Temple Conversion and Cultural, Ritual and Topographic Memory in Alexandria, Cyrene and Carthage.

By

Ruth Elizabeth Driver

A thesis submitted to the
University of Birmingham
for the degree of
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY(B)

Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity
College of Arts and Law
University of Birmingham
April 2013

'This place was already ancient when my father brought me here for the first time, many years ago. Perhaps as old as the city itself. Nobody knows for certain how long it has existed, or who created it.'

Carlos Ruiz Zafón.

Abstract

This thesis examines temple conversion in the cities of Alexandria, Cyrene and Carthage during the 4th and 5th centuries A.D. with particular reference to how the processes of temple conversion effect the cultural, ritual and topographical memory of the cities inhabitants. How an individual interacts with their city is based on layers of memory laid down in a mind-map, a community is built when there are elements of shared memory focussed around certain common landmarks. Dramatic changes to the landscape, such as temple conversion, can alter how a population views the city and their place within it.

Chapters two, three and four examine the archaeological and literary evidence for each of the cities respectively. The fifth chapter discusses the shared themes of topographical changes to the cityscape including the use and re-use of ritual route-ways, iconoclasm and temple conversion through the literature. Conclusions are drawn on the narrative of temple conversion and memory in the three case study cities.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr Gareth Sears, whose support, advice and encouragement has kept me going, academically, over a very trying few years. Also, I would like to Dr Mary Harlow for her interesting and useful comments.

Secondly, I would like to say a massive thank you to my family for myriad support I have received but particularly to my son, Milo, whose age is measured by this MPhil and my father, Trevor, who sadly passed away before I could submit this work.

Table of Contents

Abbreviations

Libanius' oration in defence of the temples entitled 'Προς Θεοδοσιον Τον Βασιλεα Υπερ Των Ιερων' (To the Emperor Theodosius, for the Temples) is more commonly known in its latin form 'Pro Templis'. As it was originally in Greek it shall appear here abbreviated to 'for the Temples'.

Chapter One

Introduction

'To many people it will appear that I am courting much danger by embarking upon an address to you about the temples and the need for them not to be abused as they are now' [1]

When Libanius made his impassioned oration in defence of the temples, circa AD 381-390, many vestiges of the old religions remained, in some places non-Christian rites still thrived. In the years that followed, Christianity replaced temples both spiritually and municipally. One of the ways in which this happened was the conversion of temples into churches. The study of temple conversion is not new but it has typically been examined in isolation; one temple, for example the Serapeum, or the temples of one area, Egypt. This thesis takes a comparative approach by studying temple conversion in a wider setting, three cities in three provinces. By identifying key themes within the combined narratives of conversion we can gain a greater understanding of the phenomena.

All three cities had been important in the Roman world. Whilst, Alexandria and Carthage remained influential centres of religion, trade and culture into late antiquity, Cyrene's standing as an important city had begun to diminish. They were also divided between the Eastern and Western empire, by diocese, by language and culture. This study will investigate the cultural, topographical and ritual memory of

1 Libanius, *Or*: 30.2

the inhabitants of these cities in the fourth and fifth centuries AD. As it is inter-disciplinary in nature, archaeological elements such as the topographical changes to the cityscapes, the use and re-use of ritual route-ways and the treatment of cult statuary and spolia will all be examined in order to establish the effects of temple conversion on these cities whilst a wide range of literary evidence will be studied in order to ascertain the ways in which these events were interpreted by contemporary writers. This thesis will show that the processes of temple conversion are very complex and rather than simplifying the process into an inflexible framework, a more meaningful and enlightening approach is to widen the model in order to reveal all the intricacies of the process.

This thesis argues that the location of structures within the topography of a city can give us an indication of the intrinsic, spiritual and cultural value that a building holds for a population. They become landmarks in the traditional sense, as locations from which to navigate, but also as images by which people understand and define their city. A change to this topography can dramatically change those definitions, particularly if the changes are made without consent either from the individual or a group. It has been shown that the way in which we experience and understand a city is by constructing cognitive maps that use places of personal significance to create a path from place to place, much like a dot to dot drawing.[2] For instance, a procession is the outward expression of one of these maps made from the places significant to a community rather than an individual. The journey is littered with significant buildings that re-enforce the community's social and spiritual identity. The removal or refurbishment of these architectural points of reference, both materially and literary, change the significance of the procession and the identity the

2 Bayliss 1999: 59. (Citing Lynch 1960 and 1981)

community is perpetuating. A procession is the external manifestation of a communities identity. They function to bring the community together for a shared aim; a celebration, festival or funeral. Due to the nature of these types of events they happen on a regular basis. This allows these architectural, cultural and religious points of reference to become established. Processions are arranged in a way in which underlines the structure of the community. This order of emperor, cleric, political elite, towns person is constantly re-asserting civic expectations onto the participant. In the case of late antique urban processions there are significant changes from the exclusion of of the traditional elite class of priest and of previously significant temple sites to the inclusion of Christian clerics and new religious landmarks, churches. The reference points on traditional route-ways will be considered in order to ascertain whether they were changed, the manner in which they were changed and the effect the changes would have had on the urban community.

There has been a great deal of work on the late antique city and temple conversion in recent years. Christie and Loseby's 1996 edited volume '*Towns in Transition*' was one of the first collections of papers to see the late antique urban centre as something more complex than merely an entity in decline, some were seen as thriving.[3] In many cases though the emphasis on certain areas within the town had shifted, often away from the classical characteristics that came to define urban centres such as monumental tomb building on the periphery or the slow loss of civil benefactors to public building works in the centre.[4]

3 Brogiolo and Ward-Perkins (eds) 1999; Brogiolo, Gauthier and Christie (eds) 2000.
4 Leone 2007: 282.

There have been a number of urban studies of late Roman North Africa. Leone's 2007 work studied a number of cities, chief among them Carthage. In addition to finding no definitive moment when these cities began to decline, Leone found that the only thing that did decline was the classical function of the cities, fora being replaced by baths for instance.[5] Sears' 2007 work '*Late Roman African Urbanism*', that built on the work of Lepelley,[6] found 'considerable continuity' in the urban areas he studied, again a wide range of cities including Carthage.[7] Taking a slightly different approach by only concentrating on one city, Haas' study on Alexandria in Late Antiquity focused on social conflict and the topography of the city. Haas demonstrated that the topography of the city was altered by a number of Christian leaders in order to Christianize the landscape.[8] No similar, late antique studies have been conducted on Cyrene or Carthage. The 2010, Merrills and Miles' study, on the Vandals which also examined Carthage is interesting in the omission, throughout the text, of the pagan community during the Vandal period. It is unlikely that this grouping disappeared that swiftly but is perhaps an indication that with the arrival of the Arian Vandals and the death of Augustine, Christian writers had new concerns to write about. Leone's most recent volume, *The End of the Pagan City*, focusses on identifying continuity and decline, through the archaeology, in North African urban religious practice.[9]

Turning to temple conversion, the first major works conducted on temple conversion were those of F.W. Deichmann in 1939 and 1954 in which he compiled a list of temples that had been converted into churches.[10] He postulated that temple

5 Ibid.
6 Lepelley 1979 and 1981.
7 Sears 2007: 50.
8 Haas 1997: 207.
9 Leone 2013.
10 Deichmann 1984: 105-36.

conversion was a response to the legislation contained in the Theodosian Code that was enforced throughout the Empire. In the decades after Deichmann's work there were a spate of regional studies which found that rather than temple conversion in response to this sweeping legislation, the fate of a region, and therefore its temples, lay in the influence of each regions social, political and economic condition.[11] It is the studies of Duval, North African temples, and Teichner, Africa and Egypt, that bear most relevance to this study. The idea of regional socio-economic and political factors was evolved by Helen Saradi-Mendelovici in her 1990 study that took a broader look at temple conversion. Rather than a malevolent Christian plot, she argues that temple conversion was influenced by a combination of factors that certainly included the actions of individual Churchmen but also the wider socio-economic needs of the community in which the temple stood,[12] a theory we also see in Haas' study on Alexandria and in Leone's 2013 work.[13] In addition to Saradi-Mendelovici's work there were a number of other studies conducted in the 1990s on conversion and temples' role in the changing townscape of the ancient city.[14] Béatrice Caseau's excellent 1999 paper in '*Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Post Classical* World', introduces the chronology and main themes associated with the 'sacred landscape' of late antiquity.[15] Caseau tackled the central issue of the sacralization and desacralization of sacred areas that led to temple conversion and religious persecution. She suggested that the fluidity of new cults and religions in the Late Antique period caused a process of constant re-dedication of sacred space that enraged various parts of society, from time to time, into acts of religious violence such as temple destruction/conversion.[16]

11 Duval 1973; Ward-Perkins 1984; Teichner 1996; Caillot 1997.
12 Saradi-Mendelovici 1990: 49.
13 Leone 2013: 1.
14 MacCormack 1990; Wharton 1995; Milojevi̇c 1996.
15 Caseau 1999: 21.
16 Caseau 1999: 22.

Hahn, Emmel and Gotter's '*From Temple to Church*' was the product of a 2002 colloquium that took a multi-faceted approach to the phenomenon of temple conversion.[17] A wealth of contributors such as Bagnall, Frankfurter and Saradi explore area of temple conversion such as methodology, hagiography and religious conflict. Hahn's chapter on the destruction of the Serapeum is particularly relevant to this study. His aim is three fold, to establish a more accurate date for the destruction of the Serapeum by drawing a line under the assumptions that the legislation in book 16 of the Codex Theodosianus was the cause of the upheaval in Alexandria and finally, to unravel the written accounts to establish that Theophilus was the main instigator and beneficiary of the troubles.

More recently, Lavan and Mulyran's 2011 edited volume *The Archaeology of Late Antique Paganism* has broached the subject of temple conversion from new perspectives, leaving behind ideas such as 'coercion' as the primary, de-facto cause of temple conversion and investigating other factors that caused a gradual decline of paganism, rather than the swift conversions as previously thought .[18] In particular, Lavan's study of the use of statues in public space is helpful to this study.[19]

There are clear themes running through the literature. There has been a move away from a view of grand decline of urban areas to a recognition that the emphasis of each centre changed depending on individual socio-economic and political factors. In many cases these factors actually promoted continuity in urban centres. So too the conversion of temples, both into churches but also for other uses, was also more

17 Hahn et al 2008: 4.
18 Lavan 2011: lvi.
19 Lavan 2011: 339-477.

influenced by economics and politics than firebrand religious extremism.

In 2004, Roger Bayliss published a study on temple conversion in provincial Cilicia. This work included a new typology for temple conversion which he applied to his studies in Cilicia. Within his new typology, Bayliss formulated a new vocabulary for temple conversion based on the categorisation of 'direct' and 'indirect' conversions.[20] For Bayliss, direct conversions are those temples or in-situ remains that are converted into churches, he refers to these as 'temple-churches'. The 'temple-church' (Figure 1) is a broad category as it includes those temples that were converted wholesale, those in which partial standing remains were included in the church and those that used the *cella* platform. The *cella*, or actual temple chamber, was often very small, the interior of temples were only large enough for the cult figure and rites conducted by the priests. It was not of a suitable size to house many people. Christian practice used ritual space differently, choosing to worship inside the structure of a church. Previous non-Christian worship was largely held outside in the *temenos*, sacred land that was often enclosed containing within it an altar or temple. Therefore, the platform was not used as the foundation for a church very often; rather it was incorporated into a larger structure that could accommodate worshippers. Bayliss' 'in-direct' category includes two sub-categories, the 'temenos-church' and the 'temple-spolia-church'.[21] The 'temenos-church' (Figure 2) was a new build church that is constructed within the enclosure, the *temenos*, of a temple. The 'temple-spolia-church' (Figure 2) is a church that uses, within its construction, temple *spolia*. This type of church does not need to have been constructed on the site of a temple nor does the *spolia* used need to come from one particular temple

20 Bayliss 2004: 7.
21 Bayliss 2004: 7.

or indeed from temples specifically.

When viewing temple conversion through the lens of cultural memory, Bayliss' typology, whilst a helpful starting point, is too limiting. The typology misses opportunities to study conversions of temples in which there were no physical changes to the structure. There are cases, such as the Temple of Caelestis in Carthage, where symbolic, non-structural actions were made in the view of the contemporary audience. In terms of cultural memory, congregating in a temple temenos and worshipping is converting the temple. Nor does Bayliss' typology take into account the process of temple destruction. Temples that were destroyed wholesale, such as the Serapeum, whilst not as common as other forms of temple conversion, are valuable to the study of temples in this period as they represent the extreme end of the spectrum of conversion and can therefore help us to analyse the full panoply of Christian attitudes to temples. The use of Christianised *spolia* within new churches is also an effective way in which to explore the array of responses to the transformation and resettlement of religious space. Therefore this thesis will categorise temple conversions into three different types; structural conversions, non-structural conversions and temple destructions. The structural conversion category will utilise Bayliss' typology with a particular interest in the use of temple *spolia*.

This thesis primarily studies the conversion of temples into churches. It is important to note that temples were converted for other uses than just religious.[22] In Cyrene, for example, many of the temples on the acropolis were converted to residential use. The many new church buildings indicated in our literary sources, un-associated

22 Leone 2013: 64.

with temple conversions may be an indication that Christian and non-Christian practices functioned alongside each other for a large part of the fourth century. Additionally, the phenomena studied in this project do not necessarily reflect what was happening within the provincial hinterland. The fate of the temples within the rural areas of these provinces is, in many cases, very different to that of their urban counterparts.

In addition to studying the processes of temple conversion on the case study cities, the effect of these conversions on the cultural memory of the cities and their populations will also be examined. The term 'cultural memory' was coined by the Egyptologist Jan Assmann who has written a number of key texts on the subject, and who has built on the work of Maurice Halbwachs and Aby Warburg.[23] Cultural memory as defined by Assmann, is memory that centres on a fixed point in time, a specific event. These events are momentous, often tragic and are kept in the collective memory by literature, ritual and monumental architecture.[24] When compared with oral history, which Assmann estimates lasts only for around 100 years, cultural memory, he argues, can be sustained for much longer periods and so have a greater impact on the community. Whilst oral history is different to cultural memory as defined by Assmann and so may not initially seem relevant to cultural memory, we must acknowledge that oral histories will have provided the authors of many of the literary sources used in this thesis with a mine of material to inform and use in their own work. Cultural memory also allows a community a way in which to define itself opposed to other cultural groupings as their common memories give them a sense of 'unity and peculiarity'.[25]

23 Assman and Czaplika 1995: 125.
24 Ibid: 129.
25 Assman and Czaplika 1995: 130.

Assmann's cultural memory works hand in hand with Pierre Nora's concept of '*Lieux de Mémoire*', a site of memory.[26] Nora developed *'Lieux de Mémoire*' as a way to give French memory its own history through the study of particular cultural symbols such as La Marseillaise, the Panthéon and Bastille Day. These symbols become '*Lieux de Mémoire*'. They are formed to replace '*Milieux de Mémoire*', physical environments of memory, at the very moment that 'an immense and intimate fund of memory disappears'.[27] It is for this reason that this thesis is primarily concerned with Nora's '*Lieux de Mémoire*' rather than Assmann's theories of cultural memory.

We will see during the course of this study that ancient Church historians cited laws as the cause of violence against the temples and used them as a justification for what followed. This legislation attempted to deal with the re-use of temples. There are two pieces of legislation, in the Theodosian Code, that particularly stand out. *C.Th*. VXI.10.18, protected the urban temple from destruction by requiring that the temple be re-used by the municipality. This was primarily designed to protect the aesthetic qualities of the urban centres and did not extend to rural temples and sanctuaries. The urban temples were therefore prime candidates for temple *spolia* in order to protect the façade of urban monuments. This law did not necessarily mean that all temples were actually kept intact. Given the central locations of many urban churches it is clear that some temples were destroyed, others were made into apartment blocks and many were left, un-maintained, to decay. As we will see, many of these phenomena appear in the case studies.

26 Nora 1989: 7.
27 Nora 1989: 12.

The second piece of relevant legislation is *C.Th*. XV.1.36, dated A.D. 397, allowed the re-use of temple *spolia* in municipal building projects. We can perhaps see the results of this law on the ground in North Africa. For instance there is evidence in Cuicul of the re-use of stele in roads during the fourth century.[28] This legislation is an indication of a trend in late antiquity that saw the re-use of huge amounts of classical *spolia* in new construction stretching from within urban centres, to rural areas, to the very edge of the North African *limes* with the construction of djeddars.[29] That said, to what extent these attempts in the legislation to stop the damage to the temples were successful is a matter of debate. Libanius' '...*for the temples*' has been interpreted as a plea for the ruination of the temples as objects of aesthetic beauty and civic pride, to be halted rather than a plea for the return of the 'non-Christian' way of life.[30] The timing of his oration can certainly be taken as an indication that there was an issue and is, therefore, useful to this thesis. As his oration was written around the same time as the legislation appears it could indicate that, either, enough temples were being looted of their structural fabric to warrant legislation or that the legislation already in place was ineffectual.

The quantity of source material, both literary and archaeological, varies significantly between the case study cities. For example, there is a wealth of evidence connected to the destruction and conversion of the Serapeum in Alexandria. In contrast there is very little connected to the process at the Temple of Caelestis in Carthage, so much so, that even the temple's location has not been confirmed. In many cases the primary literary material suffers from the 'tabloid' tendency to focus

28 LeGlay 1953: 36.
29 Brett and Frentress 1997. Merrills (eds) 2004.
30 Teichner 1996: 53.

on dramatic and controversial events to the detriment of the more mundane but historically useful.[31] Additionally, although there are a few exceptions such as Libanius, Damascius and Eunapius, there is a dearth of literature written from a non-Christian perspective. Much of this material is recycled over the following centuries and can be twisted along the way to suit the agendas of writers, many Christian, in the centuries that followed the events described. As an example, the death of Hypatia was written about by two successive Christian writers,[32] and each time the story was re-told it became more scandalous and less trustworthy. We therefore only ever get snippets of useful narrative that need to be interpreted as part of the propagandist material before they can add context to the sites.

In recent years the attitude to post-classical Africa has changed significantly with much more vigorous study of the late antique period taking place; this is particularly the case for the urban centres. The UNESCO Save Carthage campaign, begun in 1972, encouraged the study of all time periods.[33] Work at Cyrene, however, is still more focussed on the classical period. Despite recent developments much of the earlier academic and archaeological work focused mostly, if not exclusively, on the classical period. This interest in the classical phases of archaeology led to the destruction of the post-classical layers as archaeologists deemed them irrelevant to their own work and largely unimportant to understanding the archaeology as a whole. There is one exception to this trend. 'Christian archaeology' examines on the late antique period but often focus on the churches or church buildings decontextualized from the rest of the city. This tendency is problematic as it is much

31 Bayliss 2004: 5.
32 Socrates Scholasticus (writing no later than AD 450) and John of Nikiu (late 7th, early 8th century AD)
33 Ennabli 1987: 291.

harder to gauge the narrative of a sacred site if the focus is wholly on the Christian elements.

The late antique remains of Alexandria and Carthage have benefited from more sophisticated study in recent years. The fact that the cities have remained continuously inhabited in the case of Alexandria and have suffered from twentieth century construction in the case of Carthage has meant that many areas of archaeological interest are unavailable for study due to continued habitation and the destruction of remains that continued habitation causes. The difference in the knowledge we have of these cities' archaeological remains make the comparison of data and the drawing of meaningful conclusions a difficult task.[34] The disparity of comparable data continues into each of the individual sites as many areas of archaeological excavation such as pottery and mosaic studies have not been undertaken which can also affect the dating of structures.[35]

There has been a great deal of debate on the best term to designate the 'pagan' grouping.[36] The term 'pagan' is highly emotive and holds a particular set of connotations and assumptions. Fowden is a proponent of the term 'polytheist' as 'pagan' struggles to disentangle itself with Christian stereotypes.[37] Cameron argues that this term implies a Christian monotheist / non-Christian polytheist divide that is not fully representative of the diversity of the 'pagan' grouping.[38] Indeed, it is also worth noting that the 'Christian' grouping was also a vast and varied entity. In truth, there is no label that would adequately put across the wealth of political and cultic

34 Leone 2007: 22.
35 Sears 2007: 30.
36 Fowden 1991: 119-131. Cameron 2010: 14-32. Leone 2013: 6.
37 Fowden 1991: 119.
38 Cameron 2010: 25.

differences within the 'pagan' grouping. Leone stresses her use of the term in it's broadest sense as 'characterising the ritual and actions of the religious life of the Roman empire'.[39] Where possible, the term 'non-Christian' will be used as it is a better label, if only slightly. We must keep in mind that the term 'non-Christian' as applied here does not include the Jewish faith. The terms of 'pagan', 'non-Christian' and 'Christian' are used when they are in opposition to each other. They are considered a united group against the perceived foe and for the time in which that foe remains the terminology remains. Once the common threat diminishes the designations will divide into myriad factions and traditions.

This thesis will examine each of the case study cities in turn in chapters two, three and four focussing on the archaeological and literary evidence for Alexandria, Cyrene and Carthage respectively. These chapters will give context to the relationships between the cities' religious space and inhabitants. Chapter five will be dedicated to discussing the evidence with special consideration for the themes outlined above. Chapter six will come to conclusions about the effect of temple conversion on these cities and their inhabitants.

39 Leone 2013: 6.

Chapter Two

Alexandria

The city of Alexandria (Figure 3) was founded in 331 BC by Alexander the Great following his defeat of the Persians in Egypt. The population came from throughout the Greek world and included a large Jewish community. During the Roman period Alexandria became the second city of the empire providing a gateway to the 'bread basket' imperial province of Egypt. The palace district, the Bruchion, housed Alexander's tomb as well as the great library of Alexandria and the Museum; parts of this district, the library and Museum included, were destroyed in the AD 270s. According to our sources during the 4th century the city became a maelstrom of unrest between the many different religious factions that culminated in the infamous destruction of the Serapeum and the murder of the philosopher Hypatia. These religious disturbances in late antiquity were not however, an entirely new phenomenon as conflicts between the Greek and Jewish communities had led to violence and destruction within the city, and, indeed, Cyrene, during the reign of Trajan. This chapter will examine the evidence for temple conversion in Alexandria, further discussion of the evidence will follow in chapter five.

The first attested incident of temple conversion in Alexandria was undertaken by Bishop Alexander (AD 312-28).[40] In c. AD 324 he had the Temple of Kronos/Thoth, situated in the commercial sector of the city between the Caesarion and the Jewish quarter, converted into the Church of St. Michael.[41] Both Kronos/Thoth and St.

40 Eutychius *Annales*: 433-35.
41 Haas 1997: 144 and 210.

Michael were associated with the judgement of the dead, helping the ideological conversion of the temple into Christianity by deliberately associating one with the other. One of the notable elements of the church's furniture was the torso of an earlier statue that had been inscribed with a large cross.[42] The use of this cult statue is perhaps significant and might in some way underline the syncretistic nature of this structural conversion by including earlier elements of the religious furniture in the new church. In the same way as the dedications are matched so too are the icons. By creating this new cross out of the old statue they explicitly link the continuity associated with the changing sacred space. There is destruction and iconoclasm in the conversion of the Temple of Kronos/Thoth but the desire to obliterate the image and meaning of the site, that we will see in the treatment of the Serapeum for example (see below), is missing. Instead, there is a clear desire to retain an aspect of the temple's previous meaning if only to demonstrate, in the inclusion of the carved cross, Christianity's triumph over the cult.[43] The church remained in Alexandria and survived attempts by the Jewish population to destroy it in 415 AD.[44]

Although, the Temple of Knonos/Thoth was the first, and therefore by far the most significant act of temple conversion, perhaps the most eye-catching was the conversion of the Serapeum (Figure 4). The Serapeum held a great deal of significance to the non-Christian community and was an important feature in the landscape of Alexandria. The temple was part of a very large complex and as the temple of Alexandria's chief deity Serapis was a focus for civic, as well as ritual life. As Serapis was directly associated with the continued flooding of the Nile, the

42 Haas 1997: 210.
43 Kristensen 2010: 272.
44 John of Nikiu *Eccl Hist*: 7.13.

temple housed the nilometer which kept accurate records of the floods.[45] These records allowed for taxation to be adjusted annually on the basis of the amount of flooding each year, a poor flood would lead to reduced taxation.[46] As such, there would have been at least two large festivals each year centred on the site, the Serapia and the festival of the Nile.[47] Both of these festivals would have included large scale municipal processions that began and ended at the Serapeum. The worship of Serapis and the need for a nilometer was considered so important for the continued prosperity of the whole of Egypt, and therefore its grain exports to the wider world, that it features in Libanius' '...*for the Temples*'.[48] Additionally, the Serapeum played a significant role in the intellectual life of Alexandria as it also housed an important library which was allied with the great library of Alexandria. In terms of the city's topography the temple was situated on a high plateau of land in the south-west district of Rhakotis. The area was important to the ritual life of the city as it not only included the Serapeum but also the hippodrome and, nearby, an important necropolis.[49] Its location on the highest ground in the city, coupled with two annual processions allowed the temple to become a significant actual and psychological landmark for the population. The route of these processions would have included key areas of the city, particularly the Via Canopica; the major arterial road through the city[50] and would have been made up of every part of Alexandrian society including effergies of the imperial family.[51]

The Serapeum's importance in terms of Alexandria's historical, civic, ritual and

45 Mckenzie 2007: 353.
46 Peacock 2000: 427.
47 Frankfurter 1998: 56.
48 Libanius *Or 30*: 85.
49 Hahn 2008: 337.
50 Haas 1997: 82.
51 Ibid: 83.

physical landscape made it an obvious target for Christian attacks in the fractious religious atmosphere in the city at the end of the fourth century. We are well served, despite the obvious dangers in interpreting them, which will be dealt with below, when reconstructing the destruction by a number of literary texts ranging from contemporary accounts, to later works. Rufinus of Aquileia's (c. AD 340-410) Ecclesiastical History gives an account of the destruction of the Serapeum that begins with the discovery of Mithraic mysteries by the bishop and proceeds to chart the riots that were sparked off by a mocking procession of the artefacts through the city by the Christians.[52] The whole procession was designed as a parody of the type of sacred procession that we see in Alexandria, in Carthage with to the Temple of Caelestis (discussed in chapter four) and throughout the Roman world. The public display of these items would have been seen as a sacrilegious and humiliating insult and certainly provoked a violent response on the part of the non-Christian community. Rufinus' account alleges that after the rioting a number of Christians were taken hostage in the Serapeum and forced to offer sacrifices on the altars. Those that refused were killed. In an effort to stop the violence an imperial letter was read out that named all those killed as martyrs and called for the idols to be removed in order to stop 'the roots of discord'.[53] This did not stop the Christians but emboldened them to attack the Serapeum and destroy the god's statue. Rufinus writes that there was a rumour that if the statue of Serapis was touched by a 'human hand … the earth would split open on the spot and crumble into the abyss while the sky would crash down at once′. The statue of Serapis was chopped into many pieces by a soldier and the remains either destroyed or displayed to show the ruination of the god.[54] Rufinus also refers to the death of Serapis: 'who had never

52 Rufinus *Eccl Hist*: 11.22.
53 Ibid.
54 Rufinus, *Eccl Hist*: 11.23.

been alive'.[55]

Beyond the narrative of violence there are some very interesting aspects to Rufinus' account that touch on the nature of temple conversion and the pyschological elements bound up in it. Rufinus and the Christian community had altered the sacred nature of the site. One of the churches built on the site, the Church of St. John the Baptist, was a martyrium. Rufinus' highlights the story of the Christian martyrs created by the violence in 391 and stresses that the church was a martyr church.[56] We can see that Rufinus is changing the significance of the site as the text links the geographical site of the martyrs' deaths, the temple's destruction and the building of the new church; forging a new Christian identity for the space, removing all the points of reference to its long non-Christian past. The topography is being deliberately changed in Rufinus' account to reflect one aspect of a large and wide-ranging event. In both the physical and literary city the events are presented to unite the community with memories of Christian martyrs and the defeat of Serapis.

In addition to Rufinus' narrative and conclusion, much can be learned from the literary devices he employs. He reports that curses were place on the nilometer as well as on the statue of Serapis designed to prevent their destruction or removal. These curses are a very useful device for the ecclesiastical authors and an excellent propaganda tool for the Church leaders as the destruction of the statue of Serapis demonstrated their inefficacy and the impotence or non-existence of the gods. It then followed that Serapis was not a god nor was he 'alive'. Additionally, the

55 Ibid: 11.22.
56 Rufinus, *Eccl Hist*: 11.27.

continuance of the Nile flood undermined his power further; its continuation can then be attributed directly to the Christian God. Moreover, Rufinus claims that in one night all the busts of Serapis in the city turned into crosses. This is reminiscent of the biblical story of the plagues of Egypt where all of the Israelites' houses were branded with a red cross and their first-born sons remained unaffected by the plagues, protected by God.[57] This may well be another literary device more akin to hagiography, designed to draw parallels between the plagues of Egypt and the 'plague' of non-Christian sacrilege, those with crosses being the chosen ones of God. A clear line is being drawn between Christian and non-Christian, the saved and the damned. The aspect of timing in this story is also significant. The first-born sons of Egypt were all killed on one terrible night, God's wrath being swift and decisive. The replacement of the busts with crosses also happened in one night. Rufinus wishes us to see the defeat of Serapis as decisive and swift as the biblical story. There is no room in his account for a protracted struggle of ideologies. If the defeat had taken longer, the non-Christian community would have appeared more legitimate in their beliefs. Rufinus cannot allow any doubt to be cast on the nature of their conversion as he would want to avoid any possibility that it would reflect on his readers. As a didactic tool, in a polemical text, it is imperative that the conversion is decisive, the followers of Serapis were wrong and were saved. It is here where we need to approach the text with caution. There is no room in Rufinus' account for complex responses to the events. In order for his work to be successful the conversion must be swift and complete and therefore much more problematic for modern scholars unpicking the source.

Sozomen (c. AD 400-450) also records the event in great detail but it is important to

57 Exodus: 12.12.

note here that one of Sozomen's principal sources was Rufinus' account. He also asserts that the destruction of the Serapeum was the culmination of events that began with the discovery and display of the Mithraic artefacts, included riots and led to the killing of Christians in the Serapeum.[58] In Sozomen's account when the emperor was made aware of the deaths not only did he pronounce them martyrs but he ordered the destruction of the Serapeum and any other temple that 'had caused this sedition'.[59] Sozomen makes much of a story of a man called Olympius, who at first stands with the rioters telling them not to renounce their religion as the gods had not been killed when their effigies were destroyed but had flown to heaven;[60] however, Olympius quickly converts to Christianity.

There are a number of things to note in Sozomen's account that appear again and again in the general literary narrative of temple destruction. First, the notion that the non-Christian gods can be annihilated by the destruction of their effigies reflects a widely held view amongst Christians.[61] In fact, statuary from the Serapeum has been found either de-faced or destroyed.[62] Second, the use of curses to persuade the characters of the true owners of the temple is a literary tool found in several accounts of temple destruction and will be discussed again in the case of the Temple of Caelestis in Carthage. In addition to the heavenly hallelujahs, Sozomen also describes stones with hieroglyphs in the form of crosses found when the temple was being demolished that prompted many non-Christians to convert.[63] Archaeological excavations on the site have found a great deal of pre-Ptolemaic Egyptian artefacts so it is entirely possible that the hieroglyphic symbol 'ankh',

58 Sozomen, Eccl His, 7.15.3-10
59 Ibid.
60 Ibid: 7.15.
61 Caseau 1999: 34: Saradi-Mendolovici: 47-62
62 Kristensen 2009: 161.
63 Sozomen, *Eccl Hist*: 7.15.

meaning eternal life, would have been found on the site and interpreted as a cross.[64]

There is some debate about the traditional dating of the destruction of the Serapeum to AD 391. Johannes Hahn casts doubt on this date as he feels the chronology given in the accounts of Rufinus and Sozomen, from which the date is taken, cannot be correct.[65] Both accounts state that an imperial edict was sent expressly allowing the destruction of the temples but as Hahn points out, the edict of 391 (discussed in the Introduction) does not specify this. In fact, the earliest edict specifically sanctioning the destruction of temples dates to AD 399 and could be specific to the Serapeum not all temples.[66] Therefore, Hahn suggests that AD 391 can only be the 'terminus post quem', the point after which, the temple was destroyed.[67] If Hahn is correct then there was no legal basis upon which the Serapeum was destroyed casting doubts on the accounts of Rufinus and Sozomen. Clearly, aspects of their accounts such as decapitated babies and disembowelled virgins should be treated with caution.[68] These more outlandish claims may have been entirely rhetorical justifications for illegal events. Hahn points to the clear financial gains, by way of appropriated wealth of the temples, made by Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria (AD 385-412), in the aftermath of the temple closures. Theophilus became wealthy enough to dramatically control, through bribery, policy in Constantinople.[69] Hahn postulates, correctly, that the insistence on the legal basis for the move, preserved in our sources, against the temples was to mask the intentions of Theophilus and bring the events firmly into the realm of Church and

64 Caseau 1999: 34: Saradi-Mendolovici
65 Hahn 2008, 340.
66 *C. Th*. XVI.10.11.
67 Hahn 2008, 344. Evidence discussed in more detail in Hahn 2006.
68 Rufinus, *Eccl Hist*: 11.23.
69 Hahn 2008: 355.

State.[70] The clearly defined black and white rhetoric is designed to leave no doubt in the minds of the readership of the correctness of Theophilus' actions.

Fortunately for the archaeologist, the site of the Serapeum had been neglected over the centuries and was largely covered in debris rather than being built over,[71] allowing for the survival of a wealth of archaeological remains. Over the years there have been a number of excavations conducted on the site of the Serapeum, the survey of Mahmoud-Bey (1866), the Botti excavation (1894-96) and the Sieglin expedition (1898-1902). More recently, Rowe conducted an extensive excavation during the Second World War that examined areas not previously studied; importantly for this study, he located the temple temenos.[72] Judith McKenzie worked on the Serapeum and in 2004 co-published a report on all the excavations that aimed to draw all the disparate information from multiple sources together to create an overall assessment the site.[73]

The excavations revealed that the site had been in use as a ritual centre from the Ptolemaic period and that there were a number of phases of construction that culminated with the Roman temple that was destroyed at the end of the fourth century. The fist phase of construction on the site can be dated to the reign of Ptolemy III Euergetes (246-222 BC) and comprised the Temple of Serapis and the surrounding colonnaded court.[74] The temple was rebuilt in the Roman period following a fire. Dating evidence found indicates that the rebuilding was completed

70 Hahn 2008: 350.
71 Rowe and Rees 1955: 504.
72 McKenzie et al 2004: 74.
73 McKenzie et al 2004.
74 McKenzie et al 2004: 82.

around AD 211.[75] During these works the colonnaded court was enlarged,[76] as was the main staircase up to the acropolis, blocking the entrance to the Ptolemaic nilometer. The Roman nilometer had been removed by Constantine[77] and given to the Church but it was present at the Serapeum's destruction as it had been returned there by Julian.[78] The location of the nilometer after the destruction of the temple is not known.

In the case of the Alexandrian nilometer we are discussing the removal of the sacred cubit rather than the structural equipment for measuring the Nile. This is significant as every year the sacred cubit was taken on a procession that began and ended at the Serapeum. It is clear that the ownership of the cubit was a significant symbol for ownership of lucrative Nile taxation rights. By removing the cubit from the Serapeum and restructuring the annual procession around new landmarks, using a new cast of clerics instead of the familiar temple priests, the nilometer and its associated taxes were re-branded Christian and by re-branding the rite they also re-branded the ritual landscape.

As was indicated above, the main colossal statuary of Serapis was destroyed during the destruction and two heads of Serapis have been found, one of marble and one of black basalt, although it is thought that the main cult statue would have been made from wood and metal.[79] Whilst no remains of the main cult figure have been found it may be safe to assume that the precious metals were reused and the wood burnt to eradicate the idol. Certainly, the lack of remains concurs with the accounts

75 Mckenzie 2007: 195.
76 Ibid: 91.
77 Eusebius *VC*: 4.25.
78 Sozomen, *Eccl Hist*: 5.3.3.
79 Rowe and Rees 1955: 496.

of Rufinus and Sozomen, discussed above, which say that the figure was destroyed.[80] It is worth noting here however that only a small percentage of ancient statues remain intact today precisely because the materials in which they were made could be easily destroyed due either to human intervention or the ravages of time.

In addition to the statues of Serapis, statues of the twelve demagogues would also seem to have been present; examples of comparable statues are found in other cult temples, in other cities and are often thought to represent the founders of the cities. These statues were evidently present in the nineteenth century when Mimault saw them displayed on the plateau.[81] Indeed there are similar statues displayed in the collection of the Graeco-Roman Museum in Alexandria (Figure 6).[82] These statues are recognisable by the scrolls they are holding, said to be copies of their own orations. Mimault noted that the statues had been damaged but, nevertheless, it can be argued that if these twelve statues (or at least, some of them) survived the destruction of the Serapeum it may be an indication of the differentiation between the Serapeum as a spiritual and ritual focus on the one hand and a municipal one on the other. These statues represented the city and its civic memory and did not necessarily have any religious significance. There are examples of statues with political connotations being displayed in public settings throughout the late Roman world.[83] There may well have been descendants of the men commemorated who defined their civic identity from their links to the past who would not wish to see their heritage destroyed. Furthermore, that these statues were then re-displayed in the

80 Rufinus, *Eccl Hist*: 11.23.
81 Rowe and Rees 1955: 501-2.
82 www.grm.gov.eg/details_e.asp?which2=3907 last accessed 17.00pm 20/03/2009.
83 Lavan 2011: 468.

same place indicates a continued idea of the Serapeum as a cultural focal point. Even if these statues did not originally belong in the Serapeum the fact that they have been displayed on the site would indicate that there was a strong sense of cultural and geographical memory connected to both the statues and the site as the reunification places the Serapeum and the events surrounding it's destruction firmly back in the forefront of the inhabitants minds.

Following the destruction Theophilus built two churches on the site of the Serapeum, although neither of the churches was built within the temple *temenos*. The initial martyrium that later became the Church of St. John the Baptist, and which held the relics of St. John, was in use very soon after the temple's destruction. Rowe found significant archaeological evidence for the church itself including a floor, mosaics, baptismal fonts in the style of pools with steps leading down to the water, cisterns and a glass weight.[84] The archaeological evidence that Rowe brought to light chimes with John of Nikiu's description of the church as 'massive...its dimensions lofty' and 'very much decorated'.[85] Rowe found a large wall, 7.4m thick, parallel to the west wall of the colonnaded enclosure which he postulated was evidence of a road. In contrast, McKenzie and her co-authors are almost certainly correct in interpreting this thick wall as a supporting wall for the vaulting of the church.[86] This supporting wall and the inclusion of the two baptismal fonts would attest to a church capable of holding, and baptising, a significant number of people.

The church was built on top of the plateau next to the temple enclosure, but not within it, and would have been a significant church due to its ownership of important

84 Rowe and Rees 1955: 503-4.
85 John of Nikiu, *Chronicle*: 78.46.
86 McKenzie et al 2004: 108.

relics and its position on the highest point in Alexandria. Whereas previously the highest visible sight in Alexandria had been the temple of Serapis, it was now the brand new Church of St. John. Even with the survival of the colonnaded *temenos*, the appearance of the acropolis would have altered dramatically. Evidence depicting the Church of St. John the Baptist in a mosaic found in Jerash, dated to AD 531, shows both the church's significance and that of Alexandria to the wider Christian community as its image and story travelled across the Christian world.[87] The Serapeum was famous throughout the empire and an image showing a church in its place would have made a psychological impact the non-Christian community. The temple enclosure was apparently left largely intact and would have formed the entrance courtyard to the new church. Using the colonnaded enclosure gave the church greater grandeur but the significance of the geography would not be lost on those who participated in processions to the church. The remains of the temple served to remind everyone of its destruction and the eradication of the demons that it held within.

As we have seen above, the removal of the Serapeum from processions was a deliberate in order to remove the Serapeum as an important factor in civic life. Equally the inclusion of the Serapeum in other processions was designed to do the same whilst also demonstrating Christianity's triumph over the god Serapis. Processing through the razed and barren remains of the Serapeum to a new and important church would continue to underline this triumphalist message whilst simultaneously re-establishing cognitive links associating civic life with Christianity. The repetitive action of processing the community, from imperial family, clerics, the political elite, to the everyday population, through the Via Canopica to newly

87 McKenzie 2007: 251-2.

established landmarks on a regular basis and less frequent processions to the churches on the site of the Serapeum creates a series of collective memories by creating new 'lieux de memoire'.

The second church associated with the Serapeum was the Arcadia Church. This was situated at the bottom of the grand staircase that led up to the Serapeum. This Church was named after the emperor Theodosius' son and successor, Arcadius, and is the only church mentioned in Sozomen's account of the destruction of the Serapeum.[88]

The location of the Arcadia Church is as significant as the location of the Church of St. John as it was apparently built in the place where the nilometer had been housed. The nilometer was not kept in the church but the placement may have acted as another '*lieux de mémoire*'. It had usurped the position that the nilometer held in the memory of the inhabitants. Each time they passed the Arcadia Church they would have been reminded of the loss of the nilometer and the continued flooding of the Nile despite Serapis' fall.

From McKenzie's 2004 excavation report it is clear that the two churches that were built on the site were not conversions as defined in Chapter One but were newly built and had no material contact with the Serapeum. The available archaeological evidence does not suggest that the temple was converted into the churches as such and was instead replaced. Therefore, Christopher Haas' statement that '...the temple of Serapis had been forcibly converted into a series of churches' is not

88 Sozomen, *Eccl Hist*: 7.15.

entirely correct.[89] However, he is certainly correct that there was a strong measure of force during the process of destruction and re-construction. The presence of these two churches on the site of the destroyed Serapeum would have served as a constant reminder of the manner in which the temple and non-Christian beliefs had been so successfully attacked. Those visiting the structure are likely to have witnessed the debris of the temple and even when or if that was rectified, the route to the church would have been directly through the temple *temenos*.

The destruction of the Serapeum and the building of two churches on the temple site changed the physical and literary topography of Alexandria. By changing the cityscape and the inhabitants' topographical points of reference, and therefore changing their experience of the city, a new social memory was planted that particularly emphasised the annihilation of their old way of life and the replacement of a new system of spiritual and municipal governance. The site of the Serapeum, unlike most of ancient Alexandria has remained largely un-touched over the following millennia. The abandoned site, on the cityscape (Figure 5), has kept the wound alive, a constant reminder of a city turning on itself, so much so that the issue of Christians and non-Christians living together appears in modern poetry such as Constantine Cafavy's poem Priest at the Serapeum.[90]

The other major temple conversion to be considered in Alexandria involved the Caesarion. Situated in the centre of the city this temple of the Imperial Cult was one of the main temples in Alexandria. In around AD 351 the Christian cathedral, which had been the Theonas Church, built close to the west gate on the periphery of the

89 Haas 1997: 341.
90 Cafavy 1926.

city, was relocated to the site of the Caesarion, with the new church being named the Great Church of St. Michael. However, after its construction, the Great Church was still commonly called the Caesarion and is mentioned as the location of the death of the philosopher Hypatia in John of Nikiu's text.[91] Whilst this change might be thought to reflect the broader trend throughout urban centres in late antiquity that saw Christian churches moving into central positions in cities,[92] there are questions to answer regarding this change. The alterations to the Caesarion have recently come under some scholarly debate as to what type of church it was; a conversion or a simple new build.

Judith McKenzie argues that the Great Church was a new build in the enclosure of the temple, in the same manner in which the the Church of St. John the Baptist was constructed on the site of the Serapeum's *temenos*.[93] In contrast, Haas believes that the Caesarion was converted into the Great Church. Both interpretations, for this structural conversion, are based on the same literary evidence: Athanasius' '*Apologia ad Constantium*' and his '*Historia Arianorum*'. The '*Apologia ad Constantium*' was written by Athanasius in defence of his use of the Great Church to conduct Easter services before it had been consecrated. Haas cites sections 14-15 and McKenzie 14-18. This small difference in the sections used may be critical to understanding their arguments. In section 14 Athanasius mentions that the church was not completed on a number of occasions indicating that there might still be some form of construction in progress. However, in section 16 Athanasius says of the Caesarion: '...which all men have long called the Lord's house, even since its foundations were laid', which appears to be a clear indication that the building of the

91 John of Nikiu, *Chronicle*: 84. 87-103.
92 Haas 1997: 211.
93 McKenzie 2007: 259.

Great Church began with the laying of foundations and not with the conversion of a pre-existing temple. This use of different evidence continues with Athanasius' '*Historia Arianorum*'; Haas cites section 55 to support his argument and McKenzie 74. Whilst, section 55 does not give any indication of the manner in which the building was constructed as it is an account of the rioting that destroyed much of the church's possessions, section 74 does contribute to our understanding of the structure. Here, Athanasius refers to the Great Church as 'in' the Caesarion which has led McKenzie to postulate that the church was built in the temple enclosure. It is interesting that Haas does not use it as evidence of his argument that it was a converted temple; certainly it makes his argument more problematic. To a certain extent this literary evidence could be read both ways however, as the Greek used for 'foundation' is that of a building foundation rather than the beginnings of a church, it seems most likely that it was a new church built in the *temenos* of the temple[94].

The conversion of the Temple of Dionysius by Theophilus is crucial to the story of Christian coercive power in Alexandria. Sozomen reports that Theophilus requested that the temple be handed over to the bishopric and once he had the temple he proceeded to empty the Mithraic temple that lay in the *adyta* beneath the main temple.[95] Theophilus also removed the statuary from the Temple of Dionysius and *'*converted the edifice into a church'.[96] Finding that the Temple of Dionysius actually held two temples coupled with the secret nature of the Mithraic cult presented Theophilus with an excellent opportunity to create an emphatic statement of

94 The definition in the New Testament Greek Lexicon of 'Themelios': Laid down as a foundation. The foundation (of a building).
95 Sozomen, *Eccl Hist*: 7.15.2.
96 Ibid.

Christian victory over the non-Christian tradition. As we have already seen, the removal and display of the Mithraic artefacts provoked a direct response from the non-Christian population. A direct conversion would have sent a very clear message to them that Christianity had the power to destroy the gods and inhabit their places of worship, whilst assuring the Christian population that these temples had been sufficiently purified.

Again we see the treatment of statuary as an important factor in the conversion of temples. The representations of the gods are removed as a visual display of the Christian purge of the demons. We can only guess at what happened to the statues as Sozomen reports only that they were removed. Given the treatment meted out to the statues of Serapis at the Serapeum it is possible that they were destroyed and/or disfigured in order to kill the god residing within the statue, they may have just been dumped with other un-used *spolia* or displayed in pieces with crosses carved into them as we have seen in other cases such as the Kronos/Thoth statue.[97]

The second recorded church 'direct' conversion is the creation of the Church of Cosmas and Damian or the Church of Honorius. This martyr church was dedicated to the reigning emperor Theodosius' second son Honorius. It was situated on the periphery of the walled city next to the Theonas church close to the west gate.[98] This dedication is interesting as we have already seen Arcadius honoured with the foundation of a church in Alexandria. It is possible that the dedication of churches to the emperor's sons was intended to curry favour with the imperial family at a time when tension in the city and extreme responses to the non-Christian population in

97 Haas 1997: 210.
98 McKenzie 2007: 246-7.

Alexandria could have been potentially disadvantageous to the political aspirations of the ruling elite.

Whilst we see prime locations such as the Serapeum and the Caesarion taken by the Christian hierarchy to assert their power over the cityscape there is, at the same time, a move to utilise some of the other temples that may not have prominent locations but are prominent for other reasons. As we have seen the Mithraeum and the Temple of Dionysus held a great importance to the non-Christian population and its conversion and associated 'outing' of sacred, and most importantly, secret artefacts was a deliberate and successful attempt to degrade and humiliate the gods before destroying them. These acts of spiritual vandalism were effectively commemorated in the conversion of the temple, which would then be a landmark in the re-shaped memory of the city. The conversion of the Church of Cosmas and Damian opposite the Theonas Church consolidated the church's presence in an important area. Not only was the church expanding and taking these new prominent locations it was also providing itself with a stronger foundation. We know of twenty churches that were founded during the time of Theophilus, it is highly likely that there were many more at the time that have since been lost.[99] Theophilus was flooding the cityscape with churches in order to reinforce the programme of conversion, both physical and spiritual, that had been undertaken in the city.

99 McKenzie 2007: 259.

Chapter Three

Cyrene

Cyrene (Figure 7) was founded in c.631 BC as a Greek colony and was an important trading centre, in Cyrenaica, sited just inland of the Mediterranean coast. The city was positioned on a plateau looking over the coastal plain toward the sea. Cyrene was badly affected by the Jewish revolt of AD 115 and again by an earthquake in AD 365. The main late antique centre appears to be focussed around the intersection of the main North/South road with Valley Street on an East/West axis. This is in itself a development from earlier centuries where the focus has been on temples located near the Acropolis and upper city and on the more peripherally located temples such as the Temple of Demeter and Persephone. Whilst there are arguments for the conversion and/or destruction of a series of temples by Christians there may be other explanations such as irrevocable damage from the earthquake of AD 365. In this chapter I will examine the evidence for both. The analysis of this evidence will appear in Chapter 5.

As the largest temple in Cyrene, the Temple of Zeus was situated on a hill to the north-east of the city and is located close to the hippodrome. This afforded it a key position on the cityscape of Cyrene because of its elevated position. The temple was damaged by the earthquake of AD 365 and was later destroyed.[100] The temple has four distinct archaeological phases, but for the purposes of this investigation the last two are most relevant: the levels relating to the destruction and renewal connected to the Jewish Revolt destruction and the temple's final destruction.

100 Goodchild and Reynolds 1958: 40

During the Jewish Revolt of AD 115 the temple of Zeus was severely damaged. Many of the columns of the *peristasis* were undermined resulting in their collapse. Along both the longer sides of the temple column drums were cut to expose the wooden support beams in the centre of the columns. The centres of these drums were found to be burnt black suggesting that the support beams were burnt out to compromise the stability of the column. This practice is confirmed in near contemporary literature. In the Life of Marcellus, Theodoret of Cyrrhus describes a similar method of undermining temple columns. The central void is filled with wood, in this case olive wood, which when set on fire reduced the marble to lime so the column rendering the column unstable. The temple, he tells us, then collapses under its own weight.[101] The evidence from the temple of Zeus fits well with this description and can be interpreted as deliberate and successful campaign to destroy the *peristasis*, if not the temple of Zeus as a whole.[102] These fallen columns were never re-instated. Instead, some were partially buried, others were set aside at the temple site for re-use and re-working and some were re-used in other monuments such as in the base of the cult statue of Commodus.[103] In addition to the exterior damage, the interior also suffered during the Jewish Revolt. In particular, the cult statue was destroyed. During the Commodian period the interior of the temple was significantly re-worked and a new cult statue added.[104] These repairs were not finished until c. AD 172-175, leaving the temple in a state of ruin for sometime after the actual revolt.[105] The restored temple sat in a landscape that still bore the marks of the assault of AD 115.

101 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Vita Marcelli*: 6-7
102 Goodchild and Reynolds 1958: 33.
103 Goodchild and Reynolds 1958: 33.
104 Stucchi 1975: 253.
105 Goodchild and Reynolds 1958: 33.

The restored temple suffered, as did most building in Cyrene, during the earthquake of AD 365. Fallen columns have been identified as the result of earthquake damage due to their uniform position on the ground and a lack of evidence for the undercutting the column barrels to induce their collapse.[106] There is however, strong evidence for the deliberate destruction of the temple in two separate but linked phases. The temple seems to have been used for *spolia* at some point prior to its final destruction but much later than the Jewish revolt. As we have seen above, *spolia* was used as part of the Commodian re-building process but there is evidence for the removal and re-working of stone for different projects. A neat collection of stone has been found to the north of the temple and a partially re-worked column drum to the south.[107] Pieces of an inscription from the *pronaos* of the temple were excavated in 1954 and were attributed to the final destruction phase due to evidence of burning. Underneath these stone pieces were the clay footings for the stone floor of the temple. The stone paving slabs had been removed prior to the inscription falling on to the floor,[108] clearly indicating that the temple was stripped of usable stone. As far as dating evidence goes, only a small proportion of datable coinage from the site were late Roman, some 3%; the latest coin found on the site was dated c. 347-361 AD.[109] This would indicate that occupation of the temple site had diminished greatly by the time the earthquake struck.

The evidence for the temple's final destruction points to deliberate actions. We can attribute several acts to this phase. First, the apparently deliberate destruction of

106 Goodchild and Reynolds 1958: 39.
107 Goodchild and Reynolds 1958: 34.
108 Ibid: 31.
109 Roques 1987: 319.

statuary. The main cult colossus, a seated Zeus, appears to have been completely destroyed. The only remnants found of the statue, which Goodchild estimated to be eight times larger than life,[110] are eleven fragments of fingers and toes and a number of pieces of marble comprising parts of the statue's torso and arms.[111] Goodchild postulates that the condition of the pieces of arms and torso are such that the damage could only have been made with a hammer, being too extreme for mere weathering.[112] Evidence of ash in slot three of the flank wall, part of the base of the statue, was identified as cedar wood.[113] As the statue was, in all likelihood, an amalgamation of marble, wood and plaster it would seem likely that the statue was burnt, leaving the cedar wood ash, and those parts that remained were then destroyed with other tools such as a hammer. We can see from the treatment of another head of Zeus, un-associated with the main colossus, found in about 100 pieces during the excavation of the temple by Guidi in 1926, that extreme violence against these statues was employed at the Temple of Zeus.[114]

Beyond damage to the statue, there was also severe fire damage and scorching to the walls of the *cella* and the inscriptions detailed above. As the inscription was the dedication for the colossus, we can surmise that they were burnt at the same time. We have little evidence for the fire damage to the *cella* being deliberate and it certainly could have been caused by accident or by the earthquake. However, if we accept Goodchild's assertion that the damage to the colossus was deliberate then the fire damage to the *cella* might be seen as collateral damage from the same event. The Temple of Zeus appears then to have been subject to the apparently

110 Goodchild and Reynolds 1958: 54.
111 Ibid: 43
112 Goodchild and Reynolds 1958: 55.
113 Goodchild and Reynolds 1958 48.
114 Ibid: 30.

calm removal of building *spolia* over an unknown period of time after the temple stopped being actively used and then the rest was destroyed in a fire.

In addition to the destruction of the Temple of Zeus, a number of temples on Valley Street (Figure 8), close to its intersection with the main North/East arterial road, appear also to have been 'dismantled' and burned in the same manner as the Temple of Zeus.[115] Temples A, B, and C adjoin each other on the south side of the road. Grooves for channelling water were found on the base of Temple C's cult statue and this and a find of a statue of Kurana found near to the temple has led to suggestions that this was a temple to the nymph Kurana.[116] Temple B is later than the other two temples and may have been built during the Commodan restoration of the city, and is thought to be the temple of Commodus.[117] Certainly, the inscription on the base of the main statue indicates that the statue was of Commodus and has been dated from between 185-192 AD.[118] A variety of mutilated and fragmentary cult statues were found in a well that had been sealed over when one of the walls of the temple collapsed over it.[119] The destruction of Temples B and C might be deliberate. They were both dismantled and then burnt in what Goodchild has described as 'purification by fire'.[120] After the temples had been burnt, walls were built to block up the entrances.[121] Goodchild's assessment of a deliberate, ritualistic fire is though largely based on the evidence for iconoclasm. We cannot be certain that these fires were intentional. However, the dumping of statues and sealing them in the well was deliberate. Coupled with the blocking off of the temples rather than them being

115 Goodchild 1958: 40.
116 Goodchild (ed Reynolds) 1976: 218. Kurana is also known as Cyrene in the city's Greek foundation myth.
117 Roques 1987: 320.
118 Goodchild (ed Reynolds) 1976: 218.
119 Goodchild 1958: 40.
120 Ibid.
121 Goodchild and Reynolds 1958: 40.

stripped of *spolia*, it is perhaps most likely that the fires were part of a calculated event.

The Temple of Serapis on the acropolis is interesting as it also shows severe fire damage that appears unconnected to the earthquake. The temple is situated next to another temple which shows no indication of such fire damage.[122] This certainly points towards unique event if not a specific, targeted attack on the temple of Serapis.

After the earthquake in AD 365 there is evidence to suggest that cult statuary were being repaired on the site of the temple of Isis and Serapis.[123] This suggests that not all temple statuary was seen as inherently 'bad' by the Cyrenaean establishment in the late fourth century AD. The repair of these statues in public view certainly suggests that their repair was municipally sanctioned, or at least not opposed. Indeed there are other instances further west in North Africa, for instance in Caesarea, of statuary being rescued and re-displayed by the municipal authorities.[124] This statuary has appeared with new inscriptions reading '*Translata de Sordentibus Locis'* (transferred from sordid places).[125] There is a clear distinction here between the temple and the statuary. Lepelley postulates that this re-labelling and re-instituting of these statues is largely due to the respect the ruling elite had for their cultural heritage and this certainly fits in with the notion of a Christian yet classically educated elite. Leone takes this the argument further by suggesting that the economics of keeping urban monuments in good condition made the re-use of

122 Goodchild and Reynolds1958: 31.
123 Ensoli Vittozzi 1992: 241.
124 CIL 8.20963: Lepelley 1994: 10-11: Sears 2011: 135.
125 Lepelley 1992: 59.

less questionable statuary a necessity.[126]

There is limited evidence for the conversion or re-use of one of Cyrene's temples into a Christian building. The main cult temple in Cyrene, the Temple of Apollo, was largely destroyed by the AD 365 earthquake however evidence was found indicating the possibility that part of the remains may have been used as a Christian building.[127] A door was cut into the western wall of the *adyton* as the space between the *cella* and *adyton* was partitioned off creating a small room. Teichner has postulated that the statue base could have been re-used as the base for an altar.[128] Stucchi is not convinced as he found that the plinths claimed to be the bases for the staircase down to the 'church' were in fact bases for two mullions.[129] Excavation has found that the footprint of the temple was used to build two houses, houses 29 and 30.[130] Whatever the case, it is clear that the temple was re-modelled for another purpose, and a small, underground room would be useful for many reasons.

Over the course of a few years the Italian mission from the University of Urbino has discovered a number of statue deposits.[131] During their excavations of the extra-mural sanctuary of Demeter and Persephone they excavated a portion of a Doric temple whose wall had fallen inwards, as a result of an earthquake, and had collapsed on top on a number of statues.[132] The cache they found beneath the wall included a female statue thought to be Kurana, a headless sphinx, a charioteer and a statue of Demeter.[133] Whilst these statues are are all damaged, they appear to

126 Leone 2013: 178.
127 Teichner 1996: 54.
128 Ibid: 54-55.
129 Stucchi 1975: 335.
130 Purcaro 2000: 103.
131 Luni 2001 and Luni 2006.
132 Luni 2001: 1541.
133 Ibid.

have been complete before the wall fell. Whilst excavating on the northern side of the altar they also found a deposit of clay heads.[134] Luni has characterised these heads as being of poor quality, but they were perhaps removed from an older structure and deposited to keep them within the sacred area.[135] These deposits cannot be used as evidence for iconoclasm in Cyrene. What they may be able to do is give us an indication of the feeling towards these sacred sites in the years running up to the destruction of the other temples in Cyrene. Given that these statues were thought to contain the gods themselves there does not seem to have been any attempt to reclaim them. Rather the whole area, in this case the Doric temple near the site of the sanctuary of Demeter and Persephone, has been abandoned.[136]

The assemblage of statuary at the Temple of Demeter and Persephone and the destruction of the Kurana statue at the Valley Street Temples show us that there were mixed approaches to statuary in Cyrene. Clearly, in the case of the Valley Street Kurana, there were clearly extreme feelings towards the statue; perhaps due to its status as a founder deity. As we have already seen in Alexandria, re-branding of both ideas and areas serve to cement the Church's position. The location of the Valley Street Temples is central to the city and therefore reminders of its non-Christian past could not remain. Otherwise there seems to be a more measured response, perhaps with future profit in mind, miscellaneous statuary was collected and stored together.

In addition to the temples discussed above, there are two churches that will be considered in this chapter, the Central Church and the East Church. Both are

134 Luni 2006: 127.
135 Ibid: 128.
136 On recent work in the area see: Kane and West 2007.

structural conversions located on the so-called Valley Street. The Central Church, as the name would imply is located close to the central intersection of the road with the main North/South road. The East Church is located further along the street near the East Gate. Although these churches are probably not definitive temple conversions, they incorporate many key aspects of conversion; the use and christianisation of *spolia* and the transformation and resettlement of religious space.

The Central Church was an apsed, three aisled church. There are many elements in this church that have been re-used, but if it is a temple conversion, it would be designated a 'temenos church' as its location, so close to the central crossroads, lends itself to having had an earlier very significant building sited there. The orientation of the building is slightly skewed suggesting that it had to be fitted in to the plot of available space. At the front of the apse two classical columns of grey marble have been re-used.[137] Additionally included in the apse were two ionic capitals that had been upended.[138] Whilst we are unable to know the exact locations from which this *spolia* originated from, their inclusion in the construction of the apse is a significant indication that the re-use and christianisation of material was occurring in Cyrene.

There has been considerable debate between Goodchild and Stucchi regarding the East Church (Figure 9) and the possibility that it was the cathedral. Goodchild's argument centres on the church's size and the inclusion of a baptistery in the structure, a feature common, although not necessarily confined to, cathedrals.[139] At some point after the church's construction a new defensive circuit wall was built that

137 Ward-Perkins and Goodchild 2003: 157.
138 Ibid: 161.
139 Duval 1989a: 364.

did not extend far enough to enclose the East Church. Stucchi, therefore, believes that the Central Church was more likely to be the cathedral due to its central position and inclusion within the circuit walls.[140] It may be the case that the cathedral in Cyrene has still to be excavated but given the size of the Central Church and its location, there is a clear possibility that the Central Church did become the cathedral but perhaps, as is the case with the Theonas Church in Alexandria, the East Church with its peripheral location was the original cathedral and when a larger, more prominent, central location became available the cathedral was moved.[141]

There are at least four separate phases of construction in the East Church.[142] The church's first phase, period one, saw a three aisled building with an eastern apse.[143] The first of the church's re-used classical features can be found in the eastern apse. Two classical columns, of grey granite,[144] have been used at the front of the apse and have been modified in order that they can hold a stone or marble screen.[145] During period two, a western apse was added with another pair of classical columns, also of grey granite.[146] The period two church was much larger, Stucchi referring to it as an almost new church.[147]

The most interesting *spolia* can be found in the baptistery. The central baptismal platform has six classical columns, of which four remain in part. The columns were

140 Stucchi 1975: 365. Cited in Ward-Perkins and Goodchild 2003: 127.
141 Although Duval has argued that a baptistery is not necessarily diagnostic of a cathedral in the Late Roman period
142 Ward-Perkins and Goodchild 2003: 128.
143 Stucchi 1975: 364.
144 Ibid.
145 Ward-Perkins and Goodchild 2003: 133.
146 Ward-Perkins and Goodchild 2003: 134.
147 Stuchhi 1975: 302.

made of different materials; two of blue/black marble, one of grey granite, one of grey and white marble.[148] The different stone types would indicate that these columns may not have all originated in the same building. The most striking piece of classical *spolia* is the baptismal font, a reclaimed Dionysiac sarcophagus. The sarcophagus has been re-worked to include two sets of steps down and the stone has been re-worked and polished to eliminate the original carving.[149] The carving towards the bottom of the sarcophagus was not removed as extensively as higher up and elements of the design such as vine leaves and a Maenad can still be seen. The inclusion of four carved crosses in the top of each side is an indication that the font needed additional spiritual protection and an overt display of ownership. Another Dionysaic element is a small base of pentelic marble that also has a semi-erased image of a Maenad.[150] As well as the inclusion of these non-Christian images, a circular pagan altar was found, re-used as a holy-water stoup, within the original carving of garlands a cross had been added.[151] Again, we see the incorporation of *spolia* that has been specifically chosen for inclusion in the fabric of the church and here, in perhaps the most important part of the church in terms of christianisation; the baptistry, we see these non-Christian elements converted.

Unfortunately there is no way to accurately ascertain the original location of any of the columns included within the East Church. As well as the issue with original location, it is also difficult to date at what point the *spolia* was removed from it's original location. We cannot know therefore if the *spolia* came from a temple, let alone if it came from a temple destroyed by earthquake or a malevolent human

148 Ward-Perkins and Goodchild 2003: 142.
149 Ibid: 143.
150 Ward-Perkins and Goodchild 2003: 142
151 Ibid: 153.

hand. The addition of carved crosses to the classical *spolia* that show more overtly non-Christian elements is an interesting point. It would appear that the former use of these objects was obvious, but the process involved in their re-use such as the reworking of the stone and the addition of protective crosses appear to have re-sacralized them enough for use within a Christian context.

The destruction or conversion of all these temples is not recorded in any extant text. Synesius, bishop of Ptolemais and prolific letter writer (c. AD 370-413) who was born in Cyrene, did not mention their final moments. At this point however, Synesius was no longer residing in Cyrene as the municipal capital had moved to Ptolemais.[152] In '*Catastasis*', a letter written c. AD 411, he details the ongoing problems the province was having with 'marauding barbarians'.[153] The province was allegedly under a sustained guerrilla-style attack and Synesius felt that the province had been given up by the emperor.[154] The earthquake as a phenomenon was not restricted to Cyrene and was mentioned in Synesius' letter excommunicating Andronicus in 412 /13 AD.[155] Listing the many things that had befallen Cyrenaica as '...an earthquake, an invasion of locusts, a pestilence' and 'a conflagration of war'. It is clear that Synesius and the municipal government had far more important and wide ranging issues to tackle than acknowledging building changes in a city that had already been supplanted.

The lack of literary evidence coupled with a dearth of archaeological dating evidence is problematic in establishing when the final destruction events occurred

152 Goodchild 1976: 216.
153 Synesius, *Catastasis*: 1568.
154 Ibid: 1565.
155 Synesius, *Ep:* 58, 67.

for the Temple of Zeus and the Valley Street temples and to a certain extent whether these events were a more elaborate series of circumstances rather than a definitive destruction. Certainly in the case of the Temple of Zeus it is clear that there had been a complex process of destruction and renewal since the Jewish revolt which lends meaningful weight to the discussion of temple conversion. It is in Cyrene that we can see the tempered middle ground between the extreme case of the Serapeum and the more stable Temple of Caelestis.

Chapter Four

Carthage

After its destruction in the Third Punic War, Carthage (Figure 10) had been re-founded as a Roman town under Julius Caesar in 44 BC. It was the capital of Africa Proconsularis/Zeugitana and because of its location in the centre of the Mediterranean and its relationship with the fertile land in the hinterland of Africa Proconsularis, it became the second most important city in the western empire.[156] As such, archaeological studies have uncovered a wealth of high quality, high status buildings and infrastructure, despite the problems of the archaeology referred to in the Introduction.[157] During the late antique period the city saw some religious disturbances in the form of the Donatist schism and pagan/Christian disputes.

These religious disturbances can clearly be seen in the contemporary literary material. Any writings of the opposition to the Catholics, Donatist and non-Christian alike, are non-extant. This creates problems interpreting the city through the literature. We are left with an often one-sided account of events or sacred rites. In some cases, for instance Augustine's account of the sacred rites of Caelestis,[158] the style of rhetoric aids the historian; information about the opposition is given in order to promote the argument against the practise or rite.[159] More commonly, as in Salvian's account of the population sacrificing to Caelestis at the time of the

156 Lepelley 1981:11.
157 Ibid: 12.
158 Augustine, *de civ. Dei*: 2.4. 2.26.
159 Sears 2007: 3.

Vandal's invasion,[160] the information is twisted to serve a wider meaning; in this case underlining the reasons why the Western empire failed. Both of these accounts will be discussed further below and a more detailed analysis of the underlying themes found throughout this chapter will be debated in chapter five.

The location of the Temple of Caelestis, the Roman interpretation of the Punic goddess Tanit, and the road leading to it, the Via Caelestis, is unknown, although there has been some debate into possible locations. The site has been believed to be located between the Byrsa Hill and the sea.[161] Hurst argues that the temple was built on the exiting site of the Punic temple to Tanit, near the *tophet*, and has found remains of a some foundations and mosaic fragments that might be interpreted as a temple to the goddess.[162] It has been suggested by Wilson that as Hurst also found evidence of a Temple to Saturn on the Byrsa hill, a more suitable site for the Temple of Caelestis may be towards the bottom of the Byrsa hill. There are examples from other African cities, Dougga and Thuburbo Maius to name two, where when temples to Saturn and Caelestis appear in the same sort of configuration, the temples to Caelestis are situated in lower topographical positions to the temples of Saturn.[163] Wherever it was located the site would have almost certainly been located within an important district of the city and according to Quodvultdeus would have included a number of smaller sanctuaries around its periphery.[164] The literary evidence tells us that the temple was razed to the ground to make way for a cemetery but there are no remaining indications of cemetery sites within the city centre.[165] Due to the problematic archaeological evidence we are left with the written sources that

160 Salvian, *Gub Dei*: 8.2.
161 Quod, *Lib Pro*: 575. (Braun 1964).
162 Hurst 1999: 32-39.
163 Wilson 2001: 200.
164 Quod, *Lib Pro*: 575. (Braun 1964).
165 Leone 2007: 76, 156, 169.

certainly relate to Caelestis' temple. Quodvultdeus' '*Liber de promissionibus et praedictionibus Dei* ' deals with the conversion of the Temple of Caelestis and Victor of Vita's '*History of the Vandal Persecution*' also contains useful passages. Whilst this will give us a good insight into particular events connected to the end of the temple we will be left, inevitably, with an incomplete picture. There are also difficulties with these texts. Quodvultdeus, whilst a younger contemporary of Augustine, was exiled following the Vandal invasion in AD 429. He wrote about Carthage from exclusion in Naples. Victor of Vita wrote somewhere in the region of 50 years after the Vandals arrived in Carthage and, as such, is not a contemporary witness. The works are full of generalities, less concerned with providing detail, more concerned with showing the work of God. The analysis of the material will examine three possible interpretations of the evidence on the end of the temple in AD 399. The first being that the temple was completely destroyed and a church built in its place, the second, that the temple is a structural conversion into a church and the third, that the non-structural conversion was a triumphal gesture by the Bishop of Carthage.

The Temple of Caelestis was a large and important temple modelled on Delphi.[166] Quodvultdeus describes it as 'vast' and sumptuously appointed with mosaics and high value stonework and this description would certainly fit a temple of the importance of the chief goddess of Roman Carthage. It was not in use when it was subjected to Christian actions in AD 399 but it was not destroyed for another twenty years until AD 420 under the Tribune Ursus.[167] After the initial closure of the temple, non-Christian rites were apparently still practised along the *Via Caelestis*.[168] This

166 Quod *Lib pro* III: 577. (Braun 1964)
167 Ibid: 575. (Braun 1964)
168 Victor of Vita, *Hist VP*: 8.

may be an indication that the smaller sanctuaries located near to the temple were on the *Via Caelestis* and that they were not affected by the event that closed the main temple. If this is the case then the discovery of an early fifth century AD pavement in the area of the *tophet* temples close to the *Via Caelestis* and the Temple of Caelestis may support the theory that it was only the Temple of Caelestis that was initially affected. Sears argues that the pavement may have been built in the period between the temple's 'conversion' and its eventual destruction.[169] Hurst argues it may have escaped destruction due to the area being associated more with dining than overt non-Christian rites by the time of the events described by Quodvultdeus and Victor.[170] Either could be the case, however, it would appear from the evidence that only the actual temple of Caelestis was targeted by Christians in AD 399. Therefore, it would seem most likely that the mosaic's survival was due to its lack of a direct association to temple practices.

Through Augustine, we are able to piece together parts of Caelestis' celebrations. Although there are clearly propagandist elements in his description such as his 'grand display of harlots', prostitutes and 'actresses' taking part in lewd acts in celebration of Caelestis, it is none the less suggestive of thriving rites in the 370s AD. In his '*De Civitate Dei*' Augustine describes the festivities he attended with 'crowds ...gathered from all quarters', suggesting the presence of lax Christians who were unworried attending the Caelestis celebrations.[171] These crowds would have passed along the *Via Caelestis* in order to reach the festivities taking place in the temple *temenos.* As the *Via* Caelestis had many smaller shrines along its path, the procession to the temple took the participants through a familiar sacred landscape.

169 Sears 2007: 43.
170 Hurst 1999: 70.
171 Augustine, *de civ. dei*: 2.4.

Augustine tells of the cult idol being 'worshipped with prayer and obscene rites'.[172] The goddess Caelestis, her priests and her worshippers all shared the same space and as Augustine alludes to by suggesting a 'vast audience', this was a key part of the ritual year at Carthage.

Quodvultdeus' tells us that after the temple had been closed down, the site became over-grown with weeds and the Christian community, led by Bishop Aurelius, decided to put the site to new use. He reports that they were threatened by the non-Christians with a curse prophesying that dragons and snakes would protect the temple.[173] Once again we see the use of a curse, as a means of defence, within the literary tradition of temple conversion. As with the curses placed upon the Serapeum, they serve as excellent literary devices to promote the righteous actions of the Christian protagonists. As no dragons or snakes appeared to thwart the Christians, Caelestis had clearly been defeated.

The temple was used by Aurelius to celebrate Easter, an event that Quodvultdeus tells us he attended. Aurelius placed himself in the middle of the temenos where the statue of Caelestis would have once stood with the dedicatory inscription of Marcus Aurelius behind him.[174] The inscription was interpreted by Quodvultdeus as a prophecy of Aurelius' intervention. He placed his bishop's throne, his *cathedra*, the symbol of his authority in the position where the cult idol of Caelestis had stood.[175] This highly symbolic act stamped Aurelius' and the Church's authority onto the site. In a clear piece of propaganda, Aurelius tied himself and the Christian faith to the

172 Ibid: 2.26.
173 Quod, *Lib Pro* III: 44.
174 Ibid.
175 Quod, *Lib Pro* III:

site by converting the temple in a non-structural manner. Quodvultdeus goes on to point out that the tribune Ursus razed the temple of Caelestis to the ground in AD 421 and soon afterwards the new city walls were built in the vicinity, although not on the actual site of the temple.

Quodvultdeus finishes his text by telling us that the *Via Caelestis* as a whole was finally destroyed by the Vandals following their invasion of the city, obliterating it from memory; this is confirmed by Victor of Vita, writing circa AD 485.[176] Given that Victor refers to the road as the *Via Caelestis*, it seems that the nomenclature of the road had not been forgotten in the Vandal period even if the area had been destroyed and/or re-modelled suggesting that there was still a certain inclination in the city towards non-Christian traditions and that the site of the temple of Caelestis had become a *'lieux de mémoire'*.

Ennabli has theorised that Aurelius' actions were to convert the temple building into a church, a 'direct' temple conversion. Sadly however, there is no surviving archaeological evidence to corroborate this idea.[177] Duval suggests a temple may have been built in the temenos but again there is no archaeological evidence or text that allows us to come to this conclusion.[178] We are left with a close analysis of Quodvutdeus' text. In Quodvultdeus' account the Easter service that Bishop Aurelius presides over takes place outside in the temple temenos with holy items, such as the *cathedra,* that are transportable to and from the site. Given this it seems likely that the conversion was a one off, triumphalist act making clever use of Marcus Aurelius' dedicatory inscription and the symbolism of replacing the cult idol

176 Victor of Vita, *Hist VP*: 8.
177 Ennabli 1997: 36.
178 Duval 1997: 317.

with the *cathedra.* If the intention had been to convert the actual building, it would seem more appropriate to conduct the service inside. And as Sears points out, if there had been a church in the temple or even its temenos, it would be odd for it to be razed to the ground twenty years later by the Christian authorities.[179]

At the same time that the conversion of the Temple of Caelestis was taking place, the ecclesiastical districts of Carthage was being re-organized along the same lines as the districts in Rome and Alexandria.[180] This re-shaping of the districts might be coupled with the move to establish a Christian presence at the temple of Caelestis. We might interpret this series of events as being part of a clear and deliberate effort on the part of the Christian leadership to assert their authority over the city as part of a wider reform movement headed by Aurelius and Augustine, which in addition to the re-organized districts also sought to ban other rites such as memorial feasts at martyr tombs.[181] Peter Brown describes Aurelius as being 'destined to give a sword to the reforms of Augustine' in the fight to drive all pagan practices out of the cities and the church itself.[182] So, we might see Aurelius' triumphal act as merely the most eye-catching element of a general reforming policy.

Moving away from the Temple of Caelestis, in the late nineteenth century a cache of statues were found hidden underneath a mosaic floor in a room near the Bordj-Djedid cistern (Figure 11).[183] The contents of the cache were found behind a false wall that had been backfilled with rubble. Various cult idols, a Bacchus, a Carthaginian Isis, a Venus and a Jupiter to name a few, were recovered and in

179 Sears 2007: 43.
180 Ennabli 1989: 1087.
181 Sears 2007: 116.
182 Brown 1967: 143.
183 Gauckler 1899: 159.

many cases they were damaged in some way.[184] In addition to the statues, Gauckler also found a large marble inscription to Jupiter Hammom.[185] Given that Aurelius and Augustine were mounting a united front against practises that they believed continued to link the community to their unsavoury past, with mixed success, it is interesting that this appears to be an isolated cache. The addition of so many different idols is at the very least indicative that there were some members of Carthaginian society who wanted to protect idols. Leone has suggested that the cache may have been stored there with a view to removing them at a later date for sale on the statue market.[186] However, there appears to be no mechanism by which to retrieve the statues as the cache was placed underneath an expensive mosaic floor, behind a false wall.[187] The placement of the statues underneath a costly mosaic floor may also be an indication of the power and spiritual value imbued in the statues by the people that placed them there.

There are only a few churches in Carthage that can be dated to the late fourth to early fifth centuries.[188] This may be due to in part to the Donatist schism, where the available Christian energy is split into the two factions requiring two churches, that are inevitably smaller and the evidence potentially more ephemeral than one unified church. These churches may even have been hidden from view. There are cases of communities meeting in houses such as at Dura-Europos.[189] Or perhaps as Leone suggests, churches of this period were subterranean in nature. Alternatively, the difficultly in identifying these churches may be due to the difficulties in excavating in

184 Ibid.
185 Gauckler 1899: 160.
186 Leone 2013: 166.
187 Gaukler's excavations did not record stratigraphic information and the descriptions were sparse. We are therefore unable to speculate with any accuracy.
188 Sears 2007: 108.
189 Welles 1967:127.

urban Carthage. It may be that these churches did exist but have yet to be found in the archaeological record. The churches that have been excavated tend to be cemetery churches based around the graves of martyrs. Martyrs were buried in cemeteries on the outskirts of the city, as was the ancient custom, and so their associated churches do not appear in central locations.

It could be argued that unlike at Alexandria, where the anti-pagan actions of Theophilus had largely been successful in re-branding the city Christian, the non-Christian elite at Carthage were able to thwart these efforts. This elite were perhaps more organised than those of Alexandria and had links to the Roman senatorial class, many of whom had fled to their estates in the area of Carthage following the sack of Rome in AD 410 (although some of these were obviously Christians).[190] Salvian, writing after the Vandal conquest, accuses the elite of paying lip service to Christianity whilst secretly still sacrificing to Caelestis,[191] his account is vitriolic, accusing 'the noblest' of 'sacrilege'. His account does suggest that the elite of Carthage were still performing non-Christian rites after the conversion of the Temple of Caelestis. However, Salvian's purpose in writing *'De gubernatione Dei*' was to examine the reasons behind the diminishing empire. Salvian's conclusion was that the root of the discord was lax Christian morals and so we might expect his analysis of Carthage in this period to be less than flattering. In the end, Salvian writing in Marseilles almost 20 years after the temple had been razed, and writing with a very particular agenda about the State and the Church, tells us much more about the ideas and issues of a priest from South Gaul than it does about the ritual habits of the Carthaginian elite at the end of the Roman period. In addition to high profile and

190 Lepelley 1981: 40.
191 Salvian *Gub Dei*: 8.2.

dogged opposition from the elite, Aurelius lacked the foot soldiers that Theophilus was able to command, in the form of the desert monks and parabalani, and found himself unable to enforce Christianity to the same degree.

Carthage was a divided city but in contrast with Alexandria, the divisions within the Christian church and the power of the non-Christians elite might have thwarted Aurelius' attempts to fully Christianize the city. Whilst Aurelius converted the Temple of Caelestis into a church it is striking how little evidence we have for purpose built churches in the city, in this period, let alone temple conversions. The churches that we have evidence for are situated on the outskirts of the city centre indicating that the prime temple sites apparently coveted and used by the Christian Church in other cities were not available to the Church in Carthage. We have evidence that cult sites in and around the Temple of Caelestis were still in use, that whilst iconoclasm was taking place measures were undertaken to preserve the idols safely and literary evidence that non-Christian sacrifices were being undertaken as far as the Vandal invasion.

Chapter Five

Discussion

There are five key themes that have been highlighted in the archaeological remains and literary sources for the cities of Alexandria, Cyrene and Carthage. They are topographical changes to the cityscape, the use and re-use of ritual routeways, the treatment of cult statuary, the use and treatment of *spolia* and the interpretation of events in literature. Whilst the themes can be seen in the fabric of the cities, they would also have been experienced by their inhabitants. Changes in topography would have had an affect on movement around the city, changing landmarks within individual's mind maps of the city and therefore influencing how processions were experienced. The removal, destruction or re-display of statuary and *spolia* would also provide '*lieux de mémoire*' to the populace re-enforcing particular memories.

In order to experience the urban environment, people, inhabitant or visitor alike, react to their environment through their primary senses, sound, smell and most importantly sight.[192] They use the topography of the environment to create a mind-map to navigate their way around. This mind-map is then supplemented by layers of experience. Over time the mind-map becomes full of emotional intricacies that serve to anchor the person to the place. Changes to the topography of the city affect the population as they change these elaborate mind maps and/or imbue their personal landmarks with alternate meanings. It is important to note that changes to

192 Favro 1996: 1.

the topography would affect members of the population very differently; a change could hold positive, negative or ambivalent connotations depending on the individual.

There are a number of different ways in which the sacred topography of Alexandria, Cyrene and Carthage were changed during late antiquity. These will all be discussed in further detail below. First, most directly, there was actual destruction and rebuilding in different areas of the city. Secondly, as part of this re-formulation, the transformation and re-settlement of religious space occurred and thirdly, in the continuity of nomenclature in some areas.

By far the most striking case of temple destruction was the Serapeum in Alexandria. Sited on a plateau above the city, the temple held a prime location in the cityscape. The process of destruction and rebuilding would have been highly visible to the population of the city. Initially, the destruction would have had a great impact leaving a physical gap. The re-use of the site to build the Church of St. John the Baptist filled in the topographical hole in the cityscape but the religious and mental connotations it had for the population would have been vastly different. The place the Serapeum held within the mind-maps of the population of Alexandria had been inextricably changed and yet it was still a vital point of reference. To the Christian population, the Serapeum, its rites and priests were an anathema so the removal of the temple purified the city. The placement of a church on the site was the last piece of this purification process. Even its dedication, to St. John the Baptist, the man who baptised Jesus, reinforced this purification; as if the church was baptising the site. To the non-Christian population, the destruction of the temple signified the

destruction of their way of life. To both factions, the site became a powerful '*lieux de memoire*', a physical reminder of the unrest, that altered the internal mind-maps of the population. So much so that the destruction of the Serapeum, due largely to continued ruination of the site, has become one of the defining points in the long history of the city; imposing itself on the memory of its inhabitants into the modern day.

There was a definitive shift, in Alexandria, from a traditional to Christian urban environment, which in addition to the Serapeum, can also be seen in the relationship between the destruction of the Caesarion and its replacement church, the Great Church of St. Michael. The church was built to replace the earlier cathedral that had been sited on the periphery of the city. The relocation of the cathedral church into the position of one of the most important temples, the Imperial cult temple, in the centre of Alexandria, changed the sites focus whilst keeping the earlier connotations of a significant and important religious site. This conversion was perhaps less successful that the Serapeum in as much as the church continued to be known as the Caesarion (although further analysis of the nomenclature will appear below).[193]

The re-use of these significant traditional sites, the Serapeum, with the nilometer and the Caesarion, served to re-write their history. The structures were given equal significance in the new religious order; the Serapeum martyrs replaced Serapis as protectors of the city and the earlier focus of Imperial worship became the centre of the new diocese. The placement of the Arcadia Church on the traditional site of the nilometer and the re-placement of the sacred cubit in a church removed the Nile

193 John of Nikiu *Chronicle*, 84. 87-103.

floods from Serapis' sphere of influence placing it and the associated taxes firmly in the lap of the Christian Church. The inherent power that these sites were imbued with remained; they were now re-packaged as Christian.

In Cyrene, we also see this shift in the urban layout away from the old sacred spaces. As Cyrene's power diminished after Ptolemais became the municipal capital, the late Roman town was re-focused around the conjunction of Valley Street and the North/South road and the importance of this area can be seen in the treatment of the Valley Street temples and the building of the Central Church. There is evidence for the deliberate destruction and sealing off of some of these temples. Here, in the new centre, there is a desire to cleanse the area. The temples are burned, idols are attacked and removed and the temples are blocked off. There is a clearer chronology of destruction in this area than at the larger, more important, but more peripheral temples of the city. For the Temple of Zeus and the Temple of Apollo, whilst there is evidence of focused religious violence, damage from previous violence and earthquakes had already began to lessen their significance on the cityscape. The placement of a church a central position directly at the crossroads is also significant in realigning the city away from the earlier centre to the south-west.

There was certainly an attempt in Carthage to re-imagine the cityscape. Christian involvement in the Temple of Caelestis lasted for over twenty years and saw the temple first closed, then converted and finally demolished. Aurelius' Easter conversion was more of a grand gesture than an actual attempt to re-use the space in the capacity of a long-term church. It is hard to tell whether Aurelius' actions were too half-hearted to imprint a new topographical meaning on the site or that the

Temple of Caelestis was too strong a landmark in the cityscape to change. In all probability it is the case that both are true. Aurelius was unable, unwilling or unprepared to approach the temple in the same way as Theophilus had in Alexandria. There is a stark difference between the purifying baptism of fire the site of the Serapeum received and the temporary re-branding the Temple of Caelestis received. In addition, an attempt was made to change the districts to fit a new ecclesiastical plan that mirrored the more successful Christian cityscapes of Rome and Alexandria. The main churches still remained on the periphery of the city. The nature of the Carthaginian church, focussing on martyrs, as well as a more organised and powerful pagan elite seem to have thwarted attempts to re-shape the urban environment in the same way as Alexandria and Cyrene.

Both the *Via Caelestis*, in Carthage, and the Caesarion, in Alexandria, underwent attempts to re-brand them as Christian sites. It is interesting that the nomenclature of the sites reverted back to their traditional names soon after they were converted and remained for many years afterwards. In the case of the *Via Caelestis* it is obvious that the attempt to establish a new meaning to the area failed. After Aurelius' conversion of the temple, the area still attracted traditional rites that sought to re-enforce its name rather than weaken it. In the same way, the Caesarion did not have the furious re-birth that the Serapeum had and perhaps, as a result, became more susceptible to the reversion of its name. There also may have been less concern over the Caesarion's name as it was that of the emperor and not a god per se.

As part of this trend of changing sacred topography, the use of ritual procession also

underpinned the changes in the cities. Processions included the whole spectrum of city life. Everyone was represented and so it formed an official stamp of approval on the sites it passed and visited, creating and maintaining *'lieux de mémoire*'. This is a vital aspect of the process of temple conversion and the christianisation of the urban environment.

In Alexandria, the ritual landscape the processions would move through had dramatically altered. The route of the processions for the Serapia and the festival of the Nile, both important events in the Alexandrian ritual and municipal calendar, were re-used for Christian events such as the placing of the relics of St. John in to the Church of St. John the Baptist. As the procession moved towards the Serapeum complex it would pass the Arcadia Church, on the site where the Nilometer had been; the continuation of the Nile floods was no longer assured by Serapis but by the Christian God. The procession would then move through the ruined Serapeum to the Church of St. John the Baptist. Every landmark, each point of reference, has been changed to imbue the new regime with the power of the old whilst triumphantly reminding the participants of the Christian victory. For other civic and religious processions, the site would have been omitted from the route of the procession. This underlined that it was no longer an important factor to civic life.

Cyrene is perhaps significant in that the movement away from the old areas of municipal focus, the Temple of Zeus in the north-east, the Temple of Apollo in the north-west and the temples on the acropolis to the south-west, removed the need to re-use ritual route-ways. Because of this re-formulation of the urban environment most of the previous points of reference could be ignored. So much of the old city's

significance had been removed when the municipal government moved to Ptolemais that there was an opportunity to assert significance to the new buildings, the new churches. The route of processions would therefore miss all of the, previously important, temples and focus much more on Valley Street and the area between the East Church and the Central Church.

The *Via Caelestis,* in Carthage, was still used for traditional rites after the temple had closed, clearly holding great significance to the city's population. It was re-used in at least one Christian procession, Bishop Aurelius' Easter procession that resulted in the establishment of his *cathedra* in the temple. This procession and the Easter service it led to were clearly set out to try to establish the new Christian ownership or dominance of the area. The procession would have included sacred and powerful items such as the c*athedra* as well as priests and sober worshippers in contrast to the bawdy Caelestis processions we hear about from Augustine and Salvian. Where this process of re-use differs is that it appears to have been a one off. None of the sacred items are kept on the site, Aurelius does not use the temple as a new base and so once the procession ends there is no need to return to the site in the same way that there would be at the Church of St. John the Baptist in Alexandria or the Central Church in Cyrene. In order for the topographical memory to cement in the mind it needs to be repeated in order to normalize it. This does not happen in the case of the *Via Caelestis* and in fact, this route-way was eventually closed down.

Many of the cases explored within this study, underwent elaborate processes of de-sacralization and re-sacralization. A site imbued with a sacred nature immediately

becomes important to those who function in or around it. The de-sacralization of the temples was for the most part conducted with varying degrees of violence. Some sites like the Serapeum, in Alexandria, or the Valley Street Temples, in Cyrene, were purified using fire. All seem to have had their idols destroyed (the trend of iconoclasm will be discussed below). Once the space has been de-sacralized it can be re-used. In some cases, like in Cyrene, they are used for secular activities in others, the Temple of Caelestis, in Carthage, and the Alexandrian temples they are re-sacralized. This re-sacralization underpins the changes in the cityscape by focussing on the population's subconscious knowledge that the area is sacred. This links back into the mind-map making it easier to accept the changes to the situation as well as the skyline.

The topographical memory of a community is maintained by the repeated use of the urban environment to a certain, pre-determined end. In the cases of these temples the significance of the topography was changed to fit a new set of cultural and religious ideas but the continued use of the space for the same basic reasons, to process to and worship in, was designed to change the populations' preconceptions of the sites. The de-sacralization of sites and their removal from ritual processions and routeways removed them from the populations consciousness allowing them to formulate new '*lieux de memoire*'.

The treatment of cult statuary and other associated *spolia* is another key theme that is found throughout the evidence of temple conversion studied above. The image of the gods linked them into the daily lives of their devotees. People attended the temples at specific times but also had small dedicatory shrines at home. Their

images were significant as it was thought that the gods resided in their images and parts of the Old Testament specifically forbade the creation and worship of idols.[194] This made cultic idols extremely vulnerable to attack as they provided an easy target for highly symbolic acts of anti-pagan aggression. Whilst many cult statues were destroyed, other items from the temples, that were deemed to be less tainted, were re-used in the building of new churches with some objects even re-used as Christian paraphernalia.

In all the cities, the fragmentary remains of many cult idols have been found. At the Serapeum in Alexandria, there are the remains of two heads of Serapis, neither of them from the main cult idol which appears to have been completely destroyed. All that remains of the main colossus of Zeus, in Cyrene, are fragmentary pieces of fingers of toes although another head of Zeus had been found smashed into 100 pieces. Even the statues that were secretly protected in caches bear signs of violence. These graven images evoke power and the manner in which they are neutralised appears to be similar across the cities, in fact across the Christian world. Damage to the head is common, in many cases decapitation, as is the removal of limbs and digits. The effectively reduces the deity to a useless stump, unable to function. In many cases, such as we see in the colossal statues of Zeus, they are then burnt. Burning the statues serves two purposes. Firstly, it eradicates the god within and secondly, the statue, the area in which it stood and the god's devotees are purified by fire. This baptism of fire is a strong and important way of co-opting people into Christianity. It is the physical manifestation of the central idea that worshipping idols is wrong and that they are evil. Once the demon has been defeated and its space purified, the deity's death becomes its devotees entrance

194 Old Testament: Deut 5.8. Lev 19.4.

into Christian faith, much as Christ did on the cross. We can see a certain chronology in this psychology. In the first case of temple conversion in Alexandria, the temple of Kronos/Thoth, the useless stumps of a statue has been negated of so much power that we see it being into a cross. This is a deliberate action designed to suggest continuity between the new and old sacred spaces. By the time we come to the Serapeum however, the need for a gentle continuity has gone and conversion has become much more black and white, the cultic idols must be destroyed.

The treatment of founder statues is interesting. In Cyrene, we see statues of Kurana, mutilated, dumped into a well that is then subsequently sealed off. This treatment shows a clear desire to destroy the god but also to destroy the foundation myth as well. Removing Kurana from sight and ensuring that the statues cannot be easily retrieved removes her from memory. If reminders of the city's foundation are removed then it is easier to implant a new foundation myth in its place. Given that this area of Cyrene was re-inventing itself, re-focussing the city around the Valley Street area, it would be important to remove reminders of the old city from this new centre. In Alexandria, we also see the violent treatment of founder statues in the twelve demagogues. These statues were damaged but not destroyed and were replaced on the site of the Serapeum at some point after its destruction. It is likely that their survival is due to the fact that they are representations of people rather than gods and so do not challenge Christian beliefs in the same way as cult icons. Nonetheless, they were still damaged and yet received some protection from further damage.

Where we see the dismemberment and burning of statues as physical evidence of Christian values succeeding over non-Christian, we can also find similar literary evidence. In some cases, it is through the literary sources that we learn of the fate of the main cult idols, such as the colossus of Serapis at the Serapeum, where we are given great detail into the manner in which the god fell. In other cases, it is more subtle. The treatment of Hypatia's death by John of Nikiu is emblematic of the treatment of statuary. She is rendered a useless stump and then burned in exactly the same manner that the colossus of Serapis was. The movement of literature across the empire can be seen in these stories as well as the Alexandrian World Chronicle showing the triumphalist image of Theophilus astride the destroyed temple and this dissemination of information can be seen in the Jerash mosaic, a decorative but instructive image.

Whilst there is overwhelming evidence for the deliberate destruction of cult statuary there are also examples, in each of the cities studied, of caches of statues being hidden away apparently to save them from further damage although the circumstances of the caches are different. The Carthaginian cache was found underneath a floor in a house, indicating a very deliberate desire to hide the statues and to protect. There does not appear to have been a sense that these statues would be returned to their positions in the way that the Alexandrian demagogues had been as the addition of a mosaic floor sealed them in. It was perhaps, enough to know that they were protected. Even though the Cyrene cache does not at first appear to have any relevance it can be useful in constructing a narrative of iconoclasm. The statues, and in fact the temple itself, were left after the earthquake. Presumably, the municipal government had other more important sites

to restore. Gods and temples fall in and out of favour over time and what we see as iconoclasm may also just be a reflection that society has moved away from a particular deity and what has been suggested as evidence of violence may just be evidence of neglect.

It is also the case that many of these statues could have been sold on and/or re-used in the urban environment. Not only was it a legal requirement to maintain urban monuments but many of these statues held significance to the population above and beyond its religious connotations and were re-used in public places such as baths, squares and even museums.[195] Being a Christian or a non-Christian, in religious belief, is only a part of what it was to be an inhabitant of an ancient city. Other non-Christian aspects thrived in this period particularly the culture of the learned hellene. Therefore many of the statues held an economic value.

Whilst the treatment of statuary was often violent, other items from the temples were actively included into the fabric of new churches. The best examples of this can be found in Cyrene. We can see the use of classical building *spolia* was prevalent in Cyrene and we have evidence from the Temple of Zeus that *spolia* was re-worked on the site. Although we cannot determine the origin, a number of classical columns and capitals were re-used in the Central Church. The use of *spolia* in the East Church is very interesting. A pagan altar and a Dionysiac sarcophagus were remodelled into into significant Christian artefacts, a holy-water stoup and a baptismal font respectively. Both of these items had been engraved with crosses just as we saw with the converted statue in the Temple of Kronos/Thoth, in Alexandria. One these objects have been removed from the temple and any

195 Lavan 2009: 439.

unseemly images removed, the addition of crosses appears to purify the object enough to be used in Christian worship. This re-use and re-branding of *spolia* is a key aspect of temple conversion in the wider sense. The transformation of these artefacts allows for the continuity of religious space even if the church is not on the original location of the temples, the inclusion of aspects of those temples in the fabric of the church ties participants into the religious location giving them new but re-assuring landmarks for their mind-map.

In addition to the physical evidence, we have also studied a variety of literature and there are key themes that can be drawn from these texts. First, it must be reiterated that there are issues with the amount and quality of the available sources. For the most part there is a dearth of non-Christian texts which does not allow for a truly balanced assessment. The reliability of Christian texts is also called into question There are issues with the timing of the sources, many are written decades after the events, often based on one source leaving the narrative diluted over time. The few truly contemporary sources we have are to be approached with great caution as they are polemical in nature and have very specific agendas that quite often negate the need for an even handed approach to events.

There are a number of literary devices employed by writers when discussing the conversion of temples. We hear of curses placed on the cultic idols to protect them. These curses inevitably fail to materialise and by doing so the impotence of the non-Christian gods is highlighted. We see both at the Serapeum and the Temple of Caelestis that Christian writers employ this method. During the process of conversion we often see a pagan that quickly converts. Rufinus also draws parallels

to the biblical story of the plagues of Egypt by suggesting that all the busts of Serapis disappeared in one night replaced by crosses. These literary devices help change the populations' perception of events particularly by the time the stories have been re-told by successive writers. These stories help to reinforce the Christian collective memory of past events and by doing so gradually negate any other narrative that remains.

Just as these literary devices help to change the perception of events, they can also help change the perception of people. As Hahn has shown the use, in the Alexandrian literature, of the Theodosian laws, relating to the closure of the temples helps to justify the actions of Theophilus and was an effort to gloss over any other motive he may have had to close down the temples.

As a result of the closure of the Alexandrian temples Theophilus, as bishop of Alexandria, came into a great deal of confiscated wealth. In gaining this wealth, Theophilus was able to cement the position of the Alexandrian bishops and curry favour at the court in Constantinople. Theophilus is clearly the most successful of the bishops in re-branding his city Christian. He has help from a vast number of foot soldiers, in the form of monks and the parabalani. It is clear that neither Aurelius or Synesius had those kind of numbers but equally neither had the same issues within the city. Cyrene was in decline having already been surpassed by Ptolemais as the municipal centre. It held no great economic value to the Church nor did it offer Synesius a foothold into court politics. Carthage, on the other hand, had a more resistant urban elite with whom Aurelius struggled with throughout the period. Additionally, there were more inter-Christian issues taking place that de-stablised

Aurelius' ability to stamp his authority over the city.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

This thesis has examined the processes of temple conversion in Alexandria, Cyrene and Carthage during the late fourth and early fifth centuries AD to ascertain what effect temple conversion had on the structural fabric and populations of the cities. All of our case study cities were experiencing different social, economic and political issues during this period and is reflective of the individual city's experience of temple conversion. This thesis has expanded the model started by Bayliss to categorise temple conversion to include a broader array of evidence in order to investigate the full affect of the socio-economic and political issues on urban temples.

All of the cities experience great change to the topography of the urban environment and therefore, to cultural, ritual, topographical memory which has been explored using Nora's *'Lieux de Mémoire'.* Both Alexandria and Carthage saw the re-use of highly important sacred sites, the Serapeum and Caesarion in Alexandria and the Temple of Caelestis in Carthage. These sites were used as part of a concerted effort by the Christian leadership to co-opt the inherent power of these traditional sites to supplant the old religions in the minds of the populous. The re-use of the temples' processional route-ways, underlined the differences as the route passed new or altered '*lieux de memoire'*. Equally as important as the processions to the Serapeum, in particular, the majority of civic and religious processions in Alexandria after the destruction of the temple avoided the area completely. Cutting off the temple from its previous civic and religious focus. The site has remained largely ruined through the centuries which has left the site as a major centre for collective

memory. It is much harder to forget that the Serapeum existed if the space it filled is never replaced with alternative structures.

Cyrene's topographical landscape was equally changed but in a different manner. The city's sacred landscape reduced dramatically in size as the religious focus turned inward toward the churches on Valley Street. The large temple sites that had stood in important but peripheral sites were overlooked as sites to build new churches. As part of this movement towards the centre of the city, the ritual route-ways were not used. Religious processions would now use new routes allowing for the formation of entirely new mind-maps, that started new ritual memories.

Alexandria and Carthage were large and important cities in the late antique world. Whilst Cyrene had been an important city after the municipal government left the city reduced in size and importance, as it did not even have a bishop. This explains why the changes within the topographical landscape are different. The Church leadership in Cyrene did not have to deal with the non-Christian community in the same way as Theophilus and Aurelius had to. That said, the experiences that Theophilus and Aurelius had were also very different. Theophilus was able to subjugate the non-Christian elite in a way that Aurelius was never able to, although their tactics were very different with Aurelius adopting a gentler manner of metaphorical conversion to Theophilus' firebrand approach.

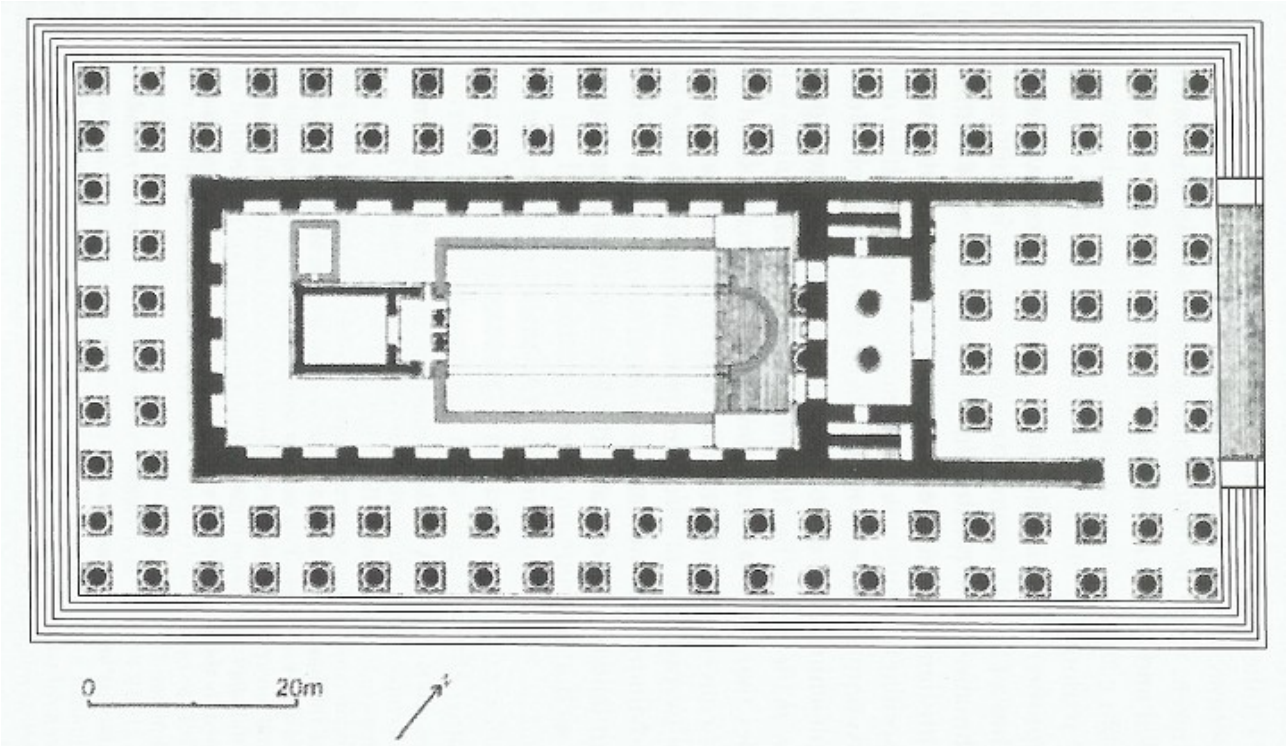
The treatment of statuary and *spolia* has been shown to be similar throughout Alexandria, Cyrene and Carthage. Some cult idols were destroyed in order to kill the god residing within and purify the area, others were removed and stored and

others were placed back on display. This indicates a complex reaction to statuary. Clearly there were instances, in the cases of Serapis and Kurana, where it was vital that the idol, and the symbolic power it imbued, be destroyed. However, few Christians, particularly the elite, were solely Christian. The cultural and historical aspects of displaying statuary were still important factors in living in the late Roman world, as was the economic value of these statues, and this is reflected in the mixed response. Purification by fire also appears in all the cities and is used as a form of baptism by burning away the impure deities. We also see iconoclasm throughout the literature both in descriptions of the destruction of idols or suggested in the case of the Hypatia. The use of *spolia* in churches that has been deliberately transformed by the addition of Christian symbols is key to a broadened approach to temple conversion. It is not necessary to know exactly where the *spolia* came from in these instances. It is more important that they help transform the religious space with aspects of continuity.

It is clear from this study that the processes of temple conversion are complex and depend a great deal on the particular circumstances of the individual city, each are influenced by a unique set of socio-economic and religious factors. Whilst, this is certainly the case, temple conversion in Alexandria, Cyrene and Carthage impacted greatly on the cultural, ritual and topographical memory of the inhabitants, completely re-writing their individual mind-maps by changing the physical and literary landscape in such a way that supplanted the sacred links to the past, replacing them with a new set of Christian references.

Appendix

Figure 1:

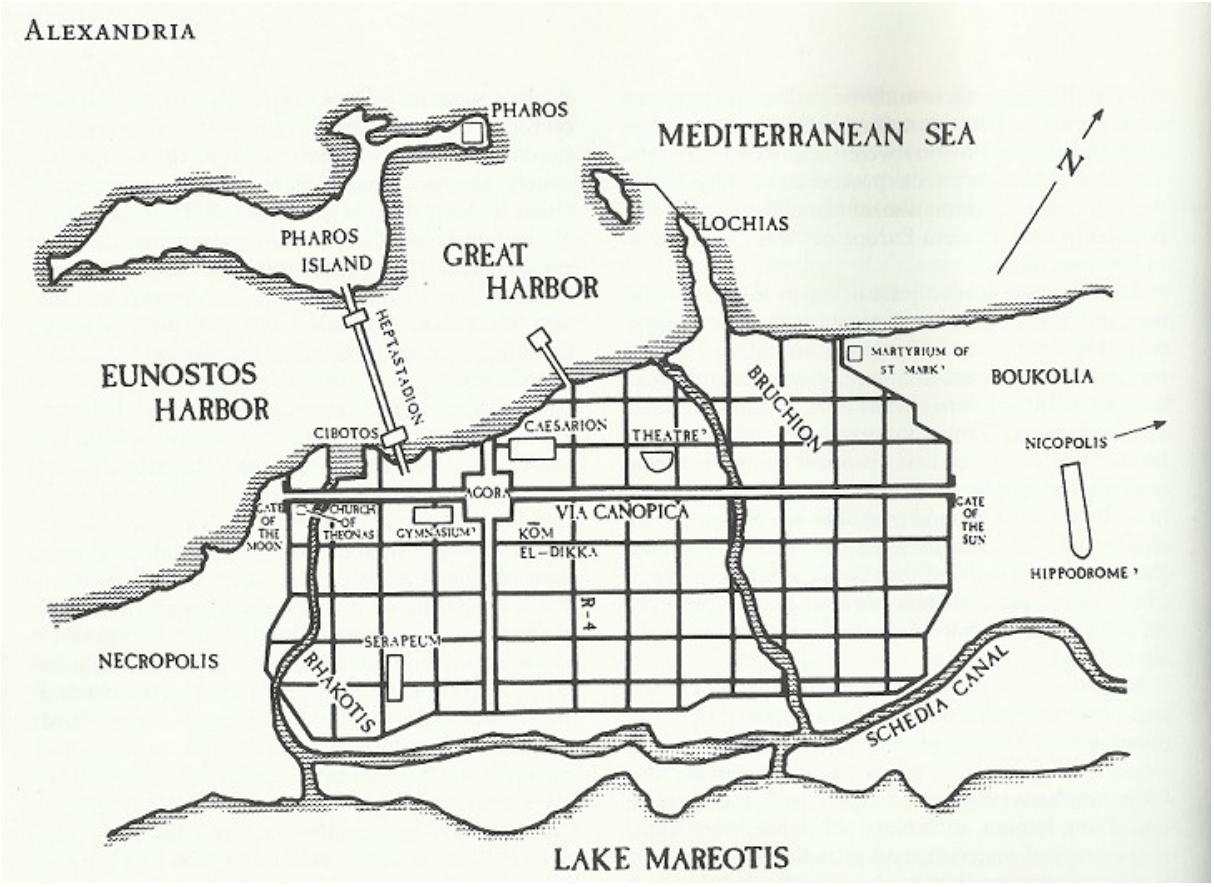


Plan of a 'Temple-Church', constructed in the Temple of Apollo, Didyma. Taken from Bayliss 2004,162.

Figure 2:

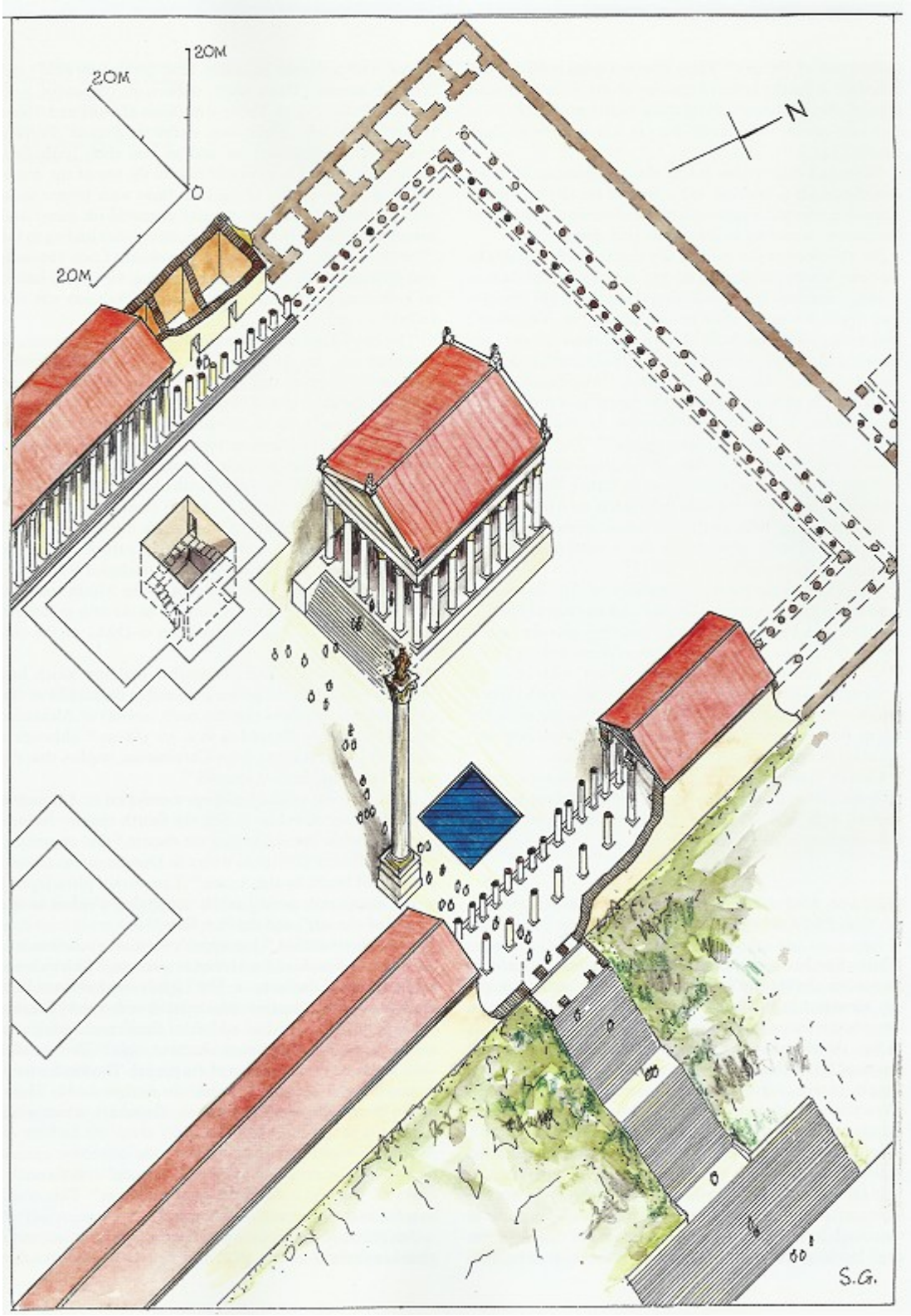
Plan of a Temple-Spolia-Church, Corycian Cave, clifftop Temple. Bayliss 2001, Vol 2. 73.
Additionally, this church sits within the wider temenos as an example of a Temenos-Church would do.

Figure 3:



Map of Late Antique Alexandria. Taken from Bowerstock et al 1999, 286.

Figure 4:



Sheila Gibson's reconstruction of the Roman Temple of Serapis, Alexandria. From Mckenzie 2007, 243.

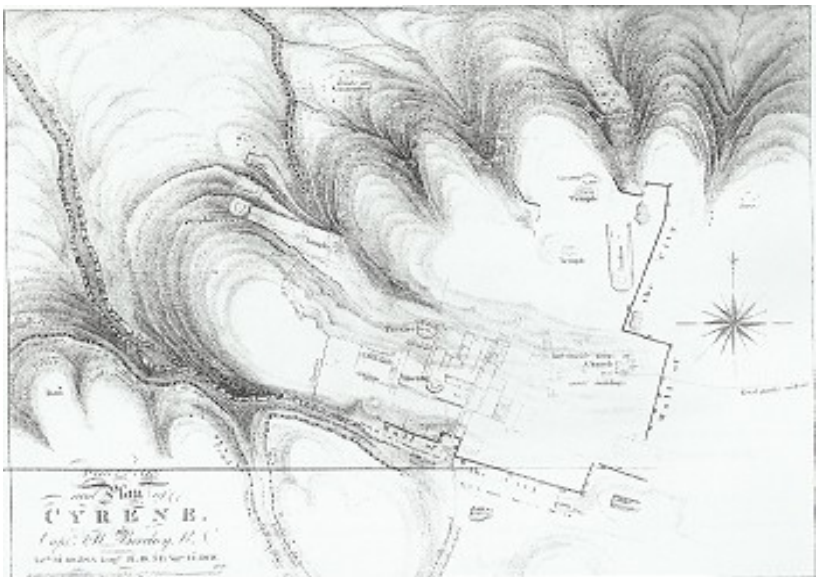
Figure 5:

Image of the remains of the temple of Serapis in Alexandria.
http://itchyfeet101.blogspot.co.uk/2010/09/egypt.html 09/08/2014: 14:44pm.

Figure 6:

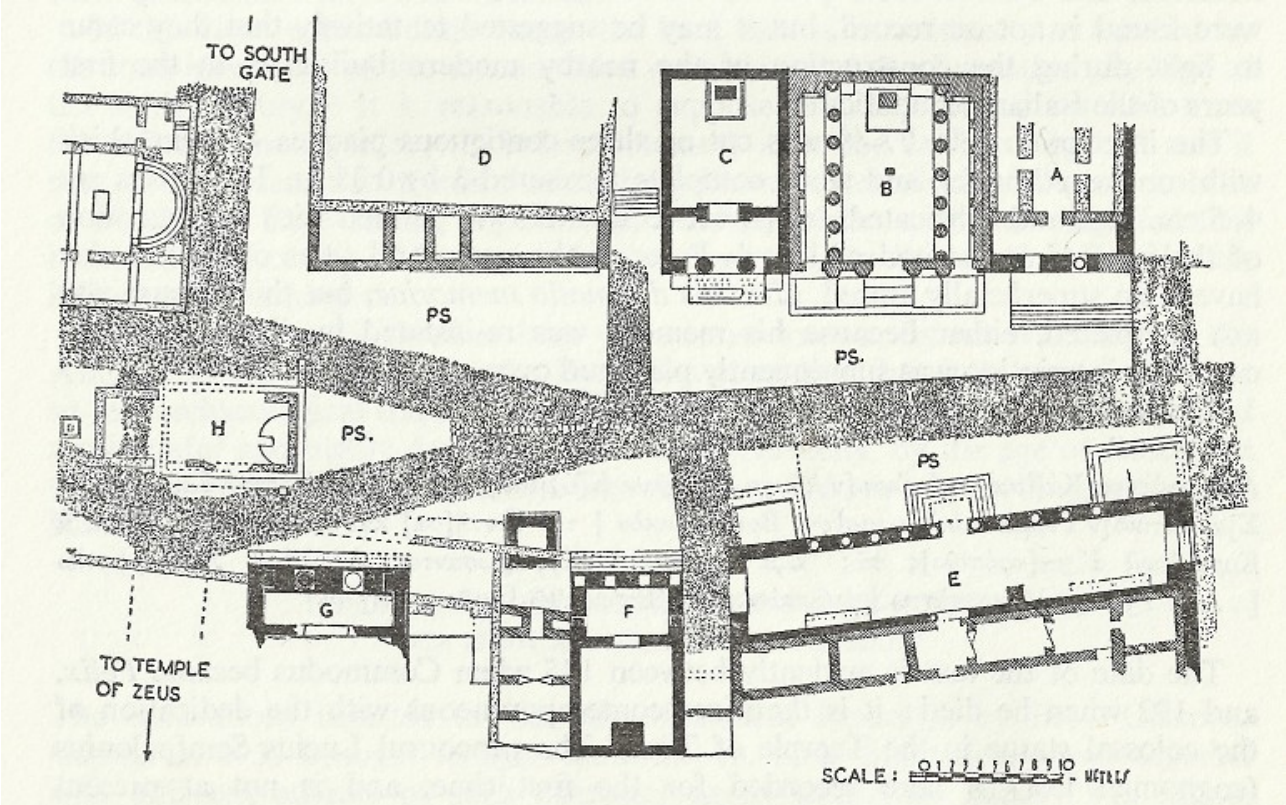
Statue of a Demagogue in the Graeco Roman Museum, Alexandria.
http://www.grm.gov.eg/details_e.asp?which2=3661 09/08/2014: 14:50pm.

Figure 7:



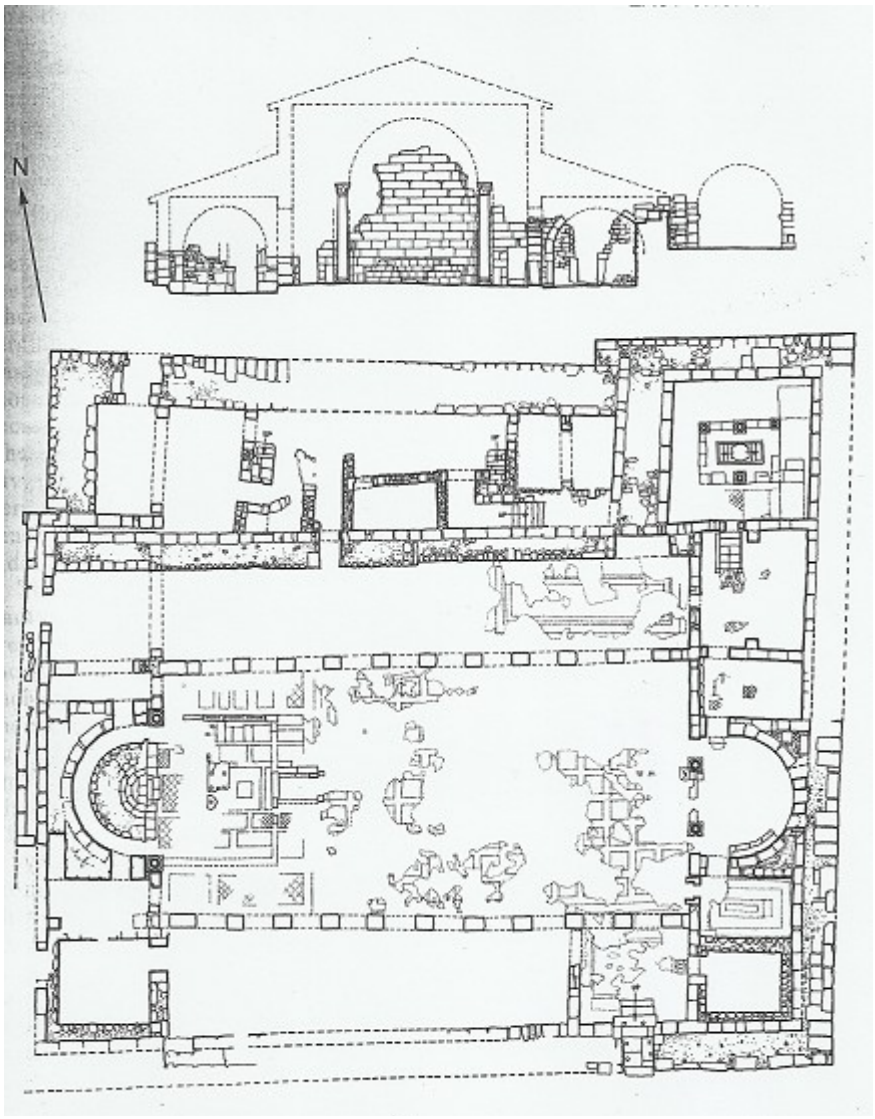
Map of Cyrene. Beechey 1828, taken from Luni 2008, 14.

Figure 8:



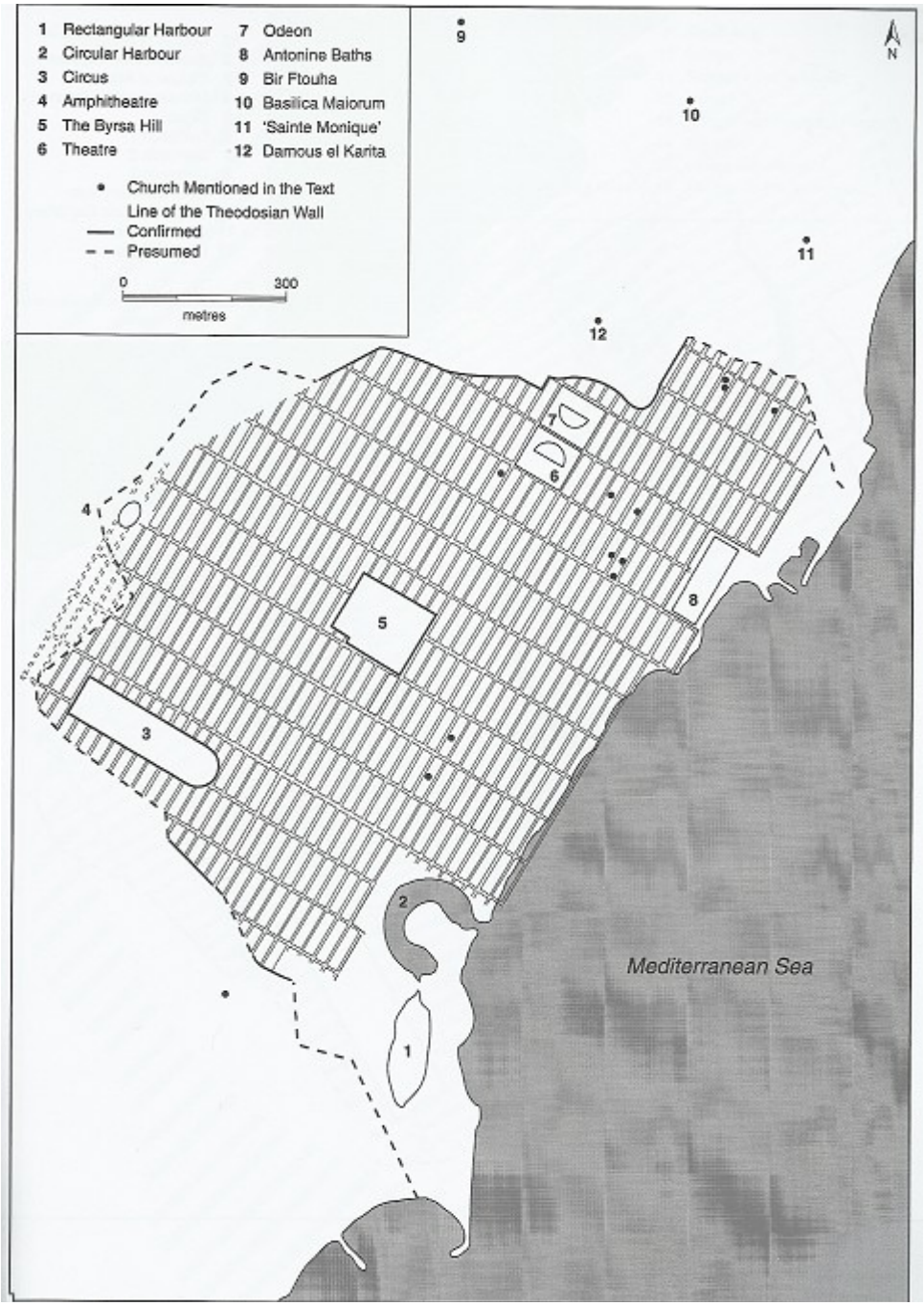
Valley Street, Cyrene. Taken from Goodchild (eds) Reynolds 1976, 217.

Figure 9:



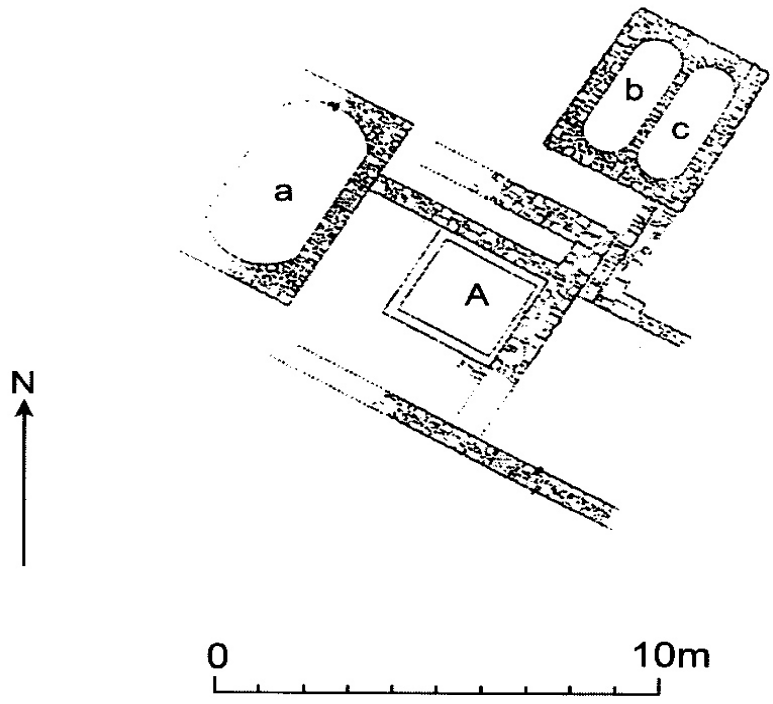
Plan of the East Church, Cyrene. Taken from Ward-Perkins et al 2003,135.

Figure 10:



Map of Carthage. Taken from Sears 2007, 147.

Figure 11:



Maison de la Cachette, Carthage. Taken from Leone 2013, 161.

Bibliography

Augustine, D*e Civitate Dei.* (eds). Dombart, B. and Kalb, A. 1955. Brepols.

Eusebius. *A select library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene fathers of the Christian Church. A New series.* Translated by Schaff, P and Wace, H. 1890. Oxford.

John of Nikiu: *The Chronicle of John : Bishop of Nikiu.* Translated by Charles, R. H. 1916.

Rufinus, *The Church history of Rufinus of Aquileia, books 10 and 11.* Translated by Amidon, P. R. Oxford and New York.

Salvian, *On the Government of God.* 1930. Columbia University Press.

Sozomen, *The ecclesiastical history of Sozomen : comprising a history of the Church, from A.D. 324 to A.D. 440.* Translated by Walford, E. 1855. London.

Synesius, *The letters of Synesius of Cyrene*. Translated by Fitzgerald, A. 1926. London.

Quodvultdeus, *Livre des promesses et des prédictions de Dieu.* Translated by Braun, R. Paris.

Victor of Vita. *History of the Vandal Persecution*. Translated by Moorhead, J. W. 1992. Liverpool.

Assman, J. and Czaplika, J. 1995. Collective Memory and Cultural Identity. *New German Critique* No. 65.

Bauer, A. and Strzygowski, J. (eds) 1906 “Eine alexandrinische Weltchronik. Text und Miniaturen eines griechischen Papyrus der Sammlung W. Golenišcev,” Denkschriften der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften. *Philosophisch-historische Klasse* 51.2 Vienna.

Bayliss, R. 1999. Usurping the urban image: the experience of ritual topography in late antique cities of the near east in Baker, P. (ed) 1999, *TRAC. 98, Proceedings of the Eighth Annual theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference*. Oxford. p. 59-71.

Bayliss, R. 2004. *Provincial Cilicia and the archaeology of temple conversion*. Oxford: BAR No. 1281.

Brett, M. and Fentress, E. 1997. *The Berbers: The Peoples of Africa.* Oxford.

Brown, P. 1967. *Augustine of Hippo: a biography.* London.

Cameron, A. 2010. *The Last Pagans of Rome*. Oxford.

Caseau, B. 1999. Sacred Landscapes. In Bowerstock, G.W. et al (eds) *Late Antiquity: a Guide to the Postclassical World.* Cambridge MA. p. 21-59.

Cavafy, C. 2008. *The Collected Poems.* Translated by Sachperglou, E. Oxford.

Deichmann, F. W. 1939. Früchristliche Kirchen in antiken Heligtümern, *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archälogischen Instituts,* 54: p. 105-36.

Deichmann, F. W. 1954. Christianiserung II (der Monumente), *Reallexicon für Antike und Christentum,* 2: p.1228-41.

Duval, N. 1989a. L'évêque et la cathédrale en Afrique du Nord. In *Actes du XI Congres International d'Archéologie Chrétienne.* Città del Vaticano. p. 345-399.

El-Abaddi, M. 1990. *The Life and Fate of the Ancient Library of Alexandria*. Mayenne.

Ennabli, L. 1989. Results of the International Save Carthage Campaign: the Christian Monuments. *World Archaeology* Vol 18, No 3.

Ennabli, L. 1997. *Carthage : une métropole chrétienne du IVe à la fin du VIIe siècle.* Paris.

Ensoli Vittozzi, S. 1992. Indagini sul culto de Iside a Cirene. In Mastino, A. (ed) 1992. *L'Africa romana, atti del IX convegno di studio, Nuoro 13-15 dicembre*

1991. Sasari. p. 167-250.

Favro, D. G., 1996. *The Urban Image of Augustan Rome.* Cambridge.

Frankfurter, D. 1998 (a). *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance*. Princeton.

Gauckler, M. P. 1899. 'Découvertes à Carthage', *CRAI* 156-165.

Goodchild, R. G., Reynolds, J. M. and Herington, C. J. (eds). 1958. The Temple of Zeus at Cyrene. *PBSR* 26. p. 30-62.

Goodchild, R.G. 1976. *Libyan studies: select papers of the late R.G. Goodchild*. London.

Haas, C. 1997. *Alexandria in Late Antiquity: Topography and Social Conflict*. Baltimore and London.

Hahn, J., Emmel, S. and Gotter, U. 2008. *From Temple to Church: Destruction and Renewal of Local Cultic Topography in Late Antiquity.* Brill.

Howden, G. 1991. Constantine's Porphry Column: The Earliest Literary Allusion. *The Journal of Roman Studies*. Vol 81. pp. 119-131.

Hurst, H. R. 1999. *The Sanctuary of Tanit at Carthage in the Roman period.* Journal of Roman Studies Archaeology Supplementary Series 30. Portsmouth, RI.

Kane, S. and White, D. (2007) 'Recent developments in Cyrene's chora south of the Wadi bel Gadir', *Libyan Studies* **38**: 39-52.

Kristensen, T. M. 2009. Religious Conflict in Late Antique Alexandria: Christian Responses to "Pagan" Statues in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries CE. In Hinge, G. and Krasilnikoff, J. (eds). 2009. *Alexandria: A Cultural and Religious Melting Pot.* Aarhus.

Kristensen, T. M. 2010. The Display of Statues in the Late Antique Cities of the Eastern Mediterranean: Reflections on Memory, Meaning and Aesthetics in Sami, D.Speed, G. (eds). 2010. *Debating Urbanism: Within an d Beyond the Walls AD 300-700.* Leicester.

Lavan, L. 2011. Political Talismans? Residual 'Pagan' Statues in Late Antique Public Space. In Lavan, L. and Mulryan, M. (eds) 2011. *The Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism'.* Leiden.

Lavan, L. and Mulryan, M. (eds) 2011. *The Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism'.* Leiden.

Leone, A. 2007(a). *Changing townscapes in North Africa from late antiquity to the Arab*

Conquest. Bari.

LeGlay, M. 1953. Les Steles a Saturne de Djemila-Cuicul. *Libyca* 1. p. 36

Lepelley, C. 1979. *Les cites de l'afrique romaine au bas empire, Vol. 1: La permanence d'une civilisation municipale.* Paris.

Lepelley, C. 1981. *Les cites de l'afrique romaine au bas empire, Vol. 2: Notices d'histoire municipale.* Paris.

Lepelley, C. 1994. 'La musée des statues divines. La volonté de sauvegarder le patrimoine artistique païen à L'époque théodosienne', *Cahiers Archéologiques 42: 5–15* , Paris.

Luni, M. 2001. 'Le temple dorique hexastyle dans le sanctuaire découvert hors de la porte sud à Cyrène', *CRAI*: 1533-1552

Luni, M. 2006. *Cirene 'Atene d'Africa'* Rome.

MacCormack, S. 1990. Loca Sancta:the organisation of sacred topography in late antiquity. In Ousterhout, R. (ed) 1990. *The Blessings of Pilgrimage.* Urbana and Chicago. p. 7-40.

McKenzie, J. S., Gibson, S. and Reyes, A.T. 2004. Reconstructing the Serapeum I n Alexandria from the Archaeological Evidence. *The Journal of Roman Studies*. Vol. 94. pp. 73-121.

McKenzie, J. S., 2007. *The Architecture of Alexandria and Egypt, 300 BC – AD 700*. Yale.

Merrills, A. H. (eds) 2004. *Vandals, Romans and Berbers: New Perspectives on Late Antique North Africa.* London.

Milojevič, M. 1997. Retrofit ecclesia: a non-conforming building type, *Byzantinische Forschungen.* 24: p. 343-66.

Nora, P. (1989) 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire', *Representations* 26, 7–25.

Purcaro, V. 2000. *L' Agorà di Cirene II.3: L' area meridionale del lato ovest dell' Agorà.* Rome.

Reynolds, J.(eds) 1976. *Selected Papers of the late R. G. Goodchild.* London.

Roques, D. 1987. *Synésios de Cyrène et la Cyrénaïque du bas-empire.* Paris.

Rowe, A. and Rees, B.R. 1955. The Great Serapeum of Alexandria. In Rowe, A. 1955. *A Contribution to the Archaeology of the Western Desert*. Manchester: The John Rylands Library.

Saradi-Mendelovici, H. 1990. Christian attitudes toward pagan monuments in Late Antiquity and their legacy in Later Byzantine centuries, *DOP*. 44: p. 47-62.

Sears, G. 2007. *Late Roman African Urbanism: Continuity and Transformation in the City.* Oxford: BAR No. 1693.

Stucchi, S. 1975. *Architettura Cirenaica*. Rome.

Teichner, F. 1996. Signa venerandae christianae religionis: on the conversion of pagan sanctuaries in the dioceses of Africa and Aegyptus. *LibSt* 27. p. 53-66.

Ward-Perkins, J. B. and Goodchild, R. G. (eds). 2003. *Christian Monuments of Cyrenaica.* London.

Wharton, A. J. 1995. *Refiguring the Post Classical City.* Cambridge

Welles, C. B. 1967. *The excavations at Dura-Europos.* New Haven.