state.¹¹³ But Grainger does not consider how this could have made Jewish mercenary troops an attractive addition to Antioch's founding core.

First, there was the hostility of the native Syrian population to the Macedonians and Greeks, regardless of which of Alexander's generals sought or claimed

¹¹¹ Grainger, *The Cities of Seleukid Syria*, 67–87.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 57–61.

¹¹³ Rather than discuss all of Grainger's points, I will address only those that seem directly relevant to the status of the original Jewish settlers in Antioch (*ibid.*, 54).

their territory and loyalty. If the natives resented Alexander the Great, they would hardly have welcomed his generals.¹¹⁴ A second problem for Seleucus was that certain Greek communities had already been established as trading posts in the area before the invasion of Alexander, and there is reason to think that they were not particularly keen on the new Macedonian power and that they harbored a resentment that appears not to have escaped Seleucus's notice.¹¹⁵ It is important to remember that Philip of Macedon had defeated Greek city-states and that Greek cities frequently revolted under Alexander and his successor Macedonian generals. Indeed, some Greeks even had served as mercenaries in the Persian forces that opposed Alexander. A third source of insecurity for Seleucus came from the Macedonian and Greek troops of Antigonos, whom Seleucus and members of the alliance had just defeated. Some of these troops had been in this area for thirty years or more, settled by Alexander or Antigonos to protect this newly-captured territory; others had been active soldiers in the forces of Antigonos. These troops had owed loyalty to Antigonos, and even with Antigonos dead, there was some suspicion that the loyalty of these soldiers now might lie with Antigonos's still-active son Demetrius rather than with Seleucus, who had just defeated them.¹¹⁶ Problems were made graver by the fact that most of Seleucus's loyal Macedonian troops were engaged in holding the recently conquered lands of Mesopotamia and the east. Seleucus was also, for the most part, cut off from further recruitment in Macedonia and Greece, and—amplifying these matters—he had had the smallest army at Ipsus, where the coalition had defeated Antigonos. Thus Seleucus had a critical manpower shortage at a time when he needed increased troop strength to secure his hold on his newly acquired lands in Syria and when the ambitions of Ptolemy had robbed him of what he perceived as his rightful lands of Coele-Syria.¹¹⁷

The original Macedonian and Greek settlers of Antioch were, at best, doubtful supporters of Seleucus, however much Seleucus was able to win their loyalty later in his reign. A body of Jewish mercenaries, owing allegiance to no one other than the highest bidder and already having a record of service in Seleucus's army, may have been among Seleucus's choice settlers. Insofar as these Jewish troops had a sense of loyalty, it would have been to Seleucus. Under such conditions,

¹¹⁴Ibid., 31–33.

¹¹⁵Ibid., 32–47, 51. As evidence that Seleucus viewed the earlier Greek settlers with some suspicion, Grainger points out that one of Seleucus's first acts after gaining the Syrian territory was to destroy Antigonos, the only Greek city in the land (p. 47). Grainger speaks of this destruction as “in part an exorcism of Antigonos” (55). Seleucus did, however, raise the status of some smaller Greek settlements (53).

¹¹⁶Ibid., 54–55. Demetrius was able to control the Mediterranean Sea and the cities of Tyre and Sidon.

¹¹⁷Grainger comments on the problem of manpower (ibid., 60–61). Specific problems are mentioned in scattered comments throughout Grainger's work.

we cannot assume that a body of Jewish troops would have appeared inferior or less valuable to Seleucus in his new city than the other groups from which he had to choose, all of whom were somewhat tainted. If Josephus is correct that Jews constituted part of the original settlers of Antioch (a reasonable enough conclusion), it is certainly within reason to assume that Jews were not considered an inferior component by Seleucus or denied the full rights extended to the other founding groups.

Aside from Josephus's comment that Jewish mercenaries were part of the original city, almost nothing is known about Jews in Antioch in the first one hundred years of the city's existence. This should not be read as evidence, however, against a Jewish presence in Antioch in its earliest years. Any evidence for the area of Antioch during this period is scarce, whether about Jews, Macedonians, Greeks, or native Syrians.

Even if Josephus is mistaken about Jews constituting an original element in the city's foundation, they must have begun to immigrate to Antioch shortly after the city's founding. The nexus between Syria and Mesopotamia was strong. Both were prominent areas of the Seleucid kingdom and were linked by important trade routes. With a considerable Jewish population in Mesopotamia and with Antioch as a midway point between Mesopotamia and Jerusalem, it is unlikely that Antioch was long without a Jewish element. Further, not only did Jews become residents of Antioch; they must have done so in considerable numbers, for they were later afforded special rights.

Population Shifts and Immigrants in Antioch

General Considerations

Antioch would have experienced various booms and busts during its history. The population at times would have declined quite dramatically, for earthquakes and epidemics were recurring realities, and the chaotic period of the breakup of the Seleucid Empire before the conquest by Rome would have further weakened the city.¹¹⁸ Such events, however, are unlikely to have altered the ethnic mix.¹¹⁹ But,

¹¹⁸Stark has made much of earthquakes and epidemics in population decline and social instability (*The Rise of Christianity*, 73–94, 158–61). Zetterholm, basically following Stark, argues that Antioch's size was such that it experienced an increased risk of epidemics (*The Formation of Christianity in Antioch*, 28–30). Stark's and Zetterholm's views of city life, however, maybe too bleak.

¹¹⁹Stark's argument that the ratio of Christians noticeably increased as a result of Christian care during epidemics is not convincing. Even if he is correct on the Christian/pagan population shifts, Stark does not address how the Jewish proportion would have been altered, which is our concern here (*The Rise of Christianity*, 73–94). His arguments

as suggested above, it is the shift in the proportion of ethnic groups in Antioch and, more important, the resulting shift in perceptions of privilege and power that are likely to have caused the most strain on relationships between Jews and the other groups in Antioch.

Significant shifts in the ratio of the various populations could occur when an ethnic group was expelled from a city, but we have no evidence of such actions related to the Jews of Antioch. This is not to say that such events did not occur, for such action was *attempted* against the Jews in Antioch and was *successful* elsewhere.¹²⁰

Some scholars have argued that the ratio of the Jewish population could have risen as a result of the Jewish prohibition against abortion and infanticide, two practices that would have tended to make the size of Jewish families somewhat larger than Gentile families, who had fewer reservations about these practices.¹²¹ Others, however, have dismissed such circumstances as irrelevant for explaining the size of the Jewish population.¹²² At any rate, these practices would not have produced as dramatic and immediately noticeable shifts in the ethnic mix of the

often seem to have a way of coming full circle, gathering enough counterevidence in the process to require a heavy qualification of the primary assertion. If, for example, the Christian community had a better survival rate during epidemics because of the care they gave their sick, then surely the Jewish community would have reflected a similar success, and the sense that the Christian God was the best protector would have been less obvious than Stark asserts.

¹²⁰See the section “The Request to Expel the Jews” in ch. 4, pp. 137–38. Note, however, Gruen’s caution that even where edicts of expulsion survived, they may not have been carried out (*Diaspora*, 38–42).

¹²¹Hecataeus of Abdera (late 300s B.C.E.) mentions that the Jews were always rich in manpower because they did not expose their children (cited by Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica* 40). Tacitus, too, points to this prohibition on exposure in order to explain the size of the Jewish population (*Ann.* 5.5.3). Josephus mentions the Jewish prohibition against the exposure of infants, but he does not associate it with the size of the Jewish population, although this does not mean that he would have denied such an association (*Ag. Ap.* 2.25). See Patrick Gray, “Abortion, Infanticide, and the Social Rhetoric of the *Apocalypse of Peter*,” *J ECS* 9 (2001): 313–37; Martin Goodman, *Mission and Conversion: Prozeltytizing in the Religious History of the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 84. The significance and frequency of abortion and exposure in the Greco-Roman world are themselves matters of debate. Bruce W. Frier offers a careful evaluation of the phenomena of abortion and exposure in “Natural Fertility and Family Limitations in Roman Marriage,” *CP* 89 (1994): 318–33. See also Donald Engels, “The Problem of Female Infanticide in the Greco-Roman World,” *Classical Philology* 75 (1980): 112–20; and William V. Harris, “Child-Exposure in the Roman Empire,” *JRS* 48 (1994): 1–22; idem, “The Theoretical Possibility of Extensive Infanticide in the Graeco-Roman World,” *Classical Quarterly* 32 (1982): 114–16.

¹²²Feldman accepts that the Jewish prohibition against infanticide and abortion would account for some increase in population, but he argues that these are insufficient factors to account for the sizeable Jewish population in the Greco-Roman period, which,

population as other factors might have, such as large-scale immigration or resettlement. For our purposes, therefore, it is important to determine when there may have been significant pressures from immigration (for both Jews and non-Jews) and what tensions may have arisen from a change in the proportion of the various ethnic groups in Antioch by the introduction of a new element into the city.

Jewish Immigration

Population shifts, immigration, and the presence of distinctive ethnic groups would not have gone unnoticed by the population of Antioch, or of any city.¹²³ Indeed, it appears that Jews were often able to distinguish even within their own community between the older Jewish residents of Antioch and the newly-arrived Jews, or perhaps between Jews with a formal membership in the community and those still judged as foreigners—a term that even Josephus used to distinguish some Jews in Antioch from other Jews there (*J. W.* 7.47).¹²⁴ It is unclear in what contexts it was important for the permanent Jewish residents of Antioch to make a distinction between themselves and “foreign” Jews.¹²⁵ If there was a formal procedure controlling who gained membership in the Jewish community in

for Feldman, makes proselytism a necessary condition of Jewish growth (*Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World*, 293).

¹²³We have a variety of evidence particularly related to Judaism. At Rome, Jews were expelled on occasion (Leonard Victor Rutgers, “Roman Policy toward the Jews: Expulsions from the City of Rome during the First Century C.E.,” in *Judaism and Christianity in First-Century Rome* [ed. Karl P. Donfried and Peter Richardson; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 93–116). At Alexandria the Jewish community was identifiable, and action could be directed against them (see pp. 133–34). The Roman edicts that required that Greco-Roman cities provide an adequate supply of kosher meat for Jewish residents suggest some measure of clear identification of Jews, as does the Esther story. The point is that the Greco-Roman cities seem to have been able to identify the Jewish community and, at times, to take action to repress it.

¹²⁴Who these “foreigners” (ξένους) in Josephus were is not clear. Kasher thinks they may have been Jewish zealots from Palestine (*The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt*, 305). Smallwood speculates that they may have been Christians (*The Jews under Roman Rule*, 362); see later in this chapter. The label “foreigner” is usually negative. Note that Flaccus refers to Jews of Alexandria as “foreigners” and “immigrants” (Philo, *Flaccus* 54).

¹²⁵Cummins (*Paul and the Crucified Christ in Antioch*, 140, n. 7), following Kasher, claims that Antiochus, the son of the Jewish *archōn* of Antioch, differentiated between Jewish residents and Jewish foreigners in Antioch and that Antiochus fingered the Jewish foreigners as those who were behind a plot to burn the city. But Josephus gives no indication that Antiochus distinguished between two groups of Jews. In Josephus, the foreign Jews seem to have been no more to be blamed for the plot than were resident Jews; indeed, Antiochus accuses his own father, the *archōn* of the Jews in Antioch, as well as other Jewish residents of Antioch, and he seems to have taken action against the practice of Judaism (*J. W.* 7.47–53), which would have affected all observant Jews.

Antioch,¹²⁶ this could have resulted in a situation of some disadvantage to Christian Jews who moved to Antioch, particularly if tensions and suspicions were forming regarding the Christian group. Further, if Jewish immigrants needed formal admission into the Jewish community, some Jews could have failed that process and been expelled from the community as well. Again, such a situation could create some jeopardy for Christians.

Although evidence for Antioch is lacking, the situation in Alexandria may be relevant. Gideon Bohak points to evidence that increased immigration of Jews to Egypt was linked to difficulties in Palestine during wartime.¹²⁷ Although one must be cautious in comparing evidence from one city with that from another, Bohak's observations are what we might expect for Antioch also: war in Palestine would have created mobile groups of Jews (slaves and refugees), and nearby great cities of the empire, Alexandria and Antioch, would have been natural destinations. For refugees, the large Jewish population already established in these cities may have provided vital family connections to which Jews of Palestine could appeal in times of crises. It is a reasonable conclusion that population shifts similar to those in Alexandria were experienced in Antioch, a city as close and easy to reach as Alexandria and with a countryside much more Semitic and familiar.

The devastating famine of the 40s C.E.¹²⁸ and crises such as the brutal Jewish War¹²⁹ of 66–73 C.E. would have driven some Jews to seek refuge elsewhere, and these immigrants would have included Christian Jews who had been affected by the same calamities. Nearby Antioch, already containing a sizeable Jewish

¹²⁶Most scholarly discussion has focused on the citizenship status of Jews in Greek cities. An equally important but largely neglected question is how a newly-arrived Jewish immigrant established his or her identity as a Jew and to what degree the local Jewish community controlled admission into its circle.

¹²⁷Gideon Bohak, "Ethnic Continuity in the Jewish Diaspora in Antiquity," in *Jews in the Hellenistic and Roman Cities* (ed. John R. Bartlett; New York: Routledge, 2002), 187.

¹²⁸Nicholas H. Taylor, "Palestinian Christianity and the Caligula Crisis, Part II: The Markan Eschatological Discourse," *JSNT* 62 (1996): 13–41; Gerd Theissen, *The Gospels in Context: Social and Political History in the Synoptic Tradition* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 125–65.

¹²⁹There is a tradition that Christian Jews fled to Pella at the outbreak of the Jewish War. For a review of the evidence and a challenge to the traditional view, see Gerd Lüdemann, "The Successors of Pre-70 Jerusalem Christianity: A Critical Review of the Pella-Tradition," in *The Shaping of Christianity in the Second and Third Centuries* (vol. 1 of *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*; ed. E. P. Sanders; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 161–73. Also see Craig Koester, "The Origin and Significance of the Flight to Pella Tradition," *CBQ* 51 (1989): 90–106; Marcel Simon, "La migration à Pella: Légende ou réalité?" *Recherches de science religieuse* 60 (1972): 40–52; B. E. Gray, "The Movements of the Jerusalem Church during the First Jewish War," *JEH* 24 (1973): 1–7. Eusebius knew of traditions linking apostles and other first-century Christian notables to Asia Minor and elsewhere; this suggests some immigration of Christians from Palestine (*Hist. eccl.* 3.5, 18, 31).

population, would have had its attraction. Many Palestinian Jews must have had family connections with members of the Jewish community there and with Jews in other large centers of Jewish immigration in the eastern empire. But such an influx is likely to have sparked concern. A decree relayed to Alexandria about three decades before the war expressly forbade resident Jews from “bringing or inviting” Jews to Alexandria.¹³⁰ Although the decree is addressed to Alexandria, it is unlikely that the concern expressed in it related only to that city. Jews in Antioch also likely would not have operated freely, without restrictions on how many immigrants their community could absorb.¹³¹ If the Jewish community was under some pressure regarding immigration and residency in the city, it is likely that they would have been forced to take a careful look at Jews who were hoping to find a home in the city. Some discrimination may have occurred, and if Christians were becoming a matter of concern, the discrimination may have had a greater impact on immigrants linked to the troublesome Christian movement.

Such an influx of foreign Jews may have created a new and more complex situation for the Jewish community in Antioch. If a group of Jews had been part

¹³⁰The decree was from Emperor Claudius, who attempted to calm the tensions in Alexandria after the disturbances of 38–41. Two forms of the decree are extant: one is preserved in Josephus (*Ant.* 19.278–85); the other can be found in Victor Tcherikover, ed., *Corpus papyrorum judaicarum* (3 vols.; Cambridge: Published for Magnes Press, Hebrew University, by Harvard University Press, 1957–1964), 2:36–55. Only the latter contains the prohibition against Jewish immigration. Most scholars think that Josephus’s version was modified in the interest of Jewish apologetic either by Josephus or by someone before him. The prohibition in the decree suggests that Jews had attempted to increase their numbers through immigration (or at least could be suspected or accused of this) and that non-Jewish residents regarded the practice as threatening in some way.

¹³¹The matter is not clear-cut. Cities tended to treat residency as a matter of privilege. Under Roman rule, the power of the city elders to deal with immigrants probably was more restricted, although local conditions may have varied considerably. Examples from both Alexandria and Antioch seem to indicate that these cities did not have the power to exclude undesirable immigrants or to expel elements of their population who were already resident but who had become undesirable. In the case of Alexandria, Jews were accused of bringing in immigrants, and the city itself seems to have been unable to prevent such influx without the authorization of Rome. In the case of Antioch, the citizens twice petitioned Titus to expel the Jewish residents after the Jewish War, but he refused (Josephus, *J. W.* 7.100–103, 109). Both cases suggest that under Roman rule Greek cities lost some of their power to control residency, and this could have aggravated tensions and increased senses of privilege and loss. The evidence also suggests, however, that cities continued to maintain an interest in controlling residency, even though their power may have been somewhat restricted. The Romans seem not to have been completely unsympathetic to the desire of the cities to control their populations, and the authorities probably tended to side with the local governments on the matter, perhaps mainly because of the Roman interest in maintaining the status quo. Rome is another matter; various peoples were expelled from time to time.

of the founding population in Antioch, we cannot expect that the rights granted to them would have been automatically extended to all later Jewish immigrants. Most likely, rights given to the original Jewish families in a city would have been inherited only by their descendants and would not have been extended to any and every Jew who happened to choose Antioch as home at a later time. This would create classes of Jews and of privilege in Antioch.¹³²

Whatever the case, any mass movement of Jews into the area of Antioch would not have gone unnoticed by the city leaders, by the larger populace, or by the Jewish community itself. Indeed, we cannot assume that the older Antiochene Jewish community welcomed every wave of Jewish immigration from Palestine or elsewhere. Antiochene Jews may have offered a cool reception to any flood—or even trickle—of immigrants, particularly when elements in the larger society were pressing to have all Jews expelled from the city, as was the case toward the end of the Jewish War. Indeed, it is possible that the influx of Jewish refugees into Antioch during the Jewish War is what prompted elements in the larger society to press for the removal of all Jews. At least it is likely that to a certain extent the issue of refugees figured in the crisis confronting the Jewish community in Antioch during the Jewish War. Jews as a group would have been very much on the minds of the residents of Antioch in the late 60s of the first century, since Antioch served as the main base of Roman military operations for the attack on Palestine and Jerusalem, with troops moving out of and returning to the city.¹³³ Further, during the initial stages of the Jewish War, Jews had slain the Gentile populations in many of the towns and villages of Syria, and Jews met similar fates as the Gentile populations retaliated. Josephus recounts the widespread incidents of slaughter in grim detail. In such an environment, many motivations spark conflict. Josephus offers three reasons for the attacks on the Jews: hatred, fear, and greed.¹³⁴

Some citizens in Antioch took a particularly harsh stance against Jewish residents, even hoping to have them expelled from the city or, failing that, to

¹³²The situation would have been different for Jewish immigrants had the original Jews been granted rights as a *politeuma*. New immigrants would have been more easily incorporated into the Jewish community and would have received the protection afforded to members of that community; this would not have been available to them had they lived in the city merely as resident aliens. But perhaps even then a Jew moving to Antioch would not have had immediate or unconditional membership in the recognized Jewish community.

¹³³See Millar, *The Roman Near East*, 71–72.

¹³⁴Josephus, *J. W.* 2.457–510. Jews in Antioch, Sidon, and Apamia did not suffer slaughter, slavery, or imprisonment, which was the common experience of Jews in the other cities of Syria and Palestine. Josephus does not mention such exceptions to the slaughter to prove a point or aid a particular agenda. He simply states that these cities were exceptions, and it is clear that he is puzzled as to why this was the case (*J. W.* 2.479).

terminate the specifically prescribed and guaranteed rights of the Jews there.¹³⁵ In such an environment, the Jewish leadership may have had an interest in silencing any disputes in the Jewish community that could bring further unwanted attention on the community from already hostile inhabitants.

Without probing the issues in depth here, the examination above points to the possibility of tension developing within the larger populace and within the Jewish community itself from an influx of Jewish immigrants or immigrants of any kind in significant numbers. Although we may not be able to determine the scope of the tension created by the pressures of immigration, the issue is not irrelevant for understanding aspects of the conflict between Jews and Christians. Such tension is, for the most part, unaddressed in the scholarly literature that examines the early Christian church in Antioch. Granted, answers are elusive for many of the questions related to such an environment of tension. For example, we cannot determine whether sufficient numbers of Jewish Christians fled to Antioch after the first organized persecution of Christians in Jerusalem for that influx to have come to the notice of the local Jewish or Roman administrators, although the influx need not have been massive to have caught their attention. Even a small number of Christian immigrants might have come to the attention of the Jewish leadership, for the network linking Jerusalem and Antioch would have kept the Jewish authorities in Antioch aware of crises and concerns in Jerusalem. Even the fledgling Christian community seems to have had an effective network between the two cities.¹³⁶ It is highly unlikely that the organized and well-established Jewish communities in these cities had no such effective network.

Non-Jewish Immigration

Non-Jewish immigration to Antioch would have had its high points and resulting pressures also. During the first twenty years of the city's existence, immigration from either Macedon or Greece would have been made difficult by the state of war in the intervening territory. After Seleucus's final victory, his territory bordered Greece and Macedon, but it is not certain that even then Greek and Macedonian immigrants would have chosen distant Antioch over the much nearer and long-established Greek cities on the Aegean coast of Asia Minor, assuming that such people desired to move at all and had a choice about where to reside.¹³⁷

¹³⁵As we have seen, however, not all Jewish residents could have been included in this sweeping proposal, since some Jews betrayed others and may have used underlying native suspicion against their own people.

¹³⁶The treatment of the Jerusalem Council in Acts and its relations with Christians in Antioch—whatever the historicity of the accounts—indicates that the author considered such networks and communications natural.

¹³⁷Jones notes how little interest Greeks generally had in settling in the east (*The Greek City from Alexander to Justinian*, 23–25).

Some immigration of Greeks and Macedonians to Antioch occurred in the second century B.C.E. Grainger argues that the Roman expansion into western Asia Minor at the expense of the Seleucid kingdom increased immigration eastward.¹³⁸ This would have added to the Macedonian and Greek elements in Antioch, but it is not known whether this population shift was a matter of concern to the Jewish residents or brought them any disadvantage.¹³⁹

It is possible, too, that the proportion of the Greek population increased without immigration, simply by a mass movement of a non-Greek group *from* the city. We do not know whether Palestine became an attractive center for Jewish emigration from Antioch as the Maccabees expanded their territories.¹⁴⁰ This is possible, however, particularly given that Antioch experienced difficult times in the latter part of the second century and early part of the first century B.C.E. and that perhaps the Jews in Antioch were somewhat tainted by the Maccabean revolt. Any decline in the size of the Jewish community in Antioch probably was reversed, however, as Antioch became a key city under Roman rule. As already mentioned, when Josephus wrote at the end of the first century C.E., the size of the Jewish population in Antioch was large enough for him to comment and to offer some explanation.

Although details are not known, it is clear that Antioch would have experienced various population shifts. And it is possible, though not provable, that the Jewish population swelled so dramatically on occasion that other groups noticed the change with concern and placed the situation under a watchful eye. At other times, an influx of non-Jews into the city may have put pressure on living conditions, brought some disadvantage to the Jewish community, and provoked ethnic tensions.

¹³⁸ Grainger, *The Cities of Seleucid Syria*, 141; Jones thinks that the last group of Greek immigrants to Antioch were Euboeans and Aetolians, settled there under Antiochus the Great (*The Greek City from Alexander to Justinian*, 16).

¹³⁹ Jones maintains that the total number of Greek immigrants would have made little impact on the proportion of the ethnic mix (*The Greek City from Alexander to Justinian*, 24–25).

¹⁴⁰ Some of the Maccabean expansion in Galilee resulted in the forced conversion of conquered people. Certain native-born Jews may have moved to Galilee when the area came under Hasmonean control, although initially Jews already in Galilee had to be evacuated to Jerusalem for their safety. It is unclear whether Diaspora Jews came in any numbers to settle the area. For recent debate on the Jewish character of Galilee, see Mark A. Chancey, *The Myth of a Gentile Galilee* (SNTSMS 118; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).