

The Antiochian - N° 4 (2013)

The Newsletter of *Antioch*:
A Center for Antiochian Orthodox Christian Studies and Research
www.AntiochCentre.net

The Work of Antioch Centre

Antioch Centre has many projects to continue, and others still to commence, relating to the poorly-known, though extremely rich, Antiochian Orthodox Christian patrimony and heritage. At present, funding is still needed for many of these projects, but some of them are going forward with what funding is currently available.

During the autumn of 2011, following the footsteps of the late and renowned Georgian scholar Prof. **Wachtang Djobadze** (1917-2007),¹ Fr. **Elia** and Prof. **Tamila Mgaloblishvili** (*The Centre for Exploration of Georgian Antiquities*, University of St. Andrew, Tbilisi, Georgia) led a Georgian group of historians, art historians, and archaeologists on a tour of Antioch and its surrounding mountains. They were able to observe the unprotected and unconserved ruins of various ancient Antiochian and Georgian monasteries and churches. This is a long-term project based on information in Antiochian and Georgian manuscripts colophons, as well as archaeological evidence. The aim is to update and continue the great work of Djobadze.

During the autumn of 2012, Fr. **Elia** received an invitation to lecture in various universities and institutions in the USA (Massachusetts, Minnesota, Tennessee, Kentucky, etc.); he spoke about *Antioch Centre* projects, and about the history of the Church of Antioch and its patrimony and heritage.

In the course of 2011-2012, Fr. **Elia** continued his efforts and research; he located and catalogued more than 450 Antiochian Orthodox manuscripts, added to our database of manuscripts, including some manuscripts from Lebanon and Syria digitized by the

¹ He is the author of *Materials for the study of Georgian monasteries in the Western environs of Antioch on the Orontes*, and *Archaeological investigations in the region west of Antioch on-the-Orontes*.

Hill Museum and Manuscript Library (HMML),
Minnesota, USA.

In this issue, we provide some information available from the colophons of some Chalcedonian Syriac manuscripts concerning the Rum Orthodox Monastery of the Martyr Panteleimon and the Prophet Elia/Elijah, on the Black Mountain (west of Antioch).

The Patriarch of Antioch and All the East



Ignatios IV

John X

On 5 December 2012, Patriarch **Ignatios IV** (Hazim) reposed in the Lord. He was born in Mharrdeh, Hama (Central Syria), in 1920. He was consecrated the Metropolitan of Latakia in 1970, and was enthroned as Patriarch of Antioch and All the East on 2 July 1979.

On 17 December 2012, the Holy Synod met at the Patriarchal Monastery of the Theotokos, Balamand (N. Lebanon) and elected **John X** (Yazigi) to the Patriarchal See of Antioch. On 10 February 2013, he was enthroned at the Church of the Holy Cross, Damascus. John was born in Latakia (Coastal Syria) in 1955. In 1995, he was consecrated Vicar-Bishop to assist the Metropolitan of Akkar for the region of Al-Hosn and Wadi al-Nasara (headquartered at the Patriarchal Monastery of St. George, Homeira, Coastal Syria), and later became the Metropolitan of Central and Western Europe in 2008.

Antioch and All the East



St. John Chrysostom

St. **John Chrysostom** (†407), the Antiochian golden-mouthed, said about Antioch that, “Our city has loved Christ from the beginning. It has received the patrimony and the desire never to allow the teachings of our Faith to degenerate into heresy... Those who lived in our city did not remain silent nor did they put up with any innovation in the Faith. They were like courageous hounds who saw wolves attacking and destroying the entire flock. They sprang after the wolves and did not let up chasing them and driving them away. They saw to it that the Apostles from every corner of the world would send them their decision in the form of a letter which would protect them from any attack launched against the faithful by those innovators in the Faith, and all such as might come thereafter.” (*On the Incomprehensible Nature of God*, Homily II)



The Roman Road from Aleppo (N. Syria) to Antioch

Antioch is a strategic city on the Orontes River, on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea (its port is Seleucia Pieria, an Archdiocesan See). Mountains surround Antioch from its four sides:

1. *West to North*, the **Amanos Range of Mountains**: **Mount Moses** (Jabal Musa, Musa Dag); **Black Mountain** (Mavron Oros, Turo d-Ukomo, Jabal al-Lukam, Jabal al-Aswad, Kafur Dag) and its **Boar’s Head** over the Mediterranean Sea (Ras al-Khanzir); and **Nur Dag** (in Aintab, Gazi Antep);
2. *East*, **Mount Silpius** or **Mount Stavros** (Habibi Neccar);
3. *South-East*, **Mount Admirable**, or **Mount Simeon** (Saman Dag; famous for its Monastery of St. Simeon the Stylite, the Lesser);
4. *South-West*, **Mount Kasius** or **Bald Mountain** (Jabal Kasius, Jabal al-Aqraa, Yayla Dag; famous for its Monastery of St. Barlaam).



Antioch seen from Mt. Silpius crossed by the Orontes River, and surrounded by the Black Mountain (R) and Mount Kasius (L)

Seleukos Nikator, a General in the Army of Alexander the Great and founder of the Seleucid Dynasty, established Antioch, around 300 BC. When it fell, in 64 BC, at the hands of the General Pompey, it became the capital of the Roman Province of *Syria Prima*, and therefore the most important city of the eastern Mediterranean, alongside Rome and Alexandria. It is called the “Golden City”, the “Queen City”, and the “Mother of all Cities of the East”. Libanius, the great pagan teacher of the *School of Antioch*, said about Antioch, “If the gods descended on earth, they should dwell in it”. In the early days of Christianity, approximately 500,000 inhabitants from different ethnicities, races, languages, and religions populated it. It was a crossroad between Eastern and Western civilisations and cultures.

In the Book of Acts of the Apostles, we find that the City of Antioch is the second most frequently mentioned city after Jerusalem. The Apostles and

Disciples, especially **Peter**, **Paul** and **Barnabas**, used Antioch as a starting point for their preaching of the Gospel to both Jews and Gentiles, travelling along the Phoenician (Lebanese and Syrian) coast. It was from Antioch that the Apostles **Paul** and **Barnabas** departed for their great missionary journeys to the Gentile lands (Acts 13:1). During the persecution that followed the martyrdom of St. **Stephen** the First Martyr, members of the Christian community in Jerusalem fled to Antioch for refuge. In the Acts of the Apostles we read, “*The disciples of Christ were called Christians first in Antioch*” (11:26). It was in Antioch that one of the first conflicts within the Church developed, between Apostles **Peter** and **Paul** (Galatians 2). For all these reasons, and especially after the fall of Jerusalem (70 AD), it became one of the great centres of Christianity following the time of the New Testament and the Apostolic Era. The Apostles **Peter** and **Paul** are considered the Founders and Patrons of the See.



*Apostles **Peter** and **Paul**
the Founders and Patrons of the See of Antioch*

The See of Antioch, called “the Great City of God” (Theoupolis), is one of the five apostolic historical Sees of the Church, the Pentarchy, along with Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Jerusalem. Its ecclesiastical jurisdiction and influence, as ‘Mother Church’, was extended to include the entire Near, Middle, and Far East. This includes Lebanon, Syria, eastern Asia Minor (modern Turkey), Cyprus, Mesopotamia, Arabia, the Persian Gulf, Persia (modern Iran), the Caucasus (Georgia and Armenia), India and China. Antioch was famous for its theological School, which promoted a

historical and concrete exegesis of the Scripture and the understanding of Christ.

Manuscripts Copied in Antioch²

Syriac manuscripts of the Rum/Melkite Chalcedonian Orthodox provenance are most numerous in the 12th and 13th centuries. They disappear after the 17th century, when Syriac was finally replaced entirely by Arabic as the liturgical language in Orthodox communities of Syria and Lebanon. Among the Orthodox manuscripts there is a group whose colophons inform us that they were written on the **Black Mountain**, to the west of Antioch, between 1022(?) and 1242; this was around the time of the Constantinopolitan re-conquest of Antioch (969-1085).

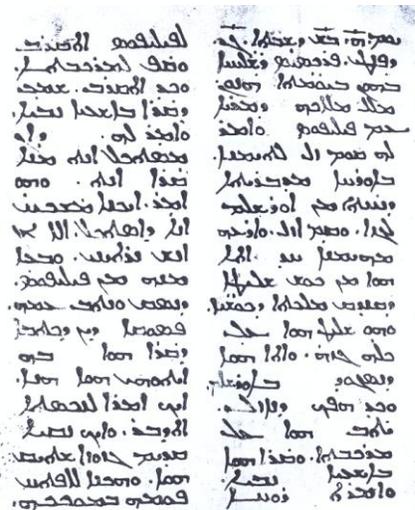
In the late 4th century, the hermit **Theodosios** had already made the Black Mountain his home. The area is also known from its association with the encyclopaedist **Nikon of the Black Mountain** (11th-12th c.); and with the Georgian translators St. **George Atoneli/Mtatsmindeli** (the Athonite/Hagiorite, †1065), St. **Ephrem Mtsire** (the Lesser, †1101/3), and St. **Arseni of Iqalto** († ca.1127).

In addition to the Antiochian Greek, Syriac, and Arabic speaking monks, both **Chalcedonian** (e.g. the monasteries of the Theotokos, St. Panteleimon/Prophet Elia, St. George, etc.) and **Non-Chalcedonian** (e.g. the Monastery of St. George), the Black Mountain also was the home of **Georgian** and **Armenian** monasteries (e.g. the Monastery of St. Thomas). Clearly this was, especially in the 11th century, a multicultural monastic centre of considerable importance.

A very large number of manuscripts were written, translated, and copied in different languages (Greek, Syriac, Arabic, Georgian, and Armenian) in the monastery scriptoria of the Antiochene region, and especially on the Black Mountain. On the basis of information in the colophons, or rubrics, or on twelve surviving Chalcedonian Syriac manuscripts written in the Black Mountain, we can learn quite a

² For further information, see **Fr. Elia**’s “Orthodox Manuscripts Copied in Antioch” on *Antioch Centre* website.

lot concerning the Rum Orthodox Monastery of Great Martyr Panteleimon, also known as that of the Prophet Elia/Elijah. This Monastery appears to have been situated to the north of Bitias (north of Musa Dag/Mt. Moses), on the Black Mountain.



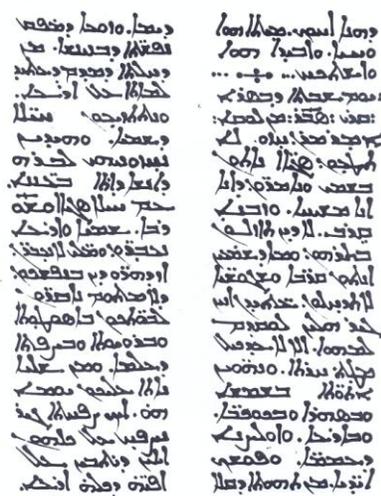
Folio from the *Praxapostolos* of 1041

Syriac scribes regularly give their names and so we learn the names of several Antiochian scribes and their dates: Priest **John** son of Joseph, who copied six manuscripts between 1024 and 1056; he was the brother of the Priest **Peter/Polycarpos**, who copied a Parakletike (Octoechos) in 1056; Priest **John** of Duqsa, who copied a Gospel Lectionary in 1046; Bishop **Theodosios**, who copied another Gospel Lectionary in 1068/1069; Hieromonk and Abbot **Michael** son of the Priest **Abu I-Faraj** son of **Lu'lu'**, who copied a Parakletike (Octoechos) in 1191; Hieromonk **Gabriel** from Maipharqat, who copied a Prxapostolos in 1232, and an Anthologion in 1242; and Monk **Agapitos**, who copied two Arabic manuscripts between 1050/1051 and 1053.

Besides the **Monastery of Great Martyr Panteleimon and Prophet Elia** on the Boar's Head, in the Black Mountain, where all but one of the manuscripts were written, the colophons also mention several other places: the **Monastery of the Theotokos** above the harbour of Rhossos, the **Monastery of Great Martyr George** in Daphne, the **Tower of St. Domitian** and the **Church of St. Paraskevi** in Antioch, and the famous **Monastery of the Theotokos** in Saidnaya, Central Syria.

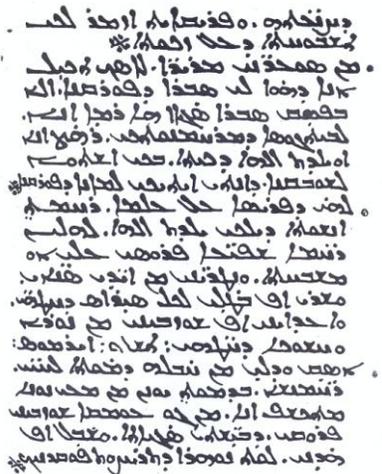
All the surviving Syriac manuscripts from the Black Mountain were written for liturgical use: thus we have four *Gospel Lectionaries* and three *Praxapostolos Lectionaries*; two contain the *Octoechos*, one originally had the *Triodion*, and one is an *Anthologion* for the Feast of Prophet Elia. Three colophons give information about the source of the text: the *Gospel Lectionary* of 1024 was “collated” from a Greek manuscript; the *Praxapostolos Lectionary* of 1041, which describes itself as containing “*Lectons according to the Rite of the Greeks*”, was “translated” from Greek Lectionary; while the *Triodion* of 1056 states that “*the book of the Three Odes (Triodion), together with Canons, was “translated”, from Greek into Syriac*” in the time of “*Abraham the King's Scribe*” by the Hieromonk **Abba Antonios**.

It is clear that all these manuscripts are the product of the process of the Constantinopolitanization of the Antiochian Rite of the Rum Orthodox Church in Antioch that took place in the aftermath of the Byzantine re-conquest of the area (969-1085). As a result of this adaptation most surviving Rum Orthodox liturgical manuscripts contain, not the original Antiochian Rite that had previously been in use, but its Constantinopolitanized form. In the 11th, 12th, and 13th centuries, both forms of the Rite evidently existed side by side for a while, the original Antiochian Rite being known as the “*Rite of the Syrians*”, and the Constantinopolitanized form as that “*of the Greeks*”.



Folio from the *Gospel* of 1046

In the case of the *Lectionaries*, it was only the arrangement, not the actual text, which was taken over from “the Greeks”, for the biblical text used remains that of the Peshitta.



Folio from the *Parakletike/Octoechos* of 1056

The *Triodion*, on the other hand, was clearly translated entirely from Greek, and the reference to the imperial Scribe **Abraham** and to the translator Abba **Antonios** would be of particular interest if it were possible to identify these two men.

It seems very likely that the process of translating Greek liturgical texts into Syriac was begun in the last decades of the 10th century, following the Constantinopolitan re-conquest. And, to judge by the number of surviving manuscripts from the Monastery of St. Panteleimon/Prophet Elia, it is very likely, too, that this Monastery played an important role in the dissemination of the newly Constantinopolitanized Rite in Syriac translation in Antioch.

Georgian Monks and Monasteries in Antioch

Between the 10th and 13th centuries, Georgian monks in the Antiochene region were greatly encouraged and generously supported by the Georgian nobility who were residing at the Constantinopolitan Imperial Court, and by Georgian royalty (e.g. King Bagrat IV [1027-1072], and his mother Queen Mariam, who herself visited Antioch; King David the Builder/Aghmashenebeli [1089-

1125]; and Queen Tamar [1184-1213]). During this golden period, Georgian monks were present in about 15 monasteries in that region.

In the 60s of the 11th century, the Georgian philosophical-theological school, headed by the Georgian scholar St. **Ephrem Mtsire**, was founded on the Black Mountain. Ephrem, together with Iovane Parnakeli, established close relations with the Greek, Syriac, and Arabic literary circles in the Antioch region. He maintained close links with **Nikon** of the Black Mountain. At that time, Georgian monks had a rich library at the Monastery of St. Simeon the Stylite (the Lesser); it contained 420 manuscripts. In 1056, besides the Antiochian monks, the Monastery was the home of approximately 60 Georgian monks. This school maintained close links with the Georgian Monastery of Iveron (Mt. Athos) and the Georgian Monastery of the Holy Cross/Jvari (Jerusalem, Palestine).

The following is a list of the monasteries and churches where Georgians were active in that epoch:

1. Monastery of St. Simeon the Stylite the Lesser and its Georgian Church of the Holy Throne/Moda (Mt. Admirable),
2. Hermitage of St. Gabriel or George the Recluse (near St. Simeon’s; Mt. Simeon),
3. Monastery of St. Barlaam (Mt. Kasius),
4. Monastery of St. George (Boar’s Head),
5. Monastery and Hermitage of St. Romanos the Melodist/Romana (Reeds Valley),
6. Church of the Wood of Life or Living Pillar (Valley of Reeds),
7. Monastery of the Theotokos Kelipo,
8. Monastery of St. Ezra,
9. Monastery of the Theotokos/Kastana (Daphne),
10. Monastery of St. Mena/Minas,
11. Monastery of St. Procopios,
12. Monastery of Tskarotha (Daphne),
13. Monastery of Tvaltai/Tvali (Daphne),
14. Monastery of Jubia (near Seleucia Pieria Port, southern Boar’s Head),
15. Castle of Kozkalesi (Kara Magara, Koca Kalesi),
16. Castle Monastery (southern Maydan and Nymphaeum, Gunahkarlar Hamam).

Some of these were originally constructed or restored by the guild of Georgian masters and builders; e.g.

Saimdavle Kanchaeli and his workers who were active on the Black Mountain in the 30s-40s of the 11th century. Information about these monasteries is preserved in historical and hagiographical works, and found in the colophons and rubrics of Antiochian and Georgian manuscripts.

In 1268, Sultan Baibars, the Muslim Mamluk ruler, chased out the Crusaders, captured and destroyed Antioch and its environs, along with the coastal cities of *Phoenicia Prima* (Lebanon and Syria). The citizens of Antioch were massacred, enslaved, or exiled. The Orthodox hierarchs were refused permission to return to the city itself. Therefore, the Patriarchal See and the ecclesiastical administration moved first to Cilicia, and then was permanently transferred and head-quartered in **Damascus**, the civil capital of Syria, in the last quarter of the 14th century. Consequently, this substantial Antiochene multicultural monastic centre came to an end.

Recent Publications

Two important books on the Christian artistic heritage in the Middle Ages in the general area of the Middle East have appeared recently:

- **M. Immerezeel:** *Identity Puzzles: Medieval Christian Art in Syria and Lebanon*, (Leuven: Peeters, 2009). A notable feature of this is the presence of 129 plates, many of them coloured.

- **B. Snelders:** *Identity and Christian Muslim Interaction: Medieval Art of the Syrian Orthodox from the Mosul Area*, (Leuven: Peeters, 2010). The book is in fact of much wider concern than its subtitle might suggest, and there is much in it of relevance for the Rum Orthodox tradition as well. It has 68 plates, and again many are coloured.

An important reference work for the Syriac tradition is the illustrated *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage*, edited by **S. Brock, A. Butts, G. Kiraz** and **L. Van Rompay** (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2011).

Another valuable contribution is a study of what is known about the history of all the individual

churches in the city of Antioch that are recorded as having existed; this is by **W. Mayer** and **P. Allen:** *The Churches of Syrian Antioch (300-638 CE)*, (Leuven: Peeters, 2012).

Also of direct relevance for Antioch's research programme on Rum Orthodox manuscripts is the inventory of all known dated Syriac manuscripts up to AD 1300, compiled by the *Chairman of the Trustees of Antioch Centre*, **Sebastian Brock**; this has appeared in [Hugoye 15 \(2012\) pp. 21-48](#). Although it is only from the 11th century onwards that the 'Melkite' (i.e. Rum Orthodox) script becomes distinctive, on internal grounds nine earlier dated manuscripts are definitely of Rum Orthodox provenance, the oldest being a collection of Homilies, copied in Edessa in 723.

Aims of Antioch Centre

- * To advance the education of the public in the history, culture and society of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch;
- * To facilitate and enhance the study of Antiochian history, demography, hagiography, spirituality, theology, liturgy, biography, archaeology, and linguistics;
- * To publish and disseminate information on the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch that is otherwise unavailable to the general public.

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