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THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE SOCIO-POLITICAL STRUCTURE IN THE BEGINNING OF THE ISLAMIC REIGN IN ANTIOCH*

*ANTAKYA'DA İSLAM DÖNEMİNİN BAŞLARINDA SOSYO-POLİTİK YAPININ
DÖNÜŞÜMÜ*

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Gürhan BAHADIR

M.KÜ. Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Bölümü

Abstract

Upon the establishment of the Byzantine State on 11 May 330 A.D., Constantinopolis (Istanbul) and Antioch became significant civilization centers in Anatolia. During Byzantine rule, Antioch was the capital city of the Syrian province and functioned as a bridge between Anatolia and the Middle-East, keeping its former position as the center of administration and civilization. The governor represented the power of the emperor and central administration in the city and as one of four patriarchate centers, the patriarch of Antioch was the head of all churches in Anatolia.

As the capital city of the Syrian province, Antioch had an autonomous governing structure. From the 4th to the beginning of the 7th centuries A.D., under the rule of the Byzantine State, Antioch's central and local administration coexisted. In addition to its autonomous political structure, Antioch was a

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significant cultural center in the East. In the 4th century A.D., the Academy of Antioch was one of the most important Greco-Roman educational institutions and passed on deep-rooted philosophies from Athens, Alexandria, and Constantinopolis.

Students came from the East and the West for an education at the Academy of Antioch. Therefore, the ethnic structure of Antioch consisted of many different nationalities.

At this study firstly the socio-political structure of Antioch between the 4th and 6th centuries A.D. was evaluated and at that time, Antioch was the capital city of Syrian province of the Byzantine State. Thereafter it was examined the process of change in the 7th century A.D., and after the Islam army overthrew Byzantine rule, with a focus on how the socio-political structure transformed.

Key Words: Antioch, the Syrian province, Medieval

Öz

Bizans Devleti, 11 Mayıs 330 tarihinde oluşmasıyla Konstantinopolis (İstanbul) ve Antakya, Anadolu coğrafyasında önemli medeniyet merkezi konumuna geldiler. Bizans Devleti hâkimiyetinde Antakya, bu devletin Suriye eyaletinin başkenti oldu. Anadolu ve Orta Doğu toprakları arasında köprü görevi gören Antakya, Bizans hâkimiyetinde Suriye eyaletinin başkenti olarak daha önceki medeniyet ve yönetim merkezi konumunu devam ettirdi. Bu dönemde Antakya'da bir meclis bulunmaktaydı. Antakya eyalet başkenti olduğundan şehirde bulunan eyalet valisi, imparatorun ve merkezi yönetimin gücünü temsil eden biri olarak hem eyaletin hem de şehrin yönetiminden sorumluydu. Aynı zamanda Antakya, dört patriklik merkezinden biri olduğundan Antakya Patriği Antakya'dan Anadolu'daki kiliseleri yönetmekteydi. Dördüncü yüzyıldan yedinci yüzyılın başlarına kadar Bizans hâkimiyetinde kalan Antakya'da merkezi yönetimle yerel yönetimin bir arada bulunduğu bir yönetim sistemi uygulandı.

Roma hâkimiyetinde Antakya Suriye eyaletinin başkenti olarak özerk yönetim yapısına sahipti. Bizans hâkimiyetinde de Antakya bu yönetim yapısını korudu. Bu siyasi yapının yanında, aynı zamanda Antakya, Doğu da önemli bir kültür merkezi idi. Bu dönemde Atina, İskenderiye ve İstanbul Akademilerinin yanında Antakya Akademisi de köklü bir tarihe sahip Grek-Roma eğitim sisteminin uygulandığı önemli bir eğitim merkezi konumundaydı. Antakya'da Doğu'dan ve Batı'dan birçok öğrenci gelerek Antakya Akademisinde eğitim görüyorlardı. Bu sebepten Antakya'nın etnik yapısı farklı milletlerden oluşmaktaydı.

Çalışmamızda Bizans Devleti'nin Suriye eyaletinin başkenti olan Antakya'nın dördüncü yüzyıldan altıncı yüzyıla kadarki sosyo-politik yapısı genel olarak değerlendirildi. Bu değerlendirme yapıldıktan sonra yedinci yüzyıl başlarında Antakya'nın İslâm hâkimiyetine nasıl girdiği yazıldı. Antakya'da

İslâm hâkimiyetinin başlamasıyla bu şehirde yönetim yapısının ve sosyal yapının değişip değişmediği araştırıldı. Makalenin son kısmında Bizans Devleti döneminde Antakya'nın sosyo-politik yapısının İslâm hâkimiyetine geçtikten sonra bu yapının nasıl değiştiği konusu üzerinde duruldu.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Antakya, Suriye Eyaleti, Ortaçağ

Introduction

Antioch is one of the most important cities in the Levant in terms of its history, dating back to 300 B.C., when it was founded by Seleucus I Nicator, one of the generals of Alexander the Great, as the capital city of the Seleucus Kingdom. It remained the capital city until the Roman period. In 64 B.C. under the occupation of the Roman General Pompey, Antioch became the capital of the new province of Syria, which Pompey organized and its status as a religious, commercial and cultural center, where Hellenistic and Roman civilizations met, was further enhanced. Between 35 and 45 A.D. during the reign of Caligula, the apostles Paul, Barnabas and Peter made a missionary journey to the city to encourage and strengthen Christianity. With their efforts, a Christian community was established in Antioch and its converts were the first to be called Christians and re-structure of Antioch into a Hellenistic-Roman city suggests that social factors were crucial factor establishing the city's political organization. Both communal and bureaucratically administered cities had common roots in the Greek-Roman urban heritage.

The Byzantine State was the direct continuation of the Emperium Romanium in political and social structure; the themes in Anatolia and Syria were reorganized accordingly during the State's establishment. As the administrative headquarters of Syria, Antioch became one of the greatest metropolises in the eastern part of the Roman Empire, by the mid-fourth century. As a military, commercial, and cultural center, the city had a palace, a cathedral, theatres, baths, and columned streets.

Essential to Antioch's growth and development is the history and situation of the Byzantine State in the Eastern Roman Empire in the beginning of the fourth century. The city changed according to the civilization which built it. As the main heir of the classic polis, before Constantinople was founded, Antioch was the region's religious center (pagan and Christian). (Zavagno, 2009: 3) When Diocletian and Maximianus Herculius rebuilt the structure of the Roman Empire at the end of the third century, Roman Emperor Diocletian (284-303 A.D.) realized that the Empire would hence forth require more than one emperor and that the administration would have to become much more active at the provincial level. Diocletian distributed the administrative task of governing the empire; he established a tetrach of two senior

emperors (Augusti) and two junior partners (Caesars). In 303 A.D. Diocletian and Maximianus Herculius relinquished their rule. (Liebeschuetz, 1990: 456-457)

In 313 A.D., Constantine the Great was governing the west as sole emperor. In this year, Maximinus, Galerius Maximianus's son, rushed in and proclaimed himself Augustus of the east after his father's death.

Maximinus appointed Theotecnus as the governor of Antioch. Theotecnus began to persecute Christians in Antioch as Maximinus had done in the east. Constantine the Great, driven by Licinius¹, campaigned against Maximinus and Licinius' army disembarked to Nicomedia where the two armies engaged in battle. Licinius' army was victorious, but Maximianus managed to escape to Tarsus, where he was subsequently found and killed. Licinius then he went to Antioch and captured Theotecnus, who was also put to death.

As a result of the accomplishments, Constantine promoted Licinius to Augustus in 316 A.D. Thereafter, Constantine and Licinius became the rulers of all territories. (Jones, 1964: 79-81). When Licinius commenced his rule in the east in 318 A.D., he ordered the persecution of all Christians. Constantine ordered him in rescripts to end the persecution, but Licinius was undeterred Constantine campaigned against Licinius in 324 A.D. and during the war of Chrypolis, Constantine defeated Licinius and had him executed. In this year, Constantine became the sole ruler of the Roman Empire and governed the east and the west until 337 A.D. (Theophones, 1997. 27).

On 11 May 330 A.D. Constantinople was founded by Constantine the Great as eastern headquarters of the Roman Empire. Consequently, it was oriented towards Hellenistic civilizations, characterized by Christianity and its political administration was formed using the Roman Empire model. A state formed by this synthesis in the eastern region of the Roman Empire was called the Byzantine State by the Renaissance historians, which was in fact a continuation of *Imperium Romanum*. (Jones, 1964: 83-84) In Constantinople, Constantine the Great began to reorganize the administration system and solve the ecclesiastical problems within the Byzantine State. He had already planned to call a council for putting an end to the ecclesiastical debates, most likely including the bishops of the east. Therefore, he called upon all the bishops to form the Council of Nicae and attended it himself on 20 May 325 A.D. The council identified, within the Roman Empire, the church's first four Patriarchates; Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem, which became the administrative centers of the Byzantine State. (Theophones, 1997: 41-43).

Provided a brief the history of Antioch above in order to highlight the socio-political structure of the city, which was based upon the Greek-Roman civilizations and a Christian heritage, before the beginning of Muslim domination. This brief summary will survey the socio-political structure of Antioch in the third and fourth centuries and the process of change and transformation thereafter. The ways in which

¹ Licinius was Constantine's brother-in-law; he had married Constantine's sister, Contantia.

the municipal oligarchy lost authority, institutions adapted themselves to the changing situation, and the process of urban transformation in the urban center and rural hinterland between the fourth and seventh centuries, constituted a significant part of this research.

The Socio-Political Structure of Antioch Between 330 and 610 A.D.

After the formation of the Byzantine State in the fourth century, Antioch maintained its importance as the capital of the Byzantine province of Syria. In addition to its importance as a capital and autonomous city. In the Byzantine time, Antioch was the *magister militum*, or commander of troops for the eastern diocese. (Haddad, 1949: 12-13) On his return, the Emperor Constantine came to Antioch and built the Great Church and hospice nearby. (Malalas, 1986:172).

Antioch was the headquarters of the Diocese of the Orient, one of the most important political divisions in the eastern half of the empire. The diocese in which the Syrian and Near Eastern provinces belonged was called *Oriens*. (Butcher, 2003: 86) The emperor was the head of the diocese and held all the power in the Byzantine State. The political structure of Antioch was constituted by local and central government structures (*curiae* and provincial governor) with a Christian ecclesiastical influence over the provincial administration (Zavagno, 2009: 4) The governors of the province represented the emperor in the state and the governor's powers extended through the province. Before Constantine left Antioch, for the first time he made a Christian, Plutarch, governor of Antioch. (Malalas, 1986: 173).

Another major function of the provincial governor, which he carried out on behalf of the emperor, was the administration of justice. Two activities took up a great deal of a governor's time: the supervision of tax-collecting, and his duties as *Comes Orientis* (Count of The East). *Comes Orientis* had control over the large and strategically important imperial diocese of the east and supervised the governors in that region. In 319 A.D. Byzantine Emperor Constantine appointed the consulship of Julius and Albinus for the first time as *Comes Orientis*, to fill the position of praetorium prefect in the East (Malalas, 1986: 173).

Antioch was the most prominent self-governing city in the Byzantine State. Antioch councilors were responsible for provincial activities and activities within the capital city. Councillors spent money and gave advice, but their government functions were mostly ceremonial. They advised the governors, but the governors made the decisions. The city had its own revenues, whether derived from local taxes or from the rents of landed estates. Collected taxes and labour were used largely for building operations, the upkeep of the streets and sewers, the supply of watchmen, and the

various public works which maintained efficiency of the city. They acted as territorial chiefs and collected all money in tribute, taxes or fees. (Jeffreys vd., 2008, 540)

In the fourth century the Byzantine Emperor was represented at Antioch by two officials. They were the Comes Orientis and the Consular of Syria. Moreover, the city under Byzantine State administration had civic self-government by the rule of small hereditary oligarchies, the curiales. Nevertheless, civic self-government was still an essential element in the state structure and so was the city council *curia*. There was the city council in Antioch. The representative organ of the town people was the *curia*; the city council and its members were drawn from "Free men" well-known personages in the city who sat in conclave in the Town Hall. (Liebeschuetz, 1972: 101-103).

The chief sources of wealth in Antioch were agriculture and commerce. All taxes fell, directly or indirectly, upon the rural population. Tax collectors collected this tax from all negotiators, that is, anyone making his livelihood by buying or selling or charging fees, merchants, shopkeepers, craftsmen, and even moneylenders and prostitutes. The yielding city-estate of Antioch was divided among large landowners who were the prominent city councilors. These councilors also made an effort to organize of the Olympic games and other entertainment for purpose of order in the city. (Haddad, 1949: 21) The changing elites' social function in the sixth century implied the disappearance of the classic urban curiae. (Zavagno, 2009: 4).

The population of Antioch throughout the Byzantine period consisted of different nationalities who spoke different languages. In the fourth century, three languages, Greek, Latin and Aramaic were spoken. There are a few indications of majority and minority inhabitants: 134 Greek and 86 Latin inscriptions were found in Antioch, during the Orontes excavations from 1937-1939, but none were Aramaic. Greek writing continued to be used in Antioch until the Arab conquest. Thus, the Greek inscriptions didn't prove that the villagers spoke Greek; their language was Syriac. The Greek language was used as a written language in Antioch and for official purposes. (Stillwell, 1941: 645; Haddad, 1949: 107-108).

The socio-political structure of the ancient Greek *polis* survived in the cities of the Byzantine State. In the fourth century, Antioch maintained its importance as the capital city of the Syrian province and the center of the Diocese of the orient. At this time it preserved both its economic well-being and intellectual heritage. Intelligence about municipal life and the history of Antioch has been primarily taken from the voluminous preserved writings of Libanius.²

² Libanius' life, see G. Downey 1961, 373 A.D. Libanius was born in 314 A.D. into a prominent senatorial family and grew up in his native city. After studying in Athens he began his highly successful teaching career in Constantinople. Thereafter he settled in Antioch in 354 A.D. Having already established his reputation as a teacher of rhetoric in the imperial capital, Libanius soon became a leading public figure in his own city and his school attracted students from all over the Greek East. His public activity continued for almost forty years, until 393 A.D. and the keen interest he took in everything that happened in Antioch and his passionate concern for the welfare of the city can be seen in his writing.

When the Byzantine State began to thrive in the Roman Empire, Greek culture dominated social aspects in Antioch. Libanius was very much aware that changes had taken place in public life; he clearly recognized the alterations in city life brought about by Roman rule and by the new religion of Christianity. In the middle of the fourth century, social life in Antioch was a combination of two different cultures: inhabitants of the city had a center of Hellenism and a stronghold of Christianity.

There were two different types of schools in Libanius' time: one was Lucian's Christian theology school, the other was Libanius' school, which applied the Greek-Roman education system. Libanius' most important contribution in this regard was to provide evidence concerning the strength of Christianity in Antioch. In Antioch, the senatorial class sent their sons to Libanius' school for a Greek-Roman education. There were among Libanius' students those, who would in time become leaders in professions such as scientists and the imperial administration. John Chrysostom was the most famous of those who went on to hold an important position in the Byzantine State. (Cribiore, 2007: 15).

The Transformation of the Socio-Political Structure of Antioch (610-641 A.D.)

The political events during the reign of Heraclius had a significant impact on the transformation of Antioch's social and political structure. This section begins with a short description of the political events during the reign of Heraclius, then progresses into the transformation of the social and political structure between 610 and 641 A.D. Upon Heraclius' arrival in Constantinople on 5 October 610 A.D., he was crowned emperor of the Byzantine State by Sergios, the patriarch of Constantinople. (Norwich, 1990: 285). Upon Heraclius' reign commenced, the Byzantine State was experiencing hard times. Before Heraclius' reign, a riot took place in Antioch, provoked by local authorities who wished to prevent a gathering of the leading Monophysites. In 609 A.D., the Byzantine army marched on Antioch to call off sectarian debates and ended the revolt in an inhuman fashion. As a result of the riot, some of Monophysites inhabitants in Syria were killed and others banished. Isaac, the patriarch of Antioch was removed. (Stratos, 1968: 76).

When Heraclius, known as the second founder of Byzantium came to power, the nation was experiencing financial and military collapse, which was also effecting Antioch. Because of this collapse, the Sassanid army under the command of general Shahrbaraz defeated the Byzantine army decisively in 616 A.D. Antioch was one of many cities the Sassanid army conquered in Anatolia. They travelled further into North Cilicia and captured the Tarsus castle, a significant Byzantine center. Subsequently, the Sassanid army made inroads into Anatolia and Damascus, moving south and capturing Damascus as well. Following the occupation of cities in Anatolia

and Damascus, Byzantine was beaten once more after three week's of siege warfare, Jerusalem's walls yielded and the Sassanid victory resulted in the annexation of Jerusalem. Two events occurred during this defeat which were viewed as unforgivable crimes in the Byzantine State: The Church of the Holy Sepulchre which was built by Constantine the Great was damaged by fire and the Sasanid army captured the True Cross, upon which Jesus was crucified, and removed it to Ctesiphon.³ (Nikephoros, 1990: 45)

The Byzantine State struggled with Sassanids in Eastern Anatolia, which separated the two states until the domination of Islam commenced in Anatolia. Anatolia was divided between two superpowers, the Sasanian (Iranian) and the Byzantine (Graeco-Roma) empires, before the Islam domination. When domination commenced in Antioch, the socio-political structure of the city was derived from part of the eastern Greek-Latin heritage. In the fifth and sixth centuries, the old municipal government and rural administration had begun to decay. The most important cities of the Byzantine provinces became centers for military and civil organization and Byzantium began to transform free city-states into units of imperial administration. (Ostrogorsky, 1959: 65)

In the early seventh century, Heraclius reconstructed the imperial image and imperial authority. Moreover, Heraclius rebuilt the financial and military structure of the Byzantine in the first ten years of his sovereignty. (Olster, 2006: 52). Thus, the Byzantine State regained its strength and launched a counter offensive against the rule of the Sassanids. The Sassanid army suffered a crushing defeat against the Byzantine army under the command of Heraclius in 622 A.D. (Downey, 1961: 575). In 628 A.D. the Byzantine army won many victories against the Sassanids including recapturing Antioch. (Chronique de Michel le Syrien, 1944: 10). Heraclius who was to be the king, and the Sassanid general Shahrbaraz met in June 629 A.D. in Arabissos, Cappadocia to negotiate the peace treaty .

Under the terms of a peace treaty, Shahrbaraz made a commitment to withdraw his forces from Damascus, Palestine, Egypt, and Mesopotamia. After the Sassanid army left the region, the Byzantine State gained dominance over the region and Antioch remained under Byzantine rule for eight or nine years before it was conquered by the Islam army. The continuous conflict between the Byzantine State and the Sassanids weakened both empires, which consequently paved the way for the Islam army. (Kaegi, 2000: 56). The most significant indicator of this decline is that the mint was closed in 628 A.D. and never opened again. (Downey, 1961: 575-576).

At the time of Abu Bakr, in 13 A.H./ 634 A.D., the Islam army began to spread out from the Arabian Peninsula. Thus, the Byzantine army was dispatched by Heraclius to the Syria province to stop the advancing of the Islam army in the Byzantine territory. Upon Abu Bakr heard this event, he reordered his generals to

³ While Nikephoros writes Sasanian general's name as Saitos, Mesudi writes as Shahrbaraz

come across with the Byzantine army in Jordan. With this command, the Muslim generals moved from their regions where they would struggle to capture, Abu Ubaidah, *Damascus*, Yezid b. Sufyan, *Apamea*, Shurahbil b. Hasan, *Jordan*, Al- Kamet b. Mucezzez, *Palestine*, Halid b. Velid, *Iraq*. All of these generals relinquished abruptly their regions to fight against the Byzantine army at Yarmuk. (Al-Tabari, 2007: Vol. 3, 82-83).

The Islam army defeated the Byzantine army in the battle of Yarmouk in 634 A.D.⁴, a defeat that resulted in the conquest of Syria. As a result of this conquest, the Islam army entered Anatolia and captured many Byzantine cities, and under the command of Abu Ubaidah, the Islam army came to Antioch in 636 A.D. (İbnu'l-Esir, 1987: Vol. 2, 455). Thus, in Anatolia border was created between the Byzantine and the Muslim State which extended from Tarsus in Cilicia and north-eastward as far as Qaliqala (Erzurum). (Bonner, 1994: 17). The Byzantine-Islam border in Anatolia was divided into two sub-districts named after, and considered appendages of, the larger provinces South of them: the Thughur of Syria and North of them: The Thughur of Jazira. The thughur of Syria started from the west through the Levant and extended the eastward to Tigris River. While the north of this thughur consisted from the cities, which were Marash, Haruniyye, Anavarza, Masisa Ezene and Tarsus, the south was coming to the region of Palestine. (Ibn Hawkal, 1996: 153)

After the battle of Yarmouk, Heraclius learnt the outcome of this war in Antioch. He pulled away from Antioch and entered into the land of Byzantines. (Al-Tabari, 2007: Vol. 3, 208-209). Heraclius tried to stop the advance of the Islam army and developed some defence strategies. Heraclius created a buffer zone in central Anatolia to stop the Islam army from moving deeper into Anatolia. This zone between the Muslim controlled areas and Byzantine areas was called el-Zavahi (outer parts, outer land). Heraclius gave 30 lbs (13,5 kilograms) of gold to the Byzantine people who lived on the buffer zone to remain in the zone. He then able to prevent the Islam army from entering west Anatolia and settling in that area. (Nikephoros, 1990: 69)

⁴ The date of Yarmouk battle, see about İbn Kesîr, 1994, volume VII, 12. he wrote that Seyf b. Omar mentioned from the year of Yarmouk battle as 13 AH/ 634 A.D. before the conquest of Damascus. Abu Cafer also accepted this view. Halife b. Hayat related from ibn Kelbi like that Yarmouk battle was made in Rajab, 15 AH. Ibn Asakir said that this was the true rumor. For this reason there have been two views about the date of Yarmouk battle. As the first view, the date of Yarmouk battle is 13 A.H. and as the second view is 15 A.H. Al-Tabari wrote 13 A.H as the year of the Yarmouk battle at *Tarikh al-Tabari*, Vol 3: (2007), 82-83. and also İbnu'l-Esir wrote 13 A.H. as the year of the Yarmouk battle at *el-Kâmil fî't -Târih*, Volume II: (1987), 410. Also see, Theophanes, 473, he wrote that Antioch was captured by Islam army in 636 A.D. According to generally accepted opinion, the Yarmouk battle was made in August 636 A.D. But the year of Yarmouk battle mustn't have been 636 A.D. Because of Islam army came to Antioch after Yarmouk battle in four months which was captured all cities of Syria region. Islam army couldn't come to capturing all cities of Syrian region to Antioch in four months after the Yarmouk battle. So the first view's date must be true. The date of Yarmouk battle is 13 AH/ 634 A.D.

These efforts partially stopped the Islam army's advance into Anatolia. Had Heraclius died three or four years earlier, the Islam army might have quickly advanced into Anatolia and reached the outskirts of Constantinopolis (Istanbul). Heraclius' reign came to an end with his death on 11 February 641 A.D. (Theophanes, 1997: 461).

One of the cities on the Anatolian border was Antioch. The people of Antioch preferred to make a contract with Abu Ubaidah when the Islam army immediately conquered all the cities in the Damascus region and asked for quarter rather than defending their land. Abu Ubaidah offered them the options of either becoming a Muslim or paying a jizyah tax or leaving the city. The ones who agreed to pay jizyah remained in the city under Abu Ubaidah's protection while the ones who did not leave. (İbnu'l-Esir, 1987: Vol. 2, 454)

After the treaty was made with the people of Antioch, the Islam army under the command of Ayaz bin Ghanam and Habib ibn-Maslamah entered through the gates into Persia and the Sea of Antioch. (Yakut, 319). Upon Antioch's capture a period followed that lasted for nine centuries, Antioch was called "the queen of the East" in the Roman Empire and served as an important military base and culture and trade center. Antioch welcomed this new era and long period where Roman, Byzantine, and Christianity melded with the Islamic civilization resulting in the city's current Muslim characteristics. (Downey, 1961: 576).

Anatolia was conquered in the reign of Umar the Great, who divided the conquered lands into provinces and some autonomous territories. Umar established an advanced administration for the conquered lands, including Mesopotomia and Syria. These administrative regions were organized as political entities and placed under a regular territorial bureaucracy and Arab administration varied from province to province. The principle of Umar the Great's settlement was that the conquered populations were to be disturbed as little as possible. Muslim Arabs did not want to change the social and administrative structure of the cities immediately after the conquests. In Antioch, Aramic, Latin, and Greek scholars and local administrators stayed in their positions and worked as they had before. (Belâzurî, 2002: 211)⁵.

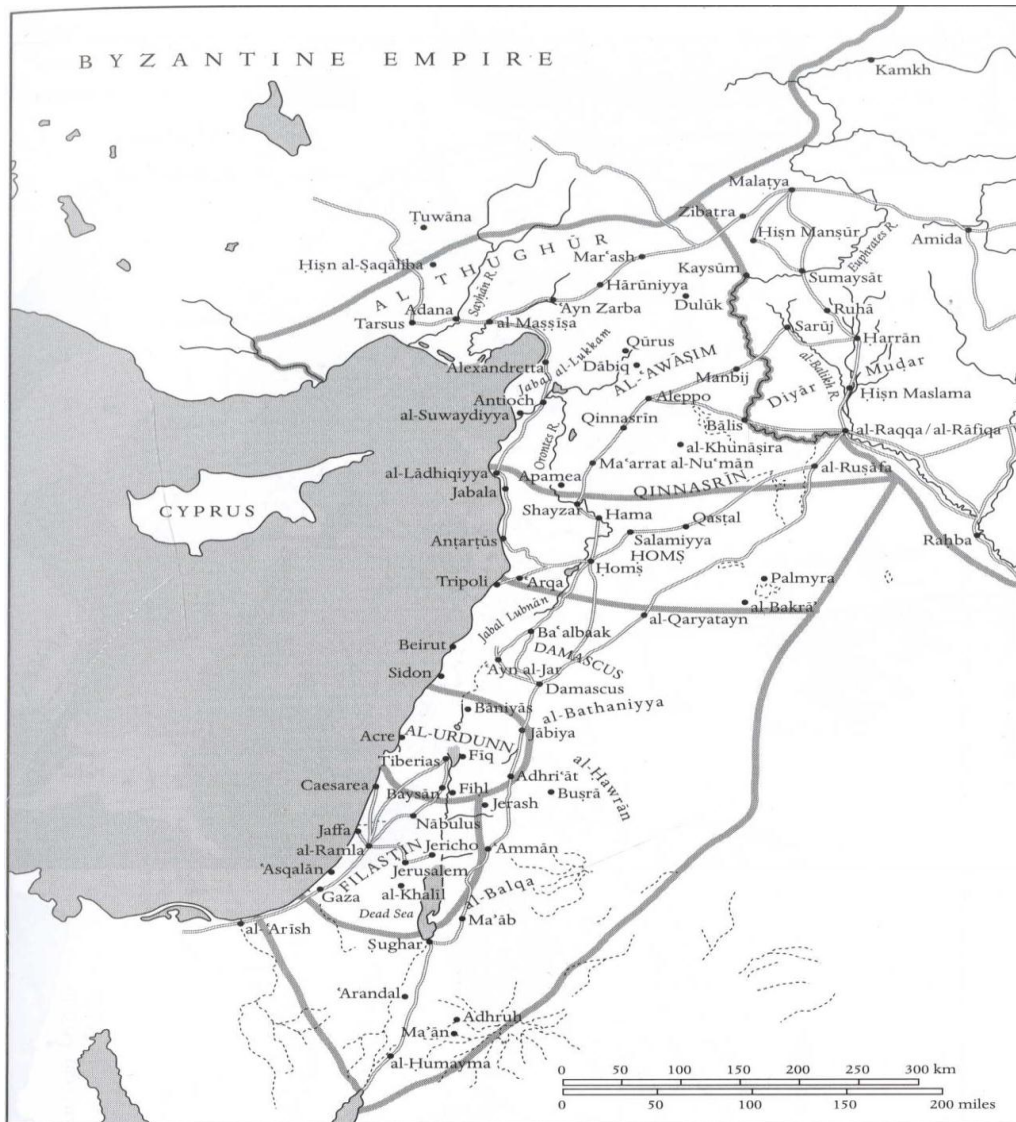
Michel le Syrien wrote in his book⁶ that the Arabs rescued the anti-Chalcedonians from the oppression of the Byzantines. This has been stated as the reason why the Byzantine State collapsed and Islam domination began in northern Syria in the seventh century. (Ginkel, 2006: 171-172). The city structure of Antioch evolved from Byzantine to Islamic domination. At that time, Antioch was an important regional center in the northern Syria, where the fiscal administrative structure started Islamic domination. Abu Ubaidah al-jarrah would send a governor to every region he conquered to establish a Muslim community.

⁵ Belâzurî 2002, 211. This event was narrated through Muhammed b. Sehm el-Antaki.

⁶ See about the book name p.172. Chronique de Michel le Syrien, Patriarche Jacobite d'Antioche (1166-1199)

Abu Ubaidah appointed Habib ibn-Maslamah governor of Antioch in 637 A.D. Habib ibn-Maslamah was also the Commander-in-Chief of the army quartered in the region of Syria. (Al-Baladhuri, 1968: 227). Umar the Great sent governors to oversee the collection of tributes and taxes, supervise the distribution of tax revenues as salaries to the troops, and lead the Arabs in war. (Lapidus, 2002: 44).

Following the conquest of northern Syria in 636 A.D., the Islam army was spread throughout the country, which was divided into districts under the names of the garrison cities (Tarsus in the Thughur region) and (Antioch in al-Awasim region). Al-Awasim was the name of a region, not a city name. Antioch was the capital city of the Syria region. (Ibn Hawkal, 1996: 165) Antioch became part of military district and one of the most important cities in the region of Syria. For the Islam army, Antioch was a frontier fort and a base for further expansion. The city was initially included in the Jund, or the military district (al-Awasim), where the attacks against the Byzantine army in the region of Syria started. (Ibn al-Adim , 1989: Vol. 1: 86)



The Region of Syria in the Seventh Century

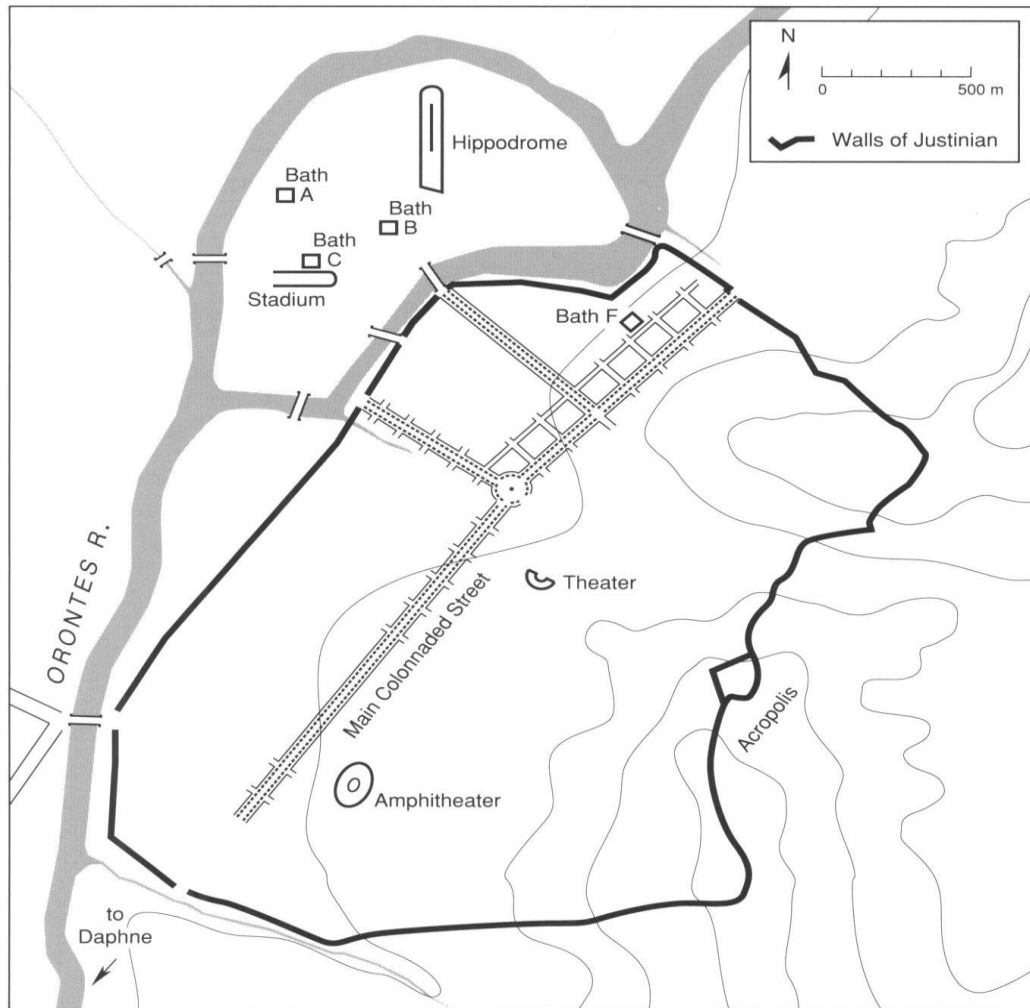
Note: This map is adapted from *The New Cambridge History of Islam Volume 1*, edited Chase F. Robinson, Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. xxxv

From 613 to 628 A.D. during the Persian conquest of Antioch, many Persians inhabited the city. Persian control of the city did not last long; the Byzantine army ended Persian domination in Antioch and regained its lost provinces in Syria. At that time of Persian defeat preceding the Arab invasion, the Christian population was the majority in Antioch. (Zavagno, 2009: 30) Semitic eastern Syriac speaking Christians who lived in northern Syria remained settled as farmers and traders, while many ethnic Greeks, mainly consisting of the urban ruling elite, left the cities and the old political elite had all but vanished by the seventh century. (Eger, 2008: 46). Early in the seventh century, Antioch had an amphitheater, a theater, a hippodrome, several large baths, agoras and a colonnaded street.

The archaeological evidence suggests that life in the city continued long beyond the Arab conquest. However, the great public building of antiquity no longer functioned. As a governor of Antioch, Habib ibn-Maslamah was responsible for taxation, distributing tax revenues as salary to city officials, border defences, internal security, religion custodianship and provincial public works. (Kennedy, 1985: 33).

As governor of Antioch, Habib ibn-Maslamah contributed to public construction projects in Antioch and a new public building appeared: the mosque. Instead of public meeting places, the Islamic city of Antioch now offered the mosque and the bazaar (Foss, 1997: 192). The political functions which would have taken place in the agora or the hippodrome in Byzantine times were now held in the mosque. The mosque replaced the Kusyan Church¹¹ as the place of worship for the political and social elite of the city. It also replaced the agora as the main outdoor meeting-place in the city. Habib ibn-Maslamah was required to assemble the people in the mosque to inform them about state and city functions (Ibn al-Adim, 1989: 86).

¹¹ St. Simon followed the path of the apostles and began building the first church in Antioch. The church was named the Kusyan Church of Antioch. The Kusyan Church was a complex building which was one hundred feet in length by eighty feet in width. This church was placed on columns and there were also porches for the political elite, women, and linguists on the east and west side of the church. *“It also had clocks over its gate which worked throughout the day and night hours. These clocks were among the wonders of the world. The mosque had been built in the seventh century and was near the Kusyan Church”* (Ibn al-Adim, 1989: 86).



The Picture of Antioch in Seventh Century

Note: This map is adapted from "Syria in Transition A.D. 550-750", pp.192.

The archaeological evidence suggests that the great colonnaded street in Antioch was built before Islamic times. The narrow roads had been constructed vertically to open to the single colonnaded street. In the seventh century, Antioch had managed to preserve the appearance of a city with a center, and retain its magnificence (Foss, 1997: 192) However, in the early Islamic period, when Antioch was included in the Jund or military district of northern Syria, the appearance of the city was reduced from its former glory. The narrow roads opened to the agora, which was replaced by the mosque area with shops (Kennedy, 1985: 12)

Medieval Antioch still contained a few of the monumental buildings ascribed to it in late antiquity, but its population was certainly nowhere close to its late antique peak: the new settlements in the region were comprised of a population of approximately 100,00 to 125,000. (Decker, 2007: 236)

The nature of the changes in settlement and land use following the Islam conquest of Antioch affected the socio-political structure of the city. The demographic character, the culture, and the urban settlement structure changed in the region from late antiquity to the early middle ages. (Zavagno, 2009: 4) In the early Islamic period, the socio-political structure of Antioch was related to the agricultural economy. As a great metropolis in late antiquity, the Antioch region included the, which was used Amuq Plain as arable land. This huge territory stretched 100 km into the interior and a similar distance north and south. The Amuq Plain provided for the expenses of the city. Moreover, al-Awasim area of Antioch was self-sufficient and used agricultural revenue to support both military and religious institutions. One of the main reasons the Islamic reign commenced in Antioch, was because, the city of al-Awasim had a garrison which compensated military expenses out of land taxes. This structure had a significant effect on city life and the settlement of new inhabitants. In the early seventh century, the Taurus and anti-Taurus mountains divided Byzantine from the Muslim world. Al-Awasim (Antioch) of northern Syria was held as an administrative province and military-protected zone for settlement. At that time Byzantine rule was replaced by Islamic rule. Northern Syria was exceptional in this spread of settlement. Tarsus, one of the the garrison city in the region of the Thughur and Antioch, one of the the garrison city in al-Awasim region had been largely recruited by Arab tribes. (Decker, 2007: 252).

Tarsus in the Thughur region and Antioch in al-Awasim region continued to dominate the social and political history of Northern Syria well into Islamic times. In 629 A.D. the patriarch of the Jacobites, Athanasios, came to the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius to discuss religion. Thereafter, Heraclius promised Athanasios that if he accepted the council of Chalcedon, he would appoint him patriarch of Antioch. Thus, he pretended to accept the council. When the Islam army captured Antioch in 636 A.D., Athanasios was the patriarch. (Theophanes, 1997: 460) After Athanasios his disciple, the holy John (II), became the patriarch of Antioch in 643 A.D. This indicates that Antioch remained the headquarters of the Diocese of the Orient under Islam rule. (The Chronicle of Zuqnin, 1999: 144)

The settlement policy and ethnic mixing of Christians and various Muslims (Arabs tribes) profoundly affected Antioch's socio-political structure. At the time of the Islamic conquest, the Islam army was comprised of the male population of the Arab-tribes. (Northedge, 1994: 232) Ibn Adim wrote that he read in Hasan b. Ahmad al-Muhallebi al-Azizi's book, *al-Kitab al-Masalik w'al-Mamalik*, that "Much of the population of Antioch consisted of non-Arabs. Nevertheless, the Arab tribe which descended from Salih b. Ali al-Hashimi and a tribe of Yemen were living in Antioch." (Ibn al-Adim, 1989: 88).

Islam sources indicate that during Omar the Great's reign, urban environments were selected for military settlement. This account was preserved by al-Baladhuri and Ibn-Adim, who provided information about settlement traditions after the Islam conquest in Northern Syria. (Piotrovsky, 1994: 220) The Jarajima (Mardaites) were Christians native to the area who moved to the Amanus Mountains after Islam occupation. Habib ibn-Maslamaha and the Jarajima made an agreement that if the Jarajima helped the army of Islam, they would be exempt from paying taxes. The Jarajima came to the city and settled around the Amuq Plain. Antioch became the area of settlement for Muslim emigrants.⁷ (Belâzurî, 2002: 228)

The necessary arrangements between the conquerors and the conquered were resolved during the second Caliph Umar b. al-Khattab's reign (634-644). The second Caliph introduced the tax system and collected from the Muslims what was considered as sadaqa and zakat, but what was collected from dhimmis was considered as Kharaj and jizya. The jizya (poll tax) was one dinar⁸ and one cerib in his reign. (Abu Yusuf, 1969: 141).

“When Abu Ubaidah al-Jarrah reached Syria, the Christians in that territory wrote to him, “You Muslims are more favourable to us than the Byzantine, even if they are of our faith.” Abu Ubaidah declared that Christians and Jews were free to apply their religious codes to social matters. They were exempted from being recruited or from participating in the efforts or expenses of the military activities in the case of war. They were not required to pay the financial duties imposed on Muslims, such as sadaqa and zakat. But, they were required to pay the two forms of taxation implied in the jizya and kharaj as were Christians and Jews in Antioch.”⁹

Conclusion

This study investigated the socio-political structure of Antioch between 330 and 636 A.D. Upon the Byzantine State was formed in the fourth century, it was based on Hellenistic-Latin civilizations, characterized by christianity in the East. Under the rule of the Byzantine State, Antioch was the capital city of the Syrian province, which extended from Tarsus to Palestine. At this study, previously, in the fifth and sixth centuries Antioch' socio-political structure was revealed by using of the early Byzantine sources and secondary sources. Moreover, at that time Antioch remained its status as a religious, military, commercial and civilization center thereafter. In the beginning of the seventh century its socio-political structure was affected by Sassanid and Muslim cultures.

After the Islam army captured Antioch in 636 A.D., the first Muslim State established its socio-political structure in the capital city of the Syrian province. The life and structure of the city was transformed by coming of Islam.

⁷ Belâzurî 2002, 211. This event was narrated through Muhammed b. Sehm el Antâkî .

⁸ Al-Baladhuri 1968, 171. “From Greek-Latin denarius; the unit of gold currency in the caliphate, with a nominal value of about 10s. \$ 2,40. In Umar's time the dinar was the equivalent of 10 dirhams, later 12.”

⁹ This part took from Y. Istanbuli 2001, 61-62. Yasin Istanbuli wrote in his book p.61, Sir Thomas Arnold in his book, *The Call for Islam*, records that. For this reason, this part was narrated as above.

After Athanasios his disciple, the holy John (II) became the patriarch of Antioch in 643 A.D. This indicates that Antioch remained the headquarters of the Diocese of the Orient under Islam rule. The process of urban transformation in Antioch between the fourth and the seventh centuries, was the focus of this research.

Byzantine and Islamic sources of the early Medieval period provide the knowledge of the socio-political structure in Antioch at the time of Muslim conquest in the seventh century. These sources, impart an understanding about settlement, land use, and the cultural life of Christians under Islamic rule. The acquired the knowledge supported a thorough, examination of the previous socio-political structure of Antioch and how it evolved under Islamic rule.

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