

## Antioch's prosperity

227. Thus it is not without reason that the city is always filled with building activity; some buildings are being torn down, some are half completed, and for still others the foundations have just been laid or are being excavated. Everywhere are the cries of those urging on the workmen, [...]

228. Let us only consider, indeed, how the city would have been four times the size it now is, if it had not already been stricken on three occasions.<sup>1</sup> Just as the temple of Pythian Apollo has suffered many fortunes, and the present shrine, standing upon those which have disappeared, is the fourth, just in the same way our city, as a city of mortals, has been smitten, and as one dear to the gods has risen up, suffering and rising again [...]

236. This road from the city I might most appropriately call the tassel of the aegis which Homer gives to Athena; thus golden is the whole road, and it ends at the golden final perfection, Daphne. When a man sees this he cannot but cry out and leap for joy and skip and clap his hands and bless himself for seeing the sight, and, so to speak, soar on wings from pleasure. One thing from one side and one thing from another enchants and astonishes; one thing holds one, and another tears one away, and there pours upon the spectator's eyes an arresting brightness, the temple of Apollo, the temple of Zeus, the Olympic stadium, the theatre which furnishes every pleasure, the number and thickness and height of the cypresses, the shady paths, the choruses of singing birds, the even breeze, the odors sweeter than spices, the stately aqueducts, the vines trained to form banqueting halls-these are the gardens of Alcinous, the feast of Sicily, the horn of Amaltheia, a veritable Sybaris. No matter what bath you choose before the others to bathe in, you will overlook a more delightful one.

237. The place is so helpful to the body that, if you leave after even a brief stay, you will go away healthier than when you came [...].

252. One cannot find any street so despised or so remote that it sends elsewhere, lacking something of what they need, those who dwell in it, but the middle of the town and the furthest quarters are equally well supplied, and they are all as full of goods for sale as they are of people.

263. In speaking of the outlet of the river into the sea I am impelled to mention the harbor. When he saw that this did not rank among those to which it rightfully belonged, the ruler<sup>2</sup> was troubled

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<sup>1</sup> Three earlier destructions: the first known earthquake is that of 148 BC. The second took place, according to Malalas (243. 10 ss. Dindorf) in the first year of Caligula's reign in 37 AD (op. cit., 243. 11/13). A third occurred under Claudius (41-54 : cf. Malalas, 246. 11 ss. D. ) and a fourth in 115, under Trajan who, in the city at the time barely escaped unscathed : cf. Malalas, 275. 3 ss.. It would seem that the three most noted quakes were those of 148 BC, 37 and 115 AD and they must be the one referred to here.

<sup>2</sup> Constantius II: Roman emperor from ad 337 to 361; he first shared power with his two brothers, Constantine II (d. 340) and Constans I (d. 350), but was sole ruler from 353 to 361. In the footsteps of Vespasian and Titus he had major works undertaken on Seleucia Pieria (Antioch's port) to make it more accessible to ships.

and changed its form, and there was cut out in Seleucia, but for the benefit of our city, a harbor hewn from the rock at a cost of as much gold as the Pactolus did not treasure up for Croesus. 264. Wherefore all ships put to sea from all parts of the world, carrying goods from everywhere, from Libya, from Europe, from Asia, from the islands and the coasts, and the best of what is best everywhere is brought here, since the quickness of selling draws hither the wits of merchants, and because of this we enjoy the fruits of the whole earth. Among harbors, this has furlled the most of the sails that are spread over the seas.

LIBANIUS. *Antiochikos* (*Or.* XI.) Translation Granville Downey

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