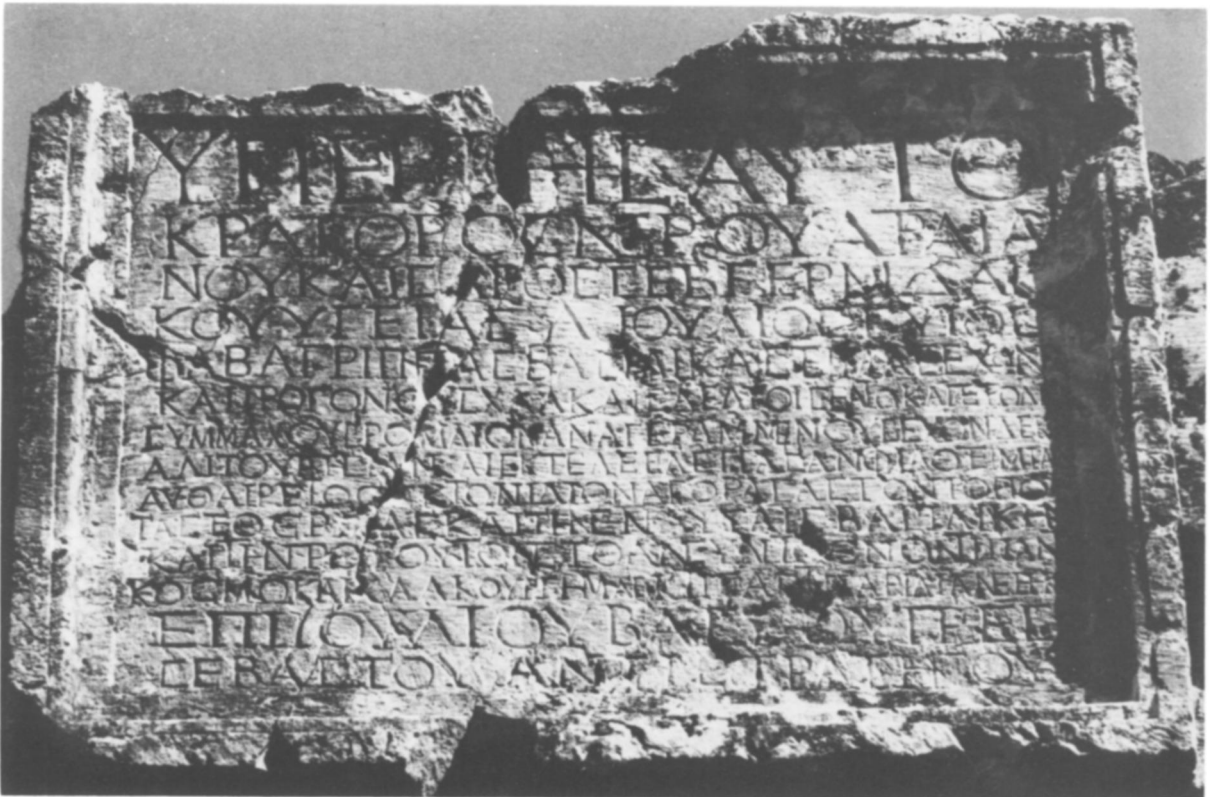




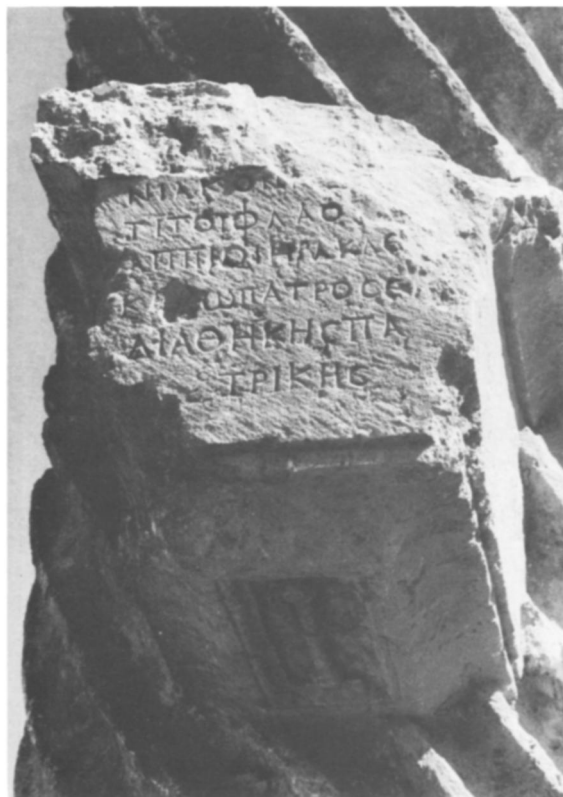
(1) NORTHERN SECTION OF THE GREAT COLONNADED AVENUE, IN FRONT OF THE BATHS



(2) DEDICATORY INSCRIPTION OF THE NORTHERN BATHS



(1) SPIRAL FLUTED COLUMNS NEAR THE AGORA



(2) DEDICATORY CONSOLE OF A STATUE OF MARCUS AURELIUS



(3) ATLAS, FROM THE FAÇADE OF THE TYCHEION



(1) STELA OF AMMOUS (A.D. 136)



(2) STELA OF APER (A.D. 96) AND FLORUS (A.D. 116)



(3) GARLAND SARCOPHAGI FROM THE NORTHERN NECROPOLIS



(1) SOUTHERN FACE OF TOWER XV, BEFORE DISMANTLING WORKS (1986)



(2) AUR. MOUCIANOS



(3) FL. TRYPHO



(1) PETRONIUS PROCULUS, *B(ENE)F(ICIARIUS)*
TR(IBUNI) LEG(IONIS)



(2) AUR. MUCIANUS, *DISCENS LANCIARI(UM)*



(3) VERINUS MARINUS, *LIBRARIUS OFF(ICI) LEG(ATI)*
LEG(IONIS)



(4) FELSONIUS VERUS, *AQUILIFER LEG(IONIS)*



(1) SEPTIMIUS GAIS



(2) STELA OF AUR. BASSUS, *IN SITU*



(3) ATIL(IUS) CRISPINIANUS, *DUPLIC(ARIUS) AL(A)E I ULP(AE) CONT(ARIORUM)*

APAMEA IN SYRIA IN THE SECOND AND THIRD CENTURIES A.D.*

By JEAN CH. BALTY

(Plates X–XV)

I. THE EARTHQUAKE OF A.D. 115 AND THE RECONSTRUCTION OF APAMEA IN THE SECOND CENTURY

‘While Trajan was tarrying in Antioch’—it was in the winter of A.D. 115, after the conquest of Armenia and the annexation of Mesopotamia, before setting out for the Tigris, Ctesiphon and the Persian Gulf—a terrible earthquake occurred; many cities suffered injury, but Antioch was the most unfortunate of all’.

... There had been many thunderstorms and portentous winds, but no one would ever have expected so many evils to result from them. First there came, on a sudden, a great bellowing roar, and this was followed by a tremendous quaking. The whole earth was upheaved, and buildings leaped into the air; some were carried aloft only to collapse and be broken in pieces, while others were tossed this way and that as if by the surge of the sea, and overturned, and the wreckage spread out over a great extent even of the open country. The crash of grinding and breaking timbers together with tiles and stones was most frightful; and an unconceivable amount of dust arose, so that it was impossible for one to see anything or to speak or hear a word. As for the people, many even who were outside the houses were hurt, being snatched up and tossed violently about and then dashed to the earth as if falling from a cliff; some were maimed and others were killed. Even trees in some cases leaped into the air, roots and all. The number of those who were trapped in the houses and perished was past finding out; for multitudes were killed by the very force of the falling debris, and great numbers were suffocated in the ruins ... And as Heaven continued the earthquake for several days and nights the people were in dire straits and helpless, some of them crushed and perishing under the weight of the buildings pressing upon them, and others dying of hunger, whenever it so chanced that they were left alive either in a clear space, the timbers being so inclined as to leave such a space, or in a vaulted colonnade ... So great were the calamities that had overwhelmed Antioch at this time. Trajan made his way out through a window of the room in which he was staying ... And as the shocks extended over several days, he lived out of the doors in the hippodrome.

This long, apocalyptic description of the catastrophe is to be found in the Epitome of Book LXVIII of Dio’s *Roman History*;¹ the date itself is given by Malalas: it occurred at dawn on 13 December; and the Byzantine chronicler states that it was the third major earthquake in the series of disasters which had visited the city.²

Situated some 56 miles to the south, in the Orontes valley, within a zone of frequent seismic disturbances, Apamea suffered the same damage as Antioch, and its reconstruction was on a par with that of the capital of the province, where Trajan is said to have raised the two great *emboloi*³ and built a public bath and an aqueduct.⁴ At Apamea too, work started with the colonnades of the main street, one of the baths and the water supply of the city.

400 m south of the northern gate, an important inscription on the main entrance of the baths (Pl. X, 2)—dated A.D. 116 by the mention of the governor C. Iulius Quadratus Bassus whom Hadrian superseded at the head of the province for some months before his accession—records that having bought the ground at his own expense and founded the baths, the basilica inside them and the portico of the street in

* This paper is a slightly emended version of the M. V. Taylor Memorial Lecture delivered at the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies in London on 10 November 1987. For the invitation, I am deeply grateful to Fergus Millar and Miss Joyce Reynolds; for many improvements as regards my English text, to Averil Cameron and Fergus Millar.

¹ Cassius Dio LXVIII, 24–5, here quoted in the Loeb translation of E. Cary.

² Malalas 275, 3–8 (ed. Bonn).

³ Ibid. 275, 21–2. For an archaeological commentary and the results of the 1932–9 excavations, see J. Lassus, *Les portiques d’Antioche = Antioch-on-the-Orontes v* (1972), 7, 133–4 and 145–6.

⁴ Malalas 276, 1–2, with the comments of G. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria from Seleucus to the Arab Conquest* (1961), 223.

front, with all their decoration and bronze works of art, a certain L. Iulius Agrippa, son of Gaius, of the tribe Fabia, dedicated the whole to his native city.⁵ A second and larger text, from the same baths, specifies that there were bronze copies of the well-known Hellenistic groups of Theseus and the Minotaur, and of Apollo, Marsyas, Olympos and the Scythian slave; it states also that the benefactor of the city built several miles of the aqueduct—a feature usually connected with the construction of such a huge building.⁶ This L. Iulius Agrippa, whose ancestors' names were inscribed at Rome on bronze tablets displayed on the Capitoline hill as friends and allies of the Roman people and whose great-grandfather Dexandros was the first high priest of the province at the time of Augustus, retained royal honours until Trajan's reign and was perhaps descended, like some tetrarchs both on his father's and on his mother's side, from the royal family of Cilicia, itself connected with the Judaeian house.⁷ However that may be, L. Iulius Agrippa participated in the restoration of Apamea in proportion to his riches; the silence of our epigraphical documentation on the site, however, precludes us from knowing whether other benefactors, as in Antioch,⁸ following the appeal of the emperor, carried out the building of houses and baths elsewhere in the city.

Work started immediately, as is clear from the dedication of the northern baths in which Trajan is *Germanicus Dacicus*, but not yet *Parthicus*, i.e. before April to August A.D. 116 and therefore just a few months after the disaster of December 115. Does this indicate that the rebuilding of the colonnade began with the northern part,⁹ the constructions on the agora and near the middle of the city being dated in the 40s and the 60s of the century?¹⁰ It is not impossible. Due to the exceptional width of the plan, restoration evidently went on for the whole century; only a catastrophe such as this earthquake could afford the opportunity for new town-planning on such a large scale. The main avenues, following the plan 'en croix de Lorraine' which dated from the time of the city's foundation (300/299 B.C.), were enlarged to respectively *c.* 37 m (on the north-south axis) and 22 m (on the east-west one), instead of *c.* 30 and 16 m, comprising the porticoes. With a total length of nearly 2 km between the northern and the southern gates, the north-south axis represents, as the Rev. W. M. Thomson wrote after his visit to the site in 1846, 'one of the longest and most august colonnades in the world',¹¹ and, until now, one of the best, if not the best example of those *plateiai* which are a characteristic feature of the urban landscape of eastern cities and especially evident since the anastylosis conducted by the Syrian General Directorate of Antiquities and Museums (Pl. X, 1). The width of the paved road at Palmyra is 11 m between porticoes 6 m wide and columns 9.50 m high;¹² at Antioch, it is only 9 m, between porticoes also 9 m wide;¹³ at Apamea, however, it reaches 20.80 m between porticoes 7 m wide. The general impression is thus quite different, as this elementary comparison makes vividly clear.

In the centre of the town, reconstruction was completed only some decades later. On the agora, among the consoles of the rear wall of the porticoes, two dedications of the Council and the People to C. Iulius Severus as [ὑπατι]κός (there is not enough space to read [συγκλητι]κός) offer a *terminus post quem* of A.D. 139;¹⁴ this seems to fit the more ornamented and already baroque architecture, with the alternating

⁵ For the text of this inscription, see J.-P. Rey-Coquais, 'Inscriptions grecques d'Apamée', *AAS* 23 (1973), 40-1 no. 1, pl. 1, 1; cf. J. Ch. Balty, *Guide d'Apamée* (1981), 56, fig. 50 (hereafter *Guide d'Apamée*).

⁶ Rey-Coquais, art. cit., 41-6 no. 2, pl. 1, 2; cf. *Guide d'Apamée*, 205-6 no. 20, fig. 230.

⁷ For these connections, see R. D. Sullivan, 'The Dynasty of Judaea in the First Century', in *ANRW* 11, 8 (1977), stemma facing p. 300.

⁸ Malalas 278, 20-279, 2; cf. Downey, op. cit. (n. 4), 218.

⁹ In Antioch, the paving of the main colonnaded street started at the southern end where a commemorative inscription was placed, on the Gate of the Cherubim, as we know from Malalas 280, 20-281, 6.

¹⁰ For the evidence of inscriptions on the consoles, see *IGLS* 1312-13; W. Van Rengen, 'Inscriptions grecques et latines', in *Colloque Apamée de Syrie* 1 (1969), 96-7 no. 1, and id., 'Nouvelles inscriptions grecques et latines', in *Colloque Apamée de Syrie* II (1972), 104-6 nos 4-5.

¹¹ W. M. Thomson, 'Journey from Aleppo to Mount Lebanon by Jebel, el-Aala, Apamia, Ribla, etc.', *Bibliotheca Sacra* 5 (1848), 685.

¹² A. Gabriel, 'Recherches archéologiques à Palmyre', *Syria* 7 (1926), 81, fig. 2; A. Ostraz, 'Note sur le plan de la partie médiane de la rue principale de Palmyre', *AAS* 19 (1969), 109-20 with detailed folding plan.

¹³ Lassus, op. cit. (n. 3), 146-7.

¹⁴ Van Rengen, 'Nouvelles inscriptions', cit. (n. 10), 106.

curvilinear and triangular frontons over the niches of the first floor and the protruding elements of the entablature; moreover, the calyx of acanthus leaves at the bottom of the columns in the North Propylea¹⁵ resembles those of the South Gate and of the Arch of Hadrian at Gerasa, dated A.D. 129/130.¹⁶ C. Iulius Severus' consulate was the occasion of this homage; but Severus had been legate of the Legion IV Scythica, one of the three Syrian legions during the Empire, and appointed by Hadrian governor of the province in 132 at the outbreak of the Jewish revolt, when the then governor C. Publicius Marcellus was sent to Judaea to annihilate the rebellion. No doubt it was during this period and with these functions that Severus won the esteem of the city;¹⁷ as a son of another Iulius Bassus, he was himself a descendant of the royal dynasty of the Attalids and perhaps a relative of L. Iulius Agrippa,¹⁸ whose activity during the governorship of C. Iulius Quadratus Bassus might well also be explained by the importance of those family networks and C. Iulius Quadratus Bassus' own relationship with Trajan, especially after the second Dacian campaign during which he had held particularly high command and earned the *ornamenta triumphalia*.¹⁹

Nearby, in front of the east entrance to the agora, three of the remarkable spiral fluted columns have consoles which once bore bronze statues of the emperors Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus (Pl. XI, 1-2);²⁰ the dedication was made around A.D. 166, as indicated by the epithet *Parthicus Maximus* given to Marcus Aurelius, and thus fifty years after the beginning of the reconstruction in the northern part of the avenue. And here too the benefactors, two brothers, Ti. Flavius Appius Heracleides and Ti. Flavius Appius Sopatros, are members of one of the greatest local families directly linked with the power structure: as convincingly argued by Jean-Paul Rey-Coquais, they seem to have received the Roman citizenship under the Flavians from Sex. Appius Severus, who was tribune of the Legion III Gallica quartered at Raphanaea, south-west of Apamea, and whose daughter Appia Severa married L. Ceionius Commodus (*cos.* A.D. 78 and subsequently governor of Syria), the grandfather of Lucius Verus,²¹ whence the dedication on the colonnade. But frequent as it may have been in the local onomastic, the *cognomen* Sopatros suggests a connection with the famous Sopatros of the fourth century, the Apamean rhetor, father of a friend and correspondent of Libanius. An unpublished console in the rear wall of the colonnade, in front of Iulius Agrippa's baths, might afford new evidence of the importance of this family at Apamea between those two *termini*, as it is dedicated to a Ti. Flavius Appius Sopatros, the most famous son of our Sopatros, in the year A.D. 230.²² In view of the very few dedications inscribed in this place on the main street, it is no doubt a real token of local excellence, which indicates the antiquity of the family and supports the hypothesis that the Sopatroi of the fourth century might well be Ἀππιῶν Σωπάτροι too.

To sum up so far, it is clear that the great local families—the municipal élites—participated, as they did in so many other cities in the East and in the western provinces at the same period, in this phase of embellishment of the town after the earthquake. As in many other cities too, it is not surprising to find among those benefactors, who so often performed the main liturgies and were at the very origin of the imperial cult in the province, those families which were descended from ancient local dynasts of the Hellenistic period and had kept some influence during the Empire through co-operation with the new regime. Significantly enough, the three main groups of inscriptions on the colonnade and the agora all suggest persons of this kind.

A final but fragmentary document, whose origin is unfortunately not precisely known, is also worth mentioning in this respect. It is a dedication of Agrippa, presumably L. Iulius Agrippa, to his friend the consular Iulius Quadratus, who might

¹⁵ *Guide d'Apamée*, 72-3, figs 68-70.

¹⁶ C. H. Kraeling, *Gerasa, City of the Decapolis* (1938), 73, 401-2, pls VIII a-b, x-xi, xxx c and xxxi a.

¹⁷ Van Rengen, 'Nouvelles inscriptions', cit. (n. 10), 106.

¹⁸ *Ibid. Contra*: J.-P. Rey-Coquais, 'Syrie romaine, de Pompée à Dioclétien', *JRS* 68 (1978), 64-5.

¹⁹ See the commentary on the famous inscription

from Pergamum by Chr. Habicht, *Die Inschriften des Asklepieions = Altortümer von Pergamon*, VIII, 3 (1969), 43-53 (esp. 45, 48-50, 52) no. 21, pls 8-9.

²⁰ *IGLS* 1312-13 and Van Rengen, 'Inscriptions grecques et latines', cit. (n. 10), 96-7 no. 1.

²¹ Rey-Coquais, art. cit. (n. 5), 66.

²² Τίτον Φλά(ουίου) Ἀππιῶν [Σ]ωπάτρον τὸν ἀξιολογώτατον υἱὸν Σωπάτρον κτλ ...

be either the above mentioned C. Iulius Quadratus Bassus, governor in A.D. 116, or his homonym C. Antius A. Iulius Quadratus, governor between A.D. 100/1 and 103/4 and therefore at a date before the earthquake;²³ particularly important is the epithet φίλος, which stresses the link between the local dedicator and the representative of the emperor.

As already pointed out, reconstruction continued throughout the century, judging by the style of the various sections of the north-south colonnade or by the inscriptions. By the second half of the century, together with the series of spiral fluted columns near the agora, work reached the southern part of the avenue: the decoration of a nymphaeum built near the intersection with the south *decumanus*, has clear, late Antonine, baroque features;²⁴ and the theatre, cut in a depression flanking the city-wall to the south of the acropolis, in a wonderful position on the edge of the Orontes valley,²⁵ has the same plan as the famous monument at Aspendos, dated by a dedicatory inscription to the reign of Marcus Aurelius.²⁶

II. THE ORACLE OF ZEUS BELOS AND THE BEGINNINGS OF THE NEOPLATONIC SCHOOL OF APAMEA

In the centre of the town, on a high podium dominating the wide temenos contiguous to the agora, the main temple of the city, the sanctuary of Zeus Belos,²⁷ retained the importance which it certainly already had during the Hellenistic period. Its complete destruction by bishop Marcellus, at the end of the fourth century, deprives us today of any archaeological remains for the understanding of its architecture and history; nevertheless, in written sources (mainly in a speech and a letter of Libanius), Apamea clearly appears as the city of Zeus, τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ πόλιν or τῆς τοῦ Διὸς φίλης.²⁸ Moreover, its oracle of Belos is well known from certain historical events which focused attention on it.²⁹ There is no doubt that a forgotten passage of the *Vita Hadriani* already alludes to it under the vague 'habuit autem praesumptionem imperii mox futuri ex fano quoque Niceforii Iovis manante responso', which a certain Apollonius Syrus Platonicus recorded in his writings.³⁰ The future emperor accompanied Trajan to Syria, where he was appointed governor of the province at the very beginning of the Parthian war, A.D. 113;³¹ and it is during his stay there that he might have had the opportunity to consult the god at Apamea. According to Cassius Dio, Septimius Severus did the same when he was legate of the Legion IV Scythica in Syria in A.D. 180, and Belos promised him the victory,³² but when the emperor returned to Apamea at the end of A.D. 201 or the beginning of 202 on his way back from Egypt,³³ the god prophesied the bloody end of all the family.³⁴ A third and less well-known passage, also from Dio's *History*, reports the answer made to Macrinus, undoubtedly from the time when the new emperor came in the spring of A.D. 218 to reassure himself of the loyalty of the troops garrisoned in the camp of Apamea;³⁵ uttering two verses of the *Iliad*, as he did the first time Septimius Severus had consulted him, Belos announced the forthcoming accession of Elagabalus: 'Old Sir, of a surety young warriors press thee sore, whereas thy might is broken and grievous old age attends thee'.³⁶

As far away as Vaison-la-Romaine in the South of France, an altar (today in the Musée des Antiquités nationales at Saint-Germain-en-Laye) recalls the predictions

²³ For a list of the governors of Syria, see Rey-Coquais, art. cit. (n. 18), 62-7.

²⁴ See A. Schmidt-Colinet, 'Skulpturen aus dem Nymphäum von Apamea/Syrien', *AA* (1985), 119-33.

²⁵ See J. Barlet, 'Travaux au théâtre, 1969-1971', in *Colloque Apamée de Syrie* II (1972), 150-2.

²⁶ K. Lanckoronki, *Städte Pamphyliens und Pisidiens* I (1890), 179 n. 1 (no. 64 cd).

²⁷ For a schematic plan of the temple, see J. Balty, 'L'oracle d'Apamée', *AntCl* 50 (1981), pl. II, 2.

²⁸ Respectively Libanius, *Or.* XLVIII, 14 (ed. Förster, III, p. 434) and *Ep.* 1351 (ed. Förster, XI, p. 400).

²⁹ Balty, 'L'oracle d'Apamée', cit., 5-8.

³⁰ *Vita Hadr.* 2, 9. J. H. Mordtmann, 'Mythologische Miscellen', *ZDMG* 39 (1885), 44 was the first to draw attention to it.

³¹ Downey, op. cit. (n. 4), 219 n. 85.

³² Cassius Dio LXXIX, 8, 5.

³³ For the date of this journey, see Downey, op. cit. (n. 4), 242-3.

³⁴ Cassius Dio LXXIX, 8, 6.

³⁵ For the historical context, see Downey, op. cit. (n. 4).

³⁶ Cassius Dio LXXIX, 40, 4; first pointed out by Van Rengen, 'Nouvelles inscriptions', cit. (n. 10), 107.

given to a certain Sextus at Apamea: the god is said to be 'Fortunae rector mentisque magister', which clearly defines his real nature as a cosmic deity, 'master of the planets, of the starry heavens and of the zodiac'.³⁷ It is therefore quite possible that the high relief with Atlas (Pl. XI, 3), discovered within the ruins of the Apamean Tycheion, in front of the temple of Belos, should be reconstructed, as tentatively suggested some years ago,³⁸ with Atlas supporting the zodiacal circle, as on a sculptured monument of Villa Albani.

These connections, together with the great renown of the oracle up to the end of the fourth century, favoured the growth of the Neoplatonic school, which was to become so famous later with Iamblichus and the Sopatroi.³⁹ It started indeed in the second half of the second century with the teaching activity of Numenius, whose writings were so influential for the theory of the soul's *descensus* and depend so deeply on oriental theologies. In A.D. 269, after twenty-four years spent at Plotinus' school at Rome, Amelius Gentilianus of Etruria settled himself at Apamea; it was there that he wrote up the notes he had taken at his master's lectures, a work in 100 books which he dedicated to Hostilianus Hesychius of Apamea, his son by adoption. Under the shade of Belos, the Apamean Neoplatonic school flourished for a long time, and Libanius' reference to the 'choir' of the Apamean philosophers, ὁ τῶν φιλοσόφων ἐξ Ἀπαμείας χορός,⁴⁰ is not exaggerated; it was this ambience which explained the later settling of Iamblichus in the town, where 'he had a crowd of students, all those who were longing to learn hastening to him from all sides', as Eunapius reports in the *Vita Iamblichi*.⁴¹

But the Neoplatonists were not alone at Apamea; a link also exists between Belos and the local Epicurean school, whose διάδοχος, Aur. Belius Philippus—who was at the same time a priest—dedicated a column ἐπὶ κελεύσεως θεοῦ μεγίστου ἁγίου Βήλου, 'by order of the greatest and holy god Belos'.⁴²

III. INTELLECTUAL LIFE AND THEATRICAL PERFORMANCES

This *saeculum aureum*, which extends from Trajan until Septimius Severus, favoured the development of intellectual life throughout the Empire, and not only the emergence of municipal élites in the political sphere, but also greater movement between the provinces and the capital. Despite our excessively fragmentary documentation, we are informed of the Apamean origin of the physician Archigenes, who came to Rome at the time of Trajan and is mentioned three times in the *Satires* of Juvenal;⁴³ and the anonymous poet of the *Cynegetica*, once attributed to Oppian, who lived under Septimius Severus and dedicated his work to Caracalla, was also a native of the city of the Orontes, the valley of which he lyrically describes:

the Syrian bulls, the breed of the Chersonese, pasture about high well-built Pella; tawny, strong, great-hearted, broad of brow, dwellers of the field, powerful, valiant of horn, wild of spirit, loud-bellowing, fierce, jealous, abundant of beard, yet they are not weighed down with fat and flesh of body, nor again are they lean and weak; so tempered are the gifts they have from heaven—at once swift to run and strong to fight ... And to this day, the fields flourish everywhere with corn and everywhere the works of oxen are heavy on the prosperous threshing-floors around the Memnonian shrine where the Assyrian dwellers mourn Memnon the glorious son of the Morning.⁴⁴

³⁷ *IGRR* 1, 4 = *IG* XIV, 2482 = *CIL* XII, 1277; cf. Balty, art. cit. (n. 27), pl. 1, 1–2; *Guide d'Apamée*, 74, figs 71–2. For the quotation, H. Seyrig, 'Antiquités syriennes, 93. Bêl de Palmyre', *Syria* 48 (1971), 80.

³⁸ Balty, art. cit. (n. 27), 10 n. 31, pls 1, 3–11, 1; *Guide d'Apamée*, 75, figs 73–5.

³⁹ See J. Balty, 'Archéologie et témoignages littéraires', in *Colloque Apamée de Syrie* II (1972), 209–12; ead., art. cit. (n. 27), 11–14.

⁴⁰ Libanius, *Or.* LII, 21 (ed. Förster, IV, p. 35).

⁴¹ Eunapius, *Vitae soph.*, *Iambl.* 457 (ed. W. C. Wright, p. 362).

⁴² Rey-Coquais, art. cit. (n. 5), 66–7: ἐπὶ [κελεύσεως θεοῦ μεγίστου ἁγίου Βήλου.

⁴³ Juvenal VI, 239; XIII, 98; XIV, 252; cf. *Suda* A 4107 (ed. A. Adler, I, p. 376): Ἀρχιγένης, Φιλίππου, Ἀπαμείας Συρίας, ἰατρὸς, μαθητῆς Ἀγαθίνου, ἐπὶ Τραϊανοῦ ἰατρῆσας ἐν Ρώμῃ, βίους ἔτη ξγ' καὶ συγγράφας πολλὰ ἰατρικὰ τε καὶ φυσικὰ.

⁴⁴ Ps.-Oppian, *Cyn.* II, 100–8 and 150–1, here quoted in the Loeb translation of A. W. Mair; for the author himself, see P. Hamblen, 'La légende d'Oppien', *AntCl* 37 (1968), 589–615.

I have already pointed out that the theatre seems to date from the second half of the century. In the first half, and during Hadrian's reign, an inscribed console from the portico in front of the baths was dedicated by the sacred association of the victorious artists (τεχνιταί); the inscription records Iulius Paris, actor of tragic pantomime, citizen of Claudia Apamea, of Antioch and of every other city, honoured by the sevirate at Beirut.⁴⁵ And at the same time elsewhere in the town a statue was erected by the Council and the People to P. Aelius Crispus, actor of tragic and rhythmic mime, who was also a citizen of Apamea and may have been either a freedman or the son of a freedman of the emperor himself.⁴⁶ The two inscriptions, which reinforce each other, focus particularly on this reign in this respect.

IV. THE POPULATION OF THE CITY

These are the only documents pertaining to municipal and intellectual life during the second and third centuries; due to this lack of sources, it is much more difficult to perceive in any but a superficial manner the daily life of the citizens and inhabitants of the town at other social levels. No doubt, however, the population increased during the second century with the era of peace and prosperity all over the Empire. This was the period of the settling of large estates in the province, as shown by the life-work of Georges Tchalenko in the villages of the North Syrian limestone plateau, where the building of large mausolea and hypogea clearly shows the emergence of a new class of landowners who had previously been state officials or had made a career in the army.⁴⁷ Given by the well-known Venice inscription (*CIL* III, 6687) as 'millium homin(um) civium CXVII' for the *civitas* of Apamea in A.D. 6—that is some half a million persons altogether⁴⁸—the population spread over the large plateau to the east, reaching the border of the Palmyrene at Khirbet al-Bil'ās, where important boundary inscriptions and a tall column, dated to the reigns of Trajan and Antoninus Pius, were discovered in the 30s by Daniel Schlumberger.⁴⁹

Within the town itself, the plan of the inhabited areas in the excavated zones does not allow us to calculate the total population, as has been tentatively done for Rome and Ostia; in Apamea, as in Antioch,⁵⁰ there were no high blocks of tenements but mainly large houses belonging to the wealthy local families, between which the city quarters seemed to have been divided since the beginning as a direct consequence of the Macedonian colonization of the country:⁵¹ servants lived in parts of their masters' houses, shopkeepers and craftsmen on the mezzanine of their shops and workshops along the main streets. In fact, Hellenistic town-planning survived after the earthquake of A.D. 115; if the porticoes of the Great Colonnade and its two perpendicular axes were obviously enlarged to the prejudice of the length or width of the contiguous *insulae*, nothing changed elsewhere. The original town grid lasted until the Middle Ages with the typical measurements and proportions of other contemporary colonial cities.⁵² Further study of the excavated houses will perhaps show that their plans were later enlarged to correspond with the growth of this important class of rich landowners, whose residences came to look like real palaces, rivalling each other all over the town. Even through the reconstruction which followed the disastrous earthquakes of the sixth century (A.D. 526 and 528) and some changes of plan due to the introduction of a new way of life, the façades and courtyards maintained until the

⁴⁵ Rey-Coquais, art. cit. (n. 5), 47–8 no. 10, 63–4, pl. v. 1.

⁴⁶ *IGLS* 1349.

⁴⁷ G. Tchalenko, *Villages antiques de la Syrie du Nord* I (1953), 381–2.

⁴⁸ For this estimate, see Fr. Cumont, 'The Population of Syria', *JRS* 24 (1934), 188–9; more recently, J. and J. Ch. Balty, 'Apamée de Syrie. Archéologie et histoire, I', in *ANRW* II, 8 (1977), 117–20.

⁴⁹ D. Schlumberger, 'Bornes frontières de la Palmyrène', *Syria* 20 (1939), 52–63 *passim* (esp. 58–9 and map, fig. 1).

⁵⁰ See R. Martin's commentary on Libanius' *Antiochikos* in A. J. Festugière, *Antioche païenne et chrétienne* (1959), 50; cf. J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Antioch. City and Imperial Administration in the Later Roman Empire* (1972), 92.

⁵¹ For the possible plan of an original *insula*, see J. Ch. Balty, 'Notes sur l'habitat romain, byzantin et arabe d'Apamée', in *Colloque Apamée de Syrie* III (1984), 473 fig. 1.

⁵² Lastly, on this point, J. Ch. Balty, 'L'urbanisme de la Tétrapolis syrienne', in *Hellénisme au Proche-Orient*, 1. *Iraq, Syrie, Liban, Jordanie* (in the press).

end this architecture of large stone blocks with heavy mouldings and Corinthian capitals so characteristic of the style of the second century colonnade; they allow us to confirm that the rebuilding affected the whole city, both the public and the private monuments, on an amazingly wide scale.

Funerary monuments, however, have not until now afforded evidence of such wealth. Two or three hypogea to the west and north-west of the northern gate⁵³ and the large basement of a sarcophagus with Eroses and garlands, along the road to the valley and to Antioch,⁵⁴ together with two garland sarcophagi in local limestone (Pl. XII, 3), not in marble (for the wife of a centurion of the Legion II Parthica and one of his colleagues⁵⁵) evidently do not point in this direction; nor do the gravestones, naiskos or fronton stelae, even the finest ones, whose inscriptions are disappointingly banal: at best, they provide a date, a simple name, frequently without patronymic, and a farewell word⁵⁶ (Pl. XII, 1–2). Alongside purely Semitic names, such as Ammous, Malcha, Marous or Sammous, occur a quantity of typically Greek ones, such as Aphrodisia, Demonike, Dionysios, Heraios, Melinna, Patrophila, Theophilos and many others which clearly refer to the strongly Hellenized population of the town; very seldom—and this is quite normal—do we find Latin names (Aquilina, cf. *IGLS* 1365). Indications of profession, which are given elsewhere, at Tyre for instance,⁵⁷ are completely missing here—the δρωπακιστής or depilator of a recently found stela⁵⁸ is a mere but fortunate exception—and nothing can be inferred from those documents about the social level and occupation of the working population; nor do we have, as for Antioch,⁵⁹ the help of the writings of a Libanius or of the sermons of a John Chrysostom to breach the immense gap—this ‘great social gulf’, in the words of W. Liebeschuetz⁶⁰—between the tradesmen and the upper classes.

V. APAMEA AS THE WINTER HEADQUARTERS OF THE LEGION II PARTHICA IN THE THIRD CENTURY

With the Severi and the third century, Apamea participated in a more important way in imperial history through the events of the beginning of Septimius Severus’ reign, because of the Syrian origin of the Augustae and the rising pressure of the Parthians and then the Sasanians, on the eastern border. In the defeat of Pescennius Niger, the punishment of Antioch, which had supported Severus’ competitor, and the division of the powerful province of Syria into two, Coele Syria and Syria Phoenice,⁶¹ Apamea does not seem to have suffered at all. The city of the Orontes valley, itself a rival of Antioch,⁶² was close to Laodicea, the newly appointed metropolis and capital of Coele Syria, ‘ob belli civilis merita’ (*Dig.* 50, 15, 1, 3); it perhaps benefited from now on from the interest of the emperor in his oracle, and later from his presence at Antioch during the Parthian wars of A.D. 197 and 198 or on his way back from Egypt in the winter of A.D. 201/2, after the complete rehabilitation of the former capital. Family links with Apamea might explain some forthcoming events, which will be subsequently described; for now, I will merely stress the fact that the father of the future emperor Elagabalus, Sex. Varius Marcellus, the husband of Iulia Domna’s niece, Iulia Soemias, was himself an Apamean;⁶³ he evidently came to Rome with the empress’s suite and there, under Septimius Severus and Caracalla, began an

⁵³ *Guide d'Apamée*, 181 fig. 197.

⁵⁴ Fr. Vandenaabeele, ‘Sondages dans la nécropole nord d'Apamée, 1969–1970’, in *Colloque Apamée de Syrie II* (1972), 90, pls XXI–XXII, 1; cf. *Guide d'Apamée*, 172 and fig. 195.

⁵⁵ Van Rengen, ‘Nouvelles inscriptions’, cit. (n. 10), 98–102 nos 1–2, pls. xxv–xxvii; *Guide d'Apamée*, 198–9 nos 11–12, figs 188–94 and 217–20.

⁵⁶ For these common stelae, see Van Rengen, ‘Inscriptions grecques et latines’, cit. (n. 10), 97–8; *Guide d'Apamée*, 192–5 nos 2–8, figs 207–13.

⁵⁷ J.-P. Rey-Coquais, *Inscriptions grecques et latines découvertes dans les fouilles de Tyr (1963–1974)*, 1. *Inscriptions de la nécropole* = *BMB* 29 (1977), 152–61.

⁵⁸ W. Van Rengen, ‘Epitaphe grecque d'un δρωπακιστής à Apamée de Syrie’, in *Studia varia Bruxellensia* (1987), 119–24.

⁵⁹ See W. Ceran, *Rzemieslnicy i kupcy w Antiochii i ich ranga spoleczna (II polowa IV wieku). Artisans et commerçants d'Antioche et leur rang social (2^e moitié du IV^e siècle de notre ère)* = *Archiwum filologiczne* 19 (1969).

⁶⁰ Liebeschuetz, op. cit. (n. 50), 52.

⁶¹ For these events, see Downey, op. cit. (n. 4), 236–43.

⁶² Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* xxxiv, 48.

⁶³ Cassius Dio LXXIX, 30, 2; on his career, see H.-G. Pflaum, *Les carrières procuratoriennes équestres sous le Haut-Empire romain* (1960), 638–42 no. 237.



FIG. 1 MAP OF NORTHERN SYRIA

important career, which is related in ascending order on his sarcophagus, found in 1764 near Velletri and now in the Vatican Cortile del Belvedere.⁶⁴

With the resumption of the Persian wars, Apamea recovered the military role it had already had during the Hellenistic period;⁶⁵ but it was no longer its acropolis and strong defensive position which were the objects of attention; rather, this important inland cross-roads some 56 miles south of Antioch provided an excellent base for operations outside the eastern *limes*, situated as it was three to five days' march from the harbours of Seleucia or Aegeae, where the fleet could bring new troops in case of

⁶⁴ *CIL* x, 6569; cf. Helbig¹ I, 233 (E. Meinhardt).

⁶⁵ For its history during the Hellenistic period, see M. el-Zein, *Geschichte der Stadt Apameia am Orontes*

von den Anfängen bis Augustus, diss. Heidelberg (1972), *passim*.

need. Consequently, the camp of Apamea was to serve, during the first half of the century, as the winter headquarters of the special body which accompanied the emperors on these campaigns, the Legion II Parthica, founded in A.D. 196 by Severus together with the I and III Parthicae but, unlike those, which were quartered respectively at Singara and perhaps Rhesaina in Mesopotamia, usually garrisoned at Albano and acting as a real 'support for the throne and a strategic reserve'.⁶⁶

The evidence begins with Caracalla. Departing from Rome in the spring of 214, he spent the winter at Nicomedia, where he had two big siege engines built and trained a phalanx of 16,000 Macedonians on the model of Alexander's army. The machines were sent by sea to Aegeae. There the forces met in spring 215 and they wintered in Syria, Caracalla continuing his preparations for the military campaign which took place in the summer of 216 and which reached Arbela. A great increase in the minting of silver in Syria at this time clearly reflects this situation.⁶⁷

Some of the troops, mainly the II Parthica, were stationed at Apamea. An important inscription unearthed in 1984 by the Syrian Directorate of Antiquities and Museums during its work of cleaning the eastern wall of the city evidently reports the stages of the legion's journey to Apamea: it states that the body of [V]ivius Batao,⁶⁸ soldier of the Legion II Parthica Antoniniana, who died at the second hour of the night at Aegeae, was buried at Catabolon, which is one stage farther on the road to Antioch, while the *titulus* itself, which we now possess, was erected at Apamea, where the legion obviously encamped for the winter.⁶⁹ It is there indeed that the inscriptions successively copied by the travellers who visited the site since the beginning of this century, and those found by the first excavators of the 30s—altogether some seven to nine gravestones—located the winter headquarters of the II Parthica, as is also briefly reported in a passage of Cassius Dio.⁷⁰ The Syrian works of 1984 added five texts, while the recent dismantling of tower XV by the Belgian mission on the eastern side of the city wall in 1986 and 1987 (Pl. XIII, 1), gave seventy-six new documents, some fragments and some anepigraphic or erased stones, which no doubt belong to the necropolis of the camp, with rarer evidence of the presence of soldiers enrolled in other units at the same period. Thanks to this important discovery, the Museum of Apamea, in the old Ottoman caravanserai below the village, is now one of the best places in the world to study the composition and recruitment of a Roman legion, especially for the third century.

Most of the stones bear figures of the soldiers, usually wearing the so-called camp-dress then in fashion (Pl. XIII, 2–3): a long sleeved tunic and a coat draped over the left shoulder and forearm, the military belt with ring-shaped buckle, sword, spear and shield;⁷¹ centurions have the *vitis* and a dagger; a *beneficiarius* holds a stick with strips (Pl. XIV, 1), which seemingly distinguished him from other *principales* of inferior ranks, such as *tesserarii* and *optiones*; the *librarius officii legati legionis* has in his left hand a *capsa* containing the documents (Pl. XIV, 3); the *aquilifer* holds the eagle (Pl. XIV, 4); in the left hand of another soldier of indeterminate rank hangs a sort of casket which recurs elsewhere in the hand of *optiones*⁷² and might well designate here one of the clerks of the *officium* of the *tabularium* (Pl. XV, 1). Among the *discentes* are attested a *discens mensorem* or trainee-surveyor, a *discens aquiliferum* or trainee-eagle-bearer, a *discens unctorem*(?) or trainee-oil rubber for the baths, a *discens victimarium* or trainee-sacrificer, a *discens lanchiarium* and a *discens phalangarium* to whom I shall return shortly.

⁶⁶ R. Rémondon, *La crise de l'Empire romain. De Marc Aurèle à Anastase* (1970), 80.

⁶⁷ A. R. Bellinger, *The Syrian Tetradrachms of Caracalla and Macrinus = ANS Num. Stud.* 3 (1960), especially 21–9.

⁶⁸ I am indebted to R. S. O. Tomlin, Wolfson College, Oxford, for this suggestion concerning Batao's name and its probable Dalmatian origin.

⁶⁹ Unpublished inscription: '... oris noctis II defu(n)ctus Aegeas, cuius corpore conditum Catabolo <ti>tulum positum Apamiae'.

⁷⁰ Cassius Dio LXXVIII, 34, 2.

⁷¹ For some rare parallel representations of the second and third centuries, see M. Speidel, 'Eagle-Bearer and Trumpeter', *BjB* 176 (1976), 124–36 figs 1–5.

⁷² For similar caskets on Roman military tombstones elsewhere in the Empire, see M. G. Picozzi, 'Una stele di legionario ad Albano Laziale', *ArchCl* 31 (1979), 167–84 (esp. 180–2), pls LXIV–LXVII.

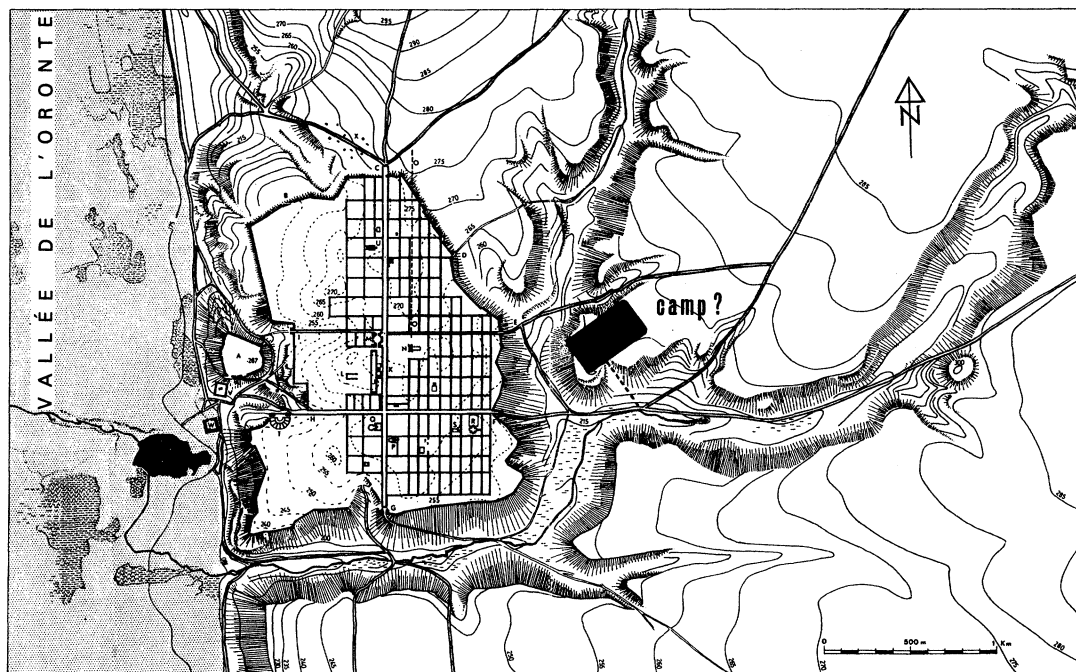


FIG. 2. APAMEA, CAMP AND CITY (AFTER CRAI 1987, P. 240, FIG. 10)

Not all these documents, however, refer to the same period of the legion's stay at Apamea; and it is by far the most interesting aspect of this discovery that it offers some precision on many controversial points of the II Parthica's history. First of all, it allows us in some 57.4 per cent of cases to distinguish between the two main periods of quartering by the mention of the legion's epithet: Antoniniana for the years 215–18, and Severiana—or Severiana Alexandriana—for the years 231–3; and it reveals for the first time something that could previously only be guessed from the lack of inscriptions at Rome during the same period,⁷³ namely that the legion came a third time to Syria accompanying Gordian III in A.D. 242–4; during that stay it was called Gordiana. But since on nearly one third of the documents (31.7 per cent), the legion is only mentioned as Parthica, a chronological classification is for the moment impossible. Special circumstances, however, are also reported which are of real interest for the historian: I have already referred to the itinerary of the troops on their way to Apamea in A.D. 215. Another inscription states that Atinius Ianuarius, soldier of the II Parthica Antoniniana, fell at Imma; this is exactly the place where E. Honigmann and G. Downey suggested that the final battle between the armies of Macrinus and Elagabalus occurred,⁷⁴ on 8 June A.D. 218, to fit Dio's statement that it was at a village of Antiochene 180 stadia from the city itself;⁷⁵ such quite unexpected confirmation shows the strategic importance of this pass through the hills on the road to Coele Syria—near the present customs and police post of Bāb el-Hāwa—where fifty-four years later Aurelian was to defeat Zenobia and, in 1164, Nur ad-Dīn to beat Bohemond III.⁷⁶

Useful information is also provided for the organization of the legion itself. As usual for the II Parthica, the soldiers do not fail to mention the exact number of the cohort in which they were enrolled, with their capacity as *hastatus*, *princeps* or *pilus*, and the line, *prior* or *posterior*, in battle-array: we virtually learn by name the soldiers belonging to each line. Some are *duplicarii*, receiving double pay or rations; others are

⁷³ E. Ritterling, s.v. *legio*, in *RE* XII, 2 (1925), 1481.

⁷⁴ E. Honigmann, s.v. *Syria*, in *RE* IV A2 (1932), 1686, 1692; Downey, op. cit. (n. 4), 249 and n. 77.

⁷⁵ Cassius Dio LXXVIII, 37, 3.

⁷⁶ For these battles, see respectively Downey, op. cit. (n. 4), 267 n. 162 and R. Grousset, *Histoire des Croisades et du Royaume franc de Jérusalem* II (1935), 462–4.

immunes, free from the heavier chores of the common soldier: among them appear a *victimarius*, a *sagittarius* (the legion indeed used archers) and a *scorpio*; this last word usually designates a type of war engine (*ballista* or catapult, which Ammianus Marcellinus describes in XXIII, 4, 7 and which was called by his time *onager*) or its projectile;⁷⁷ but the word was applied also to its crew as we now know, one of whom was Baebius Severus, a *civis Perusinus* whose gravestone is written both in Latin and in Greek. Equally new and important are a *discens lanchari(um)* and a *discens phalang(arium)*, briefly noted above. The first is represented on the stone, holding five javelins in the right hand and an oval shield in the left (Pl. XIV, 2); another monument has a quite similar soldier with four javelins and a shield, belonging to the Legion II Parthica Antoniniana. We must thus trace back to A.D. 215–18, and perhaps already to the Severan reforms, the appearance of *lancharii*, who are usually linked with Diocletian's army reforms;⁷⁸ their presence within the II Parthica does not surprise us, however, as they will later be connected with the praetorian cohorts, themselves so near to the emperor. The second trainee, *discens phalang(arium)*, obviously belonged to the phalanx which Caracalla and Severus Alexander revived on the model of Alexander when preparing their Parthian wars;⁷⁹ it is unfortunate that the Apamean inscription does not here give the epithet of the legion, but the text of the *Historia Augusta* seems to indicate that it was precisely under this second emperor that the soldiers were called by this name.⁸⁰

Fewer *principales* are known: I have already mentioned two *tesserarii*; there are also two *beneficarii* of the tribune, an *armorum custos*, a young *librarius officii legati legionis* and an even younger *exactus librarii legati legionis*, an *imaginifer*, two *aquiliferi*—one unfortunately undated, the other in A.D. 242–4 (the eagle he holds is a very strange and aberrant model of an *aquila*, which deserves more study); there are a *tubicen* and a *bucinator*, *optiones* and *equites*. Two centurions appear, Probius Sanctus who made the sarcophagus of his wife Antonia Kara, found in 1970 in the northern necropolis, and Serotinus Mac(er), whose gravestone, evidently reused in a building and very much damaged, was also recovered near the northern city gate; but a third, an epigraphic monument, this time from tower XV, no doubt represents another centurion, with the typical *vitis* in the right hand.

The rank of the commander of the II Parthica has sometimes been discussed in the past: contrary to the norm in other legions, he was an equestrian *praefectus*, which demonstrates again the special status of this unit.⁸¹ But had he been a *praefectus* since the creation of the legion, as has generally been suggested? We know the name of some of these commanders: Decius Triccianus, implicated in the murder of Caracalla and subsequent events in A.D. 217/18, Pomponius Iulianus under Philip the Arab in 244, and Claudius Silvanus in 249. One inscription (*CIL* VIII, 20996, from Cherchel), however, dated before A.D. 227, mentions T. Licinius Hierocles as 'praefectus legionis secunde Parthicae Severianae [Alexandrianae] vice legatus'; it led O. Hirschfeld to suppose that it was because Severus Alexander was on good terms with the Senate that during his reign the commandership was transferred, or seemed to be transferred, to a *legatus*, as indicated by the words *vice legatus*.⁸² The situation is obviously more complicated: none of the inscriptions found at Apamea refers to a *praefectus*, or to the office of a *praefectus*; on the contrary, we have already known since 1969 a 'strator leg(ati) leg(ionis) II Parthicae', which was therefore interpreted by W. Van Rengen, following Hirschfeld, as belonging to the years 231–3.⁸³ Two inscriptions

⁷⁷ Fr. Lammert, s.v. *skorpion*, in *RE* III A1 (1927), 584–7.

⁷⁸ S. Mazzarino, s.v. *lancharii*, in E. De Ruggiero, *Dizionario epigrafico* IV, 1 (1942), 365–7; D. van Berchem, *L'armée de Dioclétien et la réforme constantinienne* (1952), 107; D. Hoffmann, *Das spätromische Bewegungsheer und die Notitia Dignitatum = Epigr. Studien* 7 (1969), 218–20; cf. van Berchem, *Studii Clasice* 24 (1986), 158 n. 20.

⁷⁹ Fr. Lammert, s.v. *phalanx*, in *RE* XIX, 2 (1938), 1645.

⁸⁰ *Vita Alex. Sev.* 50, 5: 'fuerat et falangem triginta milium hominum, quos falangarios vocari iusserat'.

⁸¹ For the special links existing between the II Parthica and the other units garrisoned near and in Rome, see Ritterling, art. cit. (n. 73), 1478.

⁸² O. Hirschfeld, *Die kaiserlichen Verwaltungsbeamten bis auf Diokletian* (1905), 398–9.

⁸³ Van Rengen, 'Inscriptions grecques et latines', cit. (n. 10), 101.

from tower XV now add new evidence. Both the young *exactus librarii* and the *librarius* mentioned above are part of the *officium legati legionis*, the first in the II Parthica Antoniniana—thus before Severus Alexander and at the same time as the commandership of Decius Tricicianus, who is clearly said to be a *praefectus*.⁸⁴ I hesitate to maintain that as regards terminology this special legion followed the usage of the units under the command of a *legatus*, though having at its head a *praefectus*. We are only some twenty years after the creation of the II Parthica and it is difficult to believe that from the beginning the bureaux were called *officia legati* while there was a *praefectus* at their head. Is it rather that our written sources used the later grade of the commander while referring to an earlier situation? For the moment, and for lack of more explicit documentary evidence, or of a re-examination of the whole problem, this seems to me the only possible explanation.

There is no space here to discuss the origin of the soldiers indicated by their nomenclature or as given by the inscriptions themselves; many Thracian names, such as Bascila/Boscila, Bitius/Bithius/Bitieus/Bitus, Caelepor, Diza/Dizza/Dissa, Muca-tra, Mucazanus, Mucianus, Nomipor, Seutes, Tara⁸⁵ and several others more generically appropriate to a Greek-speaking country⁸⁶ show that most of the recruits were enrolled in the Balkan area. And a particular shape of monument, frequently attested at Apamea but extremely rare elsewhere, except in the museums of Sofia and Bucharest,⁸⁷ points to the same origin. But the stone engravers who inscribed the texts were no doubt Apameans and not accustomed to write Latin words, as is indicated by numerous confusions between P and R, C and S, uncial C and E, and by the introduction of a Δ in words such as *Gordiana* or *decurio*.

The II Parthica is not, however, the only unit to have been encamped at Apamea during this period; when Macrinus arrived from Antioch in May A.D. 218 to reassure himself of the loyalty of the soldiers, there were other forces in the area, as Dio states.⁸⁸ The XIII Gemina, from Apulum, was one of them as we know from two, and perhaps three, tombstones; but evidence from the III Gallica and the IV Scythica (both legions of the province), from the IV Flavia, the XIV Gemina and from the XIV cohors urbana clearly indicates the importance of the army gathered there. It has sometimes been suggested⁸⁹ that the *ala I Flavia Augusta Britannica*, a stela of which W. K. Prentice found near the northern gate,⁹⁰ participated also in these events. However, the finds of 1984, 1986 and 1987 around and within tower XV⁹¹ demonstrate that it was on a quite different occasion and not before A.D. 252 that this *ala*, together with the *ala I Ulpia Contariorum*, went to Apamea. Up to now no less than twenty-two new monuments of the greatest interest have come to light. Two of them are clearly dated: one belonging to a *decurio* of the *ala Britannica* who 'm(ilitare) c(oe)pit Maximo et Paterno cos' (i.e. A.D. 233) and died in his twentieth year of service, that is A.D. 252; the other (Pl. XV, 2) to a *signifer* of the *ala Contariorum* who died '(ante diem) XI kal(endas) Maias Gallo et Volusiano consulibus', that is on 21 April 252.⁹² Type, style and measurements of the stelae oblige us to put the whole group at the same date; moreover, they are the best preserved of all the gravestones found in the tower, and those with the most frequent traces of colour, either in the carving of the letters or on the figures themselves. I have previously suggested⁹³ that we should see in the dispatching of those particular units the answer given by the emperors to a new kind of warfare that suddenly developed along the eastern *limes*, with the abandonment by the Romans of offensive campaigns such as those which

⁸⁴ *Vita Carac.* 6, 7.

⁸⁵ See G. G. Mateescu, 'I Traci nelle epigrafi di Roma', *Ephem. Dacorom.* 1 (1923), 57–290 *passim*; D. Detschew, *Die thrakische Sprachreste* (1957), s.v., *passim*. I have so far been unable to consult V. Besevliev, *Die Personennamen bei den Thrakern* (1970).

⁸⁶ For example: Alexander, Antigonos, Appianus, Cassander, Cinegetus, Dionysius, Glaucias, Hermodorus, Tryphon, Zeno.

⁸⁷ S. Ferri, *Arte romana sul Danubio* (1933), 275 fig. 354, 341 fig. 451.

⁸⁸ Cassius Dio LXXXIX, 34, 5.

⁸⁹ Van Rengen, 'Inscriptions grecques et latines', cit. (n. 10), 100 himself following the commentary of *IGLS* 1361; id., 'Nouvelles inscriptions', cit. (n. 10), 98.

⁹⁰ W. K. Prentice, *Greek and Latin Inscriptions = Publ. Amer. Arch. Exped. Syria* 111 (1908), 143 no. 131; cf. *Guide d'Apamée*, 38 fig. 31.

⁹¹ For an account of these finds, see my preliminary report 'Apamée (1986): nouvelles données sur l'armée romaine d'Orient et les raids sassanides du milieu du III^e siècle', *CRAI* (1987), 213–41.

⁹² *Ibid.* 229.

⁹³ *Ibid.* 239.

Caracalla, Severus Alexander and Gordian led into Persian territory, accompanied by the II Parthica, and the adoption of a more defensive policy for which those *alae*, and especially the *contarii* with their long spears (Pl. XV, 3), were the most adequate opposing formations to align in front of the Sasanian cavalry.⁹⁴

The dating of these events to A.D. 252 is highly significant too;⁹⁵ it redates one year earlier than usually thought the second ἀγωγή of Shapur, fits the date given by the only ancient source—the *Syriac Chronicle of A.D. 724*, otherwise known as the *Liber Calipharum*—which affords an unambiguous date (Sel. 563 = A.D. 251/2), confirms the important minting of Trebonianus Gallus at Antioch (no doubt to be put in close relation with the preparation of a counter-offensive), and anticipates the arrival of a stronger army to bring the war inside Persian borders, which was to occur only a few months later under Valerian in the autumn of A.D. 253, with its well-known disastrous results. Once more Apamea served as a base for operations; the camp was obviously reused and the military cemetery received, beside the gravestones of the II Parthica, the characteristic stelae of the Danubian *equites*.

The camp was evidently an important part of Apamean life during the first half of the third century; it was the winter headquarters of the legion and its base for offensive operations outside the *limes*, as well as for purely defensive missions along the frontier. Within the large city necropolis, the military cemetery contained the monuments erected by the family and the heirs to those who died at the front and during troop movements within the country. If as already stated [V]ivius Batao died at Aegeae, was buried at Catabolon but honoured by a *titulus* at Apamea, the same occurred for Atinius Ianuarius who fell at Imma in A.D. 218 and for [(?)l]ubius Ianuarius who died *in barbarico* in A.D. 231–3. Hence the shape of the monuments, among which there are far more *cippi* and funerary altars than ordinary stelae. In A.D. 252 too, though this time independently of the shape, which seems typical for the cavalry *alae*, the cemetery of Apamea received the stelae of those *equites* who fell, like Aur. Mucatralis, ‘tubicen al(a)e Britan(n)ic(a)e, felicissima in e(x)peditione (h)oriental(i)’.

Camp and city co-existed for some forty years, but we have only scanty information about their everyday contacts. It is, however, sufficient to explain why Aur. Chrysomallus, ‘ortus C(laudiae) Apameae’, followed the army when it returned to Albano and died there as *quintanesis legionis*, or canteen-keeper of the legion.⁹⁶ When Macrinus, having heard that the troops at Emesa had proclaimed Elagabalus, arrived at Apamea to reassure himself of the loyalty of the II Parthica, he proclaimed his son, the Caesar Diadumenianus, as Augustus and took the opportunity to offer the soldiers some privileges, at the same time giving to every inhabitant of the town a dinner costing 150 drachmae.⁹⁷ Some weeks later, however, the city dedicated a console of the west portico of the agora to Iulia Maesa,⁹⁸ the grandmother of Elagabalus, whose father was, as we have seen, an Apamean.

Situated in the province of Coele Syria, half-way between the capital, Antioch, where the Severan court sojourned during its stay in the East, and Emesa, whence the princesses originated but which was located in nearby Syria Phoenice, Apamea obviously played an important role throughout the period. It had already welcomed Caracalla and his mother at the two hundred and third stage (*mansio*) of their journey from Rome and Egypt late in A.D. 215, and it was perhaps on this occasion that the city was given the epithet of Ἀντωνεινούπολις, which an alas very fragmentary inscription records.⁹⁹

This long period of intense life suddenly came to an end with Shapur’s invasion of Syria and the taking of Apamea during the second raid, which I now incline to date

⁹⁴ For an illustration of such battles on the well-known graffiti of Dura, see most recently B. Goldman and A. M. G. Little, ‘The Beginning of Sasanian Painting and Dura-Europos’, *Iranica Antiqua* 15 (1980), 283–98, fig. 2, pls I–VII.

⁹⁵ For full discussion of the date, see Balty, art. cit. (n. 91), 229–39.

⁹⁶ *CIL* XIV, 2282. For the abbreviation, I would prefer ‘C(laudia) Apamia’ to ‘c(ivitate) Apamia’.

⁹⁷ Cassius Dio LXXIX, 34, 1–5.

⁹⁸ Van Rengen, ‘Nouvelles inscriptions’, cit. (n. 10), 103–4 no. 3.

⁹⁹ *IGLS* 1346; cf. R. Mouterde, *CRAI* (1952), 355–63; D. van Berchem, *ibid.* (1973), 123–6.

to the spring of A.D. 252. The name appears indeed between those of Chalcis and Raphanea in the trilingual list of the thirty-seven cities taken by the Sasanians, which is inscribed on the kaabah of Naqsh i Rostem near Persepolis.¹⁰⁰ Did the town and its wall suffer any damage on this occasion? The excavations cannot up to now afford an answer to this problem; but the events no doubt contributed to the reinforcement of the rampart, which was rebuilt in several places with blocks of the destroyed monuments from the neighbourhood and of gravestones from the nearby necropolis, seemingly in the years immediately following, as the latest dated inscriptions belong to the year A.D. 252 and as they keep so much of the red colour of the letters and the enhancing painting of some sculpted details of their figures.

The burial at Kafr Nabūde, 8 km east of Apamea, of an important hoard of bronze coins of Valerian and Gallienus, usually known as the Hama hoard,¹⁰¹ obviously tallies with this atmosphere of fear arising from the third Persian threat, which culminated in the taking of Antioch in A.D. 260. Later on, we hear only of the usurper Iulius Saturninus besieged and killed by his own or Probus' troops 'in castro quodam' (*vitae quadr. tyr.* 11, 3), which Jerome, following Eusebius, said was Apamea;¹⁰² this is the last reference to Apamea in our sources before the great era of persecutions at the beginning of the fourth century; it is the last time too that the city had the role of providing a base for operations and withdrawal which had so often been hers since the Hellenistic period. But with the Middle Ages and the confused political situation in the country, it was to happen again—as part of quite another chapter in the long history of the site.

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¹⁰⁰ See E. Honigmann and A. Maricq, *Recherches sur les Res Gestae Divi Saporis* (1953), 13 and 146 no. 9; A. Maricq, 'Classica et orientalia, 5. Res Gestae Divi Saporis', *Syria* 35 (1958), 308–9 and 338 no. 9 = *Classica et orientalia* (1965), 50–1 and 80 no. 9.

¹⁰¹ See R. A. G. Carson, 'The Hama Hoard and the Eastern Mints of Valerian and Gallienus', *Berytus* 17 (1967–8), 123–42, pls xxxv–xxxvii.

¹⁰² Jerome, *Chron.* p. 224 (ed. R. Helm).