

Late Antique Archaeology • Volume 1

*Theory and Practice
in Late Antique
Archaeology*

Edited by

Luke Lavan and William Bowden

BRILL

THEORY AND PRACTICE IN LATE ANTIQUE ARCHAEOLOGY

LATE ANTIQUE ARCHAEOLOGY

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LATE ANTIQUE ARCHAEOLOGY: AN INTRODUCTION

LUKE LAVAN

THE JUSTIFICATION OF A SPECIALISM

Late Antique Archaeology has been slow to emerge. Although Late Antiquity has been a legitimate period of study for the past thirty years, archaeologists have generally preferred to remain as Roman, Early Medieval, Byzantine or 'Christian'. This partly reflects the long-term perspectives common in archaeology. It also reflects the fact that Late Antiquity was a period of profound change, causing some people to look in one direction, others in another. That said, there are strong reasons for distinguishing a late antique archaeology. Most important of these is the now broad acceptance that in territories that later made up the Middle Byzantine empire, the 7th c. saw a rupture in economic life, urban development and rural settlement.¹ By these same criteria the Mediterranean of the 3rd-6th c. A.D. looks very Roman; in contrast the miserable world of middle Byzantium offers only forms of continuity, not continuity of scale. It is the overall scale of society that seems to many archaeologists to be the most straightforward way of organising history. In these terms, Late Antiquity, in both East and West, essentially belongs to the ancient world; only in Egypt and the Levant is it difficult to identify profound changes in scale by the later 7th c. Late antique archaeology sits most comfortably as a sub-period within Roman archaeology, not as part of Western or Byzantine Medieval studies.²

Nevertheless, there are some arguments for distinguishing late antique from Roman archaeology as a whole. This cannot be done in terms of rural settlement, production, trade or technology, except

¹ For a recent view of the 'rupture', within later Byzantine territories, see M. Whittow, *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium (606-1025)* (London 1996) 53-68, 89-95.

² This is not to deny that ruptures happened in different regions at different times during the 5th to 7th c. but it is intended to describe broad patterns of change in the period as they relate to the Mediterranean.

in peripheral regions where change comes early. It does however seem possible in terms of urban, religious or military archaeology. Here, long-term changes within Roman society and external pressures create a recognisably distinct late antique situation. For urban history this means dealing not just with new political and religious structures, but also with new problems in the types of evidence we have, with the re-use of old architectural structures, a decline in clearly ideological planning and the use of less well-defined building types. Some of this ground has of course been covered by Christian archaeology, but the specificity of this sub-discipline does not satisfy archaeologists who wish to study society holistically in terms of broad structures; tracing specific cultural traits across radically different periods holds little appeal. There does therefore seem some justification for an archaeology of Late Antiquity. The idea of this series of books is essentially to support this development, through bringing together new and established scholars to address general themes, such as rural settlement, social structure, and the economy. As such, it does not intend to exclude historians: indeed historians frequently show themselves better at synthesising archaeological information than their archaeological colleagues.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL THEORY IN LATE ANTIQUE ARCHAEOLOGY

This volume is based on two conferences held in 2001 under the banner of “Late Antique Archaeology”, at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford and the Swedish Institute in Rome: examining respectively “New Research, Method and Practice” and “Topographical Studies in Late Antiquity”. Both were intended to provide a strong foundation for the series by examining a range of topics from theoretical and methodological viewpoints. This was something of a gamble as late antique archaeology tends to be extremely empirical; we did not even dare put the word “theory” in the conference title. The volume that has resulted will not be easily recognisable to anyone familiar with theoretical archaeology as being part of this genre. This is the result of deliberate choice. Theoretical archaeology is a highly developed area of thought, especially in Scandinavia, the UK and the US. Nevertheless, it is widely recognised that there is something of a gulf between those literate in theory and the rest of the archaeological community. This is less strong in prehistory, but for much

of historical archaeology, especially classical archaeology, it is striking; one frequently gets the impression that many classical archaeologists have never even heard of theoretical archaeology. There have been heroic efforts made by the *Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference*, based in the UK, to bridge this gap, through a series of annual conferences. However, this work inevitably tends to reflect the predominantly British interests of the researchers active in the group and their attachment to theoretical ideas developed by pre-historians. Some topics do engage with the Mediterranean, but these tend to relate to the early Roman period. Those that have been written on Late Antiquity are sadly not widely read in the mainstream of Mediterranean empirical scholarship.³

The lack of penetration of archaeological theory into mainstream Roman and late antique archaeology is, intellectually, to be regretted. A healthy awareness of the shape of our ideas and the problems of our evidence cannot but bring benefits. Nonetheless, it is fair to say that the widespread feeling of caution about applying theoretical archaeology to the historical archaeology of the Mediterranean is probably justified. It is very difficult to transpose the interpretative tools developed primarily in prehistory to a cultural zone rich in texts. Here interpretation is largely bounded by information from written sources and many approaches widely accepted elsewhere in archaeology can seem inappropriate in their terminology and presuppositions. Before the wider scholarly community that is Late Antique Studies, one cannot talk about the ‘elite’ without talking about *curiales* and senators, one cannot talk about ‘social life’ without slaves or *humiliores*, or cannot talk about economics without the *annona*, or identity without reference to *Romanitas* or Christianity. Work that does not do this is just not taken seriously.

Thus, if archaeological theory is to make a strong contribution to late antique archaeology, it will be necessary to work out the usefulness of different approaches in terms of very specific issues—to try out new ideas and intellectual frameworks whilst engaging fully with the possibilities of rich Mediterranean evidence, both archaeological and textual. The rationale behind this volume was to encourage work of this kind, by examining theory and methodology relating to specific topics with which scholars are currently engaged. Con-

³ For a review of the volumes from this series see R. Laurence, “Theoretical Roman Archaeology”, in *Britannia* 30 (1999) 387-90.

sequently, these papers reflect the present theoretical development of the discipline rather than how anyone might wish it to be: authors consider problems using concepts with which their late antique colleagues are familiar rather than addressing themselves to a wider theoretical audience in archaeology. All of these papers were produced by invitation, many to a 'brief'; contributors were frequently asked to write in ways in which they had not done before. The result of this has sometimes been closer to theory, sometimes closer to pure practice. Thus, although this volume contains papers that do not always resemble 'theory', they do represent the thoughts of a group of scholars who are not only well-disposed to reflection, but who are also fully engaged with the problems and possibilities of the evidence.

TRADITIONS OF SCHOLARSHIP IN LATE ANTIQUE ARCHAEOLOGY

The integration of theoretical archaeology into Mediterranean scholarship is in fact actually a relatively unimportant issue within late antique archaeology. Much more serious basic disagreements exist between scholars over fundamental aspects of method. These deserve not to be omitted from this volume, lest it create an entirely unrepresentative idea of the intellectual climate within the subject. The archaeological community is deeply split in its approaches and interests; so deeply, that different factions neither respect nor learn from the research done by their colleagues working in other intellectual traditions. Originally, we did hope to have an essay for this volume on "Ideologies and agendas in late antique archaeology", but this proved too large a task to be accomplished rigorously in the time available. However, to outline the nature of the problem I here offer a brief sketch of some of the most important divisions between different scholars and some reflections on their consequences. This should give readers some idea of the nature of the theoretical and methodological difficulties which late antique archaeology currently faces. My description, which is conceived as a struggle between two opposing traditions, is simplified and to some extent stereotyped, but does in one way or another come close to reality.

The first tradition is centred on Paris, though it has supporters in Oxford and in Classics and Religion departments around Europe and America. It is probably best labelled as 'Continental'. Scholars in this tradition tend to have had a formation in ancient languages

or art history. They are used to the idea that the role of archaeology is fairly minor: the intellectual landscape of which they are a part is dominated by literary studies. Philology is king and serious history is done from a detailed knowledge of Greek, Syriac and Armenian, not pot sherds. In some quarters there seems to be an ingrained belief that the proper study of “Byzance” is confined to literary production and art. The view of many Anglo-American researchers, that textual history is a collection of half-truths waiting to be demolished by the “wrecking-ball” of archaeology, has no room here. Archaeology is normally treated as an extension of art history and architecture. Fieldwork reflects this, being geared mainly towards the recovery of monumental architecture, and where it exists, art. Clearance excavation is preferred, though it is not universal. The choice of sites to be investigated is most revealing: they are monumental urban centres, or rural monasteries and villas, not the habitations of the poor.

Work in this first tradition is before everything extremely empirical, not inclined to wide-ranging intellectual speculation: objects and architecture are studied, not artefacts in use or human spaces. This keeps research primarily focused on ‘elite’ concerns, which have produced the most visible record; this can mean also concentrating in archaeology on what the literary sources want to tell us about: political and religious life. The broad question-based approach of the *Annales* school, which has inspired so many northern European archaeologists does not really interest this group. There is also little time given to theoretical reflections, such as those of philosophers and critical theorists working in Paris itself. Most researchers still do ‘scientific’ work, and see their data as straightforward, not complex. To do a good piece of work one must amass as much information as possible in a catalogue, with attached literary sources. This can result in some very solid research and produce useful works of reference. However, buildings and objects seem frequently to be studied for their own sake, as ‘architecture’ and ‘art’, rather than as ‘artefact’, that is, a source of historical information about the people who used them. Methodology is also very conservative. Established approaches are generally respected, and the patronage of a former master may be reflected by a grateful desire to carry on the approaches he laid down. Indeed this tradition as a whole does tend to attract people with more conservative instincts, in politics and in other spheres of life. Again, it must be said that this first ‘Continental’ tra-

dition does *not* dominate all work done in Paris, and *certainly not* all that done in France. It exists elsewhere on the European continent, in some German and Italian work and in Greece, and in one or two places in the UK. Archaeological work done in association with Dumbarton Oaks also largely fits into this group.

A second major tradition is represented by archaeologists mainly from Britain and America and their collaborators in Spain, Italy and France. It can be rather uncomfortably labelled ‘Atlantic’. It is a component of an archaeological tradition that has developed primarily in Northern Europe, especially in Great Britain and Scandinavia, and in North America, that is puts much faith in modern fieldwork techniques and has derived much of its research agenda from anthropology. This tradition is also now particularly strong amongst early medieval archaeologists in France and Italy, particularly those based in archaeological units. Scholars in this second tradition are renowned for the high quality of their fieldwork, whether excavation or survey. They are also noted for publishing their excavations more fully, with serious artefactual studies. This tradition has produced massive quantities of new information for the study of Late Antiquity. Indeed, the location of high-quality excavations can have the curious effect of inverting the geography of the Roman and Early Medieval world in the minds of Atlantic scholars. For many archaeologists in the second tradition, serious study of the Roman empire, from well-excavated sites, is confined to Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, parts of France and Northern Italy. The Mediterranean bizarrely becomes a ‘backwater’.

Even Turkey is considered to be something of an archaeological desert as almost no farms or villages have been dug there and urban excavations have been poor quality. Richard Reece has recently discussed this issue in relation to coin reports—whilst perhaps two hundred substantial sites in Britain have full coin lists, there are only around 20 sites in the Mediterranean with lists of over 300 coins, of which only two sites, so far, include details of context.⁴ The intellectual effects of geographical biases in the quality of evidence can be strong; Hodges and Whitehouse’s claim that early medieval commerce in the North Sea overpowered that of the Mediterranean is perhaps the best example; other scholars have suggested that their

⁴ This remark was made in the spoken version of the paper presented in this volume, at Oxford in March 2001.

conclusions simply reflect the underdevelopment of Mediterranean archaeology for the same period.⁵

Another characteristic of the second tradition is that it is generally more question-based and feels that empirical research should be subordinated to the investigation of issues; data should not dominate. Having strong concepts and methodology is more important than having read all previous bibliography. Scholars in this tradition are also frequently familiar with mainstream theoretical archaeology, though this is far from universal. Many of them share a broad interest in studying the total structure of society, from the bottom up. These concerns can attract scholars with left-wing sympathies, though researchers of other political viewpoints share the same interests. Nevertheless, research that concentrates on elites (emperors, palaces, icons and silver) is sometimes felt to be slightly morally suspect. British archaeologists and field archaeologists working in some other countries often exhibit great scepticism about the usefulness of textual sources. These archaeologists have often had a pure archaeological formation, rather than a training in ancient languages. They are also iconoclastic rather than conservative. They are prepared and are indeed expected to attack works of the previous generation, even if it is based on very high quality scholarship. They take particular glee in disproving, through archaeological evidence, the text-based assertions of Moses Finley or A. H. M. Jones on the late antique economy, urbanism or rural settlement. These topics represent the areas of ancient life in which such scholars are most interested. They would however also like to start rewriting social, political and religious history from archaeological evidence. This looks, at best, like a much more difficult direction to pursue. In their eyes 'good' historians are those, like Chris Wickham and Mark Whitton, who are prepared to accept defeat by seriously incorporating archaeology into their source base.

TENSIONS BETWEEN THE TWO TRADITIONS

How do these two traditions interact? In some areas they exist more or less side by side: Christian archaeology contains elements of both. Some Mediterranean archaeologists in the Atlantic tradition do try

⁵ R. Hodges and D. Whitehouse *Mohammed, Charlemagne and the Origins of Europe: Archaeology and the Pirenne Thesis* (London 1983). S. J. B. Barnish "The transformation of classical cities and the Pirenne debate" in *JRA* 2 (1987) 385-402.

seriously to take texts into consideration. However, there is also a large area where the two traditions simply do not interact; indeed, they seem to be in competition, without any substantial dialogue. This is not because strong opinions are not held. Scholars in the Continental tradition can be very free with their criticisms in book reviews, as in the “Bulletin Critique” of *Antiquité Tardive*. Scholars in the Atlantic tradition tend to keep their views private or reserve them for specialised publications which will never get into the libraries of the former. The main fractures on the fault line between the two groups are as follows: firstly and most seriously, work by Atlantic archaeologists is often ignored by their Continental colleagues, and textually-based work by the latter is not fully taken into consideration by the former: this is partly because bibliography does not coincide: the Continentals want to study architecture, religion and politics, the Atlantics economy, technology and rural settlement. Where it does coincide, the Continental attitude can be that the archaeological work of the Atlantics is impressive in its nuts and bolts but may be unscholarly in its bibliography and use (or non-use) of literary sources: it is just ‘bad’. Much traditional Continental work is on the other hand seen by Atlantics as ‘boring’ and lacking in historical meaning, because it does not have a strong enough conceptual framework. Atlantics like to laugh in private about the stylistic dates offered for buildings by architectural historians in the Continental tradition, or about the assertions of their philological colleagues who try to write economic history. Continental scholars are meanwhile supremely confident of their mastery of the literary sources; they are also unimpressed by the intensity that is poured into single sites by Atlantic archaeologists to reveal facts that they consider relatively banal, that do not relate to what they hold to be core areas of human cultural achievement: “I don’t care if people ate shish kebab at Amorium”, as one professor put it to me recently.

CHANGE?

Much of the last twenty years has seen the gradual erosion of the Continental tradition to the benefit of the Atlantics. The greatest inroads have been made in Spain, Italy and French field archaeology. For iconoclastic Atlantic archaeologists this development is of course inevitable: it is written into a Darwinian script, whereby the new vital organism of rigorous late antique field archaeology is to

triumph over the decaying mass of architecture, Christian archaeology and literary studies. However, this vision of the future is more than a little naive. Both groups are in fact currently experiencing periods of vitality, and it is far from clear which will make the biggest contribution to the subject over the next few decades.

Above all, there is no sign of revolutionary change in Paris. Philology and textual history remain firmly enthroned, with architecture and 'objects as art' in attendance. This is in large part simply because these subjects remain popular in their traditional format. Most significantly, the enormous amount of excavation done over the past twenty years in Israel and to a lesser extent in Jordan has largely worked within the first tradition, hunting for architecture through clearance excavation. In contrast, the methodological puritans of northern Europe and their allies in urban archaeology elsewhere have seen their budgets cut and are now doing far fewer research excavations than back in the 1970 and 1980s. In the most dynamic region for fieldwork, the Near East, Atlantics are now faced with the galling spectacle of clearance archaeology triumphing over stratigraphic excavation, making one hundred years of methodological refinement in their own work irrelevant. From the pages of recent preliminary reports of excavations in Israel and Jordan it sometimes seems that the future of late antique archaeology is in clearance excavation by mechanical digger rather than in single context recording. Such encounters are not confined to excavation: at a recent conference on Roman mosaics it was noted that several contributions by scholars from the Continental tradition, made absolutely no use of the typological classifications developed by other scholars, in this case mainly French, since the 1970s. There are equally examples of serious textual work done by researchers working in the Mediterranean not being taken into consideration by die-hard opponents of literary sources in the UK.

CONCLUSION

These somewhat stereotyped comments provide some idea of the context in which the papers presented in this volume are being written. It is a picture of different intellectual traditions not learning from each other and especially not being prepared to hold a serious dialogue about theory and methodology. I do not imagine that this book will really provoke this; it is more likely to be read by one group

and ignored by the other. It is possible that only open polemic in major journals can bridge the gap. However, the beginnings of a debate may be developing. We are coming closer together, partly as a result of growth of the European Union. Many of the younger scholars in this volume have not only spent time at foreign universities, but have taken entire degrees abroad. Some of them have been so profoundly influenced that they can only write in the language that their university course was conducted in, though they have chosen to return home and start work there. In such a situation it seems that the time is ripe to start a single methodological debate about our differences, to be somewhat less tolerant than we have been, to say what we really think, and to challenge each other over excavation methodology, historical theory, the legitimate use of texts and bibliographic rigour. Whilst this will be a difficult debate, it is surely in everyone's long term interest to build a Late Antique Archaeology that is as strong as it can be, in both theory and practice.

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I would like to thank all contributors to both this volume and the two conferences, as well as all those who helped organise and subsidise both events. Bryan Ward-Perkins was co-organiser at Oxford and advisory editor for this volume. Barbara Polci acted as partner for the session in Rome. The Craven Fund Committee, the Oxford Byzantine Studies Committee, and the British Academy provided generous grants towards the cost of the Oxford meeting, which was also supported by the Association for Late Antiquity. The Swedish Institute played host to our meeting at Rome, where Arja Karivieri and Olof Brandt were especially helpful. Olof's evening tour of the excavations beneath St Lorenzo in Lucina was particularly memorable. The British School at Rome made possible an important presentation by James Crow and Richard Bayliss, through the loan of a data projector. Teresa Shawcross, Susanne Bangert, Daniel Farrell and Anna Leone also provided practical assistance during the conferences. Carlos Machado worked hard to prepare an index. I am also grateful to the Leverhulme Trust for funding my academic year 2001-2002, which made the editing of these papers possible. Finally, my thanks especially to Julian Deahl for agreeing to publish these papers and to him, Marcella Mulder and others at Brill for their work on this manuscript.

PART ONE
IDEOLOGIES AND AGENDAS

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IDEOLOGIES AND AGENDAS IN LATE ANTIQUE STUDIES

AVERIL CAMERON

ABSTRACT

This paper sets a framework by discussing the trends and approaches observable in the study of Late Antiquity over the last few decades. It takes up the points made in a recent article by A. Giardina and considers the models of continuity and change adopted in several recent collective publications. It questions whether the current enthusiasm for the ‘long Late Antiquity’, and the privileging of cultural over social and economic history are likely to continue in their present form. It draws attention to differences of emphasis between historians and archaeologists, and between analyses of the Eastern and Western parts of the empire, and stresses the complementarity of historical and archaeological approaches.

The aim of this paper is to set a framework for the essays which follow and which address themselves to the current work of late antique archaeologists. It considers the discipline of late antique studies as a whole, rather than specifically that of late antique archaeology, and therefore poses a question to be answered by archaeologists themselves as to whether, or how much, their own discipline follows the same overall trends. The title itself was suggested by the organizer of the conference at which this paper was originally presented, and it immediately raises the question of how an ideology might differ from an agenda. To this I am inclined to answer that in relation to current and recent scholarship on Late Antiquity, agendas abound, as I shall indicate below. By this I mean programmes or characteristics—current topics and questions, in which we see a striking degree of conjunction between different scholars. How far these agendas rest on serious ideologies is perhaps a further question. It has been suggested recently that there is indeed a recognisable type of current writing on the history of Late Antiquity which rests on a number of identifiable ideological assumptions, even if these are not

explicitly stated by the author.¹ I have addressed this contention elsewhere² and will return to it below. But the first part of what I have to say is more about agendas.

One cannot fail to be struck by the number of recent publications which in different ways do set out agendas for late antique studies. I am thinking for example of the Harvard *Guide to Late Antiquity*, or the volumes published and in press arising from the European Science Foundation project of the 1990s on *The Transformation of the Roman World*, or volumes XIII and XIV of the new edition of the *Cambridge Ancient History* (the latter are, significantly, additions to the original publication, which ended with volume XII and did not even take the reader to the end of the reign of Constantine).³ The work of Peter Brown has generated its own industry of discussion and commemoration.⁴ But we also have such reflective collections such as *Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity*, together with a volume edited by Stephen Mitchell and Geoffrey Greatrex on the problem of ethnicity.⁵ There are also numerous publications on late antique urbanism, while several recent source books for student use also impose agendas through their selection and presentation of material.⁶ So in a different way, one could argue, does the Translated Texts for Historians series published by Liverpool University Press, with ever-growing numbers of volumes appearing from the late antique as well as the Early Medieval period. Late Antiquity is not only firmly established; it is generating its own methodological discourse and it is highly self-conscious.

¹ See Giardina (1999); Liebeschuetz (2001a).

² Cameron, Av. (2002, with longer discussion of some of the points made here; but on the notion of 'decline' see the debate in Lavan (2001).

³ Bowersock, Brown and Grabar (edd.) (1999); *CAH XIII and XIV*: Cameron and Garnsey (edd.) (1998); Cameron, Ward-Perkins and Whitby (edd.) (2000). Discussion of vol. XIII with reflections on the changing conceptions of the period: Marcone (2000). The impact of the *Journal of Roman Archaeology* and the many subsidiary volumes already published has been great, though it is not considered directly here.

⁴ Notably the debate, "The world of late antiquity revisited", *SymbOslo* 72 (1997) 5-90; the collection of papers in the *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 6 (1998) and Howard-Johnston and Heywood (edd.) (1999). See now Brown (2002) especially 74-112.

⁵ Mathisen and Sivan (edd.) (1996); Mitchell and Greatrex (edd.) (2000); see also Miles (1999) on identity, a further popular subject at present.

⁶ Maas (2000) and Lee (2000), both from the same publisher, Routledge (publishers have their agendas too, or are quick to spot the agendas of others); see also Valantasis (2000).

It may be convenient to start with a look at the *Harvard Guide*, edited by Bowersock, Brown and Grabar, and published in 1999. It has eleven introductory chapters, and then nearly five hundred pages of entries on late antique topics and individuals. It has pictures, although not perhaps very many in proportion to the text or in comparison to the importance now being placed on visual evidence. Its subtitle is “A Guide to the Postclassical World”. As far as I am aware as a contributor, the titles of the introductory essays were planned by the editors and, as is appropriate in a volume of which one of the editors is Oleg Grabar, they include a chapter on Islam. Here then is the first agenda, or rather pair of agendas: we have here the model of the “long Late Antiquity”, according to which continuity is assumed up to and into the Abbasid period, and Islam is deemed to belong to the world of Late Antiquity, not to mark a decisive break. This scenario is also evident in Garth Fowden’s book *Empire to Commonwealth*, in Glen Bowersock’s *Hellenism in Late Antiquity* and in Peter Brown’s *The Rise of Western Christendom*, even if not quite in the latter’s *The World of Late Antiquity*, published in 1971.⁷ In the workshops organised by the Late Antiquity and Early Islam project, the tendency has been likewise to minimise the degree of rupture brought about by the Arab invasions, and indeed to minimise the numbers and organisation of the invaders.⁸ In response to these trends, however, a sense of unease can be detected, and it is noticeable how frequently scholars are now choosing to discuss the question of long-term change as a methodological issue. Chris Wickham has warned that the continuity model overlooks the profound impact caused by the breaking-up of the fiscal system of the Late Roman state, and Wolfgang Liebeschuetz has recently argued strongly for a return to rupture and decline, coming earlier in the West than in the East but clearly apparent also in the East before the end of the 6th c.⁹ Nevertheless he does so against a strikingly prevalent model of continuity. But the chronological range of the *Guide* is not its only striking feature: further broadening of scholarly range can be seen in the geographical and cultural spheres. Nearly all the essays in the *Harvard Guide*, with the exception of those deliberately limited by their subject matter, range over the whole panorama of Christianity, pagan-

⁷ Fowden (1993); Bowersock (1990); Brown (1996), cf. Brown (1971).

⁸ See the essays in Cameron (1995).

⁹ Liebeschuetz (2001b).

ism, Judaism and Islam, and move geographically from the barbarian West to the Eastern empire and its borders with Iran. Religious and cultural diversity on the one hand, and the world of the Eastern Mediterranean on the other, can be said to have come into their own as central topics of historical attention.

Another index to current agendas in Late Antique studies consists in the titles of books now being published. To judge from current book catalogues, gesture, deportment and emotion are becoming the newly fashionable topics, following in the wake of gender and masculinity (or more frequently ‘masculinities’). In the *Harvard Guide*, too, time, memory and identity are themes as important as invasion and political narrative. In contrast, despite a noticeable return to narrative in history-writing on more modern periods, when it comes to Late Antiquity narrative is out of favour. Indeed, the narrative chapters which do appear in *CAH XIII* have recently been described by a reviewer as ‘oldfashioned’.¹⁰ The very inclusion of narrative has become an occasion for remark. Whatever one may think of this as a historian of Late Antiquity, it does have the unfortunate effect that much of the huge amount of contemporary work in the field goes unread by wider audiences.

As for the choice of entries in the second section of the *Harvard Guide*, it would be interesting to compare their range and emphasis with that of the Late Antique parts of the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*¹¹ and with the recent source books I have mentioned. A. D. Lee’s book is explicitly called *Pagans and Christians in Late Antiquity*, and Michael Maas likewise has substantial chapters on Christianity, polytheism, Judaism and Islam. Both reflect the emphasis on religion as part of cultural history that we have been familiar with since Peter Brown. But Maas’s book also has a wider coverage, including for example chapters on Women, Philosophy and Medicine, as well as including in the Roman Empire section law, education and literature. The *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, which begins its chronological coverage with Late Antiquity, stands out from all these works, in that it deliberately minimises the traditional concentration on spirituality, asceticism or theology in existing Byzantine scholarship and favours material culture. This is very conspicuously a reflection of the approach and preferences of the work’s main editor, Alexander Kazhdan.

¹⁰ So Fergus Millar in *JRA* 13 (2000) 754-55.

¹¹ Kazhdan (1991).

Michael Maas, in company with the *Harvard Guide*, also gives space to war, the army and military affairs. Indeed I detect in the latter a certain turning away from the earlier Brownian emphasis on cultural history towards law on the one hand and barbarians and warfare on the other. Thus Brent Shaw's chapter in the *Harvard Guide* is entitled "War and violence", and it is preceded by Patrick Geary on "Barbarians and ethnicity".¹² I will argue however that both themes are approached in ways that differ from the traditional ones.

New emphases can be seen. Certainly we have seen an enormous interest in asceticism, and some very subtle and powerful work has been done in this area. However, there are other emphases: take for example Judaism, now a strong player in the field. Leonard Rutgers has recently written about Jews in late antique Rome; they are prominent in Bowersock, *Hellenism in Late Antiquity*, and the theme of Christian/Jewish disputation and polemic has been a fertile topic.¹³ There are several reasons for this: one is perhaps the impact on Late Antiquity of the important recent work that has been done on the Jewish diaspora in the early empire, which shows what an important role Jews played in the cities of the empire. A second reason is surely the growing mass of archaeological evidence for synagogues and synagogue decoration, especially from Israel, dating up to the 7th c. A third comes from a more sophisticated reading of the Christian texts concerned with Jews and Judaism.¹⁴ But finally and fundamentally, notwithstanding the title of Richard Lim's essay in the *Harvard Guide*,¹⁵ the history of Late Antiquity is not nowadays written in terms of a 'triumph' of Christianity, or primarily by Christian or confessional historians. Late antique religious history, once seen in terms of a 'victory' of Christianity over paganism, is more often now studied for itself. There is consequently more room for the non-Christian groups, pagans and Jews alike.

Another theme, or rather another tone, which emerges from most of these works is that of optimism. Whereas it was formerly taken as a given that antiquity gave way to the dark ages, and that the Islamic invasions brought rupture, the *Harvard Guide* and other cur-

¹² Shaw (1999); Geary (1999), with useful bibliography.

¹³ For some of the extensive bibliography see Cameron (1996), with Stroumsa and Limor (edd.) (1996); cf. also Rutgers (1995).

¹⁴ Fundamental work in this area has been done by Gilbert Dagron, Vincent Déroche and Bernard Flusin, especially for the 7th c.; see the articles in *Trav.Mém* 11 (1991), with Flusin (1993).

¹⁵ Lim (1999).

rent works deal in a postclassical world with an identity of its own, not inferior but different. In a sweeping Braudel-like study which dissolves chronological divisions in a seamless synthesis, Peregrine Hordern and Nicholas Purcell have claimed the Mediterranean itself as the given over many centuries, rather than the various ruptures which may have occurred during the long timespan which they cover.¹⁶ Rupture spelt decline and fall: continuity signals, if not quite optimism, at the least authorial neutrality.

If we turn back to barbarians, what do we see? Frontiers are ‘shifting’; barbarians, once a non-problematic category, are seen now as undergoing in their different ways a process of ethnogenesis, becoming rather than being. The latter process is the subject of distinguished work in the European Science Foundation project publications, especially by Walter Pohl and others.¹⁷ The wider topics of ethnicity and acculturation are the subjects for example of the recent and very interesting collection edited by Mitchell and Greatrex. Although naturally variable in its content, as collections are, it collectively addresses, through both textual and archaeological evidence and in different contexts, the very definition of ethnicity. While we may have become uncertain of our categories the overall effect has been to provide a stimulus. Historians and archaeologists are rethinking their old assumptions in a fruitful way.

Serious work in the style of A. H. M. Jones on the Late Roman administration has been less to the fore in the last decades, perhaps not least because it has seemed to offer less excitement than cultural and religious history. One might suggest that in recent years it has been advanced through ongoing publication of the epigraphy of particular cities, such as Aphrodisias and Ephesus, or through publications on fiscal and economic matters, but Andrea Giardina takes English-speaking scholars to task with some justice for their neglect of institutional and administrative history.¹⁸ Peter Brown comments on what he sees as a changed emphasis from the old administrative

¹⁶ Hordern and Purcell (2000).

¹⁷ From many examples see Pohl and Reinitz (edd.) (1998) and cf. Geary (1999).

¹⁸ However there is an ongoing French tradition in this area, as also in late antique epigraphy and economic history: cf. e.g. the papers in *Les gouverneurs de province dans l'antiquité tardive*, *Ant Tard* 6 (1998); Durliat (1990). A French Late Antiquity would be represented on the one hand by the journal *Antiquité Tardive*, with its legacy from L. Robert, and the active promotion of N. Duval, and on the other by the work of Gilbert Dagron, with much greater emphasis on symbolic forms, on the imperial power and on the force of Christianisation and Orthodoxy.

history towards a new ‘symbiotic’ model of power.¹⁹ I would myself place Ramsay MacMullen’s book on *Corruption and the Decline of Rome*,²⁰ which returns to the traditional emphasis on the supposed corruption of the later Roman governing class, in the category of moral rather than administrative history. Yet definitional issues arise in this field as well. Christopher Kelly for example fruitfully examines the meaning of the term ‘corruption’, as commonly applied by modern writers to the Late Roman bureaucracy (and indeed the very word ‘bureaucracy’ carries a heavy load of negative connotations for us). Kelly points out in contributions both to *CAH XIII* and to the *Harvard Guide* the delicate balancing act on which the Late Roman state in practice rested. Patronage and monetary favours are hardly unknown in modern states, but the simple transference of modern judgements to late antique situations must be resisted. Interpreters of Late Antiquity need in addition to look towards different markers, for instance the visibility and show of court ceremonial.²¹ We live in a media age and it is to be expected that we should now also be conscious in our subject matter of such issues as performance, competition and visibility. Equally, we are more likely now to be able to understand the working of imperial and official power in terms of complex negotiations and transactions rather than in the simple black and white of old.

When I was teaching the Roman empire in London in the 1970s and 1980s there was a major emphasis among ancient historians on the Roman economy and consequently on the size of the army, as the main object of state expenditure. A prevailing model of the circulation of money and the role of production, recalling Moses Finley’s classic book, *The Ancient Economy*,²² played down trade, presented towns as centres of consumption and not production and saw the Roman army through its buying power, chiefly around the frontiers of the empire, as the main agent for the distribution of coin, which was then clawed back through taxation. Such a model was extremely powerful. It pervades Michael Hendy’s massive book on *The Byzantine Monetary Economy*, which covers the Late Antique period and treats

¹⁹ Brown (2002) 81-85.

²⁰ MacMullen (1988).

²¹ Kelly (1998), (1999).

²² Finley (1973, revised edition 1985, 1999); the model was especially associated with the names of Keith Hopkins and (for an earlier period) Michael Crawford.

the 4th to the 15th centuries as in some sense a unity.²³ This model has since been subjected to revision and the importance of trade has subsequently been re-emphasised. In relation to our present topic, the volume of production and type of exchange in Late Antiquity has consequently become a major topic of discussion, especially in relation to the effects of the Vandal conquest of North Africa on long-distance trade.²⁴ But the model in its pure form provided a tempting dichotomy between the high empire, when it was argued to have prevailed, and the 3rd c. and later when it seemed in many ways to begin to break down. We wrestled hard at that time with the ‘3rd century crisis’, only to find that even there the questions were about break versus continuity. Diocletian too, once the unquestioned bringer of change and a decisive shift towards Late Roman bureaucracy and repression, has been dissolved into a process rather than an individual. Not so long ago the ‘3rd century crisis’ was a main topic for students and teachers alike; now it has become something of a mirage. Rather than worrying so much about the meaning of what is essentially ambiguous evidence, historians focus directly on Late Antiquity *per se*. That may be because now historians often do not come to Late Antiquity from a background in the early empire, and simply lack that point of comparison. The 3rd c. is of vital interest if it is a question of understanding the move from ‘high empire’ to ‘Late Antiquity’, but much less so if one’s starting point is the Medieval West or Byzantium. And if I feel the lack of a correspondingly simple model for the late empire, it is probably as well that we do not have it, in that we are left free to reflect the actual complexity and diversity of the data.

Many archaeologists and many historians have written about towns in Late Antiquity, not least recently Gianpietro Brogiolo and Bryan Ward-Perkins.²⁵ It might be said that urbanism has become the major issue confronting Late Antique archaeologists, just as the 3rd century crisis was a main issue a generation ago for Roman historians. There was no simple answer then, and nor is there now. It is a question of changing priorities: to quote from Marlia Mango, “The period

²³ Hendy (1985).

²⁴ See Garnsey, Hopkins and Whittaker (edd.) (1983). For discussion of his critics, see Finley’s new chapter, “Further thoughts”, in Finley (1985) 182, and see the foreword by Ian Morris to Finley (1999) xxviii for ‘the new consensus’, which allows for a much greater volume of production and trade. For commerce in the 6th c. see Hodges and Bowden (1998).

²⁵ Brogiolo and Ward-Perkins (1999); Brogiolo, Gauthier and Christie (2000).

425 to 600 is traditionally seen as active and innovative only in the building of churches. However, although this was much more marked in the East than in the West (reflecting the greater political stability and prosperity of the former), the 5th and 6th c. also saw considerable continuity of the ideal and reality of the ancient city.”²⁶ Both regionalism and the priorities of the scholarly investigator play their part. Differences between East and West have been well recognised, in terms of the prosperity of the East in contrast to the signs of decline in the West.²⁷ Interpreting textual evidence is often difficult, not least in the case of Procopius’ *Buildings*, one of the central texts for Late Roman archaeologists. After reading the papers from a recent colloquium on this work I concluded that there was still little real agreement either about the text or about the topic.²⁸ Central though it may now be as a subject, late antique urbanism also involves difficult judgements as to the use of *spolia* in new building or restoration, or about change of use, churches being built, peristyle houses being subdivided and so on. *Towns in Transition*, the careful title of the collection edited by Neil Christie and Simon Loseby,²⁹ suggests change but leaves the reasons open. This change operated on many fronts, not purely economic, through patterns of thought, social practice, religious development—the calendar, for instance, modes of burial, the development of Christian charity, family patterns. In the East (though not until the latter part of our period) alley-ways redolent of Medieval souks began to overlay the Roman street plans. Yet the evidence is far from consistent. It is indeed perhaps the very variety of the data that gives rise to so vast an amount of publication. But it can also all too easily lead to over-generalisation which needs to be corrected by the most careful attention to local particularity.

If I had to point to one recent development in late antique studies that I find striking, it is this greater degree of sensitivity to the meaning of evidence. Probably the most obvious field in which this

²⁶ Mango (2000) 971.

²⁷ Whitby (2000) 727, writes for example of “rapid and catastrophic collapse” in the Balkans from the 6th c.; similarly Hodges (1998) 11, writes of “catastrophic decline” in the West from the 6th c.

²⁸ Cameron (2000b); on the question of texts versus material evidence cf Brandes (1999) 36-41; Ward-Perkins (2000) 315, contrasting current scholarship with that of a generation or more ago: “Nowadays, one is more likely to find accounts that bypass the contemporary written texts, or dismiss them as hopelessly unreliable.”

²⁹ Christie and Loseby (edd.) (1996).

sensitivity has been displayed is that of hagiography, where there are many examples of new and very much more nuanced readings. Undoubtedly this is a product (even if unacknowledged) of the deconstructive turn. One such reading that I can think of at once is Derek Krueger's recent book on the *Life* of Symeon the Fool, which he sees as providing a way of understanding Eastern cities in the 6th c.³⁰ Approaching similar issues from a different angle, Elizabeth Key Fowden's recent book, *The Barbarian Plain*, takes a single pilgrimage site, that of St. Sergius of Rusafa, and weaves together historical, textual and archaeological evidence to bring it to life.³¹

There are countless other examples of this imaginative reading of texts. Late antique historians have in fact applied to their subject matter techniques and approaches which have become widespread in wider Classical and Medieval scholarship. The new reading (of visual as well as textual material) is apparent in the secondary literature on all periods of the empire, not only Late Antiquity. Jás Elsner entitles one section of a recent article dealing with the Constantinian period "Rethinking the Roman empire".³² We are invited to ask why it needs to be rethought, and then to experience how contemporary scholars are rethinking it.

It is not entirely unreasonable to ask in what ways the Late Antiquity of historians differs from the Late Antiquity of archaeologists. The simple answer is that it should not: surely everyone's aim should be to integrate all kinds of evidence as closely as possible. Without however denying a considerable number of striking exceptions, it is fair to say that there is indeed a gap. The Late Antiquity of many historians, especially of the Brown school, is characterised by such themes as competitiveness, ascetic rivalries, imaginative leaps and by the visibility of saints and saints' lives. By contrast, the Late Antiquity of most archaeologists rests on the attempt to make sense either of urban remains or of the scattered evidence of settlement and survey archaeology. In either case he must attempt to put this into a historical framework provided by other kinds of evidence and by secondary literature. It is salutary to remember how difficult it is to match the archaeological evidence to the texts, even when texts are available. There is rarely a good fit, and not infrequently there is no textual evidence whatever to which an archaeologist may turn.

³⁰ Krueger (1996).

³¹ Fowden, E. Key (1999).

³² Elsner (2000) 194-95.

Conversely, the case of Procopius's *Buildings* warns against the too-ready attempt to interpret physical evidence in ways that fit a superficially credible ancient text.

One field in which the use of written evidence has been transformed is in the reading of the Late Roman legal texts. A good deal of work has concentrated lately on the Theodosian Code.³³ Attention has been drawn again to the fact that Late Roman law operated in practice rather differently from how it seems from the textbooks, not least in those areas in which it overlapped with barbarian law codes. A generation ago it was still possible to see the later Roman empire as a society characterised by a rigid and legalistic bureaucracy, for which the main evidence lay in the law codes. Ramsay MacMullen questioned this in the 1960s, making the simple observation that repetition of the substance of a law is likely to mean not that there was heavy-handed repression, but rather that the law was being disregarded or unenforced.³⁴ Thirty or more years later, the Late Roman government has emerged as formidable, to be sure, but also much weaker than we once thought, relying on rhetoric where it lacked the real power of enforcement. An increased awareness of regionalism, and recognition of the sheer variety of forms of Late Roman urbanism make wide generalizations of the older type less plausible or appealing. At the same time the public role of bishops in relation to their own cities and to the imperial and provincial government has emerged as a central theme, which incidentally, makes the study of official buildings in late antique towns and their relation to bishops' houses and church buildings a very timely subject.³⁵ To return to the legal texts, it is no longer possible to read the Late Roman law codes as other than highly complex texts, whose interpretation requires great sophistication, and whose practical impact on individual provinces can be extremely varied.

However, there are other areas in which the pendulum is swinging back. I detect some questioning of what is seen in some quarters as too great an emphasis on cultural history, as conveying, one might say, too much transformation and not enough rupture. Take Peter

³³ Harries and Wood (edd.) (1993); Harries (1999).

³⁴ MacMullen (1964), a then classic article; he returned to the issues in MacMullen (1988). On these models of Late Roman government see the revisionism of Brown (2002) 81.

³⁵ Bishops; see Kelly (1999) 186, with bibliography at n. 103; also Brown (2002) 67-70 and *passim*.

Heather in *CAH XIV*, surveying the old problem of the “fall of the Western empire”: “The nature of this crisis has been much debated and in some ways does not now appear so cataclysmic as it did to older generations of historians”.³⁶ He goes through (in a very judicious and fair way) the now-familiar arguments which are used to soften the sense of rupture, and which indeed have led almost to the disappearance of the problem of the fall of the Western empire from recent Anglo-Saxon scholarship.³⁷ Nevertheless he concludes, “None of this means, however, that the fall of the Roman empire was anything other than a revolution. ... As we have seen, the process of fragmentation was protracted and violent.” Heather is open to ideas of acculturation, and, furthermore, to acculturation as a two-way process: many Romans worked for the barbarians, and for a variety of motives, just as Goths had been drawn into Roman service.³⁸ But in his model barbarians did not merely assimilate; they actually invaded, and destruction did occur. Military history is also enjoying a comeback, and as a corollary, the Late Roman army has re-emerged as a massive fighting machine, for example in two recent works by Michael Whitby.³⁹

All this strikes me as completely natural, indeed inevitable. History, after all, proceeds by response and reaction. However, I would also like to suggest, especially when surveying Wolf Liebeschuetz’s vigorous defence of the utility of the concept of decline,⁴⁰ that we are also seeing here in part a manifestation of the type of conservative populism that is apparent at the moment in history-writing and literary criticism in more modern periods. The historiography of Late Antiquity came late to the debates long familiar to literary critics and reviewers, and even to the debates on methodology among historians. Again, while Peter Brown may have brought about a sea-change in the way that people have written about Late Antiquity in our generation, it has taken place largely without overt discussion of historical method. Rhetorical criticism and the deconstruction of texts are methodologies which have entered scholarship in the field, especially in the work of younger American writers on Late Antiquity

³⁶ Heather (2000) 31; see also on continuity versus rupture Wood (1998) 231.

³⁷ For this see for example Bowersock (1996).

³⁸ Heather (2000) 29.

³⁹ Whitby (1995); similarly, despite a section on “western collapse”, Whitby (2000).

⁴⁰ Liebeschuetz (2001a).

who are very much aware of the power of language and the importance of representation.⁴¹ But serious debate about the nature of history and how to write it is noticeably lacking in their work.

Nonetheless, we are all influenced by these debates, even when we may claim otherwise. The intensity of the general debate about history can be seen vividly in the reaction to a book published in 1997 by Richard Evans, historian of 20th c. Germany and Regius Professor at Cambridge, and called *In Defence of History*.⁴² Evans's book is a relatively conservative defence of the contention (against the attacks of postmodernists) that history has to do with the truth. Nevertheless it offers a very well-balanced discussion of the issues, and if Evans is reluctant to go all the way down the road to relativity, neither is he an unreconstructed conservative: indeed, he ends with a chapter entitled "Objectivity and its limits". In the event, he has been attacked bitterly not merely by postmodernists, so-called, but also by their opponents. In a sixty-page *Afterword* to the revised edition he defends himself against critics from both the left and the right. The former nowadays are not so much Marxists as postmodernists. The 'right' is represented by neo-conservative historians and biographers of the modern period such as Niall Ferguson, Andrew Roberts, Michael Burleigh and others, historians whose general approach—no-nonsense, massive documentation, political history, the return of narrative and so on, has been often observed. Their counterparts are to be found equally among contemporary British reviewers and critics, for example, Paul Johnson (also writes history), Auberon Waugh, Simon Jenkins and others, a group recently identified, by John Carey, the Merton Professor of English at Oxford and a prolific reviewer and critic, as "conservative populists and anti-Modernists". Evans was clearly astonished, and no doubt flattered, to be attacked as vigorously by this group as by the more extreme postmodernists whom he was gently criticising. This *Afterword* is well worth reading for those among historians of Late Antiquity who think that they do or can stand aside from the vigorous and at times acrimonious debates which into Evans enters.

Since I have myself recently been described as a cultural relativ-

⁴¹ Particularly evident in the mass of literature on asceticism and hagiography: see Cameron (2002) 180-83. Pilgrimage and pilgrim sites, especially the shrines of saints, constitute a field where archaeologists, historians and critics of texts can meet: see Cameron (2002) 176.

⁴² Evans (1997), (2000).

ist, and since the conclusion to *CAH XIV* will certainly appear to reinforce that view,⁴³ more is perhaps needed. All historians, including myself, must believe that writing history is a matter of integrity and faithfulness to the truth of the evidence; this is also Evans's position. But the supposed anti-ideology of the naive realist will not do. It is not relativism to recognise that the questions we ask as historians are—in part at least—a matter of what is going on in our own experience. Why else was the fall of the Soviet Union greeted as “the end of history”?⁴⁴ Why did the European Science Foundation choose to sponsor a project on *The Transformation of the Roman World*, if not with an eye to explaining the formation of Europe in the light of contemporary agendas, and why is it currently supporting one on the formation of a European identity in the early modern period? Why is it that Marxist historiography has become muted, to say the least, whereas not long ago Marxist agendas and Marxist ideology were so very much alive in the historiography of the later Roman empire?⁴⁵

Why is it, indeed, that many late antique historians *are* so much more aware of the pitfalls of representation, if not that they have been influenced by the philosophical and literary movements of the last generation? The historian does not sit in his or her study immune to other influences. The prevailing models of ancient urbanism in the last half century were strongly influenced by theoretical writing, whether by Weber, Polanyi or Marxist historiography. There may have been a move away from such influences, at least in Anglo-Saxon writing. But other influences have taken their place: late antique studies are not immune from the culture wars. We cannot stick our heads in the sand, appeal to ‘commonsense’ and pretend that what is happening in other disciplines, or in the world around us, is of no importance, and indeed, even if we claim to do so, we will not succeed.

Some agendas, such as pluralism, regionality, fragmentation, the

⁴³ *CAH XIV*, 972-81.

⁴⁴ Famously by Fukuyama (1992).

⁴⁵ So also Giardina (1999) 172-73; for discussion of Marxist interpretations in late antique archaeology see the memorable review-article by C. Wickham, Wickham (1988). Ian Morris, in a foreword to Finley (1999) xxv, traces the change from social and economic, even if not Marxist, history to cultural history, remarking that this is partly a generational issue and that many departments nevertheless still house ageing (sic) “radical economic and social historians who defend their turf against the cultural historians”.

questioning or the redefinition of knowledge, and the creation of new identities are, at one and the same time, political and historical.⁴⁶ In espousing some of these I have been accused of following the Blairite Third Way. A deeper and fairer reading would not say that these are New Labour themes, but rather that they are the agendas of today. In this sense, history cannot be but political, in the sense that we ask the questions of the past that our own experience leads us to ask. If this is true of history, how much more is it true of archaeology? Even without considering the intellectual trends that I have been describing, all archaeologists are aware of the extent to which national, financial and cultural agendas underlie the direction and choice of excavation, not to mention the interpretation of the results. Indeed the weight of such influences is felt all the more strongly in that money, local and national politics and practicalities are all heavily involved. For historians the pressures may be less direct, but they may be more insidious for that.

The title, “Ideologies and agendas in late antique studies” is a timely one. The events of 2001 delivered a severe blow to the Blair project and the multi-cultural turn, together with the benign and optimistic view of cultural development, rightly identified by Andrea Giardina as a major theme in Anglo-Saxon scholarship in the last generation. The end of communism is now seen to have brought a range of other problems with it. The history of Islam and Judaism alike, each such a major component of the Harvard *Guide's* view of Late Antiquity, invite complex reassessment. It may be that we can expect to see the optimistic view of the ‘long Late Antiquity’, which has held the field in recent years, replaced by a less benign model that pays as much attention to conflict and division as to assimilation and cultural interaction. The nature of imperialism, not a prominent topic in recent Late Antique scholarship, will surely require renewed attention, especially in case of the Eastern empire. Not only does this point in the direction of a return to the older topics of the Late Roman government and economy, but this attention ought also to include consideration of the state structures of Byzantium. There is indeed a striking difference between those who approach Late Antiquity from the perspective of the Early Medieval West, and those whose perspectives derive from the ancient world or from the East. This is

⁴⁶ Hodges (1998) 4-5, also draws attention to the politics of the theme of the ‘transformation’ of the Roman world.

especially obvious in archaeological writing, where scholars who work mainly on the West are used to taking a longer view chronologically. The questions they ask, and the agendas they bring, are often very different from those of the historians whose work is more focused on the Late Roman state itself. This was very apparent during the meetings of the *Transformation of the Roman World* project, and is equally clear in the publications that have resulted from it.⁴⁷ For all the huge amount of attention devoted to ‘transformation’ in the Late Antique period, in East and West alike, the remarkable tenacity of the Byzantine imperial endeavour usually goes unremarked, as though the history of the Byzantine state is something completely separable from that of Late Antiquity or the later Roman empire.

A concluding note therefore. A high proportion of current late antique archaeology is concerned with cataloguing the signs of the break or decline marking the ‘end of antiquity’ which can be observed on many sites, even if not in all. But that very enterprise rests on pre-existing notions of periodization, and those notions of periodization are inexorably built in to the very scope and coverage of a large number of archaeological publications. It seems to me that the issues now emerging for late antique historians and archaeologists alike, and which I have just outlined, demand a different kind of chronological and subject division, one which can trace change over a longer period of time, and in so doing allow for a deeper appreciation of its complexity. Many archaeologists are in the position, or imagine themselves to be in the position, of having little evidence after the end of Late Antiquity from which to attempt some answers. But the archaeologist and the historian are indeed complementary. In this period perhaps more than any other, the historian needs the archaeologist, and the archaeologist needs the historian.

⁴⁷ The debate for the West also remains particularly focused on towns; Ward-Perkins (2000) 315-19, makes the point that whereas the study of rural life, villages and rural economy for their own sake has become a major theme on Eastern agendas, this has not yet happened for the West.

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PART TWO
SOCIAL LIFE

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ARCHAEOLOGY AND LATE ANTIQUE SOCIAL STRUCTURES

JEAN-PIERRE SODINI

ABSTRACT

The archaeological remains of late antique sites can be interpreted in terms of what they can tell us about ancient social structures. This is more straightforward when examining the social structures of the upper classes, who possessed the attributes that allow them to be recognised as such. These attributes occur on a Mediterranean-wide basis and include lavishly decorated residences (in both urban and rural environments), monumental funerary structures within churches, splendid garments, precious table wares and implements, and the insignia of rank in the form of jewellery such as gold brooches, fibulae, or belt buckles. The middle class is also traceable in the cities (mostly in the form of craftsmen) and in the countryside, where small landowners and peasants could share similar lifestyles, marked in some regions (such as the Near East and Asia Minor) by conspicuous levels of wealth. However, the lives of these middle classes could change abruptly, casting them into poverty and consequently making them difficult to trace archaeologically. Nonetheless, judicious interpretation of the material remains in tandem with the evidence of documentary and epigraphic sources allows us to make some suggestions as to the social structures of Late Antiquity.

INTRODUCTION

“Each city encloses at least two cities hostile to each other: the one of the poor, the one of the rich” Plato, *Rep.* 422

The aim of every young field archaeologist is not only to correctly identify and isolate excavated archaeological contexts, but also to understand past societies through the material remains contained within them. In this he hopes he will be more successful than the historian, who has fewer surviving sources at his disposal. These sources may include laws kept through the ages and whose applica-

tion is uncertain, lives of saints, epic poetry, or court chronicles focused on the deeds of an emperor living in a capital amidst a closed company of courtiers. The archaeologist on the other hand considers his discipline as concerned with reality, as opposed to the rarefied life of the court or the way of life that is represented in elite writings. He or she is therefore proud to be accused of burrowing into the garbage cans of the past.

As our hypothetical young archaeologist grows up, however, the story becomes more complicated. Once he has established his facts he is forced to interpret them. The focus of his studies will move from buildings to their occupants, raising issues regarding their status in the society in which they lived. The answers given by his results also raise a wide range of unanswered questions. For example, if he has excavated a splendid house or a magnificent mausoleum, or found jewellery or silver vessels in an undisturbed grave, it could be said that their owner was rich, perhaps a *curialis*. Alternatively, if the same house has been found in a poor state, with worn pavements, narrowed or blocked doors, and with pits and post-holes cut into the floors of the rooms, the history of the occupants will be different, and our archaeologist will have to address this. He will have to examine the differing status of the occupants, and attempt to determine who was poor and who was rich and perhaps whether the later occupants were newcomers. These different extremes of wealth and poverty are, superficially at least, easy to determine. However, even these ostensibly simple definitions are not static or invariable, but instead may fluctuate between the 5th and 8th c., even within the same city. It is still more difficult to introduce degrees of differentiation among the wealthy, the middle class, and the poor. What are the criteria with which to establish these categories and differentiate between them? Do we use diet and skeletal composition, the occurrence of utilitarian or luxury implements, or the size of the house to determine the category to which the occupants should be assigned? In this simple case, what do we classify as a luxurious residence, a well-to-do apartment, or a modest abode? Equally, material culture may not necessarily be a reflection of status or position within a social hierarchy. Should we rank an ascetic monk, learned and from a wealthy background, among the poor? We are constantly confronted, therefore, with the possibility, indeed the likelihood, of significant errors of interpretation. We cannot determine in many cases the social status of a peasant (whether freeholder, *emphytheot*, farmer, or *colonus*),

or the profession of a citizen. We cannot hope to retrieve individual histories; how, for example, could archaeology trace the social ascension of the mother of Theodore Sykeotis, who rose from being a prostitute and innkeeper to being the wife of ‘a leading citizen of Ankyra, the *protector* David’.¹

Nonetheless, despite these restrictions, it is possible in some cases to gain a greater understanding of the differing social status of those we can trace in the archaeological record. The easiest of these to trace is the aristocracy.

THE ELITES

As Ross Balzaretto has written, “The archaeological study of power is difficult”.² I would add, however, that it is easier to study power than to study its absence. It is certainly easier to detect wealth through archaeology than it is to detect poverty; by its nature a mosaic is more likely to survive the archaeological process than is a floor made of beaten earth. The rich are visible; they possess lands, houses, goods of every kind, even their dress indicates their social importance. Their graves contain dress implements that provide incontrovertible evidence of their status. We also have many historical signs of the presence of elites, some of them contained within legal texts, such as the *Notitiae Dignitatum*. These elites may include the head of the empire (emperors and their retinue and the *honorati*, civilians and military), the high clergy (patriarchs, bishops, abbots of major monasteries), the *curiales* whose power was progressively concentrated in the hands of the wealthiest inhabitants (often named *proteuontes*), whether they were from bouletic origin or not. These last were also called *possessores*, a term whose exact definition is much debated.³ Some of these *honorati* (for example the *Ekdikos* or *Defensor Civitatis*, the *Pater Poleos*), the bishop and the *possessores* (or *ktêttores*), frequently appear in 6th c. imperial edicts and inscriptions.⁴

¹ A good analysis of the *Life* of Théodore of Sykeon is provided by Mitchell (1993) II 122-50.

² Balzaretto (1994) 104.

³ The best explanation of this term is to be found (*pace* Durliat (1996) and Delmaire (1996)) in Laniado (1997) and (2002). See also Liebeschuetz (1996) and Holm (1996).

⁴ Keil and Wilhelm (1931) n. 197A; Feissel (1999).

Properties of the Elites

In every part of the late antique empire there were huge imperial estates. During the 5th c., the Church acquired extensive properties, and there was a class of wealthy landlords in almost every city. However, as Paul van Ossel has remarked, “property is a notion that archaeologists cannot study”.⁵

In fact archaeology can rarely define the extent of estates on the ground. A possible exception, rightly emphasised by van Ossel, is the so-called Langmauerbezirk, a wall that surrounds a large number of rural settlements in the area between Trier and Bitburg.⁶ This large walled property (220 km², fig. 1), built during the reign of Valentinian, clearly belonged to a single owner, which may well have been the emperor himself. This is indicated by the fact that the *Primani*, (troops belonging to the imperial guard) (*comitatenses* or *pseudo-comitatenses*), participated in the wall construction. However, enclosing such a stretch of land with a wall is an unusual solution. In general, the limits of a property were preserved in notarial acts or in the records of tax payments kept by the fisc. Many historians have tried to evaluate the extent of these estates, which were not always in a single location but rather were sometimes dispersed through different regions. The most convenient analysis for our purpose is that of J.-M. Carrié who defines this type of land exploitation as “*citadine*” land-use (in which land was possessed by individuals living in towns) or “*curiale*” land-use.⁷ These were important properties of varying size, which were generally given to farmers who paid a rent. The increase in land taxes during the 4th c., and the rise of land prices in the 6th c., threatened the prosperity of those *curiales* who did not have access to extra revenues (i.e. through patronage from highly ranked officials) or could not practice direct farming with agricultural labourers. Those who managed to increase their income from land became the *proteuontes* or *possessores* already mentioned. The rise of a dynamic peasant middle class was also part of the weakening of the traditional curial order.

⁵ Van Ossel and Ouzoulias (2000); Balmelle and Van Ossel (2001).

⁶ Van Ossel and Ouzoulias (2000).

⁷ Carrié (1997).

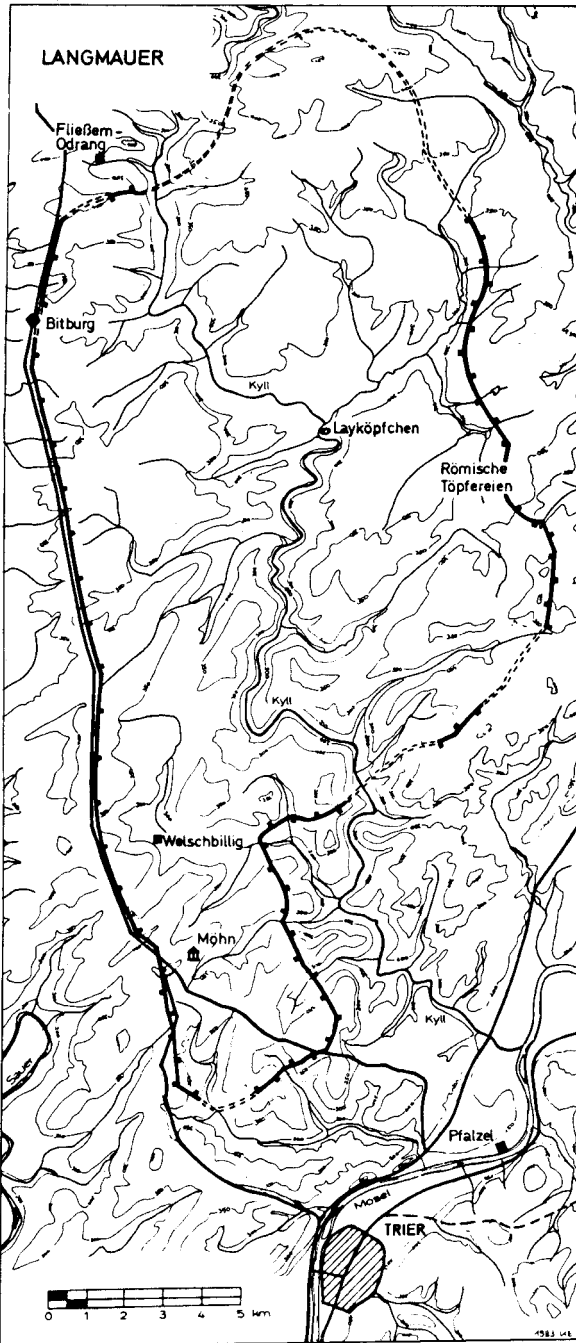


Fig. 1. Langmauerbezirk (Van Ossel P. (1992) 95 fig. 3). For fig. 2 see plates.

Houses and Residences

We are in better position to get some idea of the wealth of the upper classes when we examine their houses. During recent decades, archaeologists have added some splendid discoveries to the known series of Late Roman imperial residences, which set the fashion for this '*architettura di potenza*'. These include the Palatine in Rome,⁸ the Maxence 'villa' on the Via Appia,⁹ just outside Rome, a possible example at Milan and further residences at Trêves, Sirmium, Thessalonica, and Constantinople, as well as retirement residences (for which Split can be seen as a prototype). The most splendid example is that of Romuliana, the palace built by Galerius at his birthplace. The site, known for years as Gamzigrad, has been identified with certainty through the discovery of an archivolt inscribed with the words *Felix Romuliana*. Prior to the finding of this inscription, the attribution of the site to Galerius and its identification as an imperial residence had been vehemently contested. Among the spectacular finds from Gamzigrad, of relevance to this discussion are the pilasters (fig. 2) with representations of emperors (two retired Augusti (*seniores*): Diocletian and Maximian, two Augusti: probably Galerius and Licinius, and two Caesars: Maximinus and Constantine). These pilasters may refer to the imperial college reconstituted at the Conference of Carnuntum in November 308. On the top of the hill of Magura outside the walls were two mausolea, accessed via a tetrapylon, in which Romula and her son Galerius were buried and deified. As Timothy Barnes has noted, the excavations provide more than just the location.¹⁰ They confirm the assertion of Lactantius (*Mort. Pers.*) that Galerius had planned as early as 305 to retire after celebrating his *vicennalia* on 1 March 312. Galerius' son, Maximinus Daia, born at Sarkamen, near Romuliana, also started to build a palace in the place of his birth, as well as two mausolea for his mother and himself. When he was murdered in 313, construction ceased but he had managed to have his mother cremated and her ashes placed on the top of a grave pit found in the mausoleum. A jewellery hoard of 29 pieces, which was discovered in a niche in the crypt, constitutes a further class symbol that can

⁸ Augenti (1996).

⁹ Cullhed (1994).

¹⁰ Barnes (1996) 552.

be associated with a definite person, a point to which we shall return.¹¹

To the examples mentioned above can now be added the 'Palais de la Trouille' in Arles which may well have been the palace of Constantine.¹² Study of many of these palaces, including the imperial palace at Constantinople and the palace of Galerius at Thessalonica, continues today. The absence of more extensive archaeological data, however, means that some doubt still surrounds Bardill's recent interpretation of the palace at Constantinople.¹³

a. *Governors Palaces and Praetoria*

Luke Lavan has recently compiled a catalogue of buildings, which are similar to the grandiose residences described above and which have been identified as the residences of late antique governors.¹⁴

The identification of some of these buildings as governor's palaces is still questionable. The *praetorium* at Gortyn, for example, in its earliest phase appears to be have been a Hellenistic gymnasium connected to a stadium.¹⁵ During the Roman period this was replaced by *thermae*, which also functioned in association with the stadium. In 382-383, following the earthquake of 365, the *praeses* Ecumenius Dositheos Asklepiodotus erected a '*kainon praitorion*' in honour of the emperors Gratian, Valentinian and Theodosius. This obviously relates to the tribunal built on the NW corner of the *thermae* already mentioned, and may even have been restored by Heraclius after the earthquake of 618. The existence of residential rooms that could have housed the governor is not yet firmly established.¹⁶

Other *praetoria* are even more controversial, as in the case of the huge 4th c. villa discovered at Cercadilla, 600 m. from the walls of Cordoba (fig. 3). Hidalgo initially identified it as a *palatium* of Maximianus Herculius, an attribution opposed by Arce who suggested that it could be a governor's palace, a hypothesis that is also

¹¹ Popovic and Tomovic (1998).

¹² Heijmans (1998).

¹³ Bardill (1999). Another attempt to interpret the areas discovered so far, taking greater account of the terraces is in progress by Mrs Bolognesi and the French publishers of the second part of the *Book on Ceremonies*. The Turkish archaeological service has now undertaken new excavations in the palace, and we may gain perhaps more convincing attributions for the various rooms.

¹⁴ Lavan (1999) and (2001).

¹⁵ Di Vita (2000).

¹⁶ *Ibid.* LVII-LXIX and 363-364: 'palazzetto' reusing the triconich could be appropriate.

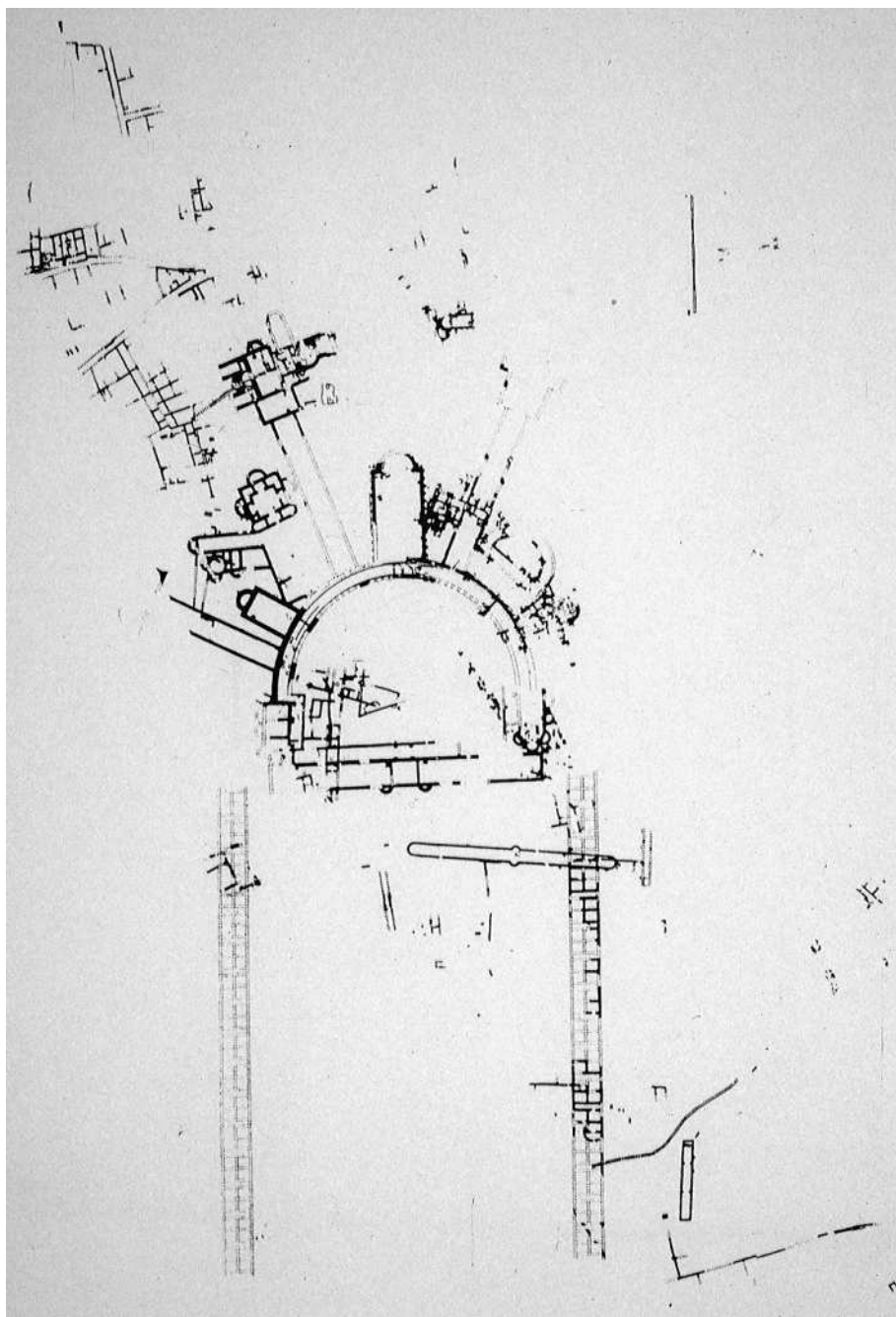


Fig. 3. Cercadilla (Arce J. (1997) 295 fig. 1).

open to question.¹⁷ At Caesarea, meanwhile, two palaces have been unearthed. One of these, built on a promontory by Herod, was the governor's palace during the Roman period,¹⁸ while the second was built while Caesarea was a Roman colony and housed the *procurator provinciae* in charge of the financial affairs of the province. After the 4th c., the lower terraces of the Herodian palace were partly abandoned, although the remainder continued perhaps to serve as a *kastron* for the *dux* in charge of military affairs. At the same time the former *praetorium* of the procurator became the seat of the Byzantine governor. A recently discovered 5th c. decree, listing "fees payable for specific judicial services and procedures of the governor's civil court," confirms the palace's identification as the *praetorium* in Late Antiquity.¹⁹

High ranking officers in the army may have used similarly luxurious buildings (as already seen in Caesarea). In Mediana, near Naissus, a splendid villa may well have been the residence of a *dux* in Constantinian times, although the complex has not been excavated in its entirety. The bases of two porphyry statues record the *diasemotatos (vir perfectissimus)* Roimetalkés. According to Ammianus Marcellinus (XXVI 5, 1), during Valens' and Valentinian's sojourn in Naissus (364), both emperors sent their retinue to Mediana, while they themselves were apparently accommodated *intra-muros* in Naissus.²⁰ In the north Syrian basaltic zone, meanwhile, I still prefer to consider that Qasr ibn Wardan (dating to 561-572), was almost certainly a military residence associated with nearby barracks, in spite of its recent interpretation as a *proasteion* of a rich landlord.²¹ The wall construction and vaulting techniques recall many sites fortified by the Byzantine army along the Euphrates banks and East of Apamea.²² A low podium positioned slightly off axis from the main door, may well have been the place where the officer stood when reviewing the troops.²³ Convincing arguments have been made for other *praetoria* at Palmyra and Caricin Grad (the so-called '*domus urbana*').²⁴

¹⁷ Hidalgo (1996); Arce J. (1997); Lavan (1999) 139-40.

¹⁸ Netzer (1996); Burrell (1996).

¹⁹ Patrich (1999) and (2001).

²⁰ Sodini (1997) 448; Srejovic (1993) 69-75.

²¹ Gatier (2001) 105.

²² Deichmann (1982) 727-35.

²³ Sodini (1997) 490.

²⁴ Sodini (1997) 485-87 and 445-46.

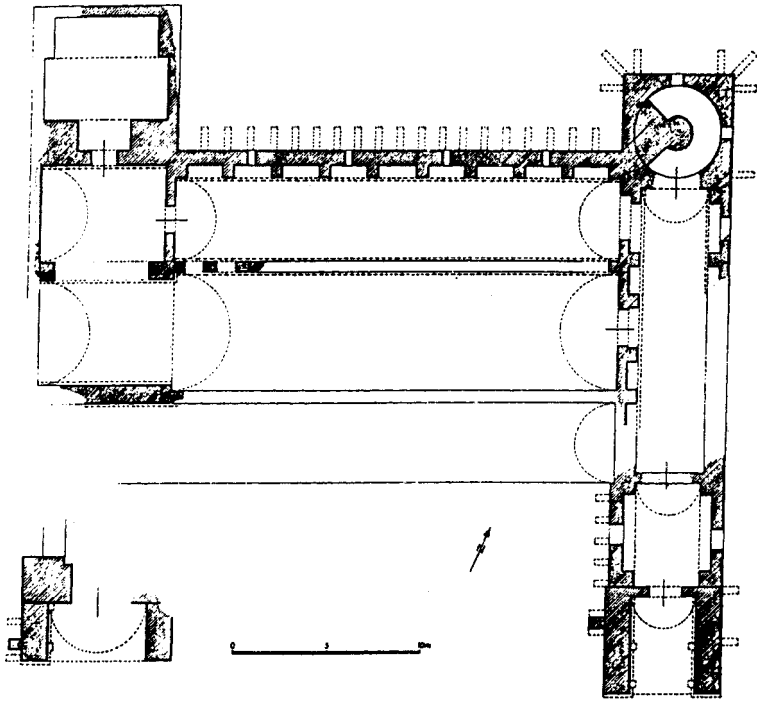


Fig. 4. Akkale, plan of residential building (Eyice (1986) 67 fig. 2).



Fig. 5. Akkale, partial view of residential building and large vaulted cisterns (Hild and Hellenkemper (1990) 165-67 fig. 2).

Turning our attention to Cilicia, in Akkale we may note a small coastal settlement, 5 km from Elaioussa-Sebasté. This comprises a lavishly constructed complex of buildings (figs. 4 and 5), the main structure of which has a façade of 65 m with two wings projecting toward the sea at each end. A small cruciform building topped by a dome could be a pavilion or reception room. The remains of baths, sub-structures, a cistern, and a wine-press, complete what appears to be an aristocratic residence connected to a small anchorage, the form of which indicates a *proasteion*.²⁵ In this case at least, the accuracy of this typological interpretation has been demonstrated. Two inscriptions, one discovered in the baths, and the other on a capital from the residence itself, give as owner the *gloriosissimus (endoxotatos)* Illous. This is a perfectly fitting epithet for the *magister militum* who was chief minister (*patricius* and *magister officiorum*) under Zeno. Therefore we have both the identity of the owner of this *proasteion* and its date of construction, Illous' death in 488 providing a *terminus ante quem*.²⁶

Private Residences

All aristocratic families had an urban residence and/or a villa in the countryside, which bore some similarities to the palaces described already. At Rome, the excavations of the Ospedale Militare, on the Celian Hill, have discovered some residences of particular interest.²⁷ These include the house of Gaudentius (a neighbour and acquaintance of the Symmachii), whose name is found in an inscription set in the *triclinium* of the complex. The statue of Antinous Casali, found at the end of the 18th c. in a fill above the *triclinium* is associated with the Symmachii *domus*, and was probably placed in a niche in the *triclinium*. The *domus* in the centre of the excavated area could be that of the Symmachii themselves. This splendid house has a magnificent reception hall, to which an apse was added in the 4th century, and which is paved with opus sectile (fig. 6). Between these houses and the church of S. Stefano Rotondo, under the Ospedale dell'Addolorata, excavations during the 17th and 18th c., revealed the *domus* of the Valerii. Although these excavations went largely unrecorded, ten statues or groups of statuary were recovered, as well

²⁵ Sodini (1997) 483.

²⁶ Feissel (1999).

²⁷ Pavolini *et al.* (1993); on the late housing of Rome cf. Guidobaldi (1986) and (1999).

as a silver bottle with busts of Peter and Paul and a silver cup with an inscription naming the Valerii. These objects, together with a 4th c. bronze lamp in the form of a ship with Peter praying and Paul at the helm, provide the first testimony of this old pagan family's conversion to Christianity.²⁸

The house was burnt during the Gothic sack of 410 and no one could afford buy it from Valerius Pinianus (the husband of Melania), due to the huge size of the estate. In this instance archaeology has allowed us to form a picture of a Roman aristocratic house at the crucial moment of its owner's conversion to Christianity.²⁹ As in previous cases, the presence of inscriptions in a pavement or on objects discovered in the vicinity (as well as the documentary evidence) has been the determining factor in identifying the owners. The extent and form of these luxurious residences indicate an architectural design for this type of domus that recalls the description of Roman residences given by Olympiodorus of Thebes in his treatment of the aristocratic houses of Rome: "Each of the big residences in Rome contains everything supposed to be found in a medium size city: a hippodrome, piazzas, temples, fountains and different types of bath-buildings ... A house is a town".³⁰ Outside the towns also, aristocratic residences or *proasteia* were, to quote Ausonius (III, 1, 29), '*urbes in rure*'. An examination of the *intra muros* houses in Stobi, Histria, Aphrodisias, Apamea, Djemila, Thuburbo Majus or Ptolemais, suggests that they all belonged to the wealthy. Andrew Poulter has painted a similar picture for 6th c. cities, like Nicopolis *ad Istrum* where the Byzantine city seems to have been occupied "by a few wealthy families and their dependants".³¹ In Egypt also, aristocratic residences with a peristyle plan have been discovered at Abou Mena, Marea, Kellis, while Apion enjoyed a "palatial suburban villa".³²

²⁸ Brenk (1999).

²⁹ Other recently discovered residences not mentioned by Guidobaldi include an example near the Arch of Constantine, on the Palatine hill (for location see Claridge (1998) 120, fig. 50, n. 20; on the excavations see Hostetter (1994)), where many of the S. rooms went out of use in the first half of the 4th c., while the apsidal hall was transformed into a funerary or religious building.

³⁰ Blockley (1983) 152.

³¹ Poulter (2000) 350-51.

³² Alston (2002) 104-27.

b. *Episcopal Palaces*

In both the East and the West, the bishop emerged as a pre-eminent political figure among the ruling classes.³³ This is also indicated archaeologically by the occurrence of episcopal palaces as parts of extensive building complexes associated with cathedrals, which have been the subject of considerable interest following the 11th Christian Archaeology Congress at Lyon.³⁴ At Byllis in Albania, current excavations are revealing a huge complex on the southern side of the cathedral, with a number of annexes, which, as in many other episcopal complexes (for example at Salona and Philippi), appear to have served an economic function. In other respects, the bishop's residence incorporates the same repertoire of architectural features that are found in other elite residences, such as *triclinia*, courtyards, gardens and fountains.

c. *The Houses of Pagan Elites?*

Some years ago, I refused to accept the identification of a number of grandiose houses in the Agora in Athens as the residences of the philosophers, with the exception of the possible house of Proclus.³⁵ The subsequent discovery of the luxurious residence in Aphrodisias which produced tondos of the ancient Sages of Greece (Pindar, Pythagoras, Socrates, Aristotle, and Apollonius) and also of their famous disciples, Alcibiades and Alexander, may well revive these attributions. However, there is nothing to differentiate between these houses and others of the generic aristocratic type that I have discussed above.³⁶ Inscriptions in the pavements of *triclinia* often allude to philosophy and ancient wisdom, through the use of the rather worn-out maxims of sophists and poets. Hanoune has also shown that some sentences may well reflect more personal choices, as, for example, in houses at Cirta ('The righteous is his own law for himself': *Justus sibi lex est*) and Bulla Regia ('Put your hopes in yourself').³⁷ These sentences indicate that aristocratic pagans were taking common Christian maxims (God is your law, put your hopes in God) and, by altering a word, were changing them into strong affirmations

³³ There is a huge bibliography on this topic: see most recently Durlat (1996); Liebeschuetz (2001) and Brown (2002).

³⁴ XIe CIAC (1989), where there are many papers on this subject in vols. I and II.

³⁵ Sodini (1997) 463-65 (with bibliography at n. 120 and 121).

³⁶ Sodini (1997) 474-77.

³⁷ Sodini (1995) 181, n. 148.

of the prevalence of mankind against the Christian God. Balty has argued that a similar transformation is apparent in the philosophical cycle found under the cathedral of Apamea,³⁸ where Christian imagery (itself sometimes borrowed from pagan iconography, as in the example of the Apostolic College) was reversed to reflect pagan ideology. In some houses, as for example in Carthage, the tone could be Christian or pagan (*Omnia Dei sunt; agimur, non agimus*), using a vocabulary, however, that reflected the same philosophical debates.

Whatever the identity or religious persuasion of the owner, all these residences are of a type which is present throughout the whole Mediterranean, within both urban and rural environments. They feature the same repertoire of architectural devices reflecting the same ideology, which mixed *otium* and politics in a setting of halls and *triclinia*, fountains, nymphaea and baths. They are decorated with mosaics, paintings and statuary, which display mythological and philosophical themes (including portraits and the sentiments of philosophers and poets) or celebrating Hesiodian Works and Days with scenes of rural life and hunting. The statuary in particular is indicative of the antiquarian taste of the aristocrats, and features statues collected from Hellenistic or earlier Roman periods, or sophisticated copies from the workshops of the Aphrodisian sculptors and their followers. These were displayed in residences in diverse locations at Antioch, on the Esquiline in Rome, at Chiragan in Aquitania, and at El Ruedo in Spain.

Other Symbols of Status

The elites, whether they were urban-based as was predominant in the East and in Northern Africa, or whether they lived in the countryside as in Britain, Gaul, Spain and Sicily, shared the same way of life, deriving the majority of their income from land. This lifestyle was also adopted by the ruling classes of the Vandals, Visigoths, and Franks. At the end of the 5th c., a certain Steleco, whose name suggests a German origin, was the owner of a villa that has been discovered near Mienne-Marboué (fig. 7).³⁹ In the East, Ariobindus, a Goth who held high military office, acquired large estates and

³⁸ Balty and Balty (1984); Balty (1989).

³⁹ Blanchard-Lemée (1983).

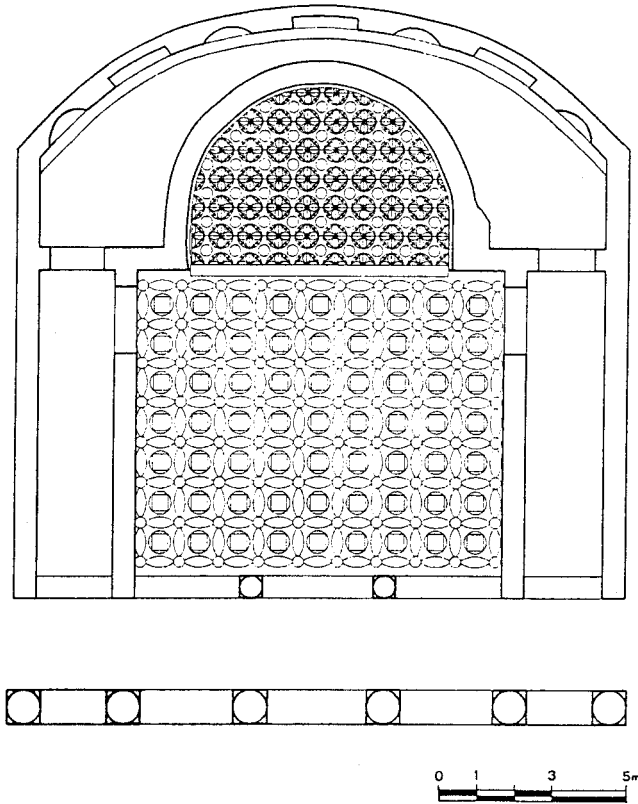


Fig. 6. Triclinium thought to be part of the residence of the Symmacchii, on the Caelian Hill in Rome (Pavolini C. *et al.* (1993) 491 fig. 19).

possessed villages in the territory of Cyrrhus.⁴⁰ Landlords, even in the *Pars Orientis*, may have lived in their estates and may have included not only the poorest of the curiales but also the wealthier peasants. When considering, for example, some of the huge houses in the Djebel Zawiye (the Syrian limestone massif), at El Bara, and the splendid mausolea with pyramidal roofs at Hass and El Bara (fig. 8), dating to the 6th c., one is drawn towards the conclusion that they belonged to rich landowners.⁴¹ Some of the gifts presented to local churches are also suggestive of the successful careers and opulent lifestyles enjoyed by some Syrians. Around 578 and after 583, a certain Megas offered two silver jugs now in the Abegg Founda-

⁴⁰ Tompkins (1995).

⁴¹ Sodini and Tate (1984).

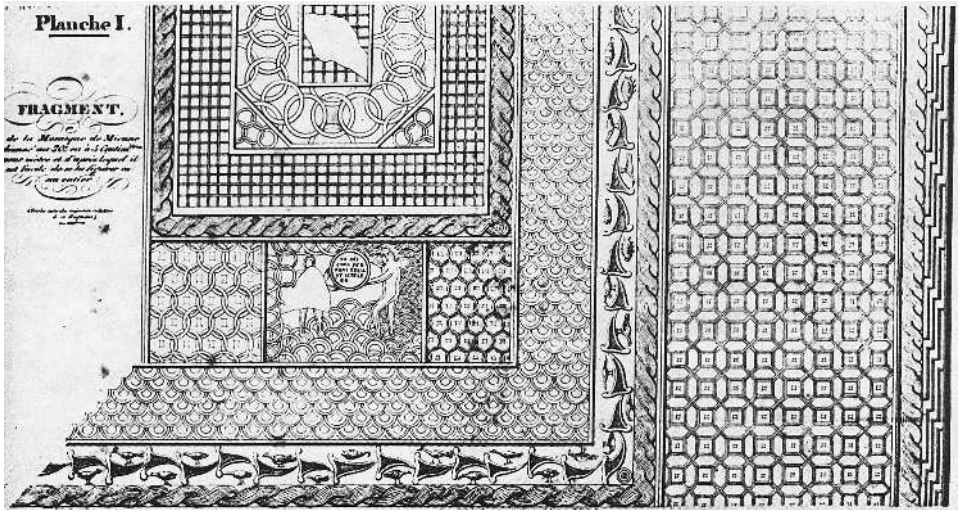


Fig.7. Triclinalium of Steleco's residence (Blanchard-Lemée M. (1983) pl. 47.2).

tion (E 37 and 38) (fig. 9) and the Riha paten (E 35). These were found in the famous Kaper Koraon treasury, reconstructed some years ago by Marlia Mundell Mango.⁴² It was probably the same Megas who was recorded by stamps on three other pieces of the same treasure (E 33, 34, 36), as being responsible for the quality of silver. Under Maurice, he was elevated to the function of curator and was the recipient of a letter from Childebert (587-588). Why did he give all these pieces to the church of Kaper Koraon? He may well have been a native of the village itself, or perhaps possessed some land in the vicinity. The same may be true of other donors to Kaper Koraon, including Sergios, tribune and *argyroprates* (E 33, 34, 36), and the *magistrianos* Symeon (E1). John, the bishop of Kyrenia, another Syrian donor who contributed to the Phela treasure (E66), was perhaps born in Phela or had previously been a priest in the village.

Even in death, the elites retained their pre-eminence, evidenced by grandiose mausolea or by a tomb with a privileged position inside the church. Naturally, bishops, who were generally members of aristocratic families, would have the best places inside the church or in the first rows of tombs near and around the apse, along with

⁴² Mundell Mango (1986).



Fig. 8. El Bara, mausoleum (1974). For figs 9-11 see plates.

priests and monks. However, high-ranking members of the laity recommended by leading churchmen were also accepted, even though on some occasions saints such as St. Thecla, reportedly rebelled against the introduction of lay people.⁴³ Wealthy donors had access to burials *juxta sanctorum*, while the luxury of the tomb itself was also a sign of their social status. Equally, although the Late Roman dead were not buried in their full finery or with their weapons, as were the barbarians, they could be represented in this fashion on their sarcophagi, as with a recently published example found in the Theodosian Walls (fig. 10).⁴⁴ The dead could also be represented in this fashion through paintings on the walls of tombs, (as for example in Thessalonica and Silistra).⁴⁵ These representations recall those on metal boxes, diptychs, on wall and floor mosaics, on manuscripts, on triumphal monuments, and on sculptures. Some metal dress ornaments are also symbolic of rank, such as fibulae of

⁴³ Sodini (1986) 233.

⁴⁴ Deckers (1993); Deckers and Serdaroglu (1995).

⁴⁵ Kourkoutidou-Nicolaidou (1997) pl. 37; Dimitrov (1962).

the crossbow type, inscribed rings, and the belt or *cingulum*, many of which have been discovered in tombs. These items could sometimes be imperial gifts.⁴⁶ The splendid jewellery and weapons in the tombs of barbarian princes, such as that of Childeric at Tournai, or that of the Gepid, Omharus, at Apahida I (fig. 11), probably come into this category.⁴⁷ These princes received honorific titles from the Roman emperors, providing some indication of the symbolic status of these implements.

Elite wealth is also well attested by silver vessels, which were acquired for domestic use as well as being donated to churches as we have already seen, and by the widespread appearance of gold jewellery, attributed to the Near-East and dated from the 5th to the 7th centuries inclusive.⁴⁸

In summary, therefore, it is clear that the elite elements of society maintain a dominant position in terms of their visibility in the archaeological record, as indeed they do within documentary sources.

THE MIDDLE CLASSES

The Urban Middle Classes

Between the ever-present rich and the invisible poor, it is rather difficult to define a middle-class. Certainly, a family belonging to this group was always vulnerable to the dangers of impoverishment. This was especially true of widows and orphans, helped by the church and ranked among the poor and destitute, but belonging in fact to the fragile margin of the middle class as brilliantly shown by Peter Brown. The Church recruited many of its priests and clerics, and even bishops, from the middle classes, who included shop-keepers, craftsmen, low-ranking state employees, soldiers and non commissioned officers, as well as free-peasants or tenants outside the cities. Many of these people could read and write and a good half may have owned their houses or shops. They belonged to the *populus* or *plebs* and some of them were members of the *curia*.⁴⁹ They were among the 80,000 people in Constantinople who benefitted from the

⁴⁶ Malte Johansen (1994).

⁴⁷ Périn (2000).

⁴⁸ Brown (1984); Baldini Lippolis (1999); Yeroulanou (1999).

⁴⁹ Sodini (1979) 118.

annonae in the late 4th c. This number fell to 10,000 toward the end of the 6th c.⁵⁰ They were represented in towns through various organisations. Most of them were members of guilds and participated in the activities of the circus factions.⁵¹ They contributed to the different *munera*, paying for lighting the streets, or contributing to the building of the walls as in Constantinople or Tomis (where butchers participated in this activity).⁵² In economic terms, they were producers of goods that were exchanged in the shops and markets and exported. For this reason their skills were much appreciated. Chosroes relocated those of Antioch after the capture in the city in 540, in order to stimulate Persian crafts. He established them in a new city equipped with a hippodrome, providing a further indication of their involvement in factions. They may have represented a desirable source of wealth production in the eyes of a foreign sovereign. Their pride in their skills is evidenced by the mention of their job in their epitaphs, which are very specific about these activities, using terms that indicate a high degree of craft specialisation. These epitaphs were displayed in normal graves, and are certainly not indicative of poverty. There are examples of even richer graves, which indicate a social level closer to that of the *curiales*. At Sardis the tomb of two high officers (*ducenarii*) of an imperial factory of shields and weapons that was established in the city in the early 4th c. reveals the aristocracy of craftsmen, organised according to the same military hierarchy as those who worked in the imperial mints. The vaulted tomb of the second officer, Chrysanthios, who boasts of being a ‘*zographos*’ was painted by his own hand. Jewellers (*argyropratai*) were also very rich and considered similar to bankers. *Naucleroi* (ship-owners) were of differing social status, depending on their level of success, and their popularity and wealth is often indicated by texts. They were connected with merchants (*emporoi*) whose activity was also lucrative. Craftsmen who worked in textiles were also among the wealthier citizens: the Tyre necropolis has shown that eighty textile specialists constructed one or more monuments for themselves. They were not the wealthiest of the Tyrians but obviously belonged

⁵⁰ Zuckermann (2000). For the *plebs* of Rome, see Purcell (1999).

⁵¹ Zuckermann (2000) identifies the *demoi* of the factions with the *demos* of the city, a view that has generally fallen from favour following the work of Alan Cameron (1976). Liebeschuetz (2001) 203-20 does not connect Guilds and circus factions (see, however, 277-78).

⁵² Sodini (1979) 107.

to the ‘*moyenne bourgeoisie*’, the highest rank of which was occupied by purple dyers.⁵³

Substantial material traces survive pertaining to the professional activities of these middle classes. We possess their shops in the large *emboloi* of the cities. Examples have been found in Scythopolis (Beth Shean) and in Beirut, where the numbers of the shops were marked on the pavement. The excavations at Sardis, which was burnt by the Sassanids in 616, allow us (through Crawford’s fine publication) to glimpse the interiors of these shops, which included restaurants, hardware stores, glass sellers, and dye workshops (fig. 12). Shops participating in the same activities tend to be clustered together, reminding us of the presence of the thriving craftsmen’s guilds, who seem to have been particularly influential at Sardis where a violent strike in 459 was ended by a sworn declaration of the builders’ corporation. The discovery within the shops of objects decorated with crosses or with menorahs probably indicates that the shopkeepers belonged to two communities: the Jews around the synagogue and the Christians further to the west. However, the economic situation of craftsmen and shopkeepers varied greatly in relation to the size and importance of the shop, the nature of the crafts practised (coppersmiths, for example, were poorer than the *argyropratai* and *chrysochooi*⁵⁴) and the location of the shop, whether in city and country. Craftsmen were also active in Egyptian cities, at least so the texts inform us, although archaeology has not yet produced much evidence.⁵⁵ There are doubts regarding where the craftsmen and shopkeepers lived, although texts mention that some dwelt in the room above the shop. The restricted nature of this space suggests that if they were living in this place, we may assume that they were on a low income. In general, however, archaeological evidence for free craftsmen and shopkeepers is rather scarce and does not allow us to determine the position of the various crafts within a social hierarchy, for which we are obliged to use the evidence of texts, inscriptions, and papyri. A large number of artisans are mentioned in funerary inscriptions, those of Korykos being of particular note in this respect.⁵⁶

⁵³ Avramea (1991).

⁵⁴ Roueché (1995) 40-41

⁵⁵ Alston (2002) 128-84.

⁵⁶ Trombley (1987).

Unfortunately, we do not possess examples of the houses of the middle-classes and notably of the shopkeepers (probably through a lack of appropriate published excavations). As noted above, we are told by the sources that some were living above their shops but this may not have been the general rule. Some public spaces were also progressively turned over to private dwellings as in Luni, and in a more coherent way at Cyrene where from the 3rd c., the agora was occupied by shops and a series of regularly constructed houses that may be associated with the shops.⁵⁷ We may also reasonably suppose that the members of the middle classes may have lived outside the walls on the outskirts of the towns, as Poulter has noted at Nicopolis ad Istrum, where “the extramural area ... was densely settled, but by people who did not possess the material wealth of intramural residents”.⁵⁸

The Rural Middle Classes

Recent research in southern Greece has brought to light a number of ‘*bourgades*’ or villages built over the ruins of cities, like Olympia⁵⁹ or Gortyn, the former provincial capital of Crete. In these two cases, the urban attributes of the site were rejected by the populace, even though Heraclius rebuilt an aqueduct in Gortyn. Small houses were clustered together and were inhabited by craftsmen (evidenced by glass kilns, pottery workshops, metal workshops) and by peasants (evidenced by agricultural tools and equipment like rotation querns, olive and wine-presses). At Gortyn, there seems to be little difference between the houses of the mid 5th c. and the and those of the second half of the 7th c. However, at Olympia the two phases give a different impression. The houses built prior to the earthquake of 551 (which probably destroyed the first late antique settlement) are composed of large rooms, although these are no longer arranged around a peristyle. Following the earthquake, the houses that were built between the second half of the 6th c. and the beginning of the 7th c. (which saw Slavic occupation during the reign of Phocas) are smaller and are built of stone and clay (fig. 13). They give an impression of impoverishment but the inhabitants still belong to a

⁵⁷ For Luni, see Ward Perkins (1981). For Cyrene see Sodini (1995) 189.

⁵⁸ Poulter (2000).

⁵⁹ Völling (2001).

‘middle’ class. Some social differentiation is shown within the graves, but wealthy people are absent.

Archaeology in Turkey has also revealed settlements that may be representative of the habitations of the middle classes. These are sometimes labelled as towns, and include, for example, Mokissos and also Levisi. Part of this last site is clustered on the island of Aghios Nikolaos and is known to have been a bishopric during the reign of Heraclius. More frequently these settlements are known as ‘*bourgades*’, of which good examples had been found at Alakisla, at Arif in Lycia and near Osmaniye in Caria).⁶⁰ These latter settlements are reminiscent of the huge villages of Brad and el Bara in the limestone massif in northern Syria and those in the Negev. At least some may be the archaeological equivalent of the rich *metrokomiai* near Antioch described by Libanius, like Imma, or to the *komai* of the provinces of Palestine, Arabia, and, in eastern Europe, Dacia and Thracia.⁶¹

In the villages of the Syrian limestone massif and the basalt region, we do find a middle-class of peasants, traces of whose lifestyle survive in two inscriptions from Apamene, recently republished by D. Feissel. These inscriptions record three cousins, two of whom were married to each other, a union which was not authorized by the church, who lived in a fortified house set in a village. They were sufficiently learned to write two inscriptions in verse boasting of their family and their wealth, thereby providing a glimpse of the social and economic milieu of an Apamene peasantry who were proud of their origins and culture.⁶²

The growing wealth of the Syrian villagers is shown, as for example in D  h  s, by changes in house construction. At the end of the 5th c. and in the first half of the 6th c., carefully laid quadrangular blocks were used implying the use of teams of specialised stoneworkers, using cranes and displaying considerable experience in stone cutting and sculpture. The peasants were no longer the builders of their houses but instead paid specialised workers, either in money or in kind. We can also see differences in the size of the houses, which vary between the larger houses with six to ten rooms and smaller ones with five rooms or less. Can we go one step further and iden-

⁶⁰ Sodini (1997) 479; Ruggieri and Giordano (1996); Dagron (1979); Gatier (1994).

⁶¹ Dagron (1979).

⁶² Feissel (1998).

tify, as Tchalenko did for Behyo, ‘villas’ of the free peasants, farms of the tenants and workers’ hovels.⁶³ The answer must be in the negative. When we try to decide whether the village was occupied by free peasants or by tenants, the same difficulties arise. Although we may surmise that the largest houses may perhaps not belong to tenants, for the remainder it is difficult to draw a line between the houses of free peasants and those of tenants. Tchalenko attempted to do this using the village names—those beginning by *beit/ba/*(greek *epoikion*) and those by *Kafr* (greek *kômê*)—to distinguish between the villages that belonged to a single landlord and those which were inhabited by free people. However, these distinctions are blurred by the subsequent evolution of the villages. Some, for example, may have refused to pay taxes to their landlord and acquired freedom or became the clients of a high ranking army officer, while at the opposite extreme, others may have relinquished their freedom to become the possession of a single landlord, without adjusting their names to the new situation. In terms of their layout there is not a great deal of difference between Baziher and a village like Dehes, even if the former is surrounded by a wall and does not develop between the 4th and 6th c.⁶⁴ The study of the development of the early Christian village, whether from a single property (the ‘Bamuqqa type’) or from an earlier village, depends above all on archaeological evidence, although this is unlikely to resolve the problem of the ownership of the last.

It remains clear that there was a significant degree of social mobility in 6th c. Syria and other regions. The wealthy, the bishops, the monks and the peasantry were all dependent upon one another for their wellbeing and that of their community. Christianity, in particular, was a unifying force in villages, and not only those in Syria.

In the Negev, the development of the hinterland was due to significant demographic pressure and ‘*bourgades*’ and even cities were flourishing in the early Christian period. Their resources may not have been principally derived from pilgrimage or from caravan traffic but rather from cultivation. Vineyards were important and are well attested archaeologically by the holes left by each vine and by the wine-presses, as well as by texts such as the *Life of Hilarion*. This wine

⁶³ Tchalenko (1953-58).

⁶⁴ Tate (1992) 213, 265-66, 283-84.

was transported to Gaza and exported in the famous Gaza amphorae to all parts of the Mediterranean, and was enjoyed at the court of the Merovingian kings as well as by the Hemmaberg clergy.⁶⁵ However, the archives discovered at Nessana and more recently at Petra allow us to have a more refined view of the life in these agrarian towns. In regard to the ownership of land, at Nessana the land was held by free owners (with “no hint of *colonus* or *emphyteusis*, except perhaps in three documents”).⁶⁶ At Petra, three brothers who divided inherited properties between them seem to lead a comfortable existence. The family had more than 5427 acres or 54.27 ha (134 acres x 40.5), which is about five times the land needed to feed a poor family. The fields were either ‘leased’ or ‘farmed’ by rural labourers, the second being more dependant upon the landlord.⁶⁷

In Egypt and in Proconsularis, we have evidence of potters working for landlords of great estates. Michael Mackensen tried to explain the presence of these *terra sigillata* pottery workshops in a rural environment from the beginning of the 4th c. to the end of the 7th. He suggested that they belonged to landlords who had also at their command the means of the pottery’s regional and trans-Mediterranean distribution. The potters would therefore be the *conductores* of the landlords workshops. There is certainly evidence for such an arrangement in Egypt during the 3rd c., where contracts between large landowners and amphora manufacturers have been found.⁶⁸ Does this, however, allow us to suggest a similar situation for the *sigillata* potters of rural North Africa? Equally, what does this tell us about the social status of potters working in the outskirts of the cities, in Africa and elsewhere, especially in the East? It remains difficult to define the social context of these crafts using archaeological evidence in isolation.

The society that emerged from the documents found in the excavations in Palestina III or from Egyptian papyri was apparently a peaceful one, therefore, where civil law was respected, with soldiers and civilians, landowners and peasants co-existing with one another.

⁶⁵ Ladstätter (2002).

⁶⁶ Kraemer (1958).

⁶⁷ Koenen (1996) 183-84; Frösén (2002).

⁶⁸ Cockle (1981).

THE POOR

As already stated, the middle classes were particularly vulnerable to economic difficulties and could rapidly become impoverished. For example, the weight of taxation could threaten the income of the craftsmen. The Syrian *Life* of Symeon Stylites relates many interventions of the saint in cases where the rich were oppressing widows, orphans and the poor. One is of particular interest because it provides us with the precise circumstances surrounding Symeon's intervention. In this case, a *curialis* of Antioch, who had received for one year (as *pater civitatis* perhaps) the revenues of the city, decided to triple the yearly tax received by the city from the 'poor who dyed skin red'.⁶⁹ Three hundred among them came to the saint who in vain asked the *curialis* to return to the customary tax. The counselor refused and became sick. He asked "all his villages and ... the priests in them" to persuade the saint to pray for him. In this instance, however, God was inflexible and he died. We may also recall the joy described in the *Life* of Josuah the Stylite when Anastasius suppressed the chrysargyron that had condemned so many craftsmen and shopkeepers to poverty. In the countryside also, taxes and rents were a permanent threat. Theodoret of Cyrus, as we have already mentioned, wrote to Ariobindus, the owner of the village of Sergitheum, to request that the peasants of this village, who could not give the quantity of olive oil requested as rent, be released from their obligations for a year. An inscription found on a mosaic at Kefr Zelih in Apamene has revealed part of a local chronicle which refers to a frost that killed the olive-trees on the 27th of January 499, which may have also reduced the peasants to poverty. The most famous account of calamities combining plague, locusts and famine occurred at Edessa in 499-502 and gives a clear evidence how easily a famine may break out, disturbing shaking all the society to its foundations such as that of 504-506.⁷⁰

If we turn from '*paupérisables*' to the 'real' poor, we have little archaeological evidence, although they are always present in the writings of the great leaders of the church. Basil of Caesarea, Severus

⁶⁹ Doran (1992) 135-137 §56. Their workshops already existed in the 1st c. A.D. on the right bank of the Euphrates, in direction of the Ammanus, attested by the construction of the channel of the fullers; see Feissel (1985). The generosity of a wealthy citizen of Hama, paying salaries for unemployed craftsmen, shows also their vulnerability: *IGLS* V, n° 1999 (Mango (1986) 28-29).

⁷⁰ Trombley and Watt (2000) par. 38-44; Garnsey (1996) 29-33; Tate (1989) 112-14.

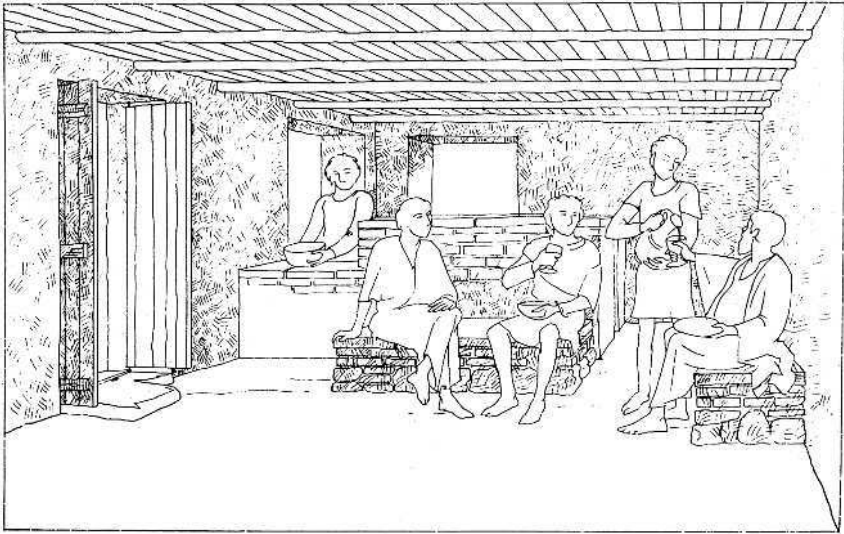


Fig. 12. Shops at Sardis, recreation of restaurant E1 (Stephens Crawford J. (1990) fig. 35).

of Antioch and John the Almsgiver all insist continuously on the love and care of the poor. A pauper is even represented on the frame of the *Megalopsychia* mosaic found at Yakto near Antioch (fig. 14), which depicts familiar scenes and characters from the city. Texts and inscriptions also frequently mention hospices, hospitals, and hostels for the poor, called *xenodochia* and *ptochotropheia*. One example, which celebrates the construction of an hospital in 511, was found in Firkia and is now housed in the Museum of Ma'aret en Noman.⁷¹

CONCLUSION

Where there is abundant archaeological material relating to the 7th and 8th c., the impression (for example in Apamea, Gerasa, and Scythopolis) is that the class of *possessores* disappeared. Their houses were split into smaller apartments or farms with agricultural equipments (such as the olive press in 'Maison de l'Huilerie' at Salamis in Cyprus). There are, however, an increasing number of shops and workshops (as for example in the *episcopoion* of Apamea), indicating a certain 'triumph' of the middle classes. Written sources may suggest a different picture, with old Christian families in Damascus and

⁷¹ Brown (2000) 35.

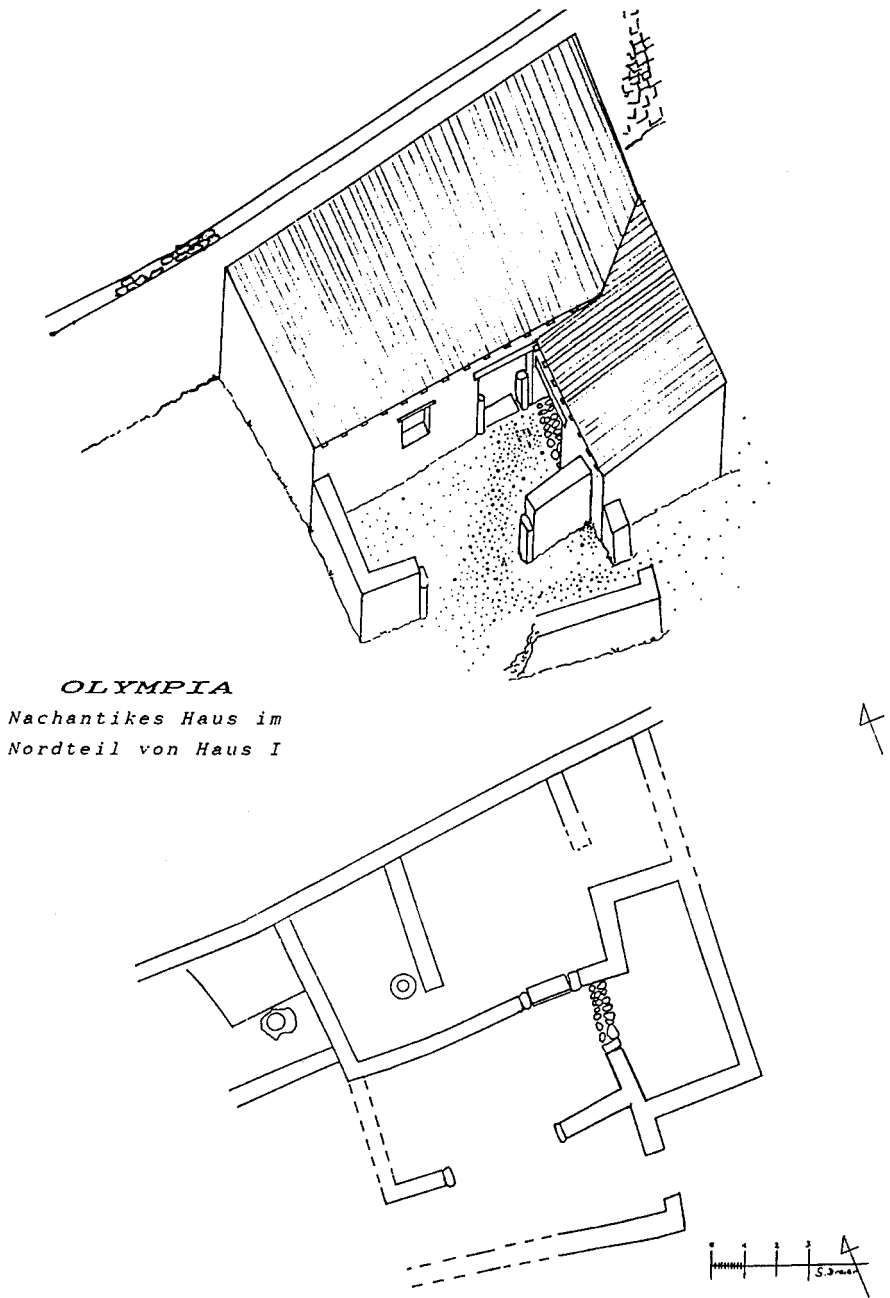


Fig. 13. Plan and possible reconstruction of a house dated at the end of 6th c; — beginning of 7th. (Völling (2001) 318 fig. 2). For fig. 14 see plates.

in Edessa apparently remaining influential, although this later period lies beyond the scope of the present paper.

In conclusion, social structures are hard to trace by excavation only. In some respects, recognition of social structures is a by-product of archaeology, the real task being to interpret the evolution of the archaeological deposits and structures within their own particular context. We may note differing standards of living, some higher than others, in contemporary and successive contexts, although their meaning is often difficult to interpret. In a normal excavation, social contrasts are not accentuated, objects do not intrinsically symbolise wealth or poverty and inscriptions are infrequent.

For the purpose of this paper, I was obliged to draw upon the entire corpus of Late Roman archaeology and to stress particular cases from which conclusions can be drawn, almost invariably with the help of epigraphy. We discover palaces of known emperors, governors or ministers and on this basis, feel justified in attributing residences that present more or less the same features to this same aristocratic milieu. Similarly, jewellery, and dress-fittings can also indicate membership of the upper classes. From this way of life, we can make suggestions as to the origins of this wealth, which may derive from properties given to tenants or farmers or other activities, the nature of which can only be guessed. In relation to the shopkeepers and the craftsmen, the few examples that we have show little sign of luxury, and I have tried to interpret their social structure in line with what we know of the social status accorded to the different crafts and the new definitions given by Zuckermann. For the peasantry, the situation is more complex because we have no access to their relationship with the land. We may suspect that the difference between a small free landowner and a farmer may not have been marked, while the size and decor of the houses can give indications of social status and allow us to perceive an hierarchy among the peasantry. However, we need criteria based on known landowners, as is the case at Nessana (due to the evidence of the papyri), which instantly allows us a much deeper understanding of these issues, or at least so we believe.

There is still a gap between the material remains of anonymous individuals, and their interpretation in terms of social structures. We have to face this issue using different hypotheses, which are increasingly based on statistics and models. Our main concern, however, must always be to construct our theories regarding social structure using well-established facts.

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THE CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITIES IN POST-ROMAN ALBANIA

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ABSTRACT

Late antique social structures in the provinces of Epirus Vetus and Epirus Nova, as represented by urban centres, ecclesiastical authority and Roman material culture, largely disappeared during the first half of the 7th c. Around this time the practice of furnished burial was adopted by sections of the population. This transition has traditionally been interpreted as reflecting an expression of ethnic identity on the part of an indigenous population. This paper argues, however, that these post-Roman cemeteries are a reflection of the more localised and fluid social structures that emerged in post-Roman Epirus rather than an attempt to construct or maintain ethnic identities.

LATE ANTIQUE ETHNICITY AND NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGIES IN THE SOUTHERN BALKANS

In the late 6th and early 7th centuries, tribes of 'Slavonians' reportedly overran, among other areas, the provinces of Epirus Nova and Epirus Vetus, forcing much of the existing population to migrate elsewhere. The exact nature of this incursion and the extent of subsequent 'Slavic' occupation have been contentious subjects since Greece and Albania were established as nation states in the 19th c. The demands of Albanian and Greek nationalism required that the populations of both countries were ethnically distinct from those which surrounded them. In both countries a process was envisaged in which successive incoming groups were assimilated into a dominant autochthonous culture, which thereby retained its ethnic integrity. This gave rise to a very particular brand of culture-historic archaeology, which played a key role in the establishment of ethnogenesis myths in both countries.¹

¹ In writing this paper I have greatly benefited from discussion with my col-

In both Greece and Albania this was of particular significance in regard to Late Antiquity and the post-Roman period. In Greece, archaeology has so far played a largely passive role, providing illustrative material for a narrative history, the basic parameters of which are broadly accepted by Greek nationals. Late Antiquity has not figured within this narrative to any great extent and therefore, with the exception of Early Christian & Byzantine churches, the archaeology of the period has until recently been generally ignored in Greece.² In Albania, the reverse is true. Under the communist regime of Enver Hoxha, who ruled Albania from 1945 until his death in 1985, the archaeology of Late Antiquity was used to underpin a highly specific narrative history of the Albanian people. Archaeological research also tended to reflect modern national borders. As a consequence, 'post-Roman Albania', although it may appear to be a very artificial construct (in the same way as 'Roman Norfolk'), is therefore a very real concept in Albanian archaeology.

The basic thesis of Albanian archaeology has been a relatively simple one, namely one holding that the Albanians were the direct descendants of the Illyrians, a loose confederation of tribes who constituted the pre-Roman population of the western Balkans. According to the Albanian model they had been subjugated by the slave-owning Romans, but had never been fully assimilated into the Roman world and had consequently remained ethnically independent while under the Roman yoke. When the Roman 'occupation' ended, the Illyrians had reasserted their independence, reoccupying the sites of their earlier settlements and reviving pre-Roman forms of material culture and burial. Despite the historically-attested presence of Slav settlers in the region, members of this proto-Albanian

leagues from the Butrint project, and in particular the work of our Albanian colleague, Eteva Nallbani, whose forthcoming doctoral thesis promises to be a definitive statement on the Komani cemeteries. I am very grateful to Eteva for allowing me to quote her research on two important issues and for pointing out some of my errors. She is, however, absolved from responsibility for those that remain for the opinions expressed. I am also very grateful to Neil Christie for his cogent criticisms of an earlier draft of the paper and to James Crow for suggesting additional references. I am also grateful to the German Archaeological Institute in Athens for permission to use photographs from Heinrich Bulle's excavations on Corfu.

² This situation is now changing and the late antique phases of a number of major sites in Greece are undergoing reassessment. A new generation of Albanian scholars have similarly rejected the nationalist position of their predecessors. For a fuller discussion of the effects of Albanian and Greek nationalism on late antique archaeology see Bowden (forthcoming), in particular Chapter 2.

or Arbër culture were seen as retaining an ethnic independence, occupying upland areas while the Slavs stayed in the valleys.³

The Arbër / Komani-Kruja culture

The Albanian case for the rise of a post-Roman independent Arbër population rested on a number of sites in central and northern Albania, including an extraordinary group of cemeteries, of which the largest were at Komani and Kruja (fig. 1, see plates). They are often referred to by Yugoslavian archaeologists as representing the Komani-Kruja culture, although Albanian archaeologists generally refer to them in terms of the Arbër or proto-Albanian culture.⁴

These cemeteries were situated in remote mountainous areas, sometime close to the fortified hill-top sites that were occupied in both the prehistoric and post-Roman periods. The burials were usually placed in tombs constructed of slabs of limestone although occasionally a tent-like roof was adopted reminiscent of Roman ‘cappucino’ burials. Excavation reports tend to suggest that the tombs were standing proud of the ground, although this seems to reflect the excavation techniques adopted rather than the way that the tombs were constructed. This style of tomb construction including the use of limestone slabs and pitched covers is highly reminiscent of Late Roman graves in Albania.⁵

The occupants of the burials were interred with an extraordinary assemblage of objects. These could include gilded disc brooches and crescent shaped gold earrings, which were probably imported from Byzantine Sicily, as well as local variants of the same items.⁶ Buckles were common, of a type paralleled in Athens, Corinth, and further

³ Bowden (2002) See also Wilkes (1992). Explicit statements of the Albanian model can be found in Anamali (1980); Anamali (1982). On the Slavs in the Balkans see Avramea (1997) and in general Curta (2001).

⁴ I will use the term Komani-Kruja throughout this paper, although this does not imply adherence to the arguments of one group or another. There is a substantial body of literature on the cemeteries and associated settlements. For Komani (Kalasë se Dalmaces) see Spahiu (1971); (1980a). For Kruja see Anamali and Spahiu (1980). Other important cemeteries include Bukël (Anamali (1971)), Shurdah (Komata (1980)), and Lissus or Lezhë (Prendi (1980)). Popovič (1984) provides a useful summary of the evidence for the Komani-Kruja culture and a further overview is given by Anamali (1993). On the Aphiona cemetery on Corfu, see Bulle (1934) 213-40 and Bowden (forthcoming).

⁵ E.g. at Butrint (Hodges, Saraçi *et al.* (1997) 228-29).

⁶ Examples in Anamali (1993).

afield in Hungary, southern Italy, Constantinople and Crimea.⁷ Large rectangular-backed bronze fibulae are also present of a type found in the Danubian provinces, Dalmatia, Thessalonica and northern Italy.⁸ Bronze and iron pendants are also common, similar to examples known from Avar cemeteries. These appear to have functioned as a kind of *chatelaine* from which other objects were suspended.⁹ Other objects are paralleled in Avar and Slavic contexts as well as in Frankish and Lombard contexts including the characteristic radiate brooches of the period.¹⁰ Glass necklaces (sometimes including *millefiori* beads) are common, again of a type known from numerous contexts, for example in northern Italy and Germany.¹¹ Bronze rings, many of which were decorated with Christian cryptograms, were also often present.¹²

The graves also contain pottery, usually two-handled flasks and trilobal jugs executed in a hard-fired buff fabric and painted with wide red stripes, similar to examples found in southern Italian cemeteries.¹³ With the exception of examples from the Aphiona cemetery on Corfu, finds of glass vessels are very rare.¹⁴ The excavators associate dress items and jewellery with female graves while weapons are associated with male graves. The fibulae are common to both sexes; it is unclear whether this observation is based on real osteological distinctions of sex or whether it has become a self-perpetuating axiomatic truth. The weapons are commonly axes, accompanied by arrowheads and short daggers. Spear heads and swords are exceptional, although they appear at Komani in a form that Popović suggests finds parallels in Merovingian and Lombard contexts.¹⁵

⁷ Anamali (1972) 137; Popović (1984) 219. For southern Italian examples see D'Angela (1982).

⁸ See Popović (1984) 217-18.

⁹ E.g. Prendi (1980) Tab. XXII, 1-2 for Lezhë.

¹⁰ E.g. Anamali and Spahiu (1980) Tab. VII, 11-12 for radiate brooches from Kruja. See also Popović (1984) 221-22. There is some suggestion that material recovered from the cemeteries that was perceived as "Slavic" was deliberately suppressed during the communist period, although the extent to which this occurred is impossible to quantify (E. Nallbani *pers. comm.*).

¹¹ E.g. Anamali and Spahiu (1980) 75 for Kruja. For parallels in Lombard contexts in Italy see, for example, Tagliaferri (1990) 402-403.

¹² See also Spahiu (1971) Tab. V, 12.

¹³ E.g. Anamali and Spahiu (1980) Tab. V, VI. For Italian examples see Arthur (1998) with references.

¹⁴ See Bulle (1934) 213-40.

¹⁵ Popović (1984) 221-22. For the division of the grave goods on gender lines, see Spahiu (1980a) 40.

Despite the presence of so many grave goods, it is usually argued that the occupants of the graves are Christian, indicated by the Christian cryptograms on the rings and by the fact that sometimes, although not invariably, an E-W orientation was observed. This last point is ambiguous. Although considerable effort seems to have been made in some cases (for example at Aphiona) to maintain an E-W orientation, at Kruja, 14 out of 28 graves had a N-S orientation, while 8 further graves were orientated NW-SE. At Lezhë, 10 were orientated E-W, while a further 24 were aligned NW-SE. At Dalmaces (Komani) the results are even less conclusive, with the alignments of the graves showing considerable variation with 8 graves running N-S, 11 running E-W, 11 running NE-SW and 7 running NW-SE.¹⁶ The cemeteries also have associated churches in some cases, or at least buildings that are interpreted as such, as for example at Shurdah and Aphiona, although the relationships between these buildings and the graves are inconclusive.¹⁷ While the presence of churches on the site is unlikely to be coincidental, they may reflect a later recognition of the significance of the location rather than a direct association. This is particularly likely in the case of Shurdah, where the remains of the settlement may well date to the late medieval period. The use of a furnished burial rite could also call into question the Christianity of the occupants. This issue will be discussed further below.

While the case for Christianity remains unproven, it is likely that the population represented in the cemeteries was Latin speaking or at least Latin literate, as indicated by the concentration of surviving Latin toponyms in the vicinity. This concentration of Latin place names is accompanied by a marked absence of the Slavic names that frequently occur elsewhere in Albania.¹⁸

As noted, the Albanian case argued that these cemeteries represented a surviving Illyrian culture, which remained in contact with the Byzantine world and formed the root of the present day Albanian population. However, the first documentary reference to the Albanians or Arbers appears in the 11th c. in the *Alexiad* of Anna Comnena.¹⁹ Based on parallels for the finds elsewhere, the Komani

¹⁶ Anamali and Spahiu (1980) 79 (Kruja); Prendi (1980) 126-29 (Lezhë); Spahiu (1980a) 29-31.

¹⁷ Komata (1980) 113 (Shurdah); Bulle (1934) 216 (Aphiona).

¹⁸ Popovič (1984) 211-13.

¹⁹ *Alexiad* 4 (cit Wilkes (1992) 279).

burials are usually dated to the end of the 6th, the 7th and 8th centuries leaving a major chronological gap in the Albanian model.^{19a}

Another significant problem for the Albanian ethnogenesis argument was the relatively limited distribution of these cemeteries. This was solved by Namik Bodinaku's identification of the so-called southern Arbër culture, in which burials containing similar items to the Komani burials were found inserted into Bronze Age tumuli in the south of Albania. A series of tumuli excavated at Piskova in the upper reaches of the Aoos river valley were of particular importance in this sense.²⁰ Similar late-antique or post-Roman burials have been found within prehistoric tumuli on the Greek side of the border for example at Merope and Kato Pedina.²¹ This adoption of tumulus burial in the post-Roman period was also used to bolster the case for Illyrian-Albanian continuity. However, the presence of the Komani type cemetery at Aphionia on Corfu, beyond the present Albanian border, and more importantly, outside the area considered to have been 'Illyrian' in antiquity, was rarely discussed.

The reaction of non-Albanian archaeologists to this overtly nationalist interpretation of the Komani-Kruja cemeteries has been understandably negative. John Wilkes has written of the 'highly improbable reconstruction of Illyrian history in this period', although Nicholas Hammond was more sympathetic to the idea that the Albanians were the direct descendants of the Illyrians.²² More recently some Albanian archaeologists, keen to distance themselves from the policies of the communist regime, have also moved away from the earlier extremist position.²³ The present paper, however, is not intended to offer a detailed reassessment of the Komani-Kruja material or to comment on the relationship between the occupants of the cemeteries and the present Albanian population, but rather to suggest some alternative approaches to the problem of the emergence of furnished burial in the post-Roman period.

^{19a} The dating of the objects in the Komani graves is a complex topic which to some extent falls outside the scope of this paper, although it is clear that any detailed interpretation will depend on a more precise chronology for the finds. The best overview of the present chronology is provided by Popoviè (1984).

²⁰ E. Nallbani *pers. comm.*; Bodinaku (1983).

²¹ Andreou (1980); (1983); (1986); (1987).

²² Wilkes (1992) 278; Hammond (2000). The Albanian's Illyrian ancestry is also upheld in *The Times Guide to the Peoples of Europe* (Fernández-Arnesto (1994) 217).

²³ e.g. Miraj and Zeqo (1993).

ARCHAEOLOGY AND ETHNICITY

Discussion of ethnic groups in archaeology has until recently been seen as a survival of outmoded 'culture-historic' archaeology. This term describes the conception of the human past in terms of the history of groups whose behaviour is explained by reference to shared cultural norms rather than wider social, economic or environmental processes. Particular patterns of archaeological evidence were associated with particular 'peoples' who were often equated with past (and present) ethnic groups. Western archaeologists now view the history of their discipline in essentially evolutionary terms, in which antiquarianism gave rise to culture historic archaeology, which in its turn was displaced by the 'New' or processual archaeology, itself subsequently rejected and revised in post-processual or interpretative theories. The idea of progression through a series of stages of increasing sophistication is implicit, and in many ways valid, but has imbued the discipline with a fear of quiescence or regression.

The rejection of culture history in favour of alternative forms of social explanation has led to an ambivalence regarding the role of ethnicity in archaeology; the identification of ethnic groups through their material culture is irrevocably associated with the early 'culture-historic' stage of archaeology's empirical development. Ethnographic work has also demonstrated the problems of equating cultural similarity with ethnic groups.²⁴ However, recent work has considered ethnicity more positively, as an important aspect of social systems and as a dynamic element of economic and political structures, rather than merely a passive reflection of a series of cultural norms. Ethnicity and ethnic groups have been removed from the realm of description and classification that characterised culture-historic archaeology, and are now perceived as a framework for explanation and interpretation.²⁵

In recent decades the debate on ethnicity within anthropology has been dominated by two theoretical approaches, one that sees ethnicity in 'primordial' terms and the second that takes an instrumentalist perspective. The primordial approach (which underlies traditional culture-historic archaeology) sees tribal affinities as an innate part of the human condition, driven by "the givens of birth—'blood',

²⁴ Hodder (1982).

²⁵ Jones (1997) 11.

language, religion, territory and culture”.²⁶ These form the primary identity of an individual which transcends the other secondary identities that are subsequently acquired. Primordial attachments are involuntary and take precedence over the needs of particular social circumstances and situations. Strong criticisms have been levelled at the primordial view. The principal objections relate to its inadequacy as an explanatory framework. The effects of so many of its crucial elements (such as blood and language) are described as “intangible or ineffable”, and ethnic identity is seen as unreasonably intrinsic to the nature of human beings. In recent years therefore, the primordial perspective has faced challenges from a group of theoretical approaches that have been broadly defined as instrumentalist.

Instrumentalist views suggest that ethnic identity is not ‘given by birth’ but is a dynamic and fluid response to changing situations (although beneath this umbrella there is considerable dispute as to the relative importance of individual action versus the constraints of social structures and cultural norms). This has been influenced particularly by the work of Frederick Barth, who saw ethnicity as the “social organisation of cultural difference”. Barth focused on differentiation—how one group expresses its separation from another—rather than on the particular cultural characteristics of an ethnic group. Shared culture in Barth’s model is a tool for the construction and maintenance of ethnic boundaries and a means by which the ‘Other’ is defined.²⁷ Barth further argued that the maintenance of ethnic boundaries can be seen as a way in which a group adapts to a particular social or ecological niche. Other writers such as Abner Cohen have also emphasised that ethnic identity is not constant or given but can be changed by individuals according to the exigencies of a particular situation. Equally, the importance of ethnic identity itself, could be highly variable, with aspects of an individual’s identity suppressed or highlighted according to circumstances.²⁸ Geary applied this approach to Early Medieval Europe, concluding that “Early Medieval ethnicity should be viewed as a subjective process by which individuals and groups identified themselves or others within specific situations and for specific purposes”.²⁹

²⁶ Jones (1997) 65.

²⁷ Barth (1969) in particular 15-16. See also Jenkins (1997) 12.

²⁸ Cohen (1974).

²⁹ Geary (1983) 16, cited by Shennan (1989) 12.

The instrumentalist view has been criticised as reductionist, in that it can make ethnicity become no more than a strategy for responding to a particular situation, with culture as a tool which is brought to bear in economic and political relationships. This is belied by the persistent failure of attempts at cultural integration, whereby “many individuals do in fact stubbornly continue to unite with those with whom they have ties of ethnic sameness, even though such alliances might run contrary to patterns of group formation determined by shared interests”.³⁰ Instrumentalist approaches also sometimes fail to acknowledge the complexity of social relationships in assuming, for example, that shared interests are perceived equally by members of a group (which in any case may be internally divided on lines of gender or class) or that recognition of shared interests will instigate a unified course of action.

Do the Komani cemeteries constitute real evidence for the existence of a separate ethnic group or groups in post-Roman Albania? As with any isolated body of archaeological material, the answer has to be no, although this in itself does not undermine the validity of a question of this kind. Anthropological and ethnographic work has underlined the fact material culture does have a symbolic function on numerous different levels, of which group identity is only one aspect. Thus it should be possible to examine this material in terms of its dynamic role within a social strategy rather than as a passive representation of a set of ill-defined cultural norms. Ethnicity is not an explanation in itself, but nonetheless can constitute part of an explanatory framework. We must change the questions that are being asked of the Komani-Kruja material and instead ask exactly what purpose may have been served by the adoption of a rite of furnished burial, where previously none had existed.

EPIRUS IN THE 7TH CENTURY

Any effort to review the Komani-Kruja material requires an understanding of the situation that prevailed in the area during the 7th c. and what it is that I mean by ‘post-Roman’. The evidence, aside from that offered by the cemeteries, is fragmentary and open to wide

³⁰ Rex (1991) 11, cited by Jenkins (1997) 47. See also Jones (1997) 76-79.

interpretation. However, a number of themes can be broadly identified.³¹

1: Urban life was extinguished by A.D. 650 (and probably considerably earlier). While the late antique town was fundamentally different to the towns of the early empire, the former was recognisably derived from the latter. Until about 550, the concept of classical urbanism was probably familiar to most of the population, even if the reality was considerably removed from the ideal. By *c.* 650, even if population nuclei remained within the areas of the earlier Roman towns, their way of life in terms of material culture was indistinguishable from that of other centres, such as the hill-top sites briefly mentioned above. These sites, which often reutilised the defences of Classical and Hellenistic predecessors, were certainly occupied from the 6th c. and possibly earlier. Excavations have produced quantities of coarseware ceramics although relatively little in the way of recognisable imports. indeed, unambiguous 7th c. occupation is only known from a handful of sites.^{31a} Data are extremely limited for most of the Roman towns of central Albania, even in the case of Dyrrhachium (modern Durrës), which is thought to have remained in Byzantine hands during the 7th-9th centuries. Dyrrhachium is thought by Albanian archaeologists to have been a focal point for the Komani-Kruja population although the nature of its occupation has not been established archaeologically.³² While we should not envisage that the urban centres were entirely swept away by barbarian attack, a certain amount of evidence can be brought to bear suggesting a violent end to the lives of some settlements. The excavated areas of Onchesmos (modern Saranda) in particular, were found covered with a layer of burnt material dated by coins of Justin II and Sophia, which the excavator not unreasonably associated with the documented Slavic attacks of 586/87.³³

2: Contact with the remaining areas of the east Roman world appears to have become limited. Although imported materials are rep-

³¹ These themes are expanded in Bowden (forthcoming).

^{31a} These sites will be discussed in detail in Bowden (forthcoming) and Bowden and Hodges (forthcoming). 7th c. levels have recently been identified at Butrint and at a site within its hinterland (see Bowden, Hodges *et al.* (forthcoming).

³² Wilkes (1992) 273-74. Evidence for occupation of the town in this period is almost non-existent although see Tartari (1982) for suggestion of a continuous amphora sequence at Dyrrhachium.

³³ Lako (1991) 157.

resented in the Komani-Kruja cemeteries, their type and distribution indicate that lines of trade and exchange had altered significantly. The large quantities of glass that are unique to the Aphiona cemetery and the exceptional number of weapons present in the Komani graves, suggest that exchange mechanisms became subject to much more localised variations. The means by which the non-local material present in the grave assemblages was obtained is entirely unknown. Supplies of imported fine wares and other products dwindled during the early 7th c. as did use of coinage. Although coins of Constantius II (641-68) are known, the latest coins to appear in any quantity date to the first two decades of the reign of Heraclius.³⁴

3: The administrative structure of the Church seems to have fragmented. Although the documentary sources are problematic, they indicate that most of the bishops of Epirus Nova and Epirus Vetus had been forced to take refuge on islands or in southern Italy along with a proportion of their congregations. By 604, 4 of the 5 remaining bishops of Epirus Vetus were resident on Corfu, while Bishop John of Lissus was in Squillace in southern Italy, as his see was in the hands of the barbarians.³⁵ Although bishops of the Epirote provinces do appear in episcopal lists of the 8th c., the references are probably anachronistic.

In summary, although the details and extent of these processes may be debated, there can be little doubt regarding the scale of the changes that occurred in the later 6th and 7th centuries. These changes included the significant shift in settlement patterns indicated by the decline of the urban settlements and the broadly concomitant increase in occupation of hilltop sites, together with the undoubted lack of stability caused by the Slav attacks (whatever their scale and nature). It was in this context of a large-scale fragmentation of social structures that the Komani-Kruja cemeteries appear.

REINTERPRETING THE KOMANI-KRUJA BURIALS

The Komani-Kruja graves represent the reintroduction of a furnished burial rite in an area where furnished burial had not been practised

³⁴ Coins of the late 7th and 8th centuries are represented by a sole unprovenanced *solidus* of Constantine V (751-75) from the coin collection of the archaeological museum in Tirana (Spahiu (1980b) 385).

³⁵ Chrysos (1981) 74-76.

for around 200 years. They were vehicles of conspicuous display and consumption in which there also appears to have been marked differentiation between genders. Despite the presence of grave goods, for the reasons outlined earlier, the burials are usually thought to be Christian, although clearly Christian strictures against grave goods were deemed of secondary importance to the need for display. It is this stark difference, between the Komani-Kruja graves and the simple unfurnished burials that are characteristic in the area during the 5th and 6th centuries, that makes them so intriguing.

Within a theoretical framework that remains essentially that of culture-historic archaeology, two basic explanations have been put forward for the Komani-Kruja graves.

1. The cemeteries represent an existing population that survived the Slav incursions and retained an identity separate from that of the newcomers.
2. The cemeteries represent an incoming group, perhaps a Romanized Illyrian population from further north who had been displaced by Slav settlement.³⁶

These arguments rest on the assumption inherent in culture-historic archaeology in which material culture is a manifestation of normative behaviour within a particular group. In other words, the burial rite and the objects within the graves represent the habitual practices of one group of people and not another. However, within a classic culture-historic framework, the rapid appearance of these objects and burial practices would suggest an invading or migrating group, thereby privileging the second explanation. This was unsatisfactory to communist-period archaeologists, requiring them to construct a model in which the objects within the graves reflected established norms of Illyrian/Albanian material culture that were maintained during the Roman period and after. This tension between the requirements of a nationalist ideology and the accepted parameters of culture-historic archaeology is one of the defining characteristics of Albanian archaeology during this period.

The idea of habitual practice, which is inherent in the primordialist definition of ethnicity and largely absent from the instrumentalist model, has been retained by recent more carefully nuanced definitions of ethnicity as represented by archaeological evidence. Sian Jones, in an attempt to reconcile primordialist and instrumentalist

³⁶ As suggested by Wilkes (1992) 278.

explanations of ethnicity, suggests that '(t)he cultural practices and representations that become objectified as symbols of ethnicity are derived from, and resonate with, the habitual practices and experiences of the people concerned, as well as reflecting the instrumental contingencies of a particular situation.'³⁷ Jones's model encompasses the concept of *habitus*—the unconscious acquisition of common or basic actions and attitudes as part of the process of socialisation within a particular cultural milieu.³⁸ This definition of ethnic symbols cannot encompass the Komani graves as an expression of ethnic identity. If we adhere to the accepted view that the Komani graves represent a Latin-literate Christian population, then a rite of furnished burial seems unlikely to have reflected or emphasised a habitual practice that would carry resonance for other members of the community. Similarly in terms of material culture the grave assemblages contain a wide variety of items that formed part of a relatively homogeneous group of objects that are characteristic of *non*-Roman contexts in Europe in the 6th, 7th and 8th centuries. It is hard to envisage these objects playing an active role in the construction of a non-barbarian Christian identity.

Indeed, in areas of Europe where a pseudo-Roman Christian identity was created and maintained, the means by which this was achieved were very different. The survival of an epigraphic habit, for example, seems to have fulfilled a particular role in several locations. This is particularly notable in south-west Britain, where a large number of Early Christian memorial stones are known, dating to the late 5th and 6th centuries, when the population faced considerable pressure from Germanic invaders to the east. The inscriptions appear in conjunction with sites where quantities of imported Mediterranean ceramics have been found dating to the same period.³⁹

The example of Cornwall is particularly noteworthy in that, unless we consider that the inscriptions and the ceramics reflect the tastes of a refugee Romano-British population, it seems that these phenomena do not represent the survival of a Romanised society but the active construction of one, where previously none had existed. Although this is not the occasion to approach this complex question it seems possible that the population of south-west Britain

³⁷ Jones (1997) 128.

³⁸ On the use of *habitus* as related to ethnicity and archaeology see also Shennan (1989) 14-17.

³⁹ Epigraphic evidence is summarised in Todd (1987) 249-51. On imported ceramics see Thomas (1981) and Fulford (1989).

were attempting to construct boundaries between themselves and the Germanic ‘Other’, through the creation of a largely fictitious Roman identity. Similarly, an epigraphic habit was maintained in the city of *Augusta Treverorum* (modern Trier) on the Moselle, where an enormous number of inscriptions are known, dating from between the 5th and 8th centuries. At Trier, the affinity with the Roman past was also expressed through the apparent curation of *terra sigillata* vessels, which were probably removed from Roman graves.⁴⁰

These pseudo-Roman traits are conspicuously absent from the Komani-Kruja cemeteries. The Albanian argument, however, is that the graves represent the revival of an Illyrian identity rather than a Roman one. The purported affinities between the material culture of the Illyrians and that represented in the graves are at best questionable and certain cases, such as the revival of ceramic styles, find little or no supporting evidence.⁴¹ However, the possibility that the Komani-Kruja populations were consciously evoking the idea of a distant ancestry cannot be discounted. The choice of locations for settlement in this period is of interest in this respect. The re-occupation of prehistoric hill forts is a characteristic feature of Europe in Late Antiquity and while in many cases the choice of site was probably based on pragmatic rather than symbolic reasons, the significance attached to ‘ancient’ locations should not be overlooked. In times of social stress, the creation of affinities with the past, thereby establishing primacy of occupation, has tremendous resonance (a fact understood by the communist regime in Albania).

The reuse of Bronze Age tumuli may have some significance in this respect. The construction of associations with earlier burial sites is not unusual. The re-use of older monuments such as barrows is a widely recognised facet of burial in post-Roman Europe, and also occurs in prehistoric contexts. In Britain, for example, Williams examined a sample of 71 Anglo-Saxon cemeteries of which 38 (54%) showed some evidence of monument reuse. In the Upper Thames valley, the figure is even higher with around 60% of 7th c. Anglo-Saxon cemeteries sited adjacent to barrows or other monuments. The “referential qualities” of earlier sites and monuments were also recognised in contemporary Christian contexts; for example, in Merovingian Gaul both prehistoric and Roman monuments were

⁴⁰ Clemens (1998) has recovered *terra sigillata* with medieval graffiti from 8th c. contexts. The inscriptions are catalogued by Merton (1990).

⁴¹ Nallbani and Gilkes (2000) 12.

appropriated for new purposes.⁴² The expression of affinity with the past is a powerful tool in the construction of identities, particularly during periods of instability. As Frank Furëdi puts it, “loss of control of the future stimulates a tenacious affirmation of history”.⁴³

Can the adoption of a richly furnished burial rite be interpreted as an active strategy in the construction of a new group identity on the part of a population that inhabited an uncertain and rapidly changing world? In the case of the Komani-Kruja cemeteries it seems unlikely, and instead the reappearance of furnished burials may be more indicative of changes in internal social hierarchies and power structures, rather than of the construction or maintenance of ethnic boundaries. It may in fact be more profitable to examine these graves in terms of what they may tell us of the internal dynamics of the groups that created them. While we may note Hodder’s warning against a “simple correlation between social organisation and burial”, in the case of the Komani-Kruja cemeteries there is in fact sufficient background evidence to suggest that the sudden appearance of furnished burial relates in fact to profound social change.⁴⁴

Although the cemeteries give the impression of homogeneity, there is in fact substantial variation between the different assemblages, suggesting that the grave groups are responses to very localised circumstances. This is apparent in the relationship between grave goods and gender, particularly in regard to the gender divisions suggested by Albanian archaeologists. At Aphiona on Corfu only nine of the nineteen burials excavated contained grave goods. All the objects corresponded with types associated with female burials in the Komani-Kruja cemeteries. No weapons were present.⁴⁵ If we accept the gender divisions suggested by the Albanian archaeologists (and the 10-9 division of the random sample excavated at Aphiona could suggest that they are plausible), it seems that at Aphiona the need for consumption and display was articulated solely through female burials. However, elsewhere these gender divisions seem extremely blurred in the published assemblages, in which numerous different combinations of objects can be observed. At Dalmaces, axes and arrow/spearheads appear in combination with glass necklaces, knives, fibulae, earrings, rings, and hanging ornaments while at Lezhë a similar degree

⁴² Williams (1997); Effros (2001). See also Härke (2001).

⁴³ Furëdi (1992) 3.

⁴⁴ Hodder (1982) 201.

⁴⁵ Bulle (1934).

of variation can be seen. A similar degree of variation can be seen in the numbers of unfurnished burials present in the cemeteries. At Lezhë out of 37 burials, only 4 were unfurnished, whereas at Dalmaces 18 graves were unfurnished, from a total of 40.⁴⁶ Dalmaces therefore contained a similar proportion of unfurnished graves to the Aphiona cemetery, with the crucial difference that the Dalmaces sample contained 'male' objects such as weapons, in contrast to Aphiona where only 'female' dress items were found. A similar level of variation can be observed in the different orientations present in the burials (see above).

It is clear that even a cursory examination of the excavated samples of cemeteries reveals significant differences between sites. To the variables mentioned above can be added factors such as the type of grave structure, the incidence of multiple burial and the implication that some of the tombs were used as ossuaries. At Lezhë, for example, graves 19 and 35 contained 4 skulls, while grave 31 contained 6 skulls. The presence of multiple skeletons in other tombs implies that the graves may have been opened on more than one occasion, further confusing the grave assemblages. Other variables are present, including the uncertain chronologies of the graves. At Shurdhah it has been suggested that the unfurnished graves are later than those with grave goods, reflecting the increasing strictures of the Church in relation to furnished burial.⁴⁷ However, these unfurnished burials have a north-south orientation and were interspersed among those with grave goods. In contrast, the graves that are nearest to the church at Shurdhah and which have an east-west orientation are richly furnished.

A degree of variation between cemeteries is not in itself surprising, given the relatively rapid development of a furnished burial rite in the 7th c. We can view these differences in the context of communities working within what was essentially an unfamiliar medium, with a corresponding level of uncertainty and debate as to what constituted 'good' practice. This may have been further complicated by the Christianity of at least some of the participants, although as discussed below, this Christianity is at best ambiguous. Equally, we should not assume that that all contemporary attitudes to death and burial were the same. The unfurnished burials could reflect conflict regarding the adoption of an essentially pagan burial practice within

⁴⁶ Spahiu (1980a); Prendi (1980).

⁴⁷ Komata (1980) 113.

a nominally Christian community, rather than reflecting the age, gender, poverty or ethnic identity of the occupants.⁴⁸ While, as Young has demonstrated, the presence of grave goods does not necessarily equate with paganism, they are unlikely to have constituted an overt statement of Christianity.⁴⁹

CONCLUSIONS: ETHNICITY, STATUS AND PARTICIPATION

An individual can manipulate customs if he becomes part of such a group, adopting its current major symbols. He cannot manipulate others without being ready to be manipulated by them. He must pay the price of membership by participating in the group's symbolic activities and by a measure of adherence to the group's aims.

Abner Cohen⁵⁰

Did ethnicity really matter in the post-Roman period? It has been argued that its role was rarely important and that other aspects of the 'social code' were dominant.⁵¹ Certainly the demands of nationalist culture-historic archaeologies may have meant that it has been over emphasised although this does not mean that it should be ruled out. For example, Heinrich Härke's analysis of weapon burial in Anglo-Saxon cemeteries, which took account of epigenetic data tracing descent lines within cemetery populations, suggests that weapons were included to demonstrate that the occupant of the grave was of Germanic descent, which seemingly carried a certain level of status.⁵² The creation of lineage was certainly important in the Germanic tribes, indicated for example by the royal pedigrees known from Anglo-Saxon and Gothic contexts.⁵³ Nonetheless, while the creation of lineage may be a part of the construction of ethnic identity (as for example in the United States today), in an Anglo-Saxon context at least, lineage seems more related to the status of the individual, rather than their membership of a particular group.

This last point is of fundamental importance to the interpretation of the Albanian cemeteries. If the grave assemblages were expres-

⁴⁸ See Hodder (1982) 195-201.

⁴⁹ Young (1977).

⁵⁰ Cohen (1974) xiii.

⁵¹ Daim (1998) 72.

⁵² Härke (1992)

⁵³ Dumville (1976) for Anglo-Saxon genealogies; Heather (1991) 19-33 for Gothic genealogies.

sions of group identity then the identity expressed is not that of an autochthonous Christian population that is attempting to define itself in relation to an *arriviste* pagan ‘Other’. Whether or not the occupants of the graves professed Christianity, they were operating essentially within a pagan milieu and one that was widespread throughout central and northern Europe in the 7th c. Migrant groups including the Avars, Slavs, and Lombards, who were probably the closest geographically to Epirus Nova, buried their dead with jewellery, weapons, and other goods. The Komani-Kruja graves were therefore part of a wide sphere of burial practice that related to individual rather than to group identity, in which hierarchies were expressed through the interment of high-status objects. The Komani-Kruja material indeed conforms to patterns of status-related burial elsewhere, for example in Avar contexts, in which great emphasis was placed on the presence of imported objects.⁵⁴ The Albanian graves contain a wide variety of imported materials, most notably the gold earrings, which probably originated in Byzantine Sicily. Also of note in this context are the glass vessels which are unique to the Aphiona cemetery on Corfu.

Material culture was not, therefore, used as a medium through which difference was conveyed, but rather as a means through which the Komani-Kruja populations participated in a set of social relations. A primary function of these ‘means of representation’ was of engendering stability within a society. The post-Roman world was one of uncertainty and high mobility, in terms of location of settlement or residence and in terms of identity and status.⁵⁵ As we have seen, the speed of change within 7th c. Epirus was rapid. In the space of perhaps two generations, an urbanised or semi-urbanised society with recognisable affinities with the Roman past was transformed into one that was essentially rural, the leadership structures of which had also dramatically altered. As I have argued elsewhere, power became individualised in late antique Epirus, a situation that may have its origins in the patronage systems of the late empire and which continued with the ascendancy of powerful churchmen in the late 5th and 6th centuries.⁵⁶ Epirus also became increasingly peripheral in relation to the administrative structures of the empire. This perhaps created a situation in which power coalesced around individu-

⁵⁴ Daim (1998) 86.

⁵⁵ Daim (1998) 84.

⁵⁶ See Bowden (forthcoming).

als rather than being focussed on town or state. The result was a far more fluid and localised network of relationships based around fluctuating allegiances and competition, which in terms of social and political cohesion may not have been dissimilar to that of incoming migrant groups, whose arrival doubtless exacerbated the process. Indeed, “at a time of political and demographic instability almost unlimited opportunities might be open to anyone with a claim to authority and the means to impose it”.⁵⁷

It is this context which may hold the key to understanding the Komani-Kruja cemeteries, in that it provides a setting for the rapid emergence of a furnished burial rite as a response to an entirely new and continually changing set of social relations. The representation of individual identity and status in relation to peer groups proved more compelling than previous strictures of the Christian church regarding furnished burial. If the occupants of the Komani-Kruja graves were Christian, their religion was not an aspect of their identity that was seemingly expressed within the burial ritual (and perhaps not within other areas of social relations). Although Christian items were placed within the graves, as with the presence of Christian objects within the context of pagan graves elsewhere in Europe, their symbolic value lay in their status as objects, rather than as a means of religious representation.

In conclusion, it seems unlikely that expression of group or ethnic identity was a primary motivation behind the revival of furnished burial in post-Roman Epirus Vetus and Epirus Nova. The Komani-Kruja populations were participating in a European-wide medium of funerary practice, rather than constructing an identity that consciously expressed their difference from their neighbours. Attempts on the part of ‘Roman’ groups to emphasise their own diversity in relation to incoming populations stress their affinity with the classical past, its religion, epigraphic practices and material culture. The Komani-Kruja population, however, was not attempting to maintain or construct boundaries by which to preserve its ethnic integrity. Instead, it was participating in the localised and fluctuating social structures that emerged from the remains of Roman Epirus.

⁵⁷ Scull (1992) 9 (referring to East Anglia in the 5th c.).

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SOME ASPECTS OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE ROMAN *DOMUS* BETWEEN LATE ANTIQUITY AND THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

BARBARA POLCI

ABSTRACT

This essay concerns some aspects of the transformation of the Late Roman *domus* into the Early Medieval house and focuses on the spaces designed for reception and entertainment. First, I will consider the use and the development of the reception areas of wealthy houses, and their relationship with the growth in private patronage in Late Antiquity. Second, I will examine the transformation of this late antique model of elite housing into the new type of upper-class dwellings that emerged in Early Medieval Italy. In particular, I will focus on the transferral of reception halls and banqueting chambers to the upper story, and on the social and architectural implications of this feature.

INTRODUCTION

“Although churches remain to us from the Middle Ages, we have not one private house: yet nothing is more full of meaning than an old house”.¹ So lamented Andrea Carandini in his 1989 article on the subject of Europe’s policies towards its cultural assets. In more recent years, however, new light has been shed on late antique and Early Medieval housing through a combination of important new archaeological investigations, new studies on the social implications of domestic architecture and a re-examination of earlier excavations and literary sources.

In this essay I shall examine some aspects of transformation of the Late Roman *domus* between the disintegration of Roman authority and the rise of the Carolingian empire, through an examination of

¹ Carandini (1989) 10.

surviving material and documentary evidence for elite lifestyle. I will focus in particular on the spaces designed for reception and entertainment—the areas in which encounters between elites and non-elites took place—in order to better understand the ways in which the participants expressed and defined their power and status through their residences during this process of fundamental social change. The study is divided into two main parts. First, I shall consider the use and the development of the reception areas of wealthy houses, and the relationship with the growth of private patronage in Late Antiquity. Second, I shall examine the transition between this late antique model of elite housing and the new type of upper-class dwellings that emerged in Early Medieval Italy. In particular, I shall focus on the transferral of reception halls and banqueting chambers to the upper story, and on the social and architectonic implications of this feature. The aim is not only to clarify some crucial aspects of the architectural evolution and transformation of the Late Roman *domus*, but also to arrive at a better understanding of the social, economic and cultural structures of the period in question.

RECEPTION ROOMS IN LATE ANTIQUITY: USE AND DEVELOPMENT

The large number of accounts found in written sources testifies to the great importance of dining and entertaining in the social and political life of Roman aristocracy, which is also confirmed by the special importance assigned to reception areas in upper-class Roman dwellings. Dinner would start in mid afternoon, but might well last into the night, accompanied by a variety of entertainment. The success of a banquet would depend not only on the quality, quantity and variety of food, but also on the elegance of its setting and the kind of entertainment offered. Performances at dinner parties would often include music, singing, dancing and poetry recitals, and occasionally also acrobats, dramatic performances, mimes, and pantomimes.²

In wealthy houses of the early and middle empire, this kind of reception usually took place in the *triclinium*, which was generally the largest and most richly decorated room in the house. The *triclinium* was named after the three rectangular couches used for reclining while dining. These couches were placed around three sides of the room and were closely fitted together around a single central table,

² Dunbabin (1996) 66-67. Cf. also Jones (1991).

of which one side was left free for service. Strict social rules governed the arrangement of seating at dinner parties, which followed a hierarchical order dictated by differences in rank and status. The couch of honour was the *lectus medius*, opposite the empty side of the table with the right hand position accorded the highest 'consular' status (*locus consularis*). Next in importance came the *lectus summus*, and last the *lectus imus*. A *nomenclator* would announce the guests and would show them to their couch and place where they would recline crosswise, with their left elbow resting on a cushion and their feet at the foot of the couch.³

By the 3rd c. A.D., literary sources, figured representations and archaeological remains all point toward an important change of fashion in dining, with the semicircular couch known as the *stibadium* or *sigma* taking the place of the traditional three rectangular couches. This dining arrangement is known from as early as the late 1st c. A.D., when it was used solely for outdoor banquets where the diners reclined either directly on the ground or, more often, on a semicircular cushion. By the 4th c., however, dining on *stibadia* was practised for both outdoor and regular indoor banquets and had supplanted the rectangular arrangement of *triclinia*, despite the occasional persistence of this traditional layout.⁴ One of the most significant archaeological signs of this change in dining fashion in late antique prestige dwellings is the large number of reception halls that are provided with an apse, where the *stibadium* would be placed. The shape of the *stibadium* lent itself naturally to the form of the apse and so the formal dining room evolved as a combination of apse and rectangular or square hall.⁵

However, the semicircular couch could only hold a smaller number of diners—between 5 and 8—while the traditional combination of three rectangular couches could accommodate perhaps as many as 18 or 20 guests. It has been suggested that, once the idea of dining on *stibadia* in an apsidal dining hall had become popular, an aristocrat who wished to host a larger number of guests would construct a triconch, a room with three apses, each providing space for a *stibadium*. According to this hypothesis, therefore, the triconch design would have evolved naturally out of the traditional usage of three couches

³ See Dunbabin (1991) 121-28 and Ellis (1991) 118-19.

⁴ Dunbabin (1991) 128-36 and Rossiter (1991) 202-6. For outdoor banquets, see also Salsa Prini Ricotti (1987) 135-84.

⁵ For this view, see Ellis (1991) 119-20 .

per *triclinium*, making larger gatherings possible.⁶ Rooms of this design are found in many prestige dwellings of the late empire, among them the well-known examples at the villa at Desenzano on the shores of Lake Garda,⁷ the villa at Piazza Armerina⁸ (fig. 1) and the so-called Palace of Theoderic at Ravenna (fig. 2.2).⁹

The ultimate luxury in this sense must have been the development of the *aula trichora* through the multiplication of the niches, which made possible even more impressive gatherings of people. This was the case, for example, at the *domus Cilonis*, where the multi-apsidal dining hall was later transformed into the church of Santa Balbina in Rome.¹⁰ The *domus quae vocatur quinque accubita*, a five-apsed *triclinium* built in the episcopal complex at Ravenna by the Bishop Neon in the mid 5th c.,¹¹ may provide a further example, which was perhaps consciously repeated on a smaller scale in the episcopal complex at Grado.¹² However, the most impressive example of this type of multi-apsidal hall is the seven-apsed chamber at the House of Bacchus at Djemila, in Numidia (fig. 2.1).¹³ A room of this size—nearly 27 m long, with the apses over 4 m in diameter—provided sufficient space for about 50 guests reclining on *stibadia*. A very similar hall was found at Constantinople on the north western side of the Hippodrome. This has been generally recognised as the palace built for Lausus, a *praepositus sacri palatii* of the first half of the 5th c., while the complex on its northern side has been traditionally identified with the palace of another *praepositus*, Antiochus.¹⁴ However, it has been recently argued that both structures were different parts of the same complex—possibly the palace built for Antiochus, since his name was found on the bricks—and that the two chambers would have been used for the reception and entertainment of different ranks of guests.¹⁵

⁶ Dunbabin (1991) 129-30 and Ellis (1991) 119. For the origin of the triconch, cf. also Lavin (1962) 1-15.

⁷ Scagliarini Corlaita (1994) 43-58.

⁸ Carandini *et al.* (1982); Wilson (1983).

⁹ Johnson (1988) 79-85 and Baldini Lippolis (1996).

¹⁰ Guidobaldi (1986) 181-82.

¹¹ See De Angelis D'Ossat (1973) and Deichmann (1972) 94-112.

¹² Cf. De Angelis D'Ossat (1973) 269-73 and Lopreato (1988) 325-33.

¹³ Lassus (1971).

¹⁴ C.f. Müller Wiener (1977) 238-39 and Scagliarini Corlaita (1995) 865-66.

¹⁵ Baldini Lippolis (1994) 298-299. The seven-apsed hall has also been identified (wrongly in my opinion) as the Hall of the Nineteen Couches at the Great Palace of the Byzantine emperors. See among others, Verzone (1976) 41-47 and Bek (1983) 96.

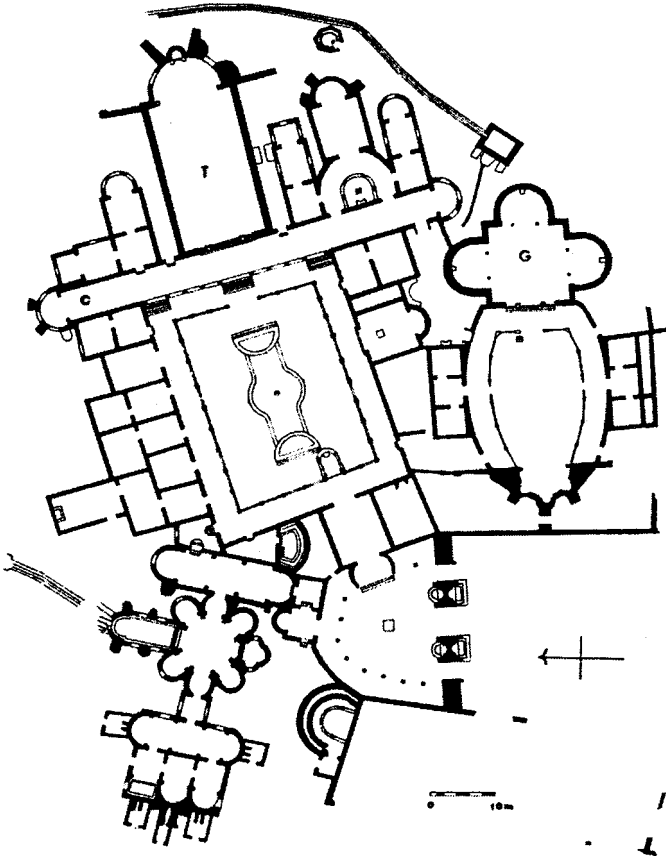


Fig. 1. Piazza Armerina. Plan of the villa. [C] = corridor [G] = grand dining hall [T] = *triclinium*. After Ellis (1991).

Late Roman aristocrats, in fact, increasingly needed to differentiate between the various classes of guests, as is clearly reflected by the presence of more specialised reception rooms in their residences. Whereas in earlier houses a *triclinium* would have been used both as a dining hall and as an audience chamber where the master of the house could conduct his business, most large houses built in the 4th c. and later were provided with at least two specialised reception halls that served different functions.

Simon Ellis has interpreted these halls respectively as a private audience chamber where the *dominus* could meet with his clients, perhaps for the *salutatio* or ‘morning greetings’, and as a *triclinium* for

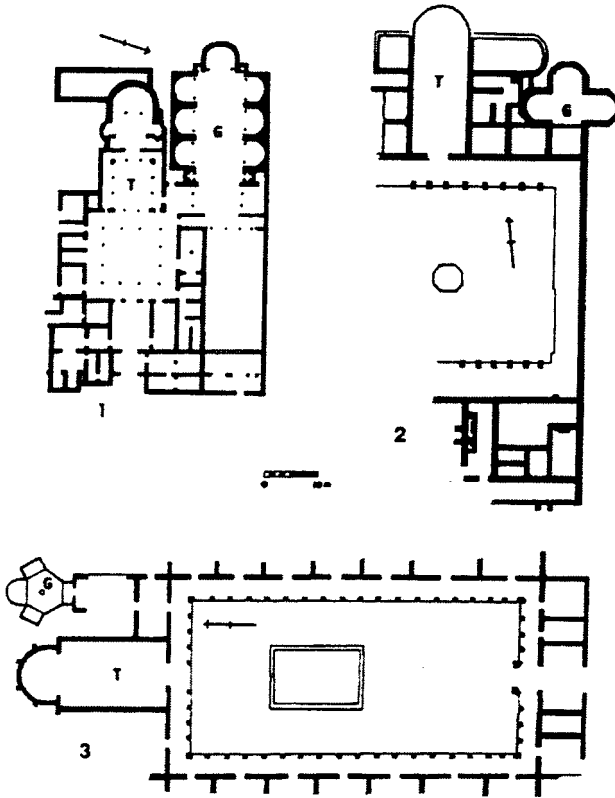


Fig. 2. Plan of three houses with multi-apsed grand dining halls. [G] = grand dining hall [T] = *triclinium*: [1] Djemila, House of Bacchus [2] Ravenna, the so-called Palace of Theodoric [3] Mediana (Niš), villa. After Ellis (1991).

banquets.¹⁶ In some cases, such as in the ‘palace of the Dux’ at Apollonia (fig. 3.3), the ‘bishop’s palace’ at Aphrodisias (fig. 3.2) and the ‘palace’ above the theatre at Ephesus (fig. 3.1),¹⁷ the audience chamber would be built close to the street, so that the less important clients could be excluded from the main part of the house, while more important clients and friends would be invited for dinner and entertainment in the main reception room, which was generally located off the peristyle. In other instances, however, a grand dining hall in

¹⁶ This concept was first expressed in Ellis (1985) and then further developed in Ellis (1988) and (1991).

¹⁷ For Apollonia, see Ellis (1985); for Aphrodisias, Erim (1969); for Ephesus, Keil (1932).

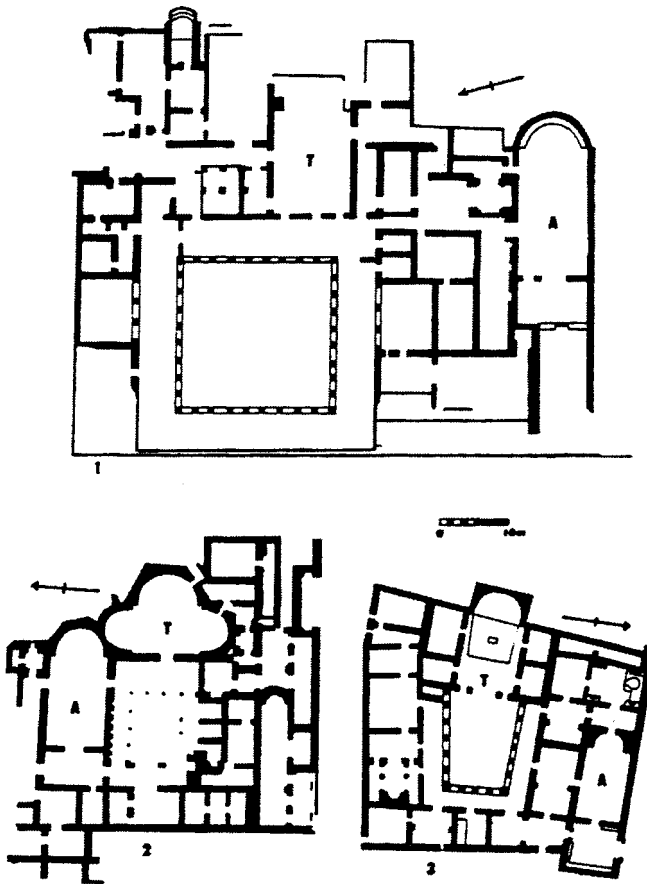


Fig. 3. Plan of three houses with audience chambers: [1] Ephesus, villa above the theatre [2] Aphrodisias, the 'Governor's Palace' [3] Apollonia, the 'Palace of the Dux'. After Ellis (1991).

which to receive the most important and influential friends was located off the main axis, and entered through a separate entrance, ensuring privacy for both the rest of the house and for the meeting in question. Ellis has identified this second type of combination of two reception rooms at the 'Palace' of Theoderic at Ravenna, the House of Bacchus at Djemila, the villa at Mediana near Niš and also at the villa at Piazza Armerina, where the 'grand dining hall' in the shape of a triconch would have had not only a separate entrance but also a second, private peristyle.¹⁸

¹⁸ Ellis (1991) 120-22.

This trend seems to have reached its apogee in the mid to late 4th c. phase of the villa at Littlecote, in Wiltshire, where interestingly a large triconch hall was located away from the main villa building, almost isolated from the rest of the complex.¹⁹ This hall has been interpreted as part of an Orphic *temenos*, together with the adjoining structures, solely on the basis of the presence of a mosaic depicting Orpheus, which bears a vague resemblance to several other Orpheus mosaics known in Britain. However, the presence of a religious decoration related to Orpheus does not necessarily imply a place of worship: the use of images of Orpheus had, in fact, become a common symbol of classical culture and a fashionable theme by the 3rd c. A.D., when Orpheus was associated by intellectual Christians with Christ.²⁰ It is more likely, therefore, that the hall was simply a reception room located in a more secluded part of the complex, which allowed the owner of the house to conduct his business and his social meetings away from the domestic range.²¹

Nonetheless, literary sources clearly indicate that, on some social occasions, the two major public rooms in the house were also used together for two distinct stages of the same *convivium*: one for the reception and entertainment of the guests before the meal, and the other where the guests would gather for the dinner itself.²² Around A.D. 460, Sidonius Apollinaris records a visit made to the villa of his friend Tonantius Ferreolus near Nimes, in southern Gaul, and describes some of the social activities which took place there:

Hardly had I entered one vestibule or the other when behold! I found on one side opposing ball-players bending low amid the whirling evolutions of the catastrophe; in another quarter I would hear the clatter of rattling dice-boxes and of dice mingled with the rival shouts of the gamesters; in another part were books in any number ready to hand; you might have imagined yourself looking at the shelves of a professional scholar or at the tiers in the Athenaeum or at the towering presses of the booksellers. The arrangement was such that the manuscripts near the ladies' seats were of a devotional type, while those among the gentlemen's benches were works distinguished by the grandeur of Latin eloquence.²³

¹⁹ Frere (1989).

²⁰ On this point, see Murray (1981) 37-62.

²¹ Toynbee (1981) and Ellis (1995) 173-75 .

²² Rossiter (1991) 200-202.

²³ Sidon. *Ep.* 2.9.4-5 (transl. Anderson (1936) 453).

Sidonius also tells how some of the houseguests sat in one corner of the room and engaged in a debate on the subject of Origen's writings until

a messenger would approach from the head cook to tell us that the time for refreshment was at hand. He had his eye on the passage of the hours as marked by the water clock, and as the fifth hour was just departing he was proved to have arrived just as the right moment. The luncheon was at once short and lavish in the style of senators, who have an inherited and established practice of having abundant viands served up on few dishes, although the meal is varied by having some of the meats roasted and others stewed. As we sat over our wine there were short stories, for amusements or instruction; they were started in two sets, bringing mirth and edification respectively. To sum up, our entertainment was moral, elegant and profuse.²⁴

A very similar account of aristocratic hospitality, but in an urban context, is found in Macrobius' account of the feast of the *Saturnalia*.²⁵ Macrobius describes a gathering of twelve guests, this time all male, meeting before dinner in the *bibliotheca* in the house of the aristocrat Vettius Praetextatus.²⁶ The pre-dinner gathering continued there for several hours, with guests discussing the activities that were permitted on feast days as well as the proper treatment of slaves.²⁷ However, as Praetextatus himself remarks, pre-dinner gatherings in the library were more usually an occasion for backgammon and draughts.²⁸ As in Sidonius' account, the debate was interrupted by a slave who announced that the dinner was ready, whereupon the guests then moved from the library to the *triclinium* to take their places for the banquet.²⁹

In both these cases, therefore, the main reception rooms were not used in isolation but were actually closely interrelated. This could have also happened in most of the examples mentioned so far, as well as in other Late Roman prestige dwellings that had more than one public room, such as at the villa at Patti Marina in Sicily,³⁰ or at the villas at Ecija and Rioseco de Soria in Spain.³¹ The rich *domus*

²⁴ Sidon. *Ep.* 2.9.6 (transl. Anderson (1936) 455-56).

²⁵ C.f. Rossiter (1991) 201.

²⁶ Macrobius. *Sat.* 1.6.1 (transl. Davies (1969) 49).

²⁷ Macrobius. *Sat.* 1.7-24 (transl. Davies (1969) 55-58).

²⁸ Macrobius. *Sat.* 1.5.11 (transl. Davies (1969) 47).

²⁹ Macrobius. *Sat.* 1.24.22-25 (transl. Davies (1969) 158).

³⁰ Wilson (1990) 204-206.

³¹ Gorges (1979) 374-75 and 403.

recently excavated at Butrint, Albania, indicates the presence of a similar combination of two reception rooms in an urban context. The large triconch hall was possibly intended as a grand dining room, while the single-apsed hall could have been alternatively used as an audience chamber or as a room for the pre-dinner entertainment of guests.³²

Entertainment seems to have assumed a greater importance at these occasions than previously. It has been suggested that one of the reasons for the adoption of the *stibadium* for indoor banquets could have been that this arrangement would leave more space available for entertainment, as with outdoor banquets where the constraints of space did not apply.³³ In the traditional rectangular *triclinium*, in fact, the space for service and entertainment must have always been limited and somewhat crowded. Music and some dance would generally accompany the dinner, but the conversation within the group took precedence, the idea of the *convivium* being that the participants were their own entertainment. By contrast, the use of the semicircular couch kept the main area of the room free, leaving a conveniently large space in front of the diners. This triconch, in which the entire central square could be used for service and entertainment, was even better suited for this purpose. Servants would use this area to bring the food from the entrance to a table, which stood in the curve of the couch, and was accessible to all without occupying the rest of the room. This arrangement would leave more space for entertainers, making it possible to host shows that were more elaborate than before.³⁴ Dining on *stibadia* would also ensure a much better view of the spectacle going on in the hall. At the same time, however, this arrangement would make conversation within the group much less convenient. The entertainment took precedence, becoming one of the essential components of the dinner.

This phenomenon should not be simply considered as a change in dining fashion but has in fact much deeper implications. Feeding

³² For the triconch house at Butrint, see Hodges *et al.* (2000) 248-50. For more examples of wealthy houses provided with magnificent reception rooms in both urban and rural contexts, see the impressive collection of examples presented in Sodini (1995) and (1997).

³³ Dunbabin (1996) 77-78.

³⁴ Macrobius talks of dancers performing *ante triclinium*, which may mean 'in front of the couches' but also 'outside the dining room': Macrobius *Sat.* 3.14.4. Also a passage of Olympiodorus mentions mimes performing 'in front of' the table: Olymp. *FGH* fr. 23, IV, 62, cited in Dunbabin (1996) 78, n. 49.

and entertaining friends and clients had always been one of the major social obligations of the Roman aristocrat, but became even more important in Late Antiquity. The decline of central government saw the end of magnificent public spectacles and, contemporaneously, an increasing tendency toward a privatisation of entertainment, which became a private concern of the upper classes. Members of the aristocracy filled part of this power vacuum, while their houses absorbed a variety of public functions. This would accord with our current view of Late Roman patronage, which had a more autocratic and pervasive nature than before. Late antique aristocrats held greater political power than their earlier (and more numerous) counterparts, and in the growing decline of central governments they became the main local power and assumed almost complete control of the areas they dominated. As a result, many people, overwhelmed by the ever-increasing weight of taxes, were forced to resort to these local patrons and then became totally dependent on them.³⁵ In Peter Brown's words, "in the late empire all attempts to secure protection and redress of grievances had to pass through a great man—a *patronus*".³⁶ Social relations between patron and client became more formalised and ceremonial, and consequently so did their architectural setting. The splendour of the entertainment that the host could offer would be one of the main opportunities he had to impress his guests and clients, in the same way as would the architecture of his house.

MOVING UP: THE TRANSFERRAL OF RECEPTION ROOMS TO THE UPPER FLOOR

Notwithstanding these important developments, the Late Roman *domus* was still closely related to and derived from the traditional Roman *domus*. Mainly organised around a central courtyard, it was generally single-storied and even in those cases when an upper floor existed, reception areas were usually found at the ground level. In Italy, however, from the 5th c. onwards, some fundamental changes occurred in the layout of the traditional Roman house. Although the opulent houses built at an earlier date continued to be occupied,

³⁵ Ellis (1988).

³⁶ Brown (1971) 37.

the 'classic' peristyle house gradually disappeared and a new model of elite housing slowly started to emerge.³⁷

Our knowledge of elite housing in this period of transformation is still quite limited and based on scanty archaeological evidence and a few mentions in literary sources. Therefore, it is particularly difficult, if not impossible, to outline its development in the way that is possible for its earlier counterpart. An examination of the available data, however, allows us to identify some interesting features and to make some provisional remarks about them. One of the most notable changes was the transferral of the main living areas from the ground to the upper floor.

Episcopal Complexes

As early as the 6th c., upper-level reception rooms are found in a number of episcopal complexes. At Ravenna, for example, a dining-room used as a *mensa canonica* was built above the *vivarium* (a series of arches, niches and openings used to house various species of bird and fish for the bishop's table), probably under bishop Maximian (546-565).³⁸ At Aquileia, the 4th c. episcopal complex was rebuilt after a great fire, perhaps related to the onslaught of Attila, and it seems likely that one of the halls used in the previous phase of the complex was transformed into a warehouse, with pillars possibly supporting a large reception hall on the upper floor.³⁹ Similarly at Geneva, a second storey hall was built between the end of the 5th c. and the mid 6th c. following a fire.⁴⁰ At Poreč, a large chamber on the ground floor was transformed into a warehouse, while again pillars were used to support the large, impressive hall located on the upper floor.⁴¹ Also the *episcopium* 'par excellence', the Lateran, was a two-storey building from at least the 7th c. When the army of Ravenna went there to rescue Sergius I, they found that both the upper and the lower doors (*tam inferiores quamque superiores*) of the patriarchate had been shut.⁴² The evidence concerning the presence

³⁷ For the end of the peristyle house, see Ellis (1988).

³⁸ Deichmann (1972) 109-10.

³⁹ Bertacchi (1985) 375-83.

⁴⁰ Bonnet (1986) 72-73.

⁴¹ Matejčić (1995) 84-89. The presence of an upper-floor hall is also postulated at the *episcopium* of Salona, even if the evidence in this case is much less clear: cf. Bertacchi (1985) 410-12.

⁴² *LP I* 373 .

of upper storey halls is not very well defined in this early phase, but by the mid 8th c., when Zacharias built a *triclinium* on the upper floor of the tower building, it is clear that they were a feature of the Lateran palace.⁴³

However, the organisation of space into two or more floors and the translocation of living activities to the upper floors should not be considered as being exclusive to bishops' residences. It is more likely that the common presence of these features in episcopal contexts can be explained as a result of the greater survival-rate of these complexes due to the continuity in their use. This does not mean that the same phenomena were not occurring in secular domestic architecture too, but only that the evidence available for them between the 5th and 9th c. is extremely patchy. In this sense, therefore, bishops' residences can be considered as one of the most valuable indicators of how Late Roman elite housing was gradually transformed into its Early Medieval form.

Second Storey Reception Rooms in Secular Residences

Turning to a lay context, it is particularly interesting to take a closer look at the archaeological sequence at the villa complex excavated at San Giovanni di Ruoti, near Potenza, in Italy's southern region of Basilicata (fig. 4).⁴⁴ Excavations have shown that around A.D. 400, a new villa was built above the remains of an earlier one that had been abandoned in the early 3rd c. Its main features were a bath building and large apsidal hall in the south-eastern side, which would have been used by the master of the house for his social encounters. Around A.D. 460 the apsidal hall collapsed and some of the other buildings were damaged, probably following an earthquake. The villa was reconstructed and practically doubled in size. However, the new complex was not arranged around a peristyle, and its main units were separated only by narrow passageways. The apsidal hall was demolished and replaced with a new one located on an upper floor at the north end of the site. Moreover, several new buildings were erected, such as a tower and antechambers adjoining the apsidal hall. Some parts of the complex were then paved with mosaics. Most of the new buildings had two storeys, with the principal rooms located on the upper floor, as was the case with the new large apsidal hall.

⁴³ *LP I* 432.

⁴⁴ Small and Buck (1994).

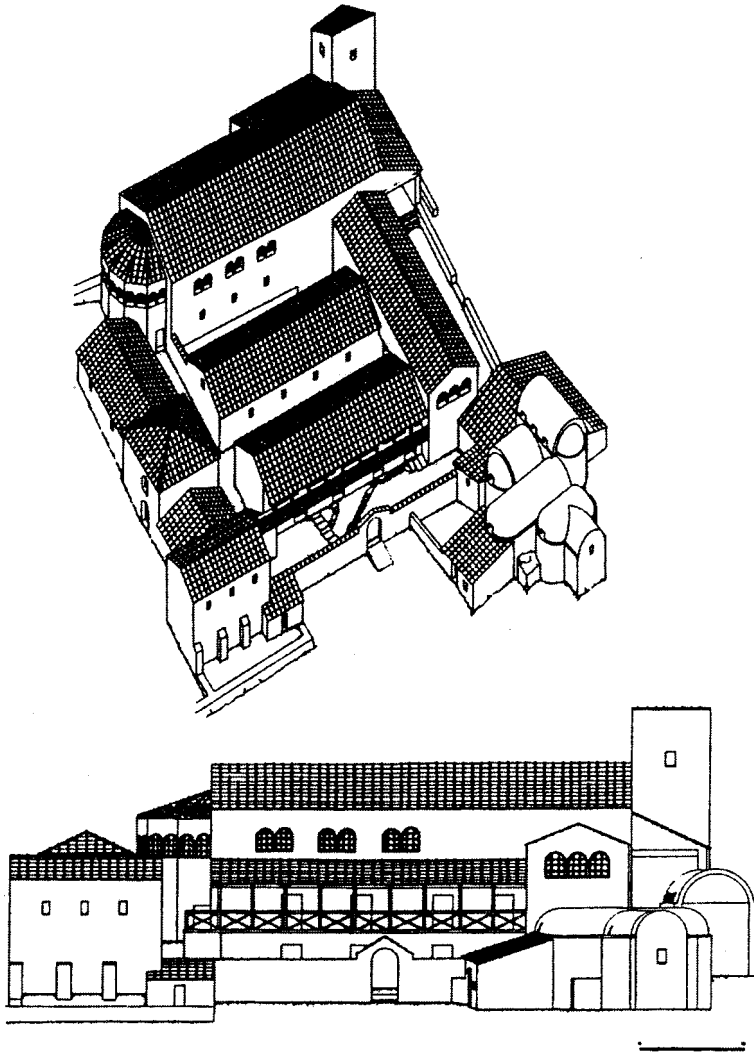


Fig. 4. San Giovanni di Ruoti. Reconstruction of the villa, *c.* 460-535. After Small and Buck (1994).

Visitors who wished to go into the hall would have entered the complex from a porticoed entrance on the northern side, close to a small room identified as a porter's lodge. They would then have reached the upper floor using the stairs, to arrive finally at the antechambers of the hall without approaching the central part of the complex.

The 'palazzetto' excavated at Monte Barro, near Lecco, in northern Italy, and dated to the first half of the 6th c. is also interesting in this context.⁴⁵ The building, in this case, was arranged symmetrically around three sides of a large square courtyard. However, the main room of the complex seems to have been located on the upper floor of the building, above a large room probably used for storing food. Remarkably, fragments of painted plaster and important metal finds, such as a bronze, hanging crown, have been found during the excavations, suggesting that the chamber on the upper floor was used as a sort of *aula regia* by the owner of the house.

In urban contexts, the archaeological evidence for the early phase of this transformation is even rarer. This may be due to the fact that the stock of housing surviving from Antiquity was more than sufficient for the needs of a much-reduced population. In the case of Rome, for example, both literary and archaeological evidence demonstrate that the surplus of Roman houses continued to be used throughout our period, and that dwellings were also installed in other types of pre-existing structures, such as porticoes and other public buildings. The fact that we do not have any evidence for newly-built houses until the 9th c. should also be considered in this context. The city's population may not have needed to build new houses simply because they could still use the large number of existing ones.⁴⁶

Early Medieval Housing in the See of Ravenna

We have more information for Early Medieval urban housing from written sources from the 7th-8th c. onwards. Of particular importance is the evidence from the *Codex traditionum ecclesiae ravennatis*, also known as the *Codice Bavaro*. It consists of a collection of Early Medieval leases from the 7th to the 10th c., which contain very detailed descriptions of housing belonging to the episcopal see of Ravenna.⁴⁷ We shall

⁴⁵ Brogiolo and Castelletti (1991).

⁴⁶ Coates-Stephens (1996).

⁴⁷ Cf. Cagianò (1972a) and (1972b).

take a closer look at some of these documents, in particular those relating to Rimini, where the oldest dwelling recorded in the *Codex* is a house rented between 688 and 705 by a certain *Johannes vicarius numeri ariminensium*.⁴⁸ It was a two-storey building with a *canapha* and a *calidarium* on the ground floor and a *triclinium* and *cubiculi duos* on the upper floor. Beside the house was a courtyard containing an orchard and a well. The house was roofed with tiles and the ground floor was built of stone. The material employed in the construction of the upper floor is not specified, although it is likely that wood was used. The house rented by the two sisters Borsa and Susanna between 748 and 769 was very similar. This also was double-storied, with a *canapha* on the ground floor, three bedrooms and a *triclinium* on the upper floor and a *curte et orto*.⁴⁹ A further house rented almost a century later (between 834 and 847) in the same town, also had three bedrooms upstairs and a *canapha et coquinola et caldariolo* on the ground floor.⁵⁰ A similar house, although one with greater pretensions, was let to the *magister militum* Mauricius and his wife Petronia at the beginning of the 10th c.⁵¹ The building overlooked the *forum* and was located on the *platea publica que pergit a pusterula sancti Thomae apostolic a quadrubio ubi est petra ociosa*. It included a courtyard, an orchard with a well, and a tower. On the ground floor was a *canapha* and a *stacione* (perhaps a shop), while the kitchen was in a separate building. On the upper floor were a *triclinium* and five bedrooms. The house let to Johannes and Anna in the 9th c. was also of interest, since it included a *balneo cum vasos posturios duos cisternas duas* and a porch.⁵²

Other documents included in the *Codex* as well as in other collections describe very similar houses in a number of other places, for example at Lucca, where a number of documents dated between 757 and the 10th c. refer to double-storied houses of the same type as the Riminesi building.⁵³ Many later documents of a similar nature could also refer to houses built at an earlier date. This was probably the case of the Ravennate document of 975, which described two stone dwellings, both two-storied, which also had a bath,⁵⁴ and also may

⁴⁸ Cagiano (1972a) 135-36 and Cagiano (1972b) 178, n. 54.

⁴⁹ Cagiano (1972a) 136 and Cagiano (1972b) 178, n. 55.

⁵⁰ Cagiano (1972a) 136 and Cagiano (1972b) 178, n. 59.

⁵¹ Cagiano (1972a) 136 and Cagiano (1972b) 178, n. 61.

⁵² Cagiano (1972a) 137 and Cagiano (1972b) 178, n. 63.

⁵³ Belli Barsali (1973) 488-99 and 542-52.

⁵⁴ Cagiano (1972a) 138.

be true of the 10th c. two-storied dwellings known at Bari,⁵⁵ Rome,⁵⁶ Naples⁵⁷ and elsewhere.

The picture which emerges from these descriptions is quite consistent. The type of house that replaced the old Roman *domus* generally consisted of a main building, often with two storeys, described with the use of expressions such as *casa solarata* and *casa terrinata* or *pedeplana* to refer respectively to a two-storey building and a single-storey house. The single-storey house was generally simpler and had little functional division of space, while the two-storey *solarata* was slightly more complex. Houses were usually rectangular in shape, and were built in recycled stone and brick. In some cases, however, only the ground floor was built in stone, with the upper storey constructed using wood or clay. Roofing consisted of clay tiles or wooden shingles, as indicated by the frequent use of such expressions as *cum tegulis et imbricibus* and *cum scindolis*.⁵⁸ The distribution of the different rooms was similar in most of the examples described: the ground floor was generally devoted to agricultural activity, shops and stables and to domestic activity, as indicated by the quite common presence of a *canapha*, a sort of warehouse, and of a *coquina*, the kitchen, often consisting of a basic open hearth. Sometimes the kitchen was separate from the real house, perhaps for safety reasons, and was shared between different households. Ground floors often contained wells, cisterns and in some rare cases, a *balneum* or *calidarium*, possibly a simple room provided with a basic drainage system. Living activities were confined to the upper floor, with a *triclinium* or a *sala* and *cubicula* or *camere* opening off the main space. Since *sala* and *triclinium* or *cubicula* and *camere* are never mentioned together in the same document, they may refer to the same room. There are no references to stairs (internal or external) leading to the upper floor. Back gardens or orchards for growing vegetables and fruits are also often mentioned.

Early Medieval housing in Rome

The picture provided by the textual evidence is confirmed by the imposing remains of the two houses excavated at the Forum of Nerva by Riccardo Santangeli Valenzani, the best preserved residential

⁵⁵ Guillou (1976) 145 .

⁵⁶ Hubert (1990) 176-84.

⁵⁷ Arthur (1991) 768-99.

⁵⁸ Cagiano (1972a) 365 and Cagiano (1972b) 178, n. 54.

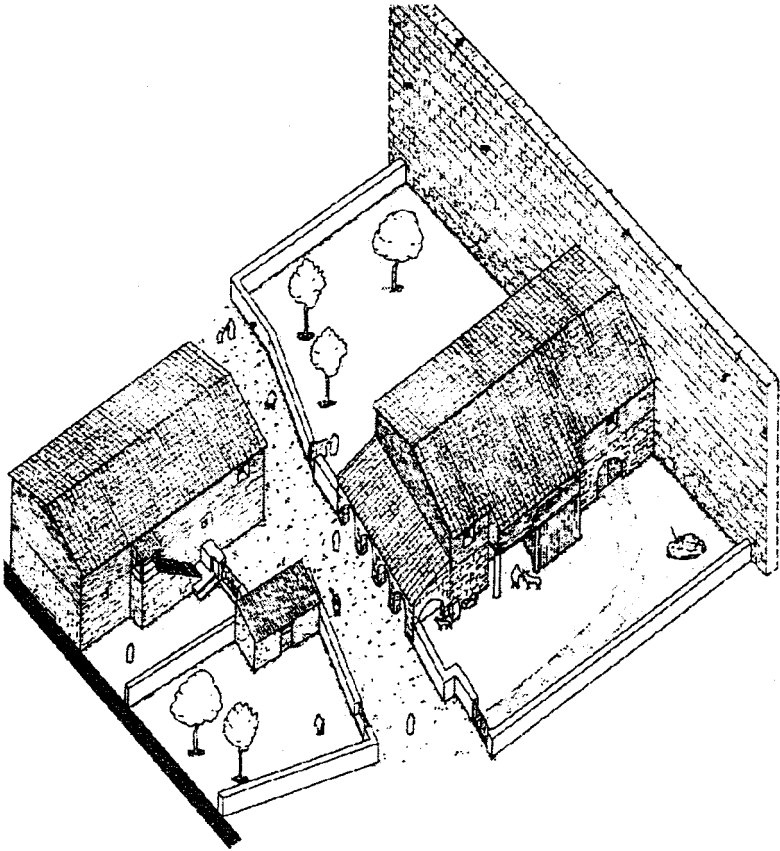


Fig. 5. Rome, Forum of Nerva. Reconstruction of the houses excavated. After Santangeli (2000).

structures so far uncovered from Early Medieval Italy (fig. 5).⁵⁹ Dated by the excavator to the 9th c., both houses were irregular rectangular structures, built in stone, with walls made of cut blocks of peperino reused from the Forum. The first house, built on the street front, has an exceptionally well-preserved portico, built in blocks of peperino with insertions of bricks and high-quality mortar, forming the façade. The excavation also revealed traces of an outer wooden staircase that led to an upper floor. A well and a cesspit were included in this structure, as well as a latrine located on the first floor. Nothing remains of the internal partitions of the building, apart from a large post-

⁵⁹ Santangeli Valenzani (1997) 64-70 and Santangeli Valenzani (2000).

hole in the floor, interpreted as the location of a supporting pier. Regarding the first floor, there is no evidence to suggest whether the construction was in wood or brick. However this was the place where the *cubicula*, the bedrooms of the household, and possibly a dining room or some other sort of hall must have been situated. On both sides of the building, the excavations revealed two unroofed areas within the enclosure wall. Apart from the cesspit, this area was probably used for housing domestic animals, indicated by the remains of a hitching point in the wall and part of a drinking trough. The second house is not so well preserved, but still contains some interesting features. The masonry of this building was in peperino with patches of reused bricks. The room on the ground-floor was vaulted, a feature which is presumably contemporary with the original construction. This second house also has the traces of an outer stair on the western wall, leading to a first floor.

Santangeli Valenzani has convincingly argued that the two structures are representative of a relatively well-defined type of residential building, characteristic of the houses of the wealthier classes of the time. This picture is also confirmed by the *domus* recently excavated by Stefano Coccia's team on the *Via Iugaria*, at the western end of the Basilica Julia, and by Etienne Hubert's detailed analysis of documentary sources related to housing for a slightly later phase, which seems to confirm that upper floors were generally associated with aristocratic housing.⁶⁰

It is important to note that, by the early 9th c., the re-location of *triclinia* to the upper floor had become quite popular not only in the residences of people with some means, but also, on a more impressive scale, in proper palatial structures. The Lateran palace, as we have mentioned above, was equipped with an upper-floor *triclinium* by Zacharias as early as the mid 8th c. Two further magnificent *triclinia* were added to it by Leo III (795-816). The earlier of the two, in use by 799, was the so-called *Aula Leonina*, a triconch hall located on the upper floor of the *Patriarchium*, used as a banqueting hall by the pope and the cardinal on certain feasts. The *Liber Pontificalis* claims that this *triclinium* was larger than similar earlier halls in the Lateran and was splendidly decorated with porphyry and white columns, and paved with precious marbles.⁶¹ Shortly after 800, Leo III built a second

⁶⁰ Hubert (1990) 176-79.

⁶¹ *LP* II 3-4.

triclinium at the Lateran, which was also located on the upper floor of the palace. It consisted of a hall, a full 68 m long, projecting from the northern flank of the basilica, and with a principal central apse and five conchs on either side.⁶² The same pope also embellished the papal complex at the Vatican with a great triconch *triclinium*, located, once again, on the upper floor of the complex.⁶³

“*Una architettura longobarda*”?

The palace built at Salerno by the Lombard duke Arechis II (758-787) also consisted of a two-storey building.⁶⁴ The *aula regia*, located on the *piano nobile*, was accessed by a monumental outer staircase and was directly linked to the still surviving palace chapel. Archaeological investigations have also indicated that the ground floor probably took the form of a loggia. A close parallel with the ducal palace at Salerno is to be found at the palatial structure found within the monastery of San Vincenzo al Volturno, interpreted by the excavators as an area for receiving and accommodating distinguished guests of the monastery (fig. 6).⁶⁵ This also was a two-storey structure, with the ground floor consisting of three simple undercrofts, presumably used for stables and other domestic purposes, such as lodging for retainers or storerooms. An outer staircase provided access to the upper level, where richly decorated apartments were situated.

One should obviously be cautious in making generalisations on the basis of such a small number of examples. However, it seems clear that the 8th-9th c. palatial structures described here possessed, albeit on a more impressive scale, very similar features to their contemporary, more modest counterparts. While elite dwellings of the ancient world were characterised by a single-storied construction arranged around an open peristyle, Early Medieval elite dwellings were highly-compact architectural units, divided into two storeys. The ground floor was generally reserved for domestic activities, stables and warehouses, and had a much smaller number of spaces than the late antique elite *domus*. Living activities, meanwhile, were concentrated on the upper floor, which was clearly distinct from the service area.

⁶² LP II 11.

⁶³ LP II 8.

⁶⁴ Cagiano (1971) 14-15; Delogu (1977) 42-50 and Peduto *et al.* (1988).

⁶⁵ Hodges and Mithen (1993) and Hodges, Gibson and Mitchell (1997) 251-61.

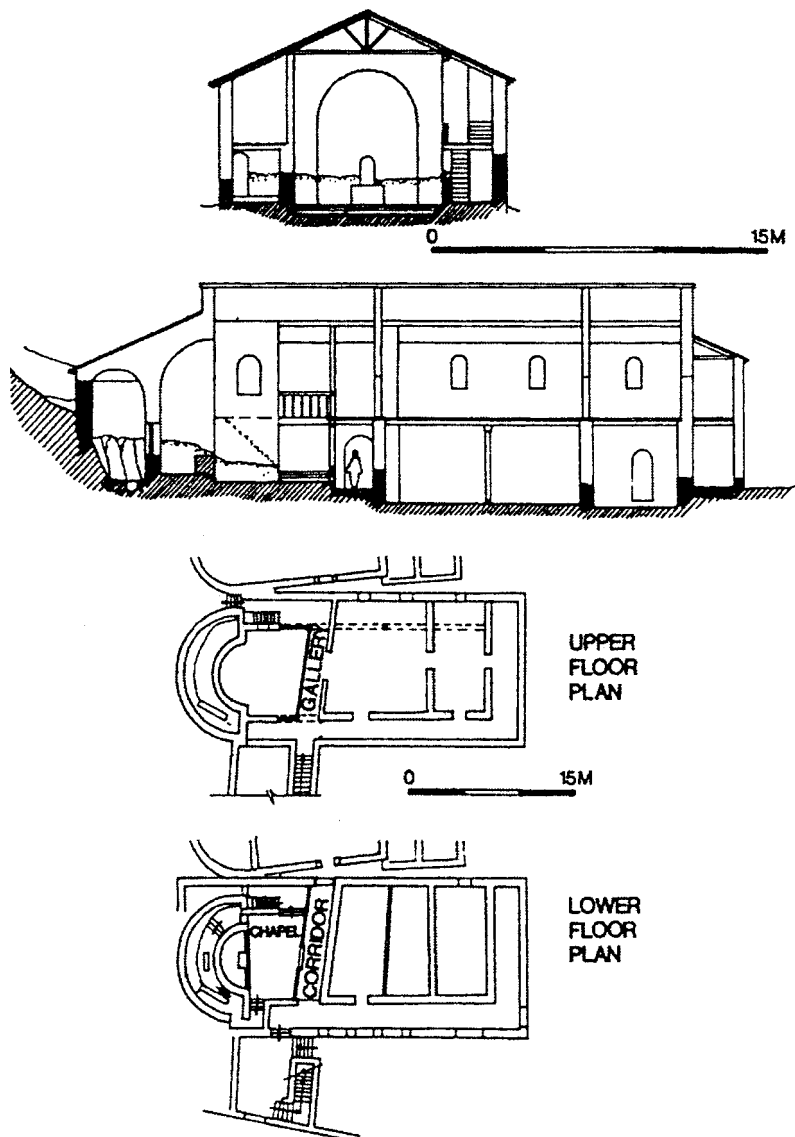


Fig. 6. San Vincenzo al Volturmo. Reconstruction of the palace, c. 800-20. After Hodges, Gibson and Mitchell (1997).

Cagiano De Azevedo interpreted this new tendency of living mainly on the first floor as something which was typically Lombard. According to this hypothesis, the Lombards wished to live in open spaces and simple buildings, and preferred to live on the first floor rather than

the ground floor because the upper level was more airy and cool.⁶⁶

However, as we have seen in some of the examples presented above, this kind of arrangement is not only attested in Lombard contexts, but actually seems to have been quite widespread throughout the Italian territory. It is also attested prior to the Lombard conquest of Italy, as in the cases of San Giovanni di Ruoti and the palazzetto at Monte Barro or also at the episcopal complex at Ravenna.

Cagianò de Azevedo's theory in favour of a Lombard culture, characterised by a vertical orientation of dwellings, as opposed to the Roman or Byzantine tradition in which dwellings were usually single-storied is rendered even more unlikely by the existence of some interesting examples of double-storied houses in territories which cannot certainly be defined as belong to a 'Germanic' cultural tradition. On the basis of this evidence, other scholars have instead characterized the origins of this new style as the product of Byzantine influence.⁶⁷

A similar kind of arrangement, in fact, is actually found in the East in earlier and more common domestic structures. For example, documents in the form of papyri from Egypt, provide interesting information on the organization of space across various floors of a building in dwellings from the 1st to the 3rd c. A.D. At the bottom of the house there was usually a cella (*kellios*), while dining rooms (*triclinoi* or *symposioi*) and bedrooms (*akkubitois*) were generally on the upper floor.⁶⁸ In the account in St. Mark's Gospel (Mark 14:12-16), followed closely that of St. Luke, the Last Supper was celebrated in a large upper chamber, thereafter known as the *cenaculum*. The room in which the fire of Pentecost appeared to the Apostles was also located on the top floor, while the building lived in by the Apostles and Mary after the Crucifixion also had an upper room, the *anageion* or *hyperoon*, as mentioned in Acts 1:13-14. Excavations in Palestine have brought to light a number of dwellings dating to the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D., which recall those described in the Gospel. In Jerusalem, for instance, the remains of the so-called 'Burnt House' indicate that

⁶⁶ As Cagianò De Azevedo ((1974) 34) put it: "per abitare vollero spazi aperti e costruzioni semplici, ma cercarono di non abitare più al piano terreno...la vita tende a svolgersi nei locali del primo piano e non più al pian terreno, probabilmente perché più ariosi e freschi. In questo senso è possibile parlare di una architettura longobarda."

⁶⁷ Guillou (1976) 151-54.

⁶⁸ Ellis (2000) 96.

domestic activities took place on the ground floor while living rooms were positioned on the upper floor.⁶⁹ Also in Jerusalem, the house known as the 'Great Mansion' had storerooms in the lower part of the house while the living areas and a large reception hall were built in the upper part.⁷⁰ At the city of Pella, meanwhile, on the eastern side of the River Jordan, the excavators found a house with storerooms and stables on the lower level and traces of residential quarters on the upper floor.⁷¹ Other interesting examples of a later date come from southern Syria: the 5th c. house at Il Medjdel, for instance, had a single large square room on the ground floor, probably used as a stable, while the upper-floor was subdivided into four rooms and was accessed through an external staircase (fig. 7).⁷² The so-called palace at Bostra also has a triconch reception room on the upper floor (fig. 8).⁷³ Many other examples could be added to this list. However, my main concern here is not to present the pattern of housing in the central and eastern Mediterranean. I shall limit myself to the observation that the widespread adoption of second-storey living in the the central and eastern Mediterranean was probably part of a process in which urban space became more ruralised, with types of building already known in a rural context gradually introduced into the city.

However, while I would reject Cagiano de Azevedo's assertion in favour of the Germanic origins of this architecture in Italy, equally I would not argue that it was the product of Eastern or North-African influence either. I believe that the origins of this phenomenon are most likely to be found in other practical reasons, rather than within ideas of the impact of foreign influences and ethnic groups as has previously been the case. For Early Medieval Naples, Paul Arthur has argued in favour of houses distributed over two floors because of the need to house a growing population in a limited urban space. He suggests that after a drop in the size of population during the 4th-6th c., the number of inhabitants rose again, thereby explaining the common adoption of two-storey buildings.⁷⁴ However, this explanation is less applicable in many other contexts. Certainly, in

⁶⁹ Hirschfield (1995) 58.

⁷⁰ Hirschfield (1995) 59-60.

⁷¹ Hirschfield (1995) 69-70.

⁷² Ellis (2000) 91-93.

⁷³ Ellis (2000) 93.

⁷⁴ Arthur (1991) 768-69.

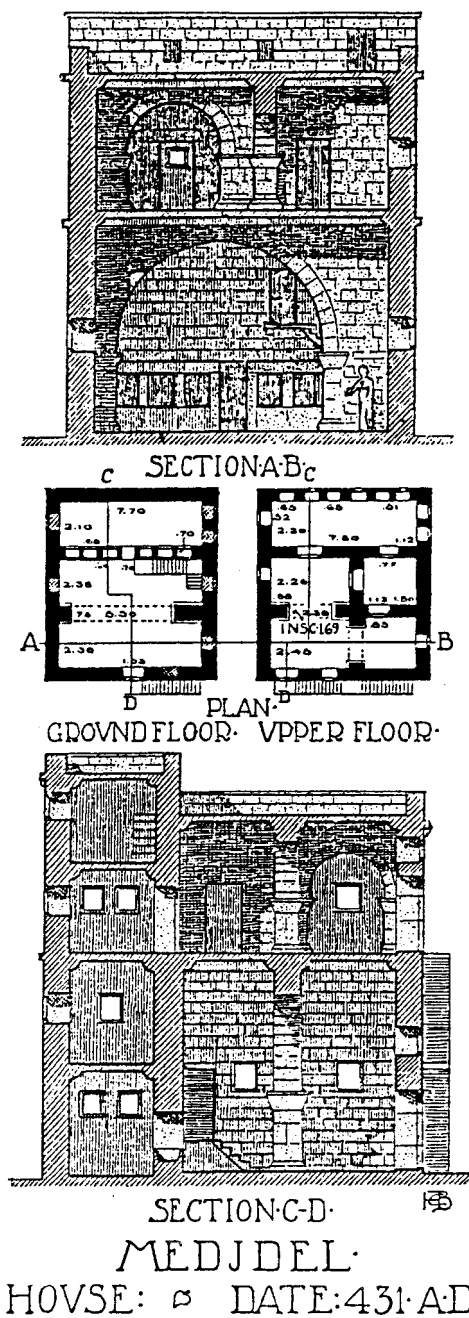


Fig. 7. Il Medjdel. Plan and elevation of the house. After Ellis (2000).

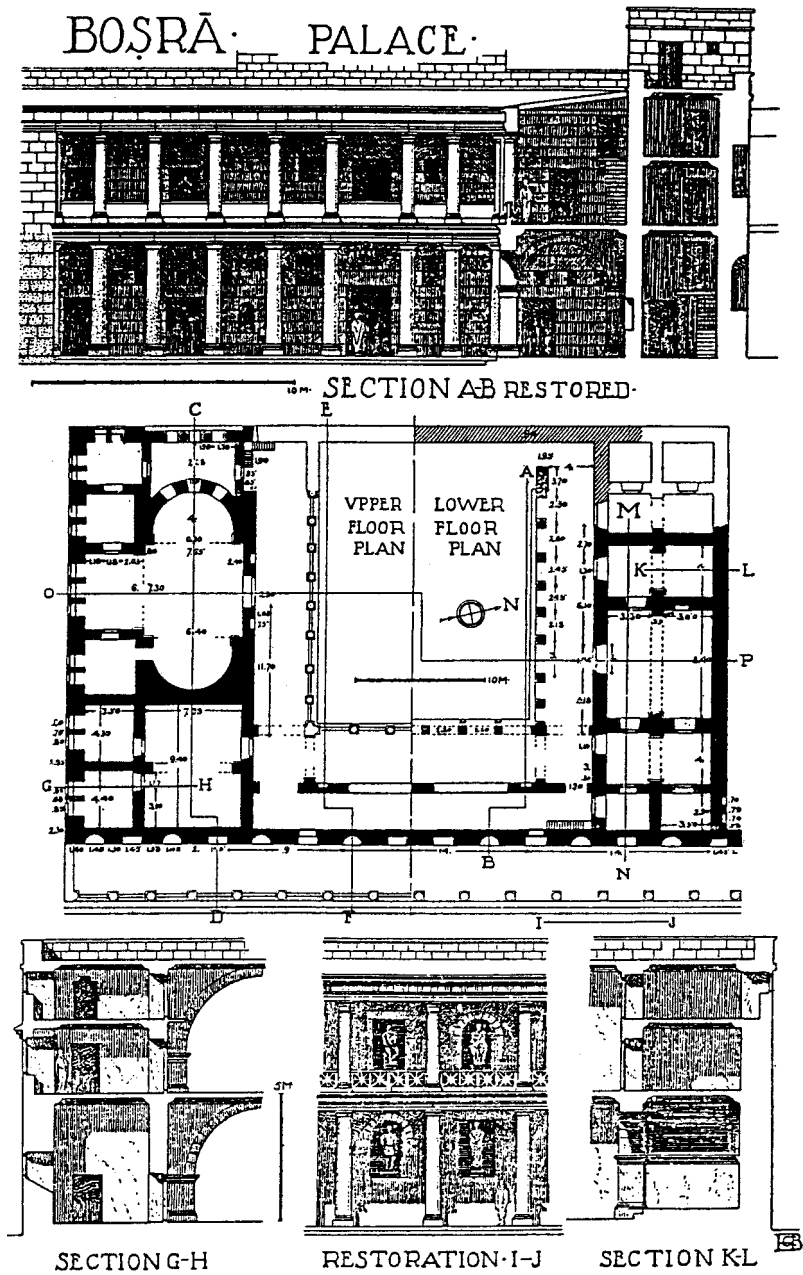


Fig. 8. Bostra. Plan and elevation of the 'Palace'. After Ellis (2000).

the case of Rome, it is hardly credible. Despite being still the greatest city in the western Mediterranean, the number of Rome's inhabitants had dropped quite dramatically. While Procopius's tale that only 500 men were left in Rome at the end of the Gothic Wars sounds impossibly pessimistic, the estimated figure remains quite small and would not explain the development of this new model of housing.⁷⁵

It could be suggested that, at least for some cases, the transferral of reception halls to the upper floor was due to defensive considerations: at Aquileia and Geneva, for instance, the upper-floor hall was built following a fire. Gregory of Tours mentions the case of Angers, where Bishop Andoveus built a dining-room, a *solarium*, on top of the city walls, perhaps on a tower.⁷⁶ It is also worth noting that in the late 4th c., country villas such as that represented in the famous mosaic of Dominus Iulius in Carthage, increasingly assumed a fortified aspect, and walled enclosures became a more common feature.

Nonetheless, a series of other important aspects should be taken into account, especially concerning the urban context. First, one should consider the process of the ruralisation of the city. Animals, as noted above, were kept on the premises. The relatively common presence of back gardens and orchards in the sources, attested archaeologically by 'dark earth' deposits, indicates the presence of cultivated areas in a domestic context, providing vegetables and other foodstuffs for the family. It is also possible that the vertical growth of the city could have also been due in some cases to the problems of sewage and drainage systems and water supply. Flooding and its disastrous consequences were well known to the ancient Romans, but seem to have become more acute in the 6th and 7th c. than they had been previously.⁷⁷ This was possibly due in part to political fragmentation: difficulties with water and drainage were now faced by weaker governments, often without the financial and technical means necessary to maintain the old Roman system. It is likely that problems associated with drainage and the control of sewage and waste disposal increasingly lead to the vertical growth of the city. The transferral of living areas to the upper floors of dwellings could perhaps be considered as one of the consequences of this ruralisation and general impoverishment of the city. In this new settlement pattern, the ground

⁷⁵ Hodges and Whitehouse (1983) 48-52.

⁷⁶ Cagianò (1974) 649.

⁷⁷ Squatriti (1998) 66-96.

floor was utilised for agricultural and domestic activities and was no longer considered the best position for the living areas of the house.

Finally, one should consider the simplicity of these dwellings. To judge from their austerity, the desire to emulate an elite *modus vivendi* appears to have considerably diminished. This trend could be seen as having both an economic and an ideological dimension. On the one hand, these changes may be considered as a consequence of the lack of resources that followed the collapse of the old Roman system of taxation. This situation may have led to the emergence of a new social system, characterised by the decline or the disappearance of intermediate social classes, and therefore polarised between a rich and powerful minority and the rest of population. On the other hand, it could be suggested that another consequence of the transformation of the hierarchical structure may have been the emergence of new ideological factors, characteristic of Early Medieval societies, which sanctioned the ostentation of wealth mostly in religious contexts.⁷⁸ It could be argued, therefore, that Early Medieval aristocrats may have preferred to express their status and prestige more through the construction and foundation of monasteries and churches than through the medium of their own residences. In Chris Wickham's words, "what had really changed was also the rhetoric of building, which in the absence of the leading role of a really rich public power could easily drop sharply in scale."⁷⁹

CONCLUSION

The aim of this paper was to analyse some aspects of the transformation of elite dwellings in Italy during the period between the dissolution of the Roman imperial system and the rise of the Carolingian empire. One of my main concerns was to look at the ways in which the reception areas of wealthy dwellings were defined and articulated in order to express the power, wealth and status of their owners.

In the first part of the paper I outlined the evidence for a relatively formal and ceremonial domestic architecture in the later Roman empire, characterised by the presence of very elaborate reception facilities, used as spectacular settings for receiving and entertaining

⁷⁸ Cf. Wickham (1989).

⁷⁹ Wickham (1989) 142.

clients and guests. In the second part, I examined the new model of aristocratic housing which gradually started to emerge in Italy after the dissolution of the Roman empire. The analysis of the limited archaeological and documentary evidence has indicated a rather different picture than that which was identified for Late Antiquity. Early Medieval elite dwellings were compact architectural units divided into two stories. Domestic activities were concentrated on the ground floors, while the upper floor was clearly distinct and reserved for the living space of the owners. The transferral of living activities to the upper floor has been identified as one of the most characteristic feature of the process of transformation of the Roman *domus* into the Early Medieval house. It is proposed here that the origins of this feature may be associated with defensive strategies and, at least for urban contexts, with the increasingly ruralisation of towns, characterised by the presence of agricultural activities and also by the lack of maintenance of water-conduits and drainage systems and the decline of effective waste disposal, which gradually led to the vertical growth of the city. In this sense, therefore, the relocation of living areas to the upper floors of dwellings could be considered as another consequence of the dissolution of urban administration in the Late Roman and post-classical world.

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PART THREE
THE ECONOMY

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LATE ANTIQUE TRADE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES & FIELD PRACTICES

SEAN A. KINGSLEY

ABSTRACT

Trade patterns offer multifarious insights into ideology, politics and social orders between the 4th and 7th centuries A.D. Whilst various models of trade have been formulated for the West Mediterranean, the East is in comparison very poorly understood. This paper examines trade in the East, with special reference to Byzantine Palestine, by considering three key topics: rural production, urban economies, and overseas trade as represented by shipwrecks and pottery. It is argued that more focused research strategies are required to maximise available sources.

INTRODUCTION

The study of late antique exchange requires the negotiation of a bewildering and diverse range of data, from obscure historical texts to ships' cargoes deep under the Mediterranean. That trade played an important role within society, such as in generating revenue to pay government taxes, is uncontroversial. Yet when seeks more precision on important topics there remain many open questions. What were the contents of the economic portfolios of the East Mediterranean provinces in Late Antiquity? What products were the basis of regional economic stability and prosperity? How far did specific agricultural and industrial products travel and in what volumes? What strata of society profited from exchange: was it only the landed elite, or also village communities? Were the merchants of Late Antiquity state agents or private entrepreneurs?¹ Surprisingly

¹ This paper incorporates research undertaken for my D.Phil thesis at the University of Oxford (Kingsley (1999a)). I am forever grateful to my inspirational supervisors, the late John Lloyd and Bryan Ward-Perkins, and equally to Claudine Dauphin, for on-going support and advice. Thanks are extended to Luke Lavan for inviting me to present my thoughts on this topic at the Oxford meeting of 'Late Antique Archaeology' in March 2001.

topics of this kind remain under-investigated. This is despite the potential of trade as a window into Late Antique social structures and ideologies, ranging from the role of the humble farmer to the economic policies of the State.²

Part of the reason why these questions are neglected is that the methodology for studying ancient Mediterranean trade remains under-developed. In this paper I will not, however, attempt a total critique of current approaches, but focus on three key topics to trade studies: rural production, urban economies, and the study of overseas exchange through late antique shipwrecks and pottery studies. For each topic I will examine how appropriate methodologies or field practices can significantly advance our knowledge. For the sake of clarity, this discussion is restricted to the East Mediterranean, with special reference to Byzantine Palestine, where survey and excavation during the last 20 years have yielded a wealth of data, the volume of which is so far unparalleled anywhere else in the East.³

The East, stretching from modern Turkey to Egypt, has seen very little research into late antique macro-economics. In the West Mediterranean, by contrast, trade models have been debated for decades.⁴ It is widely acknowledged that Rome was highly dependent on a continuous stream of North African grain and oil, and that the development of shipping lanes by the State facilitated open commerce. This is manifested in the archaeological record in the form of African Red Slip wares, that were manufactured in the area of modern Tunisia.⁵ Simon Keay's research has suggested that much surplus state oil procured as tax from Tunisia was sold commercially from state-owned olive oil depots in Rome. Oil's penetration via Rome was thus commercial, but deliberately facilitated by state initiative.⁶ Elsewhere in the West, David Mattingly has examined African oil production and export in great detail, Michael Fulford has discussed economic inter-dependence at Carthage, Simon Loseby has appraised trade currents for late antique Marseille, and Clementina

² For the importance of trade in understanding Roman society see Storey (1999). Wickham (1988 and forthcoming) continues to argue strongly that exchange stands at the heart of understanding late antique society.

³ For a discussion of the sources, including 2930 sites of Byzantine date in Israel, see Dauphin (1998); also Kingsley and Decker (2001).

⁴ e.g. Jones (1974); Hopkins (1983b).

⁵ For current information on modes of ARS production, cf. Mackensen (1998a), (1998b).

⁶ Keay (1984) 414, 424.

Panella, among others, has examined import patterns for Italy. Most of this work has been summarised by Paul Reynolds.⁷

If the Roman economy is an academic battleground in the West, as Keith Hopkins remarked in the introduction to *Trade in the Ancient Economy*,⁸ in the East Mediterranean it is an academic wasteland. In general terms, research strategies applied to urban excavations and landscape surveys tend to be far less sophisticated than in the West and, on the whole, fail to be formulated in ways that are systematic or sensitive enough to divulge economic patterns. Where useful information has been forthcoming, it is more by chance discovery than design.⁹ This situation is frustrating because it was the eastern provinces that were the beating heart of the later Roman empire between the early 4th and mid 7th centuries.¹⁰ It is the aim of this paper to explore some of the ways in which appropriate methodologies might unlock the potential of this area and provide the basis for a new understanding of eastern trade.

RURAL COMMUNITIES

‘Primitivistic’ ideology has long envisaged late antique rural life as depressed and over-taxed, with farmers trapped within a social caste system that prevented social fluidity.¹¹ Much of this bleak backdrop to Late Antiquity stems from A. H. M. Jones’ interpretation of historical texts, written before archaeological evidence became widely available. For instance, using *papyri* from Antaeopolis and Ravenna, both dating to the reign of Justinian, Jones calculated that the land tax absorbed over one-quarter of gross land yields and that common landowners paid three times more tax in the 6th c. than their

⁷ Mattingly (1998); Fulford (1980); (1983); Loseby (1998); Panella (1986); Reynolds (1995).

⁸ Hopkins (1983a) ix.

⁹ The few exceptions include amphora and fine-ware quantification at Pella in Jordan: Watson (1992); and Alexandria in Egypt: Majcherek (1992). For amphibious excavation and survey work at Caesarea, Israel: Adan-Bayewitz (1986), Oleson *et al.* (1994), Blakely (1996), Tomber (1999); and at Dor, Israel: Kingsley and Raveh (1996), Gibson *et al.* (1999). The work of Abadie-Reynal and Sodini (1992) at Argos in the Peloponnese is also relevant in this context.

¹⁰ Ward-Perkins (2001) 167.

¹¹ For the roots of this theory, Jones (1964) 817, 822-23, (1974) 87. For an example of agreement, see Hendy (1989) 4, 6.

predecessors in the 1st c. B.C.¹² The primitivist model saw farming not only as depressed and over-taxed, but also incapable of selling a surplus even if it did produce one. Items of trade only circulated within a regional context, hindered by difficulty and costs of over-land transport.¹³ Supporters of this argument often cite Gregory of Nazianzus's 4th c. account of how agricultural surpluses produced in Caesarea in Cappadocia (located 250 km inland) were unprofitable because the infrastructure for long-distance exchange did not exist so far away from the sea.¹⁴ The impression that few imports penetrated the countryside is also suggested by a less familiar text. According to Synesius of Cyrene, writing during the second half of the 4th or the early 5th c., the peasantry living inland in southern Cyrenaica had never encountered marine life. On observing salted fish spilt from an Egyptian amphora, Synesius states that some peasants 'said they were the bodies of evil snakes, sprang up and took to flight, for they suspected that the spines were as dangerous as the poison of a serpent's fang.'¹⁵ Though these texts are few and far between they do give the impression that rural communities were not engaged in meaningful levels of trade. However, it is becoming increasingly possible to study rural settlements archaeologically and find good structural and ceramic evidence that provides an alternative source from which to evaluate these questions.

Sumaqa in the Carmel, Israel—A Case Study

Recently published results of large-scale excavations and surveys at Sumaqa in Israel provide a rare, detailed insight into the kind of rural village where the majority of people would have lived and worked in Late Antiquity.¹⁶ It provides a useful example of how current field priorities and site methodology can be used to expand and indeed

¹² Jones (1974) 83. This comment in no way detracts from the recognition that Jones remains one of the finest minds of our age in grasping the holistic complexity of Late Antiquity. Would he have embraced archaeological sources had they been widely available?

¹³ Inflexible arguments regarding the prohibitive costs of land transport still limit acceptance of theories of large-scale intra-regional trade. For a comprehensive demolition of the primitivist view, see Laurence (1998).

¹⁴ As discussed in Hendy (1989) 7.

¹⁵ Synesius *Ep. 148* (transl. Fitzgerald (1926) 243).

¹⁶ Excavated from 1983-95 by Professor Shimon Dar of Bar Ilan University: Dar (1999).

alter our view of economic life in the countryside. Although only 11 km inland from the Mediterranean coast, the village is situated at 340 m above sea level and is hidden amongst the dense ravines and the steep-sided slopes of the Carmel. Natural routes of communication in and out of the village are particularly poor (fig. 1, see plates). Sumaqa's inhabitants (estimated at a maximum of 937 people) are thought to have been Jewish, based on the discovery of a synagogue, a burial-cave whose façade incorporates an incised *menorah* on each side, a *mikveh* (ritual cleansing bath), and Talmudic references to various resident rabbis.¹⁷ In terms of architecture and decoration the village is unspectacular. Structures are built of local limestone, marble is very rare, coloured mosaics absent and no inscriptions have been found. A traditional interpretation of such a settlement would lead to the conclusion that Sumaqa must have been a poor village whose economy revolved around subsistence agriculture.

Excavations provide a very different picture. Within the village's surrounding catchment zone (60% of which is terraced), 5 wine presses have been recorded, used from the 3rd c. until at least the 6th c. A.D. Their collecting-vats possess a combined liquid capacity of 46,500 litres (the equivalent of about 2300 local amphorae), which it is estimated would have given an annual surplus of 64%, after meeting local demands.¹⁸ However, the primary economic activity pursued at Sumaqa was centred on at least 12 workshops, which resemble wine presses in the plan of their plastered upper floors (7.5 x 13.4 m max.) and their lower collecting-vats (4.0 x 4.6 m max.) (fig. 2, see plates). But these installations are characterised by the presence of large cylindrical stones up to 2.64 m long with an average weight of 750 kg. Moving these stones would have required the effort of 5 people. Opinion differs regarding the product processed under these rolling stones. However, their impressive scale, together with the fact that their associated vats could hold 7,000-10,000 litres, certainly shows that these workshops were designed to crush a hard agricultural product that yielded abundant liquid.¹⁹

Irrespective of the identity of the mysterious product associated with these workshops, there is no doubt that a surplus was achieved

¹⁷ Dar (1999) 17-34, 38-40, 139.

¹⁸ Dar (1999) 100-107; Kingsley (1999a) 74-75.

¹⁹ Dar (1999) 77-94, including the improbable argument that local fauna and flora were processed into dyes. Such work would not have required large vats or heavy stone rollers.

for trading. This is evident in the ceramic record which, although dominated by local bag-shaped amphorae (LR5 constitutes 92% of the total), includes a curiously wide range of imports from North Africa (Keay XXVG), Egypt (painted Coptic ware), and the East Mediterranean (LR1, LR2, LR3 and Beirut amphorae). Of these imports LR3 is numerically dominant (6% of all amphorae). The 755 fragments of imported fine ware bowl fragments found at Sumaqa (Cypriot Red Slip: 59%; Phocaeen Red Slip: 26%; African Red Slip: 6%) are equally revealing.²⁰

This evidence demonstrates that Sumaqa's villagers lived well above subsistence, and used at least part of the profit derived from the sale of their agricultural produce to purchase semi-luxury foodstuffs and 'exotic' table wares. Such trade was almost certainly conducted at least partly through monetary exchange: 439 coins of 4th-7th c. A.D. date have been recovered from the site, minted at Antioch, Alexandria, Thessalonica, Constantinople, Nicomedia and Rome.²¹ That villagers chose to identify with a pan-East Mediterranean material culture is particularly interesting; it runs counter to the conservative belief within Israeli scholarship that Roman and Byzantine Jewish communities adhered to rigid rules of ritual purity (*halakhah*), which are particularly stringent regarding imports.²² The excavations and interpretation of the material culture at Sumaqa suggest an economically comfortable unit inhabited by a fairly 'liberal' strand of Jews, who were integrating themselves through trade into a very extensive cultural area. This evidence, combined with the impressive production facilities, does not suggest a community stifled by heavy taxation. Rather, we can envisage at Sumaqa a situation where tax demands were perhaps a positive force.²³ Villagers apparently responded to tax pressures by intensifying production, which created greater crop surpluses that could be sold commercially in coastal markets; some of the proceeds of this were re-invested in the infrastructure of agricultural production. The distribution of both imported amphorae and imported fine wares (fig. 3) throughout Israel indicates that Sumaqa is far from being an isolated case.

Archaeological research has here necessitated a radical reconsideration of the traditional view of the nature of rural communities.

²⁰ Kingsley (1999b) 264-67, tables 11-17.

²¹ Kindler (1999) 347.

²² Adan-Bayewitz (1993) 229-31; Zevulun and Olenik (1979).

²³ As proposed generally by Whittaker and Garnsey (1998) 277.

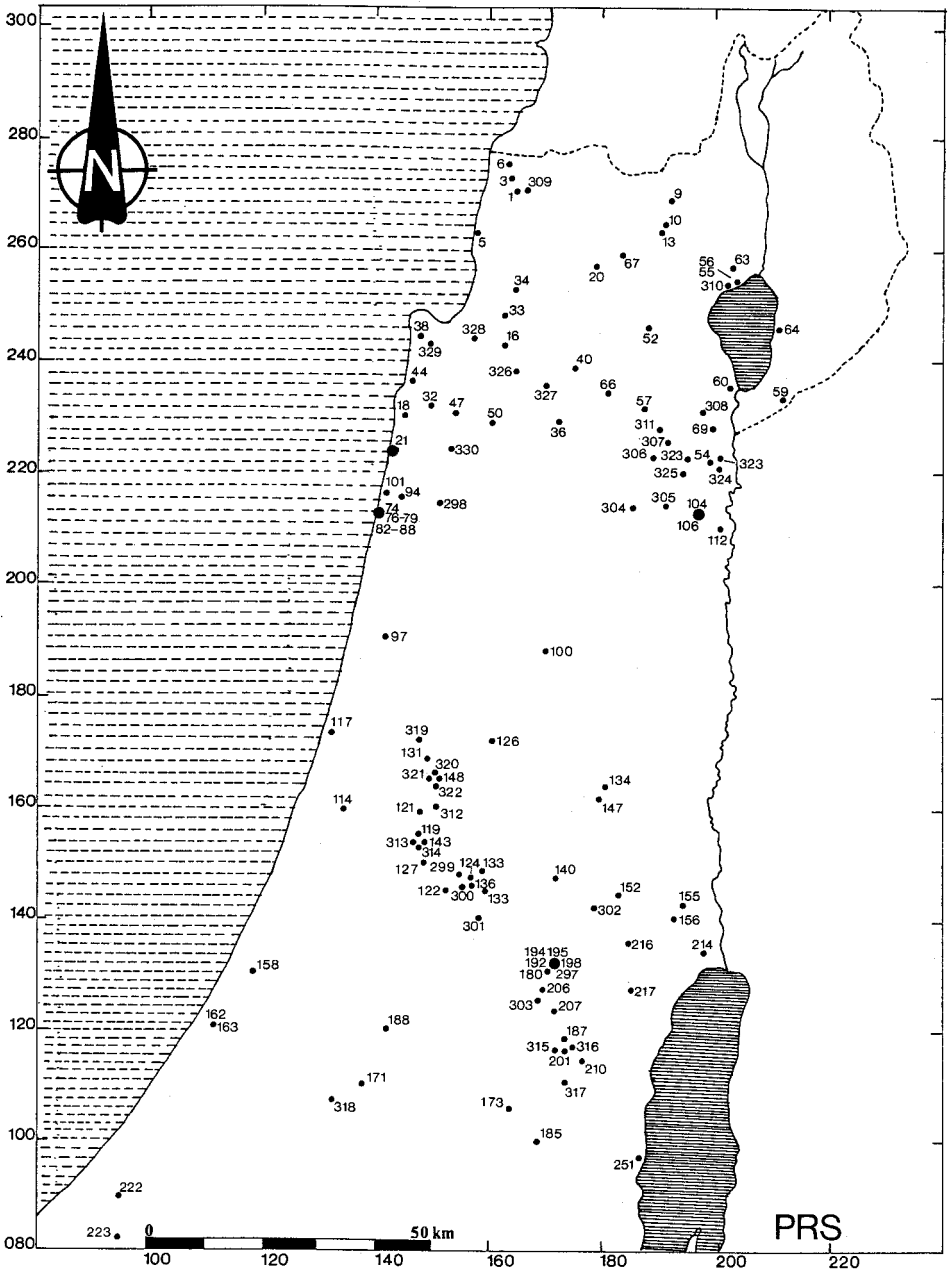


Fig. 3. Distribution map of Phocaean Red Slip imports (5th to mid-7th c. A.D.) in Israel (excluding the Negev). These occur at 135 sites between Shelomi in the north (site 6), Hammat Gader in the east (site 59), and Ma'on to the south (site 223). PRS are represented in 14 small towns and at least 38 rural sites (villages, farms, estates, field watch-booths, cave dwellings). (S. Kingsley 1998). For figs 4-6 see plates.

Sumaqa underlines that field recording of rural settlements should not limit itself to architecture, but must include investigations of productive structures and excavations with detailed studies of ceramic assemblages, if we are to develop an accurate idea of the economic character of a given region.

It is interesting that new historical research is now moving in a similar direction to archaeological work. Recent textual studies of the role of periodic markets and research into rural communities in late antique Egypt, using *papyri* and numismatics, both concluded that most Roman and Byzantine peasant households were less self-sufficient and considerably more involved in commerce than is traditionally asserted. This view can be supported by Libanius' reference to coin as being a standard medium of exchange amongst peasants in 4th c. Antioch.²⁴ Even though coinage entered circulation via government payrolls or state payments to contractors, it seems to have become the preferred private and public store of value in the late antique East. In Egypt, for instance, peasants, stone masons, unskilled workmen and grape pickers were all paid in gold coin.²⁵ The argument that late antique rural production was introverted, and that farmers were a hapless lot, is no longer tenable; a new approach that favours greater social and economic fluidity is gaining momentum within current scholarship. While it would be naive and irresponsible to propose that levels of peasant 'income', indebtedness, or depression or contentment were stable throughout the East Mediterranean, research has firmly turned away from the primitivist stance outlined above.

URBAN ECONOMIES

Turning from the rural periphery to the heart of Roman civilisation, the character and structure of urban trade is as yet hardly explored in the East Mediterranean. The 'consumer city' debate has long raged in the West,²⁶ but has hardly figured in the East. In the primitivist view of the Roman economy 'consumer cities' lived off the surrounding countryside in a parasitic way, acting as centres where the landed

²⁴ Liebeschuetz (1972) 83-84.

²⁵ Banaji (1992) 73-74, 97.

²⁶ Whittaker (1990), (1993). See esp. Parkins (1997), (1998).

elite expended their wealth. Certainly cities did serve as residential centres for an elite that drew their wealth from satellite rural communities: Libanius informs us that some estates in the Antioch region 'are farmed for the city and the income from them belongs to the city that own them';²⁷ private individuals also, such as Evangelius of Caesarea from 6th c. Palaestina Prima might own whole villages, such as Porphyreon in modern Haifa, which he purchased for 300 lbs of gold.²⁸ However, it is also apparent from both literary and archaeological sources that eastern cities were centres of commerce and industry.

Urban Commerce

Historical texts confirm that seasonal markets and fairs were held on Christian festival days at Mambre, Ptolemais, Botna, and Jerusalem in Palestine.²⁹ For example, Choricus refers to *skenai* (temporary booths) set up by traders during the festival of St Sergius in Gaza, which were 'copiously laden with merchandise both for the rich and for those of moderate means'.³⁰ Such festivals testify to a symbiotic relationship fostered between town and country, where both city and village produce was sought and purchased by all strata of society. Nevertheless, references to markets of this kind, or to urban retail are few and far between; archaeology, one might hope, could provide a better idea of the extent and nature of these activities. Unfortunately, excavation strategies in the East Mediterranean have neglected to study commercial structures, which might provide an idea of the nature and extent of urban retail. Instead they have and still concentrate on recording monumental public buildings, shying away from unglamorous utilitarian structures. Excavations of colonnaded streets complete with their shops are rare; only at Scythopolis has there been a real attempt to include an assessment of their development as part of wider urban research strategy. The excavation of the early 7th c. shops at Sardis in Turkey, complete with their contents, show, however, the importance of understanding the extent and development of these structures. Urban warehouses have been similarly neglected; those uncovered at Caesarea Maritima in

²⁷ Libanius, *Or.* 50.473 (transl. Norman (1977) 63).

²⁸ Procopius, *Anecdota* 30 (transl. Dewing (1960) 17).

²⁹ de Ligt (1993) 73.

³⁰ Choricus, *Laud. Marc.* 1.83 (transl. de Ligt (1993) 73).

Israel are a testament to the merits of open-area excavation that aims to understand urban quarters holistically, rather than seeking out the easy targets of churches and bath buildings.³¹

Urban Industries

Industry was a conspicuous element of city life throughout the East and is mentioned widely in textual sources. Papyrological evidence indicates that in late antique Egypt some craft specialisation was restricted to cities (bleachers, dyers, linen weavers, bakers, silversmiths and glass makers), and that at least 15-20% of the heads of households were engaged in urban industrial production.³² At coastal Korykos in Cilicia, in a sample of 456 funerary inscriptions, 40% of those recorded were working in clothing manufacture and minor handicrafts, in seafaring trades, wine import, pottery manufacture, and retail.³³ Here it is possible that the percentage is exaggerated, as part of the population may never have received inscribed tomb stones. However, it testifies to the importance of this part of the population.

Again, establishing the extent and nature of these activities through archaeology is difficult. Firstly few urban archaeologists are actually interested in these topics; serious discussions, such as those on the bone and ivory workshops in Alexandria, are rare.³⁴ Secondly, there are difficulties in the nature and survival of the evidence, as not all productive activities left enduring physical remains. Exceptional preservation from the early 7th c. shopping street at Sardis underlines this: dye-processing in this area was indicated by crucibles found alongside accumulations of dye pigment over 1 m high.³⁵ When it does survive, archaeological evidence for production is more often structural, such as the furnaces and vats from a 6th c. *tinctoria* (a cloth-dyeing installation) uncovered at Jerash.³⁶ These structures are particularly badly neglected by monument-hunting excavation strategies; they are not usually located unless large-scale open-area excavation

³¹ Sardis: Stephens Crawford (1990); Caesarea Maritima: Patrich (1996).

³² Bagnall (1993) 86. For higher percentages at Oxyrhynchus and Panopolis, see Alston (1998) 83-84.

³³ Trombley (1987) 18-21.

³⁴ Alexandria: Rodziewickz (1998).

³⁵ Stephens Crawford (1990).

³⁶ Uscatescu and Martin-Bueno (1997) 77.

is undertaken and are in any case more likely to be located on the outskirts of cities, away from the core areas of public building, and so be missed.

In fact, the study of urban industry really requires a total rethink of field practice. The most appropriate way to study it is through urban field survey. This technique, almost unknown in the East Mediterranean, involves systematic fieldwalking of city sites, as done in the countryside, but in a more intensive fashion. It is particularly effective at recovering diagnostic industrial waste, such as wasters and slag, which can be mapped and considered alongside recovered datable ceramics. Geophysical work may also be used to pick up kiln sites and other features. Thus, urban survey provides a new framework in which to set industrial remains and to decide upon appropriate excavation strategies. Until it is widely adopted in the East, urban excavation will not generate much serious economic data; it will continue to provide us with just political or religious information, the result of research strategies that are biased towards recovering monumental buildings of this type.

Urban Cloth Production and Dyeing in Palestine—A Case Study

So far, I have pointed to tensions between the interpretation of textual and archaeological sources for the late antique economy. However, scepticism towards the value of textual information is most appropriate to the study of rural communities, where textual references are few, where papyrological documentation is exceptional, and where archaeological data frequently seem much richer. In an urban setting this is not always the case. Some of the inadequacies of existing archaeological data have been pointed out above; in contrast, textual sources do sometimes exist in useful detail, because of the urban focus of classical literary culture. Much can be achieved through careful combinations of archaeological and textual evidence, though one must allow each to tell us about different topics in its own way, rather than trying to force evidence to agree. The evidence for one specialist pursuit from Palestine, cloth production and dyeing, can be used as a case study.

Textual sources provide us firstly with a useful idea of the minimum extent of cloth production and dyeing. In Palestine, Talmudic literature refers to purple dye production in Diospolis;³⁷ Caesarea

³⁷ Schwartz (1991) 173.

and Neapolis are also listed as exporters of purple-dyed cloth in the *Expositio Totius Mundi et Gentium* thought to date to A.D. 359.³⁸ The same source suggests that cloth manufacture at Scythopolis was most renowned in Palestine; it refers to abundant cloth production in this city and its export throughout the world. To this list of sites we may add Ascalon: an inscription found on a *tabula ansata* from Khirbet Dah-Dah in North Hebron, dated to A.D. 527, refers to the 'shed of Zenonos the tanner from Ascalon', who presumably learned his trade in the city of his birth.³⁹ This makes up for the fragmentary nature of our archaeological evidence, which is effectively limited to two sites. At Dor, a complex of rock-cut basins, water channels and courtyards of 4th and 6th c. date sheltered alongside the north harbour are plausibly associated with the city's long tradition of purple-dye production,⁴⁰ which dates back into the 5th c. B.C. However in the absence of any texts it is questionable whether this site would have been interpreted in this way. More substantial remains of the mid 5th c. A.D., covering 250-300 m², have been excavated next to the synagogue at Constantia, the maritime city of Gaza (fig. 4).⁴¹ The size of the industrial area here suggests that it saw high capital investment, by either the state or private investors, with the manufactory processing pigment procured from the Negev, Sinai, Italy and Greece.

Historical texts also give us important information on the organisation of production. They suggest that at least some urban operations were initially state-controlled (although challenged by private enterprise). Thus, an edict of A.D. 374 in the Theodosian Code warned that anyone illegally sheltering linen workers at Scythopolis would be liable to a fine of 5 lbs of gold.⁴² The underlying assumption is that the dye-works were staffed by state employees whose employment rights were tightly regulated. Another law from the same source, issued in 385, ordained that 'if any person should dare to usurp the use of a boat that is assigned to the compulsory public service of purple dye collection and to the collection of shellfish, he shall be held liable to the payment of two pounds of gold'.⁴³ By the first half of the 5th c., the State's attempt to monopolise

³⁸ *Expositio Totius Mundi et Gentium* 31 (transl. Rougé (1966) 165).

³⁹ Amit (1991) 162.

⁴⁰ Raban (1995) 301.

⁴¹ Ovadiah (1969) 196-97.

⁴² *Cod. Theod.* 10.20.8 (transl. Pharr (1952) 286).

⁴³ *Cod. Theod.* 10.20.12 (transl. Pharr (1952) 287).

the purple-dye industry may well have become unenforceable. Yet another edict in the Theodosian Code, dated to 436, refers to 300 lbs of purple silk, which had been ‘coloured in clandestine dyeing operations’. The State was so disturbed by this unlawful activity that it implemented the extraordinary measure of sending every seventh man from the bureau of secretaries, every sixth man from the bureau of regular taxes, and every fifth man from the bureau of registrars to dye-works in Phoenicia to investigate this corruption.⁴⁴ It is uncertain whether centralised control over purple-dye production was regained, but this investigation smacks of desperation in a world where even the most highly specialised industry was becoming increasingly commercialised.

In this combination of archaeological, documentary and epigraphic evidence the sources are not in competition but rather yield complementary information that can give some indication as to the complexity of the structure of urban trade and industry between the 4th and 7th centuries. This testifies to the importance of considering all types of source material in an urban context, and not falling for the temptation to privilege archaeology, as was once done for textual sources.

OVERSEAS EXCHANGE

Shipwreck Archaeology

If rural and urban agricultural and industrial production was locked into macro-economic Mediterranean developments, how can we assess the character and scale of the latter? The survey and excavation of shipwrecks throughout the Mediterranean basin offers exciting opportunities to examine short-term trade history. Theoretically, the study of a solid sample of cargoes ought to permit a reconstruction of what regional products proliferated amongst Mediterranean markets, of how they were distributed, and in what quantities. The optimum preservation of organic materials on wrecks promises to end the on-going debate about the contents of specific amphora types. Equally, analyses of domestic assemblages, primarily the personal containers used by ships’ mariners and stored in the galley area, enable

⁴⁴ *Cod. Theod.* 10.20.18 (transl. Pharr (1952) 288).

ships' provenances to be determined; this is based on the assumption that crews used wares manufactured within their homelands.

The potential of shipwreck archaeology is at present very much marginalised. This is because marine archaeologists, unlike any others within the wider discipline of archaeology, are still exclusively defined by the medium in which they work. Specialists studying cities, villages, landscape evolution, water systems, churches, or villas normally concentrate on a clearly defined subject or historical period; marine archaeologists tend to concentrate on digging wrecks, rather than applying the results of their studies to wider historical debates. Part of the explanation behind this odd reality is the cumbersome artificial-breathing equipment required to operate underwater, which tends to exclude and restrict personnel in this field of study. Equally, the discoveries of underwater archaeology are more dependent on the vagaries of their environment for their survival and discovery. In consequence, underwater archaeologists tend to be more evidentially-focused and less period-specific than their counterparts on dry land.

The rationale underlying wreck analysis may seem obvious, but alongside the basic assumption that ships are tools for studying trade patterns lies a very poorly developed set of research goals in the Mediterranean.⁴⁵ Wreck research has proven chronologically broad in the sites selected for analysis, and limited in strategy formulation. At present we have no archaeological evidence for the shipping of Egyptian wheat to Constantinople (estimated at 31,200 tons yearly, or 624 shipments),⁴⁶ or for shipmasters flouting state legislation by carrying commercial cargoes alongside state consignments, as hinted at in historical texts. Where exactly are the great *annonae* ships of Late Antiquity, which staved off famine in Constantinople? Similarly, we have little idea how Syrian, Cypriot and Greek oils and wines were distributed by ship, other than the evidence of the Yassi Ada wreck of A.D. 626; it is clearly foolhardy to pin all our hypotheses of early 7th c. maritime trade on a single wreck.⁴⁷ Other products including

⁴⁵ For the potential of shipwreck studies, see Gibbins (1990), Parker (1990), Kingsley (2000).

⁴⁶ Calculated in Kingsley and Decker (2001) 2.

⁴⁷ Demonstrated by van Alfen's reappraisal of LR1 amphorae from the Yassi Ada wreck (1996), which suggested that, contrary to being a commercial cargo, the transport amphorae may have been collected from various ecclesiastical estates as *annonae militaris*.

Egyptian *papyri* and most metal raw materials are completely invisible within the available maritime archaeological record.⁴⁸

Three factors need addressing before shipwreck archaeology's potential can be fully realised. First, archaeologists need to become less intuitive and more analytical in survey and excavation design. By posing specific questions (such as how did the Vandal occupation of North Africa effect trade currents, or how did maritime trade change in the wake of the Justinianic plague?), a proactive approach could replace what is effectively a process of pot-luck in the procurement of data. Second, a wider variety of sites of varied preservation need to be examined, in order to properly consider shipping of different dates and characters. It has long been proven that it is not only coherent hulls with intact cargoes that yield useful trade-related data, but even highly scattered sites where cargoes are intermixed within ships' graveyards.⁴⁹ If we wish to interpret late antique trade patterns relying solely on aesthetically pleasing accumulations of intact amphorae and well preserved underlying hulls, we will have a long wait. Third, publication rates must improve, unless shipwreck archaeology is to remain tangential to studies of late antique trade. Wrecks in Greek waters have been unofficially estimated at some 2000, which undoubtedly include dozens of ships of 4th to 7th c. date. The Israel Antiquities Authority has surveyed about 200 wrecks and cargo concentrations. Although the data-bases from both of these countries offer massive potential for radically rewriting the history of long-distance trade in the East, not one late antique site has yet been published by these government bodies.⁵⁰

Dor, Israel (Southern Carmel coast)—A Case Study

The excavation of a small merchant vessel at Dor, Israel, in 1999 exemplifies how important new information can be extracted from even relatively poorly preserved Late Antique wrecks. Following a preliminary survey in 1991, I deliberately selected this site (Dor D) for excavation to test the interpretative potential of a partly coher-

⁴⁸ The Marzamemi wreck off the coast of Sicily, which contained a shipment of Thessalian marble, provides an example of another type of cargo that was shipped around the Mediterranean (Kapitän (1980)).

⁴⁹ Parker (1979); Kingsley (2000) 67.

⁵⁰ In terms of the retention of highly valuable primary data, I consider the non-publication of wreck sites off Israel as more problematic than the delayed publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Cf. Kingsley (2000).

ent Byzantine wreck (with limited wood preservation and no intact pottery containers) lying in shallow waters off Israel. Despite the ship's state of preservation (fig. 5), we expected to locate some sections of the hull pinned down beneath the 346 stone ballast boulders. We also expected to recover a substantial sample of sherds, comprising the original transport amphorae from between the wreck and the shore (where they would have been washed by wave motion), despite the fact that the surface density of amphorae was as low as 8 sherds per m².⁵¹

Both hypotheses proved correct. A strict policy of total pottery retrieval, from three 1 metre-wide trenches cut along the site's flanks, recovered 89 kg of amphorae and domestic wares. Quantification demonstrated that 90% of the cargo is likely to have comprised bag-shaped amphorae manufactured in southern Palestine (LR5; fig. 6) and that 7% were LR4 from the Gaza/Ascalon regions. The variety of amphora sub-styles and clay fabrics demonstrates that at least some of the cargo amphorae had been reused. Over 500 LR4 and LR5 sherds were found that had a pitch lining, indicative of a wine content.⁵² Grape pips were also found adhering to pitch on one sherd. This single sherd, only detected through a policy of total sherd recovery, is the first unequivocal evidence that the LR5 amphora carried one form of the wines for which the Holy Land was renowned in Late Antiquity. Another reused jar sherd was distinguished by a hole filled with a lead plug, probably used initially for the venting of gas from fermentation.⁵³

Analysis of the ballast by Dr Eleni Morrisseau of the Geological Survey Department in Nicosia has confirmed a provenance in north-west Cyprus. The few rims of LR1 amphorae from the wreck, interpreted as deriving from the galley stores, have been independently provenanced by Dr David Williams of Southampton University as also being from Cyprus. The pottery evidence, the radio-carbon readings and the mortise-and-tenon technology used to build the wooden ship combine to evoke a picture of a 15-20 m long merchant vessel of Cypriot origin transporting empty Palestinian amphorae

⁵¹ For the Dor D survey, see Kingsley and Raveh (1994); Kingsley and Raveh (1996) 64-66. The 1999 excavation is described in Kingsley (2002).

⁵² Kingsley (2001) 50-51.

⁵³ Vent holes present on the shoulders of Palestinian LR4 and LR5 amphorae are believed to have been used to release excess carbon dioxide within the jars as its wine content continued to ferment.

back to the Holy Land for re-filling during the second half of the 6th c. The implications of these results for the economic history of the later 6th c. are currently being appraised. Although poorly preserved, the Dor D shipwreck was quickly excavated in only two weeks and exemplifies the great potential of a type of site traditionally ignored by 'marine archaeologists' in favour of coherent wrecks.

Pottery Quantification

Despite a widespread enthusiasm for marine archaeology, it is unlikely that sufficient sites will be recorded or published within the next 50 years to clarify scales of trade in specific products and trade routes, unless some visionary institute devotes its energy to producing a master data-base of late antique Mediterranean shipwrecks.⁵⁴ This is frustrating within the contemporary academic climate, which regards quantitative analysis as one of the best ways of escaping hollow generalisations regarding the relative orders of magnitude of inter-regional trade.

Conventional pottery studies are still our best source in determining which strata of society consumed imported produce and what volume of material was involved in trade. For example, other than a dense array of Palestinian wine amphorae scattered in wrecks along the coast of Israel, our export trail goes cold along more distant sealandes. A couple of cargoes are known from Turkey, one 5th c. bag-shaped amphora has been fished up off Corfu, while the 6th c. wreck of La Palud off southern France contained a minor consignment of LR4 and LR5 from the Gaza/Ascalon regions and northern Palestine.⁵⁵ In contrast, a detailed examination of survey and excavation reports provides a relatively comprehensive picture of the geographical scope and changing distribution through time of shipped goods. Although we could examine this issue using any major type of East Mediterranean amphora, the point can be well illustrated using the Palestinian evidence. Rather than representing examples of small-

⁵⁴ I am bemused as to why the Institute of Nautical Archaeology at Texas A & M University, which has been surveying the waters off Turkey for decades, has not produced a data-base of the hundreds of sites identified; cf. for example Rosloff (1981). The threat of inadvertently informing 'treasure-hunters' of site locations is a weak excuse.

⁵⁵ Discussed in Kingsley (2001) 51-55. For the important 6th c. wreck of La Palud, see Long and Volpe (1998).

scale trade in the odd amphora exchanged as a political gift or carried West as a pilgrim's souvenir, the evidence from 29 quantified pottery deposits from sites located between the Sinai and Spain is indicative of the large-scale export of Palestinian wines.⁵⁶

Pottery quantification is an extremely time-consuming methodology that measures the relative frequency of different types of wares within assemblages, and is implemented by counting or weighing sherds, or by measuring total rim or base circumferences of individual vessel types.⁵⁷ Available quantified deposits indicate that within the Near East amphorae from the Gaza and Ashkelon regions were already reaching Beirut in significant quantities by the second quarter of the 4th c.⁵⁸ It is tempting to interpret the development of this trade as fuelled by newly regulated state demands for taxes, which were probably transported in kind at this date.

The large-scale trade in Palestinian wine only took off in the early 5th c., and lasted another 250 years (fig. 7). In many instances, deposits of Palestinian amphorae are higher than is currently acknowledged. They accounted for as much as 45% of all imported amphorae at mid 5th c. Carthage; 20% at 6th c. Argos; 12% at Arles in southern France; up to 20% in late 6th or early 7th c. Marseille; 16% at Naples; and 11% at Rome around 600-50.⁵⁹ Palestinian wines reaching Spain, Gaul and Italy after the fall of the Roman West can only be explained as evidence of substantial commerce, and not state-regulated exchange. These Palestinian wines merely comprised one element of the stream of produce distributed from the East in Late Antiquity. Similarly, the wines and oils from Syria, Cyprus, Greece and Turkey occur so far away from the principal lines of the *annona civica* supply routes and so continuously in the West after the fall of Rome that their circulation can only have been driven by market forces. Such over-

⁵⁶ Kingsley (1999a) tables 12-13.

⁵⁷ Despite general consensus amongst scholars that pottery quantification is essential to both appraise trade patterns and assess, with greater precision, when specific sub-forms of specific pottery types proliferated and declined, it is instructive that in the recently published proceedings of a conference devoted to late antique pottery between Syria and Jordan (Villeneuve and Watson (2001)), only three of the 27 papers include any discussion of quantification: Abadie-Reynal (2001) fig.1; Hayes (2001) 281-82; Uscatescu (2001) fig. 1.

⁵⁸ Reynolds (1997-98) 54.

⁵⁹ Carthage: Riley (1981) 90; Argos: Abadie (1989) 54; Arles: Congès and Leguilloux (1991); Marseille; Bonifay (1986) 303-304; Naples: Arthur (1985) 255; Rome: Whitehouse *et al.* (1985) 186.

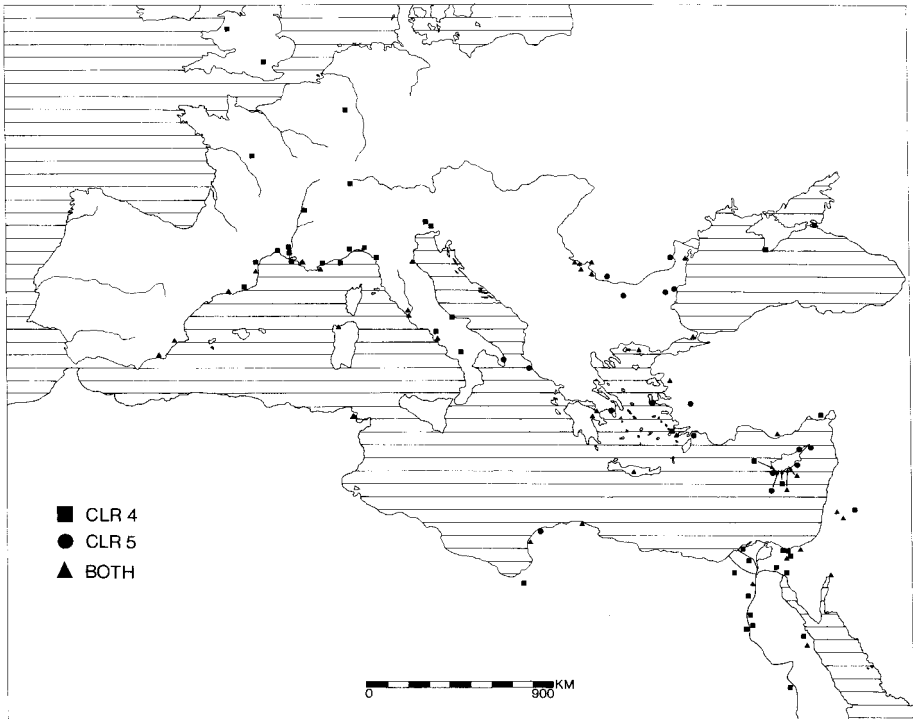


Fig. 7. Distribution map of Palestinian amphorae from Gaza/Ashkelon (CLR4) and central and northern Israel (CLR5) found outside the area of production between the 5th and mid-7th c. (S. Kingsley 1999)

seas trade cannot be explained away as reflecting the topping-up of food resources by famine-hit cities whose population had outgrown their countryside's ability to support them; indeed, large-scale shipments for these purposes would have been incredibly inefficient. Instead, I believe that the diffusion of eastern wine and oil throughout the West and elsewhere reflects broad-based consumer tastes, which have, to date, been little studied.

CONCLUSION

In its totality, the term 'trade' encompasses a vast array of activities; in this paper I have deliberately emphasised the importance of medium-level inter-regional exchange. Without doubt the *annona*

militaris,⁶⁰ *annona civica*, and even ecclesiastical gift-giving all played a highly influential role in Late Antiquity. However, there is good evidence that trade was far more extensive than this and touched and integrated far more sectors of society than our history books inform us. The ever-increasing flow of archaeological data suggests that we pay Antiquity an injustice by assuming that ancient civilisations were innocent of the broad cycles that drove rural production, as Sir Moses Finley believed. During Late Antiquity it seems that many farmers tending vines in the fields of Palestine and Syria acted in response to commercial forces, as well as fiscal demands.

Unfortunately these points are still not fully appreciated. In Michael Maas's recently published *Readings in Late Antiquity*,⁶¹ no doubt a standard textbook for many university undergraduates, we hear nothing about the complexities of rural production, but only descriptions of how natural disasters—locusts, famine and plague—compounded the hapless state of rural communities. The reasons for this lie partly in a failure to synthesize existing information meaningfully, but also in a failure of archaeologists to adopt appropriate research models and field methodology. Landscape archaeologists working in the East Mediterranean need to pay greater attention to regional economic structures; this means studying agricultural and industrial installations, and the relative quantities of local and imported pottery present in scatters, rather than focusing on geographically dominant 'sites'. Far more studies of pottery assemblages from rural locations are needed to detect the extent to which imports penetrated inland. Since at least 60% of society, and almost certainly far more in most East Mediterranean provinces, was based in the countryside,⁶² greater study of village life, especially in Egypt, Syria and Turkey, could radically alter our current rather one-dimensional view. Within cities, project directors should seek to excavate particular quarters rather than uncover individual public buildings and should consider intensive field survey work. The period's historical texts are still badly neglected; I am positive that highly informative narratives containing lively trade anecdotes await detection. By the same token, Egyptian *papyri* also promise to unlock the silent world of peasants, trade, and city commerce. The present wealth of reports of

⁶⁰ For an example of LR2 associated with military trade, see Karagiorgou (2001).

⁶¹ Maas (2000) 58-68.

⁶² Bagnall and Frier (1994) 55 estimate that about 3 million of Roman Egypt's 4.75 million population (63%) was rural based.

excavated sites of 4th to 7th c. date coming from Egypt will also provide significant impetus for the subject. Finally, traditional distribution studies, complimented by amphora quantification, still offer the best insights into long-distance exchange structures, particularly when we accept the incomplete character of the archaeological and historical records. After acknowledging that many of the economic products of Late Antiquity cannot be detected, we must maximise what is available: in short, infinite numbers of broken pottery sherds.

Within such a broad approach to late antique trade, the researcher must be prepared to design innovative research methodologies, to synthesise archaeology with history, as well as embrace comparative sources from the last 200 years, which enable us to avoid the pit-falls of invalid modern analogies. Such a multi-disciplinary approach, in my opinion, constitutes the most effective agenda for the early 21st century.

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COINS AND THE LATE ROMAN ECONOMY

RICHARD REECE

ABSTRACT

Coins provide a source of information on the Roman economy which is not available in the written sources. They can be studied either as the products of the imperial administration—coins as struck, or as a reflection of coin use—coins as found. Coins as struck are well described in standard works of reference and only a few points of caution need to be added. Coins as found form an area of study that is in its early stages, and a rather basic general survey of the available information and methodology is needed. From these subjects a number of questions for further consideration can be framed.

INTRODUCTION

In many early societies, taxes, goods, services, and profits ran on notional lines of accounting or on the very practical level of the exchange of commodities. In the Roman empire, however, the emperor produced coinage which allowed all notions and commodities to be realised in the form of small lumps of metal. The extent to which this means of exchange was used or enforced can only be known for certain for a very small number of times and places, when written documents survive. Fully monetised exchange should never be assumed. This means that Roman coins cannot be used directly as hard evidence for absolute levels of economic activity. Nonetheless, it is possible to consider the patterns of coins production, supply and loss through time and space, in the hope this will provide at least important clues to part of this story.

The use of coinage to study the economy has two major elements. Firstly, the nature and production of coins themselves allows us to investigate what the state intended to do, or thought it was doing, as mint production quantities varied through time and place, sometimes reflecting payments or intended payments for acts of govern-

ment policy. Secondly, coins as found may provide information on how government expenditures worked in practice and how the wider public used coin. Coinage as produced in the later empire is therefore a direct testimony to the overall workings of the imperial 'state' economy. Coinage as used, lost, and found is evidence of the activities of parts of the wider economy, ranging from provinces, to towns, to districts, to households, and even to individuals. All we have to do is to gather the evidence and then to interpret it.

COIN PRODUCTION: COINAGE AS STRUCK

Coinage as produced is reasonably well recorded, studied, and published in the volumes of *Roman Imperial Coinage*¹ and *Moneta Imperii Byzantini*.² Unfortunately coins are thought to be a highly abstruse and complex area of study and few historians have mined the corpus for their own purposes. This is partly due to the fact that although the corpus is a near perfect guide to coinage produced in qualitative terms, but there is little guidance as to quantities minted, which would be much more interesting in studying the intentions of the state. In practical terms this means that it is difficult for a reader to decide which issues were produced in bulk and circulated to every coin-using person in the empire, and which issues may never have been seen by more than a few privileged people in the imperial capital on New Year's Day. This is extremely frustrating for historians interested in the relative production of coinage at different periods of the empire.

Even if we did know the total number of coins surviving for each issue it is not possible to extrapolate relative production levels from this. Unfortunately, it seems likely that the bulk of some gold issues of the mid-5th c. from the imperial mints were passed to barbarian tribes to the North to ensure peace. These groups may have used the coins for the purchase of goods in frontier markets, in which case the coins will have circulated back into the empire and have been lost and hoarded there and so made available for us for study. On the other hand, they may have melted the coins down, with the result that these coins have been deleted from the archaeological record.

¹ Mattingly, Sydenham *et al.* (1923 ff.).

² Hahn (1973).

No doubt a few of the same issues circulated in Constantinople, but their small surviving numbers would give a totally false picture of the quantity minted.

Alternatively, it might be possible to estimate production quantities by comparing all the coins of a given issue and so count the number of different dies involved in the production, as dies on average probably wore out at a similar rate. Another issue could be selected and those dies also counted. The relative sizes of the two issues, say the first year of the reign and the last year of the reign, could then be given. However, historians usually want to turn relative numbers into absolute numbers—how many tons of gold?—and that is at present a very dangerous subject. Furthermore, two points combine to exclude the historian from the work of die-counting and to deter the numismatist. To gather together a photograph of every known example of an issue of coins is an enormous amount of work which can take years. To compare every photograph with every other one to establish how many dies were used extends both the effort and the time needed. The violent views expressed on estimations of the sizes of issues, a perfectly reasonable and proper thing to try to do, have unfortunately closed the subject down for the present. Anyone wishing to pursue the topic should consult the eminently reasonable survey by de Callatay.³ The net result of all this is that the study of coins as struck is a very sadly under-exploited resource. We should perhaps instead turn to the study of coins as found.

COIN SUPPLY: INTERPRETING MINT DISTRIBUTIONS FROM COINS AS FOUND

The study of coins as found should be divided into the study of coin loss and the study of coin supply. Coin supply seeks to reconstruct the overall chronological pattern of coins brought into a site or a region; coin loss seeks to study at what date coins supplied to a site fell out of use. Coin supply, at an empire-wide and regional level, allows us to tentatively approach the workings of the state; it gives us a perspective that coins as struck cannot provide: how state salaries were spent in practice and it permits us to try to detect other forces important in shaping the distribution of change.

³ de Callatay (1995).

Understanding Bullion and Small Change

In order to understand coin supply in the Roman empire, one must be clear about the difference between bullion and copper coinage. By the late 4th c., coins were either bullion, worth their own weight in gold or silver, or they were made of impure copper and had virtually no intrinsic value. The relationship between them is not known in quantitative terms. If copper coinage was such an unimportant proportion of the mass of available value, why was so much of it produced in the later empire? My understanding of it is that while everything that mattered happened in gold or silver coin—payment of soldiers and state servants—this valuable bullion had to be lured back to the state coffers by copper bait. The soldier was paid, and this was a constant concern of the state. The soldier was anxious to spend his coin, but was not allowed to receive change if he took gold or silver to a shop in payment for a lower value. He therefore had to take the gold or silver to a moneychanger and receive usable copper in return, whereby both were happy. The state had recouped its bullion, the soldier could spend his coin.

For this to work, gold and perhaps silver was produced at Comitatus mints which moved with the emperor or struck coins when he was present.⁴ Such coin was sent by the state to points of need. At its simplest, this was where the loyalty of the army and state servants needed to be retained. It makes sense to suppose that where the greatest amount of gold was sent, the greatest amount of copper bait would be needed to be supplied to bring it back in to the treasury. Gold and silver would have performed a complete cycle—mint—treasury—paymasters—state servants—the public—tax gatherers—the treasury—the mint. The only gold found will be that which escaped from the cycle by being mounted as jewellery, through burial as a hoard that was not recovered, or simply by being lost. Copper will not perform a cycle. It will be minted and sent out and will stay where it arrives, oiling the wheels of the bullion cycle, because it has no value outside a bullion-guaranteed economy. If evidence were needed of this, the distribution of gold and copper within and without the empire is clear. Gold travels a long way, while Late Roman copper virtually stops at the frontier. Gold has its own intrinsic value, but for copper to have any value it has to be validated by gold or silver.

⁴ Mattingly, Sydenham *et al.* (1923 ff.) vols VIII and X.

Thus we have a theory of a connection between the location of salaried state servants and the distribution of copper coin. On a broad scale this theory seems to be supported by the evidence. Late Roman copper is most common in frontier provinces such as Pannonia, the Rhineland and Britain, where there are large armies. The idea that bags were sent out from the mint to non-military locations founders on the variety of what is sent and on the fact that it is unlikely that provincial mints sent coin to Rome. There was no point in sending out, or even releasing copper from the mint if there was no gold available to back it. Thus, whilst studies of (gold and silver) coins as struck can potentially tell us about how much the state intended to spend at a given moment, studies of coin supply (from copper coins that are found on site) can tell us where state salaries were actually being spent. Again, it must be stressed that large numbers of copper coins in a period in any given region represent monetisation, not wealth. It was and is perfectly possible to manage complex transactions and debts without large amounts of change. Copper coinage tells one nothing therefore about the condition of an economy, rather only about the workings of the state, which created the coinage of the time. Needless to say, it is not fair *a priori* to assume that the state made up the greatest part of the economy and to equate state activity as seen in coins with structurally determinant economic activity.

Rome and Supply

When examined in detail, the connection between copper coin supply and state servants seems somewhat more complex. This can be seen at Rome, through the large coin collection that comes from the Forum and Palatine. Rome was itself a prolific mint throughout the 4th c. 53 of the coins from this group were struck between A.D. 305 and 317. On 21 of these coins the mint is illegible. This leaves 32, of which only 9 were struck outside Rome (three from Ostia, one each from Lyon, Arles, Carthage, Aquileia, Antioch and Alexandria). On the other hand, 1051 coins from the Forum and Palatine areas were struck between A.D. 364 and 378. Of these, 870 had illegible mintmarks. Of the 181 from known mints, there were 55 from Rome and 126 from elsewhere (Arles 17, Aquileia 28, Siscia 43, Thessalonica 20, Constantinople 6, Antioch 5, and one each from Trier, Lyon, Serdica, Heraclea, Nicomedia, Cyzicus and Alexandria). Therefore, of the coins found on a series of sites in Rome, struck

between A.D. 305 and 317, the majority were struck in the city. However, of the coins lost in Rome struck between A.D. 364 and 378, over three times as many originated from other mints than originated from the Rome mint. What are we to make of this?

The key to this issue is an appreciation of the balance between supply and arrival. Supply represents directed policy, while arrival represent undirected drift. In the first part of the reign of Constantine there is clearly a good political reason for coins to keep to their issuing emperor's sphere of influence, since armies seldom moved between those spheres. Thus of the coins struck from 305 to 317, Rome has mainly coins minted in Rome. After 317, when the politics changed dramatically, a large number of western coins are lost in the East. For example, in Jerusalem, of 14 coins struck between 310 and 330, there are 8 legible mintmarks of the West (Arles 1, Ticinum 2, Rome 5) and 4 of the East (Heraclea 1, Cyzicus 1, Antioch 2). The pattern of this small number is repeated at several other sites. If we are reluctant to suppose the positive supply of coins struck in Rome from 310 to 317 to the area of Jerusalem, then the most probable background to this pattern is the move of Constantine, his armies, and their purses to the East after 323. On the coin evidence alone it is impossible to decide whether the majority of Rome coins of 305 to 317 were purposefully let loose in the city at the time of their striking, or whether Rome supplied a coin pool of relatively restricted circulation in central Italy, some of which returned to Rome by a reflux movement.

The question of coins of 364 to 378 is much more difficult to resolve neatly. If the Constantinian model is used then there was a substantial troop movement from the Balkans into Rome in those years or shortly after (Rome 55, Siscia 43). The problem here is that coins from Siscia, while saturating the Balkans, also moved strongly elsewhere. At Carnuntum on the Danube, and so accessible by water both to East and West, a sample of 713 coins of 364 to 378 show 443 from Siscia.⁵ The movements of coins from Siscia can be partly seen in diagrammatic form for Malta, Rome, Conimbriga and Carnuntum⁶ and in detailed tables for Britain.⁷

⁵ Hahn (1976).

⁶ Reece (1982b).

⁷ Reece (1978).

Britain and Supply

Another interesting region to consider is Britain. There seems at present no point in citing an individual site list in Britain because the 4th c. coinage there appears to be homogeneous. This relies on work done 25 years ago and since then, although the number of coin finds has increased dramatically, no further detailed studies have been made. The conclusion that was reached was that the coinage of the islands came from a single continental source after being thoroughly mixed. This of course is nonsense, but it is what the evidence suggests. The second point is the common appearance in Britain of only two of the 48 varied mintmarks that Siscia used as batch or control marks between 364 and 378.⁸ These marks do not appear in the centre of Rome, for example, and are not common at Carnuntum.

It is currently unknown what troop movements, if any, or other acts of imperial policy might explain the coins of Siscia at Rome or the mix of coinage found in Britain. An alternative, probably better, explanation is that in the relative peace of the 4th c., a lot of small change moved around the empire undirected. The Siscia coins at Rome can only be called supply if a provincial mint city bagged up a sample of coin and supplied it to a capital mint city. Rome was at that period producing plenty of coin itself and again such supply seems most unlikely. It also seems like a good explanation for Britain, rather than envisaging that a changing group of mints from Trier and Lyon to Aquileia and Siscia faithfully bagged up a part of their production and sent it, regardless of distance and cost, to a distant province which was not in a position to demand this service.

COIN SUPPLY AND SITE HISTORIES

Recent excavations in the Mediterranean area that have been published with reasonable speed tend to have lists of coins found and sometimes have comments on the meaning of those coins. This is a fairly new departure and the evidence is very thin and very uneven. The appearance of coins in excavation reports may vary from the mention of a few examples that helped in dating certain features,

⁸ Carson, Hill and Kent (1960) part 2, numbers 1408-29.

to a complete list. The comments may run from two sentences to two pages. Comment on coins from excavations is reasonably well developed in Britain, but few other places have adopted the practice.

From the optimistic tone of the introduction to this article it might be thought that coins could comment directly on the economic success or failure of the site on which they were found. Indeed, variations in coin supply (that is simple lists of coins from excavations without context) are frequently taken as equating with the economic health of a site or a region. Unfortunately, this cannot be the case. It could be the case if coins found were all gold or silver; however they are not—they are almost entirely copper. As stated above, these coins were issued by the state with a view to recouping imperial salaries of gold and silver; their level of supply to a region therefore varied greatly. As such their presence in a region relates not directly to levels of wealth but only to levels of monetisation. Despite this it is possible to use coin supply as guide to levels of economic activity on individual sites, if not regions. However, a number of methodological stages need to be borne in mind.

What Does the Total of Coins on a Site Mean?: The Value of Coins Used and Coins Found: Gold, Silver and Bronze

Firstly, it seems very likely that all the coins found on any one site represent but a tiny fraction of the moneyed wealth present there at any one time in antiquity. This is because when an economy uses several different metals for coins and produces several denominations, most of the value resides in the largest denominations, which are usually minted in precious metals. This is exemplified by the work of Depeyrot in France, where from 1650 to 1910 the number of copper coins was often over half the total number of coins struck annually.⁹ There were as many, or more, copper coins as there were gold and silver coins combined. The normal value of copper coin, however, was between one and three percent of the total money struck, although in the 1880s very low striking of gold and silver brought the relative value of copper up to its highest level—about 15% of the mass of money produced in the decade. The normal total value of copper coin was only about 1 to 3% of all the money produced.

⁹ Depeyrot (1979).

In the Roman empire there is good evidence that not only was gold widely used to settle major state debts such as payments to the military but, in the later empire, that the everyday use of gold was increasing.¹⁰ The problem is that coins that were lost and are now found in excavations are mainly of bronze and copper and biased towards the lowest of values. Thus even 7,000 copper site-finds, more than are published for most sites, cannot give any indication of the annual income of a landowner or administrator, because they only represent the value of one or two gold coins in total.

This gives rise to two points:

1. Coins from excavations cannot be interpreted in a way that provides a simple economic history of the site in question.
2. When they are interpreted such coins can only give information on their own terms. These will almost certainly be different from the terms expected by historians accustomed to texts written by the middle and upper echelons of society.

The Importance of Regional Context

Despite what has been said here it is possible to obtain a significant, though relative, measure of economic activity on a site. This comes not from measuring the total of coins supplied to it but from estimating how relatively usual/unusual this is when compared to the regional background. The presence on a site of a large number of coins of Constantine the Great as sole ruler might be taken to show that there was a flourishing market economy in the years 324 to 337, while a smaller number of coins of Valentinian and his family could suggest a down-turn in the economy from 364 to 378. The number of years available for the issue of coins is almost equal so that cannot explain the difference. Perhaps, therefore, the number of coins produced in the two periods was markedly different.

Fortunately, this does not matter. Even if mint production could be accurately measured there is no reason for, and there are many reasons against, assuming that every issue of coins was supplied equally to every site in the empire. What we need to know is not the level of production but the level of local supply. We need to know this because it may be that every site for 100 miles around has more coins of Constantine than Valentinian. If this is the case it is a matter

¹⁰ Banaji (1996).

of provincial economies, or provincial supply, rather than a local peculiarity. Before we can interpret the coins from our excavation, we need to know the pattern formed by nearby sites, perhaps the provincial pattern, so that we can isolate peculiarities from a regional background. In other words, if all nearby sites show a similar number of coins found for Constantine and Valentinian, and our excavation shows less coins of Valentinian, then there is something peculiar to our site and so something to be explained, perhaps in economic terms.

The moral here is that every site should be interpreted against its local or provincial background. If this is not done there is the danger of viewing the coins as indicative of incidents in the history of the site when in fact they reflect vagaries of coin supply to a large area of the empire. However, because of the very thin coverage of good coin lists over the empire we have, as yet, little idea as to which mints supplied which areas, and also where the boundaries between different areas were. A critic might indignantly point to the coin lists from Sardis,¹¹ and Histria,¹² and say that it was perfectly possible to tell which mints supplied those sites and how the supply changed through time.

The point at issue, however, is areas rather than different individual sites. Are Sardis and Histria, judging from the coins supplied to them, in the same supply area? Although in these two cases the material is published, the question cannot be answered without some hard work, and that work has not been done. Even when the work is done, we will only be able to discuss the differences and similarities of two points on the map, rather than two areas. There is no particular reason why the two cities should define the coin supply to the areas around them, unless, that is, the cities were the way in which the coinage entered the hinterland. This in itself would be an interesting point to establish. If the opposite were true, in that the surrounding area differed qualitatively in coin loss from the city, then that throws up a different set of interests and possibilities.

A hard-line approach would say that it will be some years yet before enough coin lists are published from the Mediterranean area to give us a single Mediterranean background, let alone separate backgrounds for Italy, Asia Minor, North Africa, Greece or Pales-

¹¹ Buttrey *et al.* (1981).

¹² Preda and Nubar (1973).

tine. Hard-line attitudes and exclamations may make for spirited reading but they do little to help the subject to advance. If we heed the warning that there are perils of misinterpretation ahead, we could go forward cautiously and find much that can safely be done.

An example that has resulted from recent work is that of the Saxon Shore Fort at Reculver in Kent. The fort was substantially built or remodelled in the late 2nd to early 3rd c. A.D. The standard pattern of coin loss in the whole of Britain is very low indeed in the first half of the 3rd c. These coins do occur in surprising numbers at Reculver. The presence of these unusual coins marks the site out as unusually important in that period.¹³

COIN LOSS: METHODOLOGICAL PRE-REQUISITES

The chief historical use of the study of coin loss is the study of monetisation, major changes in which can sometimes correlate with major economic changes in different regions. It is however more a more complex area than coin supply and requires a strong methodological framework.

The Importance of Archaeological Context

The establishment of real coin loss during different periods of occupation depends on an accurate assessment of the context in which the coins were found. Without dated contexts for coins one cannot study the frequency of coins lost over time, only broad patterns of supply to the site. Thus, although a site might have many 4th c. coins, it is perfectly possible that these arrived and were lost much later, when they were still in circulation, giving a false picture of coin loss. Unfortunately, the number of sites at which it is possible to study coins in context is currently extremely limited; most sites come from Britain, in the Mediterranean there are but a handful, and of major sites we have just Rome, Carthage and Jerusalem.

A further interpretative problem is posed by the physical processes of archaeological site formation. Even if one does have coins in dated contexts, one still has the problem of residuality—that coins in different layers may have become badly mixed, by the digging of late pits into earlier levels or through the action of animals. This is not

¹³ Reece (forthcoming).

a serious problem at every site; however, it does occur, and is a phenomenon that one should be aware of. The excavations of the Crypta Balbi site in Rome provide us with an example of such residuality, and a plausible methodology for detecting it.¹⁴

The Roman coins from this site occur mainly in contexts dated later than the 4th c. Many people take this to show that 4th c. coins continued in circulation for up to 500 years after they were minted. This suggests that they have not read the reports. The writers make this suggestion one of their first enquiries and they certainly demonstrate that the coins occur in deposits long after their dates of striking. They show a gradual fall in the number of coins deposit by deposit and question whether this indeed shows continued use. The same work was undertaken on the Roman pottery of the 4th c., which was all broken and abraded in the earliest excavated levels in which it occurred. From these studies diagrams were drawn, for both the pottery and the coins, which demonstrate that the rate of disappearance is the same for the coins and the broken pottery. Very reasonably, the writers insist that if anyone wishes to claim the continued use of the coins, they must also accept the continued use of worn and broken pottery. The case for continued use is virtually disproved. At the Crypta Balbi, the Roman coins and the Roman pottery occur less and less frequently as the layers accumulate; the most obvious conclusion is that both are part of recycled rubbish and that the coins did not continue to be circulated long after they had ceased to be supplied.

INTERPRETING COIN LOSS

Coins within Sites—Places of Exchange or Piles of Rubbish?

Although most interest in coin loss is directed at overall patterns for whole sites, the distribution of coin deposits within sites also raises some interesting questions. At this point it is best to point out that it is extremely difficult to interpret patterns of coins deposited on site as relating to exchange activities, such as market stalls. To be available for discovery coins must have been deposited. This might either mean that they were accidentally lost and not recovered,

¹⁴ Sorda (1989).

purposefully deposited for a reason, as at a shrine, or simply discarded. They will be in their find-spot because whatever adventures they may have had after leaving a purse or money-box, their journey finished at the find-spot and they were not moved afterwards. Some people are happy with the idea of coins being deposited for a reason. Coins may be placed in a shrine on a street corner or dropped in the cabbage leaves of a busy market and swept up at the end of the day. They get agitated, however, when it is suggested that anyone anywhere ever throws money away or, less emotively, discards it.

Almost all excavated and published coins come from the uncovering of the monuments beloved of Mediterranean excavators. In towns these are market places, large houses, basilicas, gateways and so on, while in the countryside they are forts with military inscriptions, or villas with luxurious mosaic pavements. By studying archaeological contexts, one could reasonably assess whether this related to the use of money in these locations, and so hope to identify places of exchange, such as shops and stalls. However, without knowing the precise context of finds, which is the usual situation, it is also quite reasonable to interpret the occurrence of coins as being some measure of rubbish deposition within town centres. 19th c. industrialists in northern England summed up the feeling that you could only make money by getting your hands dirty in the saying "Where there's muck there's brass". Archaeologists perhaps need to invert the saying, as it seems likely that lost or discarded coins are markers of rubbish. If this is so, then coins would normally be concentrated in largely unexcavated rubbish tips on the outskirts of sites. For example, if there are five coins in every cartload of household rubbish, then ten coins found on the road surface of a gateway suggest a very messy entrance to a town. On this basis, the ups and downs of coinage on any site, whether seen against a provincial background or not, trace mess, rubbish and disorganisation or their absence. A number of coins found in the same area of an excavation may, therefore, suggest a heap of rubbish rather than the site of a thriving market stall.

Site with no Coins

What of sites that do not show much, or any, coin loss? What does the absence of coins mean, and what do the few coins found on such sites signify? The most recently published site, which approaches this

topic with great clarity and excellent technique, is the late villa at San Giovanni di Ruoti in southern Italy.¹⁵ This large and thoroughly excavated villa was occupied for much of a 500 year period and produced 41 coins ranging from the Roman republic to about A.D. 400. The major period of the villa's life, from 400 to 520 is characterised by substantial, even palatial, buildings and a large midden with large quantities of pottery. No coins minted in this period are identifiable, and only 15 out of 41 coins cannot be firmly placed in the years A.D. 1 to 400. Of those unidentifiable coins, 9 look like issues of the 4th c., judging by their shape, size and general appearance. This leaves only 6 coins that even *could* belong to the 5th c. This detail is given to show that there are sites in the centre of the Mediterranean area of high status, and flourishing economies, which scarcely join in the use and loss of small change. At San Giovanni this pattern, which is followed by the site throughout its history, continues into the 5th c. even when strong activity is quite clear from the excavated record. Quite why this should be the case is unsure; only when further sites are excavated will it be clear if this is an accident or perhaps related to particularities in the use of coin on a site of this type.

COINS LOSS AND SITE HISTORIES—CARTHAGE

Thus far, it has been argued that the only way to approach the economic history of sites is through considering their coin supply in relation to that of the surrounding region. Coin loss generally measures relative monetisation. However, when coin loss is real, derived from coins found in dated deposits, it can occasionally be used as a guide to the comparative history of different periods on the same site. This can be done when coin life is very long; this allows the relative use of coin between different periods on same site to be compared, as old coins that were lost very late must have been in circulation for a long time. This is useful in studying sites which we have other reasons to think went through periods of major economic transition, as has been suspected for Carthage after the Vandal conquest.

Carthage provides important evidence for the interpretation of

¹⁵ Small and Buck (1994), Simpson (1997), Reece (1997).

coin finds that is highly relevant to any discussion of sites between A.D. 300 and 600. Here we have not only an idea of the overall pattern of coins supplied to the site, but also the location of coins within dated deposits, and so their pattern of loss.

The key issue at Carthage can be summed up in two sentences:

1. A good number of coins of the 4th c. were lost at Carthage
2. Very few coins were lost in the 4th c. at Carthage.

There is no contradiction between these two sentences because they make up two very different statements. The difference between them must be understood in order to get the full value out of coin finds. Point 1 comments on the number of coins found in the British excavations at Carthage, that were minted in the 4th c. (and were probably mostly supplied to Carthage within a few decades). Point 2 comments on the number of coins found (and therefore lost) in 4th c. deposits. These are two completely different statements with very different implications.

Point 1 implies that there was reasonable coin supply to Carthage in the 4th c. but little more. If this had not been the case, few 4th c. coins could ever have been lost there unless they were imported in bulk long after they were minted. There is no reason to suspect this, and what evidence there is from elsewhere argues against it. Point 2 concerns coin loss, and allows many suggestions to be made about coin use in Carthage in the 4th c., about the running of the city and, by extension, the life of coins in use. The coin lists from the different excavations show that many coins of the 4th c. reached the city and presumably circulated there. We are not able to compare Carthage's supply against a regional context and so have not even a local relative measure of the city's economic history. However, most of what we know from archaeology and from written sources suggests that Carthage was a thriving city in the 4th c. It is only a minor extension to suggest a coin-fuelled exchange of goods running at an enjoyably high level, for those with money. Of course this is a hypothesis.

If we were to take the evidence of low coin loss at face value, as an index of economic activity, we would have to declare 4th c. Carthage to be an almost deserted disaster area, because there are in fact very few coins in the 4th c. levels. Few people would believe this second interpretation—it ignores the substantial buildings of the

4th c. and all written texts; most would accept the picture of a thriving city and ask for an explanation of the scarcity of coins. However, if it was suggested that coins were valued, that they were in such dynamic use that they rarely hit the ground, and that when they did hit the ground was clean enough to find them and pick them up again, few would argue. This seems a perfectly reasonable explanation. Low coin loss, when you know that coins are being used, may indeed suggest success rather than failure.

The pattern of coin supply at Carthage changes after 400. From about 400 to 480, the average date of coins in succeeding layers does not get later. The pattern known before 400 then recommences with the beginning of Vandal coinage around 480, followed by the Byzantine reconquest. Again, in the absence of a wider regional supply background it is not possible to estimate the city's relative prosperity in terms of the rest of Africa. However, deposits of the 5th c. up to about 470 continue to show low coin loss, though these coins are mainly of up to 100 years old and more. Again a traditional explanation of low coin loss might be attempted whereby the troubles of the years around 400 unsettled trade in Carthage and a death-blow was inflicted by the Vandal conquest. This is what caused the low coin loss of the 5th c.; there were few coins to lose and no exchange in which to lose them. This argument of course requires an acceptance of 4th c. poverty in the city.

A second obstacle to this argument is the context in which the coins of the 4th c. were lost. Only half the coins minted in 330 to 345 were sealed in deposits, lost beyond recovery, by around 510. This means that the other half of the coins, together with surrounding issues of the 4th c., were still available to be lost in the 6th c., when they are lost in substantial numbers. Thus they survived the 5th c. somewhere, which allowed them to continue in use subsequently and to form a substantial part of coin loss up to about 600. Disaster in the 430s, would have led to abandonment of coins and coin use—and I think I can point to just this phenomenon elsewhere. This shows that there was in fact continued coin use, with low coin loss, in the 5th c. I think, therefore, it must be allowed the same meaning in the 5th c. The coins lost in the 5th c. are basically the same as those lost in the 4th c. because the 5th c. issues from the eastern Mediterranean stay firmly in the eastern Mediterranean, even when areas such as Sicily and Malta are still a full part of the empire. Thus at Carthage, a combination of a good knowledge of the city from ar-

chaeology and texts and an unusual pattern of coin loss allows us to establish strong continuity of coin use across some two hundred years of the city's history, when it saw major changes in political regime.

It has to be admitted that this story has been constructed very selectively from the coins found in the British excavations.¹⁶ Clearly other sites in Carthage ought to be brought into play, for comparison or contrast, and ideally other North African towns ought to be considered as well. Sadly, many of the coins from other excavations have not yet been published, and those that have cannot be put back into the deposits in which they were found from the reported information. The idea that other North African towns might be considered also raises a sad smile, because, with one or two exceptions, no other good coin lists have yet been published. The main exception is the Moroccan site of Zilil, studied by my long-time fellow-numismatist Georges Depeyrot.¹⁷ It is very comforting to be able to say that, completely independently, he has also worked on the idea of coin life, by examining the coins in each stratigraphic unit, and our ideas are very similar. Unfortunately, the latest dated levels at Zilil are shortly after 378, so the site cannot confirm the ideas given above, beyond this date.

POLITICALLY MOTIVATED COIN LOSS

Not all patterns of coin loss relate to economic pressures. The coins from Kenyon's excavations in Jerusalem provide about 2340 identifiable coins ranging in date from about 300 B.C. to A.D. 1960.¹⁸ The general rate of loss was therefore roughly one coin a year for over 2000 years. There were times of higher coin loss, such as the last century B.C. or the 18th c. A.D., and there were almost gaps in the series. But three years stand out because they account for 209 coins—about 10% of the total. The years are A.D. 67, 68 and 68—once those dates are given everything becomes clear; these are of course the coins of the Jewish Revolt and are exceptional because they were produced locally in quantity, because their message was strongly against the occupying power, and the people who issued

¹⁶ Reece (1984), (1995).

¹⁷ Depeyrot (1999).

¹⁸ Reece *et al.* (forthcoming).

them lost their struggle for independence. This meant that large numbers of coins with little intrinsic value had no future and were dangerous possessions; the simplest explanation of their occurrence in archaeological levels is that they were rapidly discarded. Here we can see a clear example of an increase in coin discard for political rather than economic reasons. Although no examples of this kind of discard have so far been identified for Late Antiquity, it is possible that they will be in future.

MAJOR CHANGES IN MONETISATION

When coinage systems change, denominations go out of use, and lower value coins in base metal may lose their token value. They have only their intrinsic value which is something less than that of a metal washer, which at least has a use to which it can be put. Demonetised coins can be given to children to help them play shops, they can be used as counters for games, or they may be left somewhere and forgotten. Some of the most commonly found coins in north-west Europe, whether as single finds or as hoards, are the poor quality radiate coins of the period A.D. 260 to 274. The simplest explanation for their numbers in the archaeological record is that they lost their value and were set aside or discarded. The reasons why such changes occurred might vary—in many cases it seems to relate to periods of economic stress—sometimes local, sometimes felt in many regions. Late Antiquity presents several examples of large scale change in monetisation, which will be considered here.

Britain in the Late 3rd c.

In later Roman Britain, Verulamium is close to the average type of town in its coin finds. At Verulamium, large-scale coin loss comes in the late 3rd c., the period of the very low value radiate coins. It could be that the late 3rd c. was a testing time for many of the towns of Britain, particularly those to the east, and there was doubt whether the coin-using economy in towns would survive. In fact it did, though in most cases it never returned to full strength. If only we had some good town coin lists from France we might see similar events at work there, allowing us to connect up the substantial information in Britain with the poorly recorded Mediterranean.

The End of Coin Use in the 5th C. West?

For Late Antiquity, one of most interesting issues is the general cessation of low value coin loss in the western Mediterranean area in the 5th c. Such cessation cannot be proved by a simple coin list giving all the coins found on the site in the order in which they were struck. The absence of coins struck after 410 does not necessarily show the end of coin use in 411. It simply shows the end of supply that is common to the area. Cessation of coin use can only be suggested through listing coins from layers above the first coin of 410 in the sequence, and so comparing them with coins from earlier periods, whilst watching the pottery in the same layers for signs of residuality. This kind of information exists for very few sites—thus we are limited again to Rome, Carthage, Jerusalem and sites in Britain.

Rome: Slowing Down or Stopping?

I think that at Rome in the early 5th c. coin use slowed down or stopped, leading to a major episode of discarding. We have few coin finds published from Rome, but what there is all points in the same direction. Of particular importance in this instance is the Crypta Balbi, where the excavators have produced a complete coin list and a discussion of the 212 coins in their contexts, which is unique in Rome.¹⁹ There are also 77 coins from several seasons of excavation at the Schola Praeconum,²⁰ and 5231 miscellaneous finds from the clearance of the Forum and Palatine areas, though these in most cases, lack further context.²¹ Numismatists from Frankfurt are at present working on two other groups of coins from Rome, again without firm contexts, but their results are not yet complete.

In the coins from the Forum and Palatine clearances, several deposits were kept separate and one, from the Basilica Aemilia, contained a complete hoard, which is able to show us what coins were in circulation around the year 410. A provenance in the basilica seems acceptable because the deposit included fragments of marble flooring, molten bronze, and lumps of charred wood. This is compatible with the evidence from the surviving floor of the

¹⁹ Sorda (1989).

²⁰ Whitehouse *et al.* (1982); (1985).

²¹ Reece (1982a).

basilica, where there are irregular stains from pools of bronze and jagged edges where marble has been chipped away. This destruction is attributed to Alaric's sack of Rome in 410. The hoard is described as complete because it was still covered with strands of coarse linen that had almost certainly burned with it; corrosion products of the copper coins had been absorbed into the ashes of the threads.

When the hoard was cleaned and the coins identified, there were 100 coins or fragments of coins, of which the latest was one of Priscus Attalus of the year 409. The rest of the hoard tailed back to about 356 and then ended with only one or two earlier specimens. Obviously the significance of this hoard lies in its demonstration of the coin pool in use around the year 410. However, the coins labelled as from the basilica in general showed very much the same chronological distribution as those in the hoard, with numbers stretching back to around 350, with very few coins before that. It is very likely that they too represent coins in circulation in 410, when the basilica is thought to have been destroyed. They may even represent the coins used by money changers at this spot, at the centre of the Forum.

Collections of coins found elsewhere in the Forum and Palatine areas could be divided into two main groups. One category concentrated on coins from the Republic up to the 4th c., made up of fairly uniform loss over about 600 years. The second category was very similar both to the Basilica Aemilia hoard and the general finds from that area. No group had any number of coins struck after about 420, although single examples, and even medieval and later coins, had been incorporated into several deposits over time. When considered against the finds in the Basilica Aemilia, the composite picture across the whole Forum and Palatine area suggests gentle and uniform coin loss throughout the Roman period, which ended with substantial loss or discarding in the first twenty years of the 5th c. After that, coin loss, when it occurred, was very low indeed.

A further group of coins comes from the Schola Praeconum. This site, whatever the name and purpose of the structures, consisted mainly of a rubbish fill of animal bone, pottery, and few coins. These deposits are in close proximity to the deposits from the clearance of the Palatine and the Basilica Aemilia which included large numbers of later 4th c. coins. However, the coins here belong to the 5th c., with one or two earlier issues of the later 4th c., and stop at about 450. The pottery has been variously dated to around the end of the

5th c. or soon after 450.²² The key point is that 5th c. issues are present, in small numbers, but very few 4th c. issues have survived, and those that have are uncertain and worn. This suggests that the large-scale loss or discarding at Rome soon after 400 marks a break in common coin use in the city, which was re-established rather weakly later in the century. The residual coins at the Crypta Balbi seem to confirm the suggestion that widespread coin use was not re-established after the early 5th c.

Britain

If the scarce issues of 408 to 410 are removed, then the composition of the hoard from the Basilica Aemilia is very similar to the coins found in the latest deposits in some sites in Britain. In Britain, few people would now doubt the equation of numbers of coins of the later 4th c., in terminal rubbish deposits, with an end to coin use and the piling up of rubbish on sites which were being abandoned. In Cirencester, coin loss after these deposits is unknown and it is therefore reasonable to assume that coin use ceased after about 415. The clearest evidence so far (at present unpublished) comes from Ware in Hertfordshire. The average date of coins in succeeding layers gets progressively later as would be expected. However, after the first layers dated by coins to around 400, the coins that occur seem to be almost a random selection and the average date of each deposit seems totally erratic. I assume that after the end of coin supply, coins that occur in later layers are mainly recycled rubbish.

Africa

In Carthage there are few coins in 5th c. deposits and none of these correspond to the wholesale deposition of 4th c. coinage as in Rome. The discarding of 4th c. coinage at Carthage happens in the mid 6th c. after the Byzantine reconquest, as will be discussed below. Zilil, in Morocco, follows the British rather than the Roman pattern.

Summary and Interpretation of Western Sites

So in summary: coin use in Cirencester and Zilil ends soon after 400. I think there may be a severe blow to coin use after 410 at Rome,

²² Reynolds (1995).

with several almost coin-free decades. In Rome there are later deposits with coins, notably the Crypta Balbi and the Schola Praeconum, but in those deposits the coinage of the 4th c. is much rarer; they are basically 5th or 6th c. groups with a few earlier coins. At Carthage, coin loss continues at its low level, without interruption. It seems clear that that Britain did not have a monetary economy after 400, but Carthage did, as did Rome, albeit in a weaker fashion. Nevertheless, there is still an overall pattern of a collapse in coin supply, that needs to be explained.

Coinage in a System

Perhaps the important point to draw from all this is that meaning lies not in the presence or absence of individual coins, but in the existence of a system in which such coins had an agreed value. This nuances our interpretation: I think most people assume the continued use of gold, certainly in Italy in the 5th c., and probably also in Spain and North Africa. If gold was in use, then the backing for a token currency such as copper was in place; however, the evidence we have suggests it was apparently not functional. Does this mean that gold had become a commodity, with coins as units of commodity, so that the greater—gold—was not seen as having any relationship to the lesser—copper—other than through their intrinsic values? Even then it would have been possible to produce lumps of copper which related in a purely intrinsic sense to the gold piece, but this was not done.

I do not understand this. I accept that the state is necessary to validate the issue, the size, weight, and fineness of gold pieces. The many outbreaks of copying of copper coin throughout the empire, but especially towards the frontiers, show that local populations were quite capable of taking the production of small change into their own hands when official supply was interrupted. If acceptable and accepted gold was available in the western Mediterranean area in the 5th c., why were no local copper coinages produced to facilitate the buying and selling (*emendi et vendendi utilitas*) which the Anonymus *De Rebus Bellicis* (I.6) lists as a main purpose of money?

Monetisation in the East: Copper Coin Shortage and Copying

Roman coin use in the 5th c. East shows no sign of demonetisation. At Jerusalem small copper coin use goes strongly through the whole

of the 1st millennium A.D. In Egypt there actually appears to have been a period of copper coin shortage, when demand outstripped supply, judging from the copies of coins, and the moulds for copies. Dr H. C. Noeske is at present studying such moulds from Alexandria, and has published a short study of copies from site-finds.²³ There are unstudied examples in the Flinders Petrie museum in University College London, and examples now in the National Museum in Warsaw from Edfou (Apollonopolis Magna) have been published.²⁴ The latest coin used to make impressions on the Warsaw moulds belong around the year 400, but Noeske's copies continue with Late Roman and Axumite coins, until the reform of Anastasius.

The coins from such moulds are very thin pieces of cast copper. They resemble the normal struck small coins from Vandal Carthage in shape and size, but are often totally illegible. The moulds with impressions of 4th and 5th c. coins strongly support the evidence from 5th and 6th c. layers at Carthage that the coinage, when used in the 5th c., included a high proportion of issues over 100 years old. I have the impression, and I can put it no more firmly, that where new coinage does arrive in the 5th c., there is a low point in the third quarter of the century. This may be the point at which copying takes place, to be rendered unnecessary by the larger coins struck after the reform of Anastasius.

I suppose it is still possible at this point in our ignorance to suggest a completely different alternative, in which the copying takes place after that reform, when small change ceased to be provided by the state. This interpretation would be consonant with the work of Noeske who has found copies of coins up to the pre-reform issues of Anastasius. We need a thorough new study of a large group of 5th and early 6th c. finds to clear up some of the many uncertainties. It may be that the place to look will be Corinth, where all the small late coins were grouped together in the original publication as needing further study. While there is no hope of putting back together the deposits from which they came, the time might be ripe for full re-publication. Current excavations, which are being published meticulously, could be used to suggest contexts for the different types of coins.

²³ Noeske (1998).

²⁴ Krzyzanowska (1988).

East and West

This question of late copies highlights once again a difference between the East and the West. In the East Mediterranean area, shortage of regular supplies of small change may well have been remedied by local production. The absence of supplies of copper coin to the western area, however, evoked no material response. There is therefore a core area in which coin is needed, wanted, and home-produced if necessary and another area to the West, to which pottery and other goods are traded, but which does not seem to want or need small change and certainly does nothing to compensate for it when it is not supplied. The Vandal kingdom lay at the junction of the two areas. Unlike Malta to the immediate north, it produced its own copper coin from about 480 onwards; there therefore seems to be some odd way in which the rebel kingdom kept modern Tunisia attached to the Greek East, when it has always been thought of as part of the Latin West.

The Visigothic kingdom in Spain and Provence had no such effect. The Visigoths seem to have been responsible for a good proportion of the gold coins produced in their area in the 5th c., but they never produced any extensive copper coinage that has thus far been identified. In Italy, however, the Ostrogoths produced a good gold coinage in the Imperial name and tradition, together with a little silver, and some perfectly good, though rare, copper coins. Issues such as those by Athalaric are of good size and quite clear design so they have never been relegated to the 'uncertain 5th to 6th c.' category. It seems likely that it was the Ostrogoths who produced the marks of 42 and 83 (possibly *denarii* or *nummi*) on quite fresh issues of Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian (A.D. 69-81); the only convincing explanation for these is that a great hoard of early Imperial copper was discovered and sensibly recycled. But the coins struck in the mints of Rome and Ravenna from the 550s to the early 7th c. are rare as site finds and can hardly be used to suggest that a functioning coin economy still existed. The copper issues of Heraclius at Rome and especially in Sicily suggest a rather ham-fisted last gasp than a market-led flourishing coin use.

VALUE COLLISIONS

Site-finds can sometimes give us information on the effects of the collision between two economic systems which have different price ranges and coin denominations.

Jerusalem

Post-antique coins from Jerusalem deserve study in the future and especially comparison with other large groups in the area when these become available. To some extent the history of the area can be written from the coinage found, but there are anomalies which make it clear that the coins are saying different things from the texts. Thus the Byzantine coins do stop in the 7th c. while they continue in Greece and much of Asia Minor—this is as it should be. But the coinage of the 12th c. consists of a number of Islamic issues, very sparse issues of the Frankish West, and only one or two issues of the Crusader states. It might be significant that the Islamic issues are all copper, while the Frankish are silver, since copper coinage was unknown in the West at the time. Perhaps the economy of Jerusalem, which had a continuous tradition of the use of small change from at least the 2nd c. B.C., and the economic ideas of the newcomers formed a mismatch which could only be resolved by the use of local small change. Future study of the contexts of the Jerusalem coins may show continuing use of Hasmonaean and Herodian small change well beyond the period of striking. This is because the Roman system, which only went down to a quarter of an *As* (the *quadrans*), lacked the smallest coin used in daily commerce, the *minutum*. This comes to us direct from the Gospels (Mark 12.42) where the widow gives two *minuta* (Greek *lepta*) ‘which make a *quadrans*’.

The Byzantine Reconquest and Western Coinage

A very similar case is demonstrated at Carthage in the 6th c. A.D. Carthage came adrift from the central Roman coinage system, and much else, with the establishment of the Vandal kingdom around 430, but was brought into the East Mediterranean coin system with the Byzantine reconquest around 540. From the 470s to 530s, the Vandal state produced a large amount of copper coinage. The overwhelming denomination lost was the single *nummus*, a very small, thin, and roughly produced coin. There were some larger denomi-

nations but they are seldom encountered. Since they do not occur in the 'expected' ratio that their value might suggest, it seems likely that they did not circulate as freely as the small coins. If all other factors were equal (numbers in circulation, occasions of use and so on), then I would expect a coin of value 1 to be lost about five times more frequently than a coin of value 5. When it can be tested this idea seems to hold true. In Carthage, however, the *nummus* seems to be the standard coin for market purposes.

In this period, the central authority in Constantinople issued copper coins of up to 40 *nummi* in value. Ones and twos were known at some mints, but the standard coins found normally range from fives to forties. There is no doubt about this, because the value is the most obvious feature of the reverse of the coin. A is one, I is 10, K is 20 and M is the large 40 *nummi* piece. The Byzantine occupation of Carthage brought the Vandal system, based on the *nummus*, into collision with the Byzantine system, which brought virtually no issues so small. Again, as in Jerusalem, a metropolitan system had a higher value system than the provinces. This disjunction continued well into the 19th c., when Britain had to strike half and third farthings specifically for new Mediterranean colonies such as Malta where a lower price system than that in Britain survived.

In 6th c. Carthage, a Byzantine mint was quickly opened which struck numbers of Justinianic single *nummi*, but the North African system quickly succumbed to the inflated values of the Byzantine state. Vandal issues fall out of use and are stockpiled in hoards which contain only a few current issues which give them their undoubted date. The shedding of 4th c. coins seems to also occur mainly about this time (520 to 570), and so may be connected with these changes. After the death of Justinian, when the effects of reconquest seem to be strongly felt, exchange seems to rely on a much smaller number of coins of higher value. By 580 single *nummi* were a thing of the past, and by 620 the economy had come in line with central authority.

In these two examples the results of collision were different. The price and coin denominational system of the Vandal kingdom was virtually destroyed by the Byzantine reconquest. This seems clear from the nature of the site-finds, because the coin denominations certainly changed, and I take this to be a reflection of price changes. In the case of the Crusades, the incoming economy seems to have

been moulded by the home (Arab) economy because the coins in use appear to have continuity. Since coin use in Carthage seems to decline sharply after the Byzantine arrival and before the Arab conquest it might be that the effect of the Byzantines was to destroy what had been a thriving market economy. The smaller effect of the Crusades suggests that the violent military disruption had a less violent effect on the markets. As always, this is to judge on the basis of coin-finds, and these, as always, reflect everyday market transactions. No logical extrapolation can be made to the large scale state economies of the modern period, because so many models can be built, all of which are consistent with this small part of the material evidence.

CONCLUSION

The interpretation of coin finds requires considerable methodological caution. However, there are many significant issues to the study of the late antique economy that can only be resolved through numismatics. To summarise: coin supply from coins as found can provide us with significant information about how state payments worked in practice and provide a measure of the relative economic history of a site in relation to its region. Coin loss can tell us about the relative economic history of two or more periods on the same site, as well as about changes in regional monetisation and the interaction of different monetary systems. Unfortunately, there are probably less than 20 coin reports from the whole of the Mediterranean area which list enough coins in enough detail to provide a basis for extending this type of work. Despite this, a start can be made, and more reports should soon be published. I hope I have shown that the form of publication is vital, because details on the contexts in which coins were discovered adds dramatically to the information which can be extracted from raw lists. Nevertheless, where information on stratigraphic contexts is not available, that must not deter workers from publication, because there is still much work that remains to be done on simple lists.

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PART FOUR
TOPOGRAPHY

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LATE ANTIQUE URBAN TOPOGRAPHY: FROM ARCHITECTURE TO HUMAN SPACE

LUKE LAVAN

ABSTRACT

Writing about the late antique city is dominated by topographical mapping, architectural studies and site syntheses. These approaches operate within a conception of space as the location of points within an imaginary grid. However, other notions of space exist. This paper proposes a move away from the location and description of physical remains towards a study of human spatiality. It also seeks to re-establish the study of topography at a general, rather than site-focused level. The limitations of existing approaches and the needs of late antique evidence are explored. An alternative topographical approach is suggested, based on studying 'activity spaces' (human activities in their total material setting) instead of simple buildings. This gives special prominence to texts, but seeks to combine all kinds of evidence. The methodological issues involved in doing this are considered. Possible implications for archaeological field practice are also explored.

WHERE DID WE LOSE THE LATE ANTIQUE CITY?*

One of the most evocative 'late antique' experiences one can have is to walk around the ruins of an extensively excavated Mediterranean city, where much of the site is preserved largely as it was in the closing years of antiquity. Amidst the remains of churches, colonnaded streets and bath buildings, one feels very close to the human events recalled by late antique writers, which so often took place in an urban setting. This immediacy is sadly lost back in the library, when reading academic studies of urban monuments. The disengagement that this provokes is partly a result of the complexity of urban data. However, it also results from a scholarly desire to master this

* This paper was written before the appearance of Allison (2001), which covers some of the same issues in an Early Roman context and contains much interesting bibliography.

information rather than synthesise it and, especially, from the use of spatial concepts and methodology that impoverish writing about late antique cities. This leaves them empty and cold, as physical descriptions and line drawings, with no life. Reconstruction drawings of these buildings are common, but few are drawn in use; consequently, not only scholars, but also the general public, has little or no idea what late antique cities looked or felt like. This is not a brilliant situation to be in after several decades of excavation and library research. In this paper I argue that it is possible to broaden our understanding of late antique urban topography by reconsidering the spatial concepts and methodology that we use, and especially by implanting a human perspective at the centre of our writing.

‘SPACE’ OUTSIDE OF LATE ANTIQUE STUDIES

In the humanities and social sciences there is a vast array of approaches to the study of space. This work has evolved from several disciplines, creating a huge range of concepts; these have been either well-defined or simply assumed according to the priorities of different scholars. The best-established tradition conceives of space as the location of points within a physical grid. Though it was present in the ancient world and other pre-industrial civilisations, it received its classic exposition in the works of Descartes and Newton; this concept of space has often been associated with traditional regional geography, concerning for example the study of settlement patterns and the location of industry. A second tradition stresses the importance of using spatial concepts based on human action; this has been explored by geographers interested in developing a sense of place, or in describing the perceived geographies and spatial vocabularies carried around in the heads of different individuals. A third strand of thought sees space not so much as a subject in itself, but as an inherent inseparable part of human action, through which all aspects of our lives are constructed and negotiated; this is particularly associated with concepts of ‘social space’ developed by the philosopher Lefebvre. Many concepts from the second and third traditions outlined here have been tried out in archaeology, including that of Roman cities.¹

¹ My description of concepts of space is a gross simplification but useful for the purpose of this article: for current definitions of space being used in the hu-

'SPACE' AND THE LATE ANTIQUE CITY

The most systematic spatial study of the late antique city remains that of Dietrich Claude, who in his *Die byzantinische Stadt* (1969) devoted almost 100 pages to *Topographie*. This work sought to list monument types built or maintained in Mediterranean cities of the 6th c. A.D., using archaeological and literary sources. In its day it gave researchers a first glimpse of the distinct nature of cities of this period. Since this book was published there has been an enormous amount of new archaeological work which has greatly altered our understanding of urban history. In early medieval archaeology, in western Europe, this has included a great deal of interest in the broad topographical development of cities.² However, within the more classical-looking cities of the late antique East or the West up to the mid-5th c., few scholars have followed Claude's lead, in writing about topography in a systematic, holistic way.³ Broadly three types of spatial writing have dominated research: that done by self-conscious topographers, that done in recording architecture and that done as part of site syntheses and guide books. All of these exist within the first conception of space outlined above: that of mapping physical phenomena in relation to an absolute grid.

Topographical Mapping

Topographical mapping, more usually known simply as 'topography', is an academic practice that has grown out into classical archaeology out of geography. It normally involves the extensive recording of the broad outlines of sites, from their natural setting to

manities and social sciences, with bibliography see Curry (1996) and Simonsen (1996). The discussion in Alston (2002) 12-43 is also useful. For a review of spatial approaches in Roman archaeology see Laurence (1997).

² See for example Brogiolo and Gelichi (1998).

³ Claude's work significantly studied not only building work but occasionally considered relevant literary sources for monument use. German scholarship has continued to study topography, though not in such a systematic way as Claude: Bauer (1996); Bruhl (1979, 1990). W. Müller-Wiener's *Bildlexikon zur Topographie Istanbuls* (1977) assembles available evidence for Constantinople but does not seek to synthesise it. Mango (1990) does do this, for monuments and large-scale urban change, though not everyday life, for which see Mango (1981-82). E. Zanini's chapter on "Le città dell'impero," in *Introduzione all'Archeologia Bizantina* (1994) 117-71 is the only work to preserve Claude's ambition of a general treatment for Late Antiquity, though it organises material in terms of city syntheses rather than as Claude did, by theme.

the position of monuments within them. In this, it fits traditional dictionary definitions of topography as “the location of physical phenomena” or “where things are”, though not more recent notions such as “sacred topography”, which treat topography as equivalent to “spatial narrative”.⁴ Topographical mapping is particularly cherished in classical urban archaeology because it appears to give great order to the complexity of the ancient city, and because there is still so much of it to be done. It is seen as a necessary preliminary to all further fieldwork. A great deal of this work is done as an integral part of excavation campaigns and not as free-standing research. Other studies are done as library research: locating monuments from old excavation reports, textual studies or even the scrutiny of placenames. In both kinds of work topographers do have a secondary historical object. This usually involves three areas of interest: the first is relating the implantation of cities and buildings to relief and other natural features; the second is attempting to explain the motives behind the design of newly planned urban areas; the third seeks to account for the setting and design of individual buildings within a new or existing urban environment. The last approach was that adopted by Krautheimer in the introduction to his *Three Christian Capitals*, and seems to be implicit in the work of *Topographie Chrétienne* series and C.-R. Bruhl’s *Palatium und Civitas*.⁵ For the Republican and Early Imperial period this work can be very successful, allowing one to study concepts of urban design and ideal forms, in a period of colonial foundations and urban growth; it also helps one think through the intentions of urban architects from this period, when monumental ideological programs and symbolic intentions seem frequently to have played an important role in the design and relative positions of many monuments.⁶

Unfortunately this work is somewhat less useful for Late Antiquity, in spite of Krautheimer’s early optimism.⁷ The 4th to 6th c.

⁴ *Oxford English Dictionary* “the practice of describing a particular place...delineation of the features of a locality...study of local distribution”—Simpson and Weiner (1989) 257.

⁵ Krautheimer “Introduction” in *Three Christian Capitals: Topography and Politics* (1983) 1-5. Gauthier and Duval et al. (Paris 1986 f). Bruhl (1975, 1990).

⁶ Urban planning: see Ward-Perkins (1974) and Owens (1989) though note critical reflections in Laurence (1994) 12-19 and more recently papers in Fentress (2000). W. L. Macdonald sees even the position of early imperial street monuments as having been planned in relation to architectural criteria: (1996), esp. 5-31

⁷ Krautheimer (1983) 5.

saw far fewer urban foundations than the 2nd B.C. to 3rd A.D. New cities were small and contained only a limited number of structures. Orthogonal planning of new urban quarters of existing cities was rare.⁸ Most new late antique buildings were instead set in very old urban environments and many re-used earlier architectural structures; there is certainly some information to be drawn from the choices of sites, but inertia and practicality intervene in situations of re-use to make this less useful as a source for intentionality.⁹ Furthermore, new buildings can show a lack of care in their placement when compared to early imperial monuments.¹⁰

There was also arguably far less clearly ideological planning in Late Antiquity. Krautheimer argued that some major churches in imperial capitals were meaningfully located: he thought Constantine's churches at Rome were built on the periphery because they sought to avoid conflict with the pagan senate in Rome's centre; San Lorenzo at Milan was built by Ambrose outside the city, as a new focus, in opposition to the Arian-dominated court. But, since he wrote, his conclusions seem less secure. The siting of Constantine's churches on the edges of Rome can now be fitted within a pattern observed elsewhere, whereby churches were built away from city centres, on available land; his conclusions about Milan have been undermined by changes in the chronology of San Lorenzo. Furthermore, the considerable efforts of *Topographie Chrétienne* to establish the factors behind the location of churches have rather sadly concluded that pragmatism rather than ideology played a great, if not the greatest, role in the location of many churches, especially those within cities.¹¹ Gisella Cantino Wataghin has also pointed out that ideologi-

⁸ For new cities see Zanini in this volume. The use of orthogonal grids for new urban quarters was rare: 5th c. urban expansion at Carthage continued the existing orthogonal grid: Canadian Carthage Team (1985) 21. New 5th c. quarters at Sitifis and Scythopolis were ordered but not orthogonal: Février (1965); Foerster and Tsafirir (1987-88) 40-41. Tsafirir and Foerster (1997) 104-105.

⁹ This is not to say topographical studies considering reuse cannot produce important historical information: see Leone in this volume. Urban architectural design was not entirely over: the continued siting of some of street monuments in relation to their wider architectural context is argued by Bauer (1996) 363-94.

¹⁰ Mango (1976) 30-35 makes this point in relation to the cathedral of Gerasa. For less ideological planning in comparison to the early empire: Gauthier (1999) 195-98, 202. However, fortifications are more carefully sited in relation to natural relief than early imperial defences had been.

¹¹ Gauthier (1999) 198-202 and Cantino Wataghin, in this volume, note that churches seem often sited because of the availability of building plots, lack of funds

cal justifications for the siting of cemeteries in new locations seem to have been largely made *post-entum*, as late as the 7th or 8th centuries. At the level of individual monuments, aesthetics and intentionality in the use of *spolia* similarly can often fall flat when subject to detailed scrutiny.¹²

Architectural Studies

Architectural studies of individual monuments tell us what large-scale topographical work does not: how cities were organised physically on a human scale. The study of period architecture, especially churches, is of course very popular; it forms the late antique branch of what was old-style classical archaeology. Plans and elevations of individual buildings, often obtained through clearance excavation, form the basis of a technological and aesthetic study of architecture. The focus of most architectural studies is in enumerating, by catalogue, the details of structural features rather than a functional interpretation of these buildings. This work tends to prefer to study 'architecture' as an aim in itself, rather than to study 'buildings' as source for economic, social or spatial history.¹³ Functional labels are given to parts of buildings and to buildings as a whole, for 'churches', 'baths', 'houses' and other structures. For the early imperial period some architectural historians such as Pierre Gros have done this on a systematic basis, trying to obtain a clear idea of what the words *templum*, *basilica* and *curia* signified in ancient textual sources.¹⁴ For the study of late antique churches it has been more difficult to develop a detailed idea of the different functions of structures. Some writers have tried to seriously relate church fittings to function. Unfortunately the absence of early liturgies means that the interpretation of church plans in terms of function is in large part guesswork; despite a century of research even some senior researchers, such as

or because of the gift of an aristocratic house, that may have formerly served as a house church.

¹² Krautheimer (1983) 2-5. Gauthier (1999) 198-99. San Lorenzo, now 5th c: Rossignani (1990) 137-38, 138 and 138-39. On burials see Cantino Wataghin (1999) 147-80. On *spolia* see: Ward-Perkins (1999) 225-44 and Leggio and Coates-Stephens in this volume.

¹³ For examples of this kind of work see at its best see Duval (1995-1998), Chevalier (1995) and Michel (2001), which is truly high art. At its most dull: Lavan (1999) 135-67.

¹⁴ See Gros (1996), at beginning of each section.

Mango and Poulter, believe it may be a futile exercise.¹⁵ Nevertheless, architectural studies continue to provide us with most of our knowledge of late antique urban topography.

Site Syntheses

Another strand of research into Late Antiquity, which could be described as topographical, is the compilation of evidential syntheses for urban sites. Here the work of Clive Foss has dominated and defined the field. Typically this work proceeds by first providing a textual and epigraphic discussion of the political and religious history of a site and then recounting details of standing monuments by type, or as part of a site tour. As such, it is related to the tradition of the guide book; Foss' work on Ephesus and Sardis is indeed ideal for this purpose. Again, this work has essentially an architectural focus, on buildings and structures, where single functional labels are usually given to structures on account of their form. Sadly, there is no late antique equivalent to the systematic and detailed topographical writing that has been done from archaeological evidence in the early Roman period for Pompeii and Herculaneum, though in many areas of the east and southern Mediterranean late antique urban landscapes are sufficiently well-preserved to make this possible; many have had no significant building since the 6th c, and can have statues bases and graffiti still *in situ*.¹⁶

Evoking The Late Antique City: Towards a Human Spatiality ?

The three approaches outlined above essentially exist within a conception of space as a grid. Each represents a valid, well-developed and useful aspect of late antique studies. However, I think that, unintentionally, this work has also encouraged a wider impression

¹⁵ Mango (1976) 9-11. Poulter (1994) 249. A. Michel's monograph contains serious discussion relating archaeological evidence to liturgical use and the overall functions of complexes; this is cautious and good work. Bowden (2001) 56-68 wishes instead to explore the social interpretation of churches as monumental architecture; this kind of cross-cultural approach is valid but strongest, in a Mediterranean context, when linked firmly to the information provided by texts: see Lim (1999) 266-81 for a similar inquiry, fully using written sources.

¹⁶ Examples of C. Foss's work: (1976), (1979), (1996), (1998). Pompeii and Herculaneum: Laurence (1994), Wallace-Hadrill (1994), Zanker (1998). For the level of preservation in late antique cities in Asia Minor see Roueché (1999) or Smith (1999) 170-73 on the positions of statue bases.

of the late antique city as a human historical space, which strongly conditions our perception of urban life in this period, but exceeds the real limits of its methodology. The labels given to buildings by site syntheses, guide books and architectural commentaries suggest an account of urban topography where structures have single functions, such as for a 'baths', 'church', 'civil basilica'; these labels are given implicitly and their basis is often not properly discussed.^{16a} It is unsurprising that one might want to derive from this information a general or regional appreciation of the late antique city as a lived historical space; however, this would be, I think, intellectually flawed. This article seeks to establish the limitations of existing work in trying to develop a human understanding of the urban landscape. It also suggests that to move in this direction we need to adopt both a new methodology and a new evidential base.

LIMITATIONS OF ESTABLISHED APPROACHES

It might seem obvious that architectural studies of cities and site-syntheses give us a good idea of urban topography as experienced by late antique people. I wish to argue that this is not the case, by presenting here a number of limitations in moving towards a human understanding of urban space from existing work. This involves writing about topography as a narrative of human space, as one might write about it in geography, but as an explicitly historical exercise, actively reconstructing the past. It means reconstructing a defunct human spatial environment that is dead and gone, rather than describing surviving buildings and structures in modern architectural terms. A number of obvious problems present themselves in doing this from existing approaches: many important buildings have been neglected, or missed; functions of other structures have been misread or oversimplified; architecturally invisible activities have frequently been entirely excluded from discussion.

Buildings Neglected / Buildings Missed

Studies of architecture tend to concentrate on new buildings built in Late Antiquity, such as churches. In so doing they neglect older structures, where important traditional activities may or may not still

^{16a} For a wide-ranging discussion of this problem see Allison (2001) 185-92.

be continuing, such as civil basilicas. The study of 'period architecture', such as churches and baptisteries, tends to favour more distinctive buildings. In Late Antiquity this creates a serious problem, because the architecture of many urban elements, including secular public buildings, is less clearly defined than in the first three centuries A.D.; the difficulty of interpreting the 'principia' at Justiniana Prima or the structure known as the 'xenodocheion' at Teurnia in Noricum from their plan alone are just two examples of this.¹⁷ Secondly, Late Antiquity saw the extensive reuse of pre-existing urban sites—new buildings were often inserted into older ones; in these circumstances functional identifications can be difficult or impossible from surviving plans.

Indeed, identifications of administrative, caritative and even some religious buildings seem often to depend only on the existence of *in situ* inscriptions—for example the tax office at Caesarea Maritima or the synagogue in the House of Kyrios Leontis at Scythopolis, were both only identified by mosaic inscriptions.¹⁸ Alternatively, identifications can only be made by the recovery of related artefact assemblages. Thus Andrew Poulter has been able to interpret an unusual late antique building-type found on the Danube as a horreum, through the preservation of the contents of one of these structures, destroyed by fire; prior to his discovery these buildings had been misinterpreted as grain-milling factories. Contemplation of the excavated architectural remains alone had not here produced a correct identification.¹⁹

One should also recall that the importance of colonnaded streets as covered shopping malls has only really been appreciated since the excavation of a set of shops adjoining one of these colonnades at Sardis, complete with their everyday contents, preserved by the sudden collapse of an upper storey, which sealed merchandise, weighing apparatus etc, in each of the rooms.²⁰ Needless to say, the continued clearance excavation of late antique sites in the Levant, in spite of rich destruction deposits containing objects *in situ*, is disastrous. All

¹⁷ 'Principia' at Justiniana Prima: see discussion with bibliography in Lavan (1999) 143-44. Xenodocheion at Teurnia: this identification is not based on inscriptions. It rests on the idea that separate entries for each of the eight rooms of this structure, which is adjacent to a church, might indicate a hospice: Glaser (1990).

¹⁸ Revenue office at Caesarea: Holum (1995). Synagogue at Scythopolis: Zori (1963).

¹⁹ Horrea at Dichin, Bulgaria, and nearby: Poulter (1999).

²⁰ Sardis shops: Stephens Crawford (1990).

that this procedure does is bring to light yet more sterilised late antique architecture, of which we arguably have too much.

Functions: Multiple Not Single; Reuse for New Purposes

Architectural studies also tend to concentrate on the primary functions of new buildings, neglecting the possibility that these spaces might have had more than one function. It is also true that traditional activities once acted out in classical structures may now take place in the alternative architectural settings provided by new building types, as secondary functions.²¹ In some cases the architecture of a structure may even have nothing to do with the use to which it was put for most of its history. This is important in the Balkans, where it seems there were sometimes disjunctures between the public building aspirations of the late Roman state and the needs and wants of the communities they sought to impose themselves on.

The St George complex at Serdica, of the 4th c. or later provides a good example. This appears from its plan to be a bath building; its main chamber is also heated by a generous hypocaust; however, because the hypocaust was never connected to any flues, it has been postulated that it was intended for drainage, and that the structure was originally an imperial audience hall, a function for which parallels are not strong, though perhaps just possible. More likely, the structure was built as a bath but was not completed; instead it could have served a variety of functions, including storage, before it was eventually converted into a church.²² Indeed, this situation is not so remarkable for the Balkans; here an effort seems to have been made, through imperial benefactions and the activity of the army, to uphold urban centres, with public works such as fortifications and especially new foundations such as Diocletianopolis, Gorsium-Herculia or short-lived Justiniana Prima. Wider economic indicators for the region, such as the nature of rural settlement or even the condition of urban housing, suggest that it did not have the prosperity necessary to sustain these projects, without imperial finance.²³

²¹ T. P. Wiseman makes a similar point related to public performances of drama in early imperial Rome: they could occur in a variety of settings. Thus, even in the principate one should not try to confine human activity to the frames provided by well-defined public architecture: Wiseman (1983) 151-55.

²² Serdica St George complex: Lavan (1999) 144-45.

²³ The Kaiserthermen at Trier provide another example: Here an ambitious first phase (late 3rd / early 4th c.) was never finished. The thermae were eventu-

Architecturally Invisible Activities

Activities which do not have a distinctive architectural setting are rendered invisible by architectural studies. This is a serious problem for the late antique city. Arguably, street processions of governors, aristocrats or religious groups did more to articulate social structure than mosaics, colonnades or elaborate bath buildings within private houses; however, only now are scholars starting to look for the often slight epigraphic evidence for processions or street rituals in the late antique urban environment.²⁴

Thus existing approaches can give us a very fragmentary view of ancient topography in human terms, from which much is missing and in which some things are misinterpreted. Indeed, architectural descriptions with fixed functional labels do not even amount to a complete description of the ancient material world, but produce a spatial environment which is empty of objects, as well as being empty of people.

ALTERNATIVE SPATIAL METHODOLOGIES

Theoretical Alternatives from Archaeology

There are, of course, a variety of methodologies available in the archaeology of other periods, that have been used to reconstruct spatial environments in a more human way. Principal amongst these is the long tradition of site interpretation present in prehistoric archaeology; here finds in and around buildings with earthen surfaces often relate to use, rather than just to their abandonment; quite understandably, excavators seek to reconstruct the activities to which these artefacts and their distribution relate and so understand the functions of buildings and spaces. Where distributions of artefacts seem very strongly structured and comparatively undisturbed, excavators have sought to define 'activity areas' and even match these scatters to human activities, through careful ethnological observations of similar patterns of rubbish created in comparable situations today. Like

ally completed to a more modest design: Fontaine (2001) 122-34, with bibliography. Diocletianopolis: Madkarov, (1993). Gorsium: Fitz and Fedak (1993). On the artificial nature of urbanism on the Danube in the 6th c., possibly underpinned by the state: Poulter (1992).

²⁴ Roueché (1999b).

topographical mapping, this approach seeks to provide an account of the physical environment, but focuses attention on a human scale. It is explicitly concerned with the historical reconstruction of human action, the function of buildings and artefacts, rather than the study of architecture or objects for their own sake, which is still the dominant approach in late antique studies.²⁵

Recently, archaeologists have sought to develop more complex appreciations of ancient space, by adapting methodologies current in geography and elsewhere. These scholars have focused on the past spatial experience of historical human subjects rather than the material record alone; they aim to produce an 'insider' appreciation of how people conceived of and behaved in and around monumental structures, rather than simply try to describe them in terms of the labels of contemporary 'objective' categories. Such work frequently uses anthropological analogy as an interpretative aid or uses a range of concepts popular in social theory, such as phenomenology. Individual and conflicting perceptions, and the construction of spatial alternatives are important areas of study. Use of ideas of 'social space' allows these different concepts to be related to other contested structures of society.²⁶

The Theoretical Needs of Late Antique Urbanism

I think that some but not all of this work is useful for late antique studies. Spatial studies are in fact so underdeveloped in Late Antiquity that there seems at this moment little point in developing very complex notions of space. Indeed, many approaches that are currently fashionable require a level of information about spatial practice which we do not and may never have. They are drawn from geography or cultural studies where direct observation and recording of the world according to the latest theoretical criteria is possible. In contrast urban historians have to spend 90% of their time reconstructing a fragmentary account of the basics of the material world. The reality is that late antique studies still needs to develop

²⁵ This is often known as 'spatial archaeology', for the history of which see Gowlett (1997). For the state of the art see other papers in the same volume. The matching of artefact scatters to the rubbish patterns observed during ethnographic observations of activity areas is part of 'middle-range theory': Binford (1983) esp. 95-192.

²⁶ Many of these works are referred to in Laurence (1997) 7 n.1, to which could be added Johnson (1996) and (1993). For an exploration of individual perceptions of Roman monumental architecture see Revell (2000).

a basic knowledge of the everyday use of some of its most common spaces.

In this situation, I would suggest that it is, for the moment, best to adopt a modified version of an approach generated by archaeological fieldwork itself; competent excavators are well-used to dealing with the human use of space, though many show little interest in exploring these issues away from the boundaries of their own sites. I suggest adopting a modified version of prehistoric site interpretation. However, to suit the rich but complex urban data we have from Late Antiquity, this approach needs to be modified. Firstly, it needs to be expanded to incorporate texts in some way, recognised by all but the most unrepentant archaeologist to be indispensable in understanding life in Roman cities.²⁷ Secondly, it needs to be wide enough not just to consider the functions of architectural structures, but to include the many important activities that people living in a Mediterranean environment quite naturally carried out away from buildings, in open spaces. Finally, I also feel it should be used to form the basis of a general topographical approach, rather than just a basis for considering features of individual sites. Instead of acting as a means of interpreting the archaeological record, it would become the main focus of interest. This amounts to an inversion of prehistoric priorities—reflecting the reality that it is disciplined interpretation *not* the data that really matters in Mediterranean classical archaeology.²⁸

A POSSIBLE APPROACH

Here I wish to propose a framework that goes some way towards addressing these concerns. It is not offered as an approach that excludes

²⁷ On the necessity to include textual sources in our accounts of the city as well as archaeology and conflict in this debate see the review of positions in Laurence (1997) 9-11 and papers in the same volume and comments in Laurence (1994) 8. See also Allison (1997a) and (1997b).

²⁸ It is typical of historical, and especially Mediterranean Roman, archaeology that careful textually delimited interpretation is the main focus of interest not data—who in Mediterranean scholarship wants to hear about alternative cultural identities, possible religious interpretations, elites or top-ranking settlement centres: we want to hear about being Roman / Germanic, Christianity, *curiales* and cities. The idea that archaeology can find a real competitive interpretative alternative to this for the Mediterranean world is unfounded. This is not to say data does not matter: rather it is to emphasise that the *quality* of data in relation to questions posed is crucial: interest in data is not absolute when we have so much of it.

others—just one approach that will have its limitations. I will be happy if it merely provokes discussion. However, it is time that new methodologies of space were applied to the late antique city, that allow us to explore it better as a historical townscape, full of people, rather than as a lifeless ruin.

My approach is based on traditional site interpretation but differs from it in four ways:

Firstly, I would group ‘activity areas’ into larger units, ‘activity spaces’, such as *horrea* or *praetoria* (buildings), or (non-architectural) law court or *adventus*. They would consist of two elements :

- i) the spatial functions (the activities themselves/ what people are doing)
- ii) their material setting (from the bodies of people present and their clothes to any buildings involved)

Secondly, I would use the concept of ‘activity spaces’ much more generally than ‘activity areas’. They would not merely serve as conceptual tools in site interpretation, but would be the basis for general descriptions of human space, components of a historical narrative of ancient topography.^{28a}

Thirdly, I would alter the source basis for the reconstruction of human activities within these spaces: artefact assemblages would be fine, supplemented by *in-situ* inscriptions, but in place of ethnographic analogy I would use descriptions of activities as recounted by contemporary texts.

Fourthly, I would, as far as possible, base conceptions for organising space on those described in contemporary textual sources.²⁹

This methodology represents little more than an attempt to import an explicitly historical study of human spatiality common elsewhere in archaeology into our discipline. It puts human action firmly as its focus, but retains the traditional topographical goal of providing a coherent narrative description of the spatial world for its own sake. It is distinctive in its desire to establish a general framework for ac-

^{28a} Thus activity spaces such as ‘praetorium’, ‘law court’, ‘curia’ and ‘adventus’ would within an overall topographic narrative take a similar position to the simple functional labels given to buildings in the guide book narratives; here, though, the topographic narrative I am proposing seeks to describe a synthetic reconstructed city, rather than just being a commentary on one site.

²⁹ It is easy to find terms in the texts for categories dealing with religious, political and some aspects of social life; ancient authors have defined much of own conceptions and practice of these activities. For economic activities and broad conceptions of space used to study ‘urbanism’, in which we are rather more interested than the ancients, own spatial categories can be used where necessary—e.g. ‘rub-bish tip’, ‘pottery workshop’.

counts of late antique urban topography.^{29a} There has been strangely little discussion about this, especially amongst archaeologists, despite the application of many theories of space to early imperial monument types and sites. On the other hand, historians, such as recently Richard Lim on late antique Rome or Christopher Haas on Alexandria, seem more interested in writing about topography in a general manner.³⁰ It is particularly important to work at a general level in Late Antiquity because of the nature of the urban evidence. Although site preservation for the end of antiquity is good, we have no 4th or 5th c. Pompeii; archaeological information is frequently fragmentary and literary sources, though arguably richer than for the early empire, are widely scattered. Our detailed knowledge of the city in this period has to come from carefully integrating sources, from a wider geographical area, in a general, though regionally sensitive, narrative: there is no alternative.

In using texts explicitly this approach does go some way to providing an ‘insider’ perspective on ancient space; the use of texts as a basis for monument function is however nothing new. Good architectural studies have always appreciated the need to use texts.^{30a} Actually, scholars already do use texts as the source of most functional identifications of buildings—in labelling structures as basilicae, curiae or agorae. Nevertheless, it sometimes escapes us that archaeologists do not actually discover basilicae, curiae or praetoria, but nameless, empty monumental structures.³¹ We are in fact conceptually dependent on texts, epigraphy and analogies from them to provide functional labels for most political, social and religious buildings.³²

^{29a} This approach is close to but differs from the study of *place*, which deals more with individual locations, rather than general classes of human space.

³⁰ Laurence’s (1994) monograph on Pompeii reflects this. It is exceptionally rich in the many approaches it adopts; however, it is not always clear how the frameworks of different chapters can be related to each other. Zanker e.g. (1998) writes in a systematic way about ‘townscapes’, though on the remains of individual cities, rather than for general classifications of human space. Lim (1999); Haas (1997). Writing about sacred topography as a coherent historical narrative is now in vogue with historians—see for example section on *topoi* in Markus (1990).

^{30a} Simplistic uses of architectural labels based on texts have led to errors, for which see Allison (2001) 185–94. Allison rightly displays a strong degree of scepticism about this practice in relation to domestic architecture and the identification of shops; however it is important not to overdo this scepticism; label identifications for public buildings, such as basilicae (in the west), curiae, fora, and thermae are generally far more secure, being based on strong textual references and inscriptions.

³¹ Normally the finds relate to abandonment; stone floors are swept in use.

³² See Balty (1991) who shows that the identification of city council chambers

My approach does, however, try to make the basis for identification through these sources rigorous and explicit. Where we can identify unusual building types through mosaic inscriptions or well-founded textual identifications it is fair to accept them as a solid core of good material, as a basis for making secondary analogies elsewhere. When we do not have a firm basis for discussing building functions on individual sites we would do best not to offer any interpretations of this kind at all and let silence reign. Lack of rigour in identifying the functions of buildings has in the past caused major confusions in historical debate, especially when identifications based only on loose analogy, without clear textual or epigraphic foundations, have entered wider literature. In particular, the nature of imperial palaces and the praetoria of civil governors has been obscured by localised, sometimes sensationalist reasoning.³³

POTENTIAL OBJECTIONS

Texts and Archaeology: Incompatible Sources?

There are currently many examples of scholars trying to combine texts and archaeology in studies of the ancient city. The work carried out by Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, Ray Laurence and others on the urban environment of Pompeii and Herculaneum has sought to understand the use of a wide range of urban spaces through the spatial concepts and practices revealed in textual evidence. Simon Ellis has done much the same thing in his studies of late antique housing.³⁴ Interestingly, Ray Laurence has expressed concern that he has produced “an academic heresy”, at least in part because of his combination of textual and archaeological evidence.³⁵ This was a cherished methodological taboo for an earlier generation of archaeologists, who were regularly presented with anachronistic interpretations of archaeological levels in terms of well-known historical events, rather than more mundane processes of site formation. However, I am not at all proposing that an attempt should be made to make texts, epig-

in the West is in large part made possible by a coin identifications of the *curia senatus* at Rome and inscriptions from the *curia* at Timgad: 12-15, 73.

³³ On praetoria see Lavan (1999) and (2001a). On imperial palaces see Duval (1992). In the case of praetoria, some consistency, in function and architecture, emerges when identifications are limited to those based on inscriptions.

³⁴ Wallace-Hadrill (1994); Laurence (1994); Laurence (1997); Ellis (1988).

³⁵ Laurence (1994) ix.

raphy and archaeology agree artificially, in spite of their separate methodology. Rather, I wish to argue that urban topography, particularly the study of political, social and religious spaces, is a legitimate meeting place for all these sources.³⁶

It must be stressed, to the chagrin of some field archaeologists, that archaeology is often not a superior source to textual evidence for topographical reconstruction—it is just one source amongst many that should not be unduly privileged. As Laurence has noted, both are equally a cultural product of the Roman world; the relationship between archaeological remains and past behaviour is not straightforward, just as with the texts.³⁷ On an ancient site we find only ruins, not ancient topography, despite their seductive materiality. Much of the ancient city is missing from their testimony, especially in the reconstruction of political and social activities; these leave little unambiguous artefactual evidence behind, which might help us to interpret cellular buildings or plain hall structures that housed them. Ruins on ancient sites represent partial and fragmentary data that will *never* produce a narrative to replace the spatial world described by Ammianus and Libanius.

In practice, as work by Balty, Laurence, Ellis and others shows, texts and archaeology *can* frequently be related to precisely the same questions of function, location etc, which neither source can fully answer alone. It is important to point out that in arguing for the integration of textual sources I am not talking about using rhetorical descriptions of cities such as can be found in Menander Rhetor or Procopius' *de aedificiis*, though these are important at a symbolic level; I am talking about using the countless anecdotes, legal references and papyri that recall everyday activities and their setting in Mediterranean cities.³⁸ The integration of sources at a practical level

³⁶ This was recognised by Krautheimer (1983) 1-5.

³⁷ Laurence (1994) 8. The functions of some urban elements, such as fortifications and production sites can be much more easily identified by analogy: this is not something that I would wish to dispute. Archaeology is also close to the only source we have for economic topography.

³⁸ I am here talking about the Mediterranean. The integration of archaeology, in northern Europe, with a small number of texts is another issue. Nevertheless, it should not be assumed that the functioning of buildings and cities in the 4th c. was here any less 'Roman' than in the Mediterranean; this should be demonstrated, or silence should reign. See Cameron for the different types of site description contained in Procopius' *de aedificiis* and their responsible use by archaeologists; some of these are difficult, some more straightforward: Cameron (2000) 179.

should be very conscious of their different value for different kinds of questions. For example, the location of praetoria within cities, the functions of their courtyards and the architectural signification of the term *praetorium* are very different questions for which different types of evidence have different values. Some questions will always be better answered by archaeology, others will only ever be answered by texts.³⁹ This integration of texts and archaeology is best done at the level of general or regional synthetic discussions, before being critically applied to individual sites. It is at the former level that the meaningful historical discussion lies, where literary evidence exists in sufficient quantities to make its combination with archaeology possible.

Contiguous Space

A second major objection to writing about “spatial functions plus material setting” is that such an approach disrupts a contiguous appreciation of space, because human activities overlap spatially, whilst architecture does not. This problem is however largely avoided in practice—most activity spaces in the ancient city were spatially discrete, occupying distinct building types. On the other hand, a study of activity spaces rather than buildings ensures that spaces which have no fixed architectural setting, such as those which take place in the street, will not be missed; neither will multiple functions of single buildings be ignored.

Relativism

Most seriously perhaps, are objections derived from wider theoretical considerations. Surely our post-modern experience teaches us that a single account of human activities is impossible, because of the conflicting perceptions of different people involved; an attempt to describe a single account of events might even add up to a positivist imposition of thought, seeking to suppress the thoughts of others. This chimes with a view popular amongst some archaeologists that texts represent ‘merely’ the distorted views of an elite, rather than that they reflect a largely consensual wider consciousness. Such scepticism is valid for the early imperial period, in recently conquered

³⁹ See Alston (1997) 25-40 for houses based on Egyptian papyri. There are some aspects of his reconstruction that archaeology could never reveal.

provinces, but is not so rewarding in the Mediterranean, from the 3rd c. onwards.⁴⁰

In my own research I have not found perceptual pluralism very useful in dealing with late antique urban topography; I have tried hard to find perceptual conflict over space in the late antique city. It certainly existed over religious matters and over the relative importance of religious to secular topography, as Richard Lim, Christopher Haas and Annabel Wharton have demonstrated; multiple view-points, if not conflict, did exist over some other conceptual issues, such as the meaning of *spolia*, as papers in this volume demonstrate. However, there seems generally to have been little but consensus about the nature of the everyday functions of political and social spaces; alternative voices seem untraceable.⁴¹ Janet Lindblom has come to a somewhat similar conclusion in her work on women and social space in early Byzantium; differences are recorded between some behaviour as recorded in anecdotes and codes of behaviour for women as recommended in texts; but, males and female authors of these works do not show any differences between them in either their conceptions of how women should comport themselves in public or in their behavioural anecdotes.⁴²

It is important to stress that Late Antiquity was not post-reformation or post-modern northern Europe, where deep perceptual conflicts have been based on ever more exaggerated identities. In Late Antiquity, considerable consensus means that a single functional account of urban topography, based on ancient texts does indeed seem possible—with the proviso that such an approach should be based firmly on our experience of the data, rather than on any particular philosophical position.

⁴⁰ For the early imperial period see Webster and Cooper (1996).

⁴¹ Lim (1999); Haas (1997); Wharton (1995); see also Maier (1995). I have not found it possible to generate alternative views from the texts on the nature of the *adventus*, *fora*, city council chambers, *praetoria*, law courts, prisons etc. The hostile views of the clergy on entertainment buildings, should be treated as quite unrepresentative, as they continued to attract crowds without difficulty: Segal (1985-89) 158-159; Ward-Perkins (1984) 92-118.

⁴² Lindblom (2001) 175, plus discussion on day of paper.

CONCLUSIONS

The approach outlined in this article represents just one response to the difficulties of writing about human space in the late antique city. As suggested earlier, it is likely that political and social spaces have most to gain from it; in my second paper in this volume I consider the application of ‘activity spaces’ to the political topography of the late antique city, which I argue could in some ways alter our appreciation of urban life in this period. The topography of religious conflict and dissent probably needs a different approach with a more flexible methodology. An ‘economic topography’ might use very little textual information. However, the construction of systematic topographical accounts of the human use of space can be more than an end in itself. It could have wider benefits.

Firstly, it could provide a good intellectual context for justifying modern archaeological recording to the wider historical community. This may sound trite and like a naive call for clearance excavators to reform, but it is not intended as such; rather it is intended to highlight an interpretative hole between urban excavation results and historically meaningful research. Many clearance excavators working on East Mediterranean Roman cities still simply cannot see the point of using modern recording techniques to address what they consider to be interesting historical questions. They have long consoled themselves that, whilst not being archaeological wizards, they were at least good historians in matters of topography, who knew the wood from the trees, especially with regard to public buildings. But, if high-quality archaeological fieldwork could be brought to contribute more strongly to a general level of topographical writing there might be more pressure for change; it needs to be demonstrated, in a historically meaningful arena, that the recording of architecture as built, on which clearance excavators base their approach, is really less important to understanding the functions of public buildings than recording repairs, minor epigraphic evidence and artefact assemblages.⁴³

Conversely, a general understanding of ‘activity spaces’ within the late antique city could also provide a basis for improving excavation

⁴³ I do not wish to provide a bibliography of ‘bad’ excavations at this point. However, for a study of the impact of modern recording on a traditional clearance excavation see Ratté (2001).

strategies. A decade of well-targeted question-based work could produce a better understanding of the late antique city than a century of uncovering prominent public monuments. This would involve reversing the current relationship between field archaeology and synthetic history. Over the last thirty years, archaeology has heroically re-written the history of the late antique economy, rural settlement and the broad condition of cities, largely by producing new data, acting as the “wrecking ball” as Mark Whittow puts it. Discoveries in the field have demonstrated unexpected economic and demographic vitality in many urban centres during this period. However, for public space within monumental Roman cities, archaeology is now well past the discovery stage. Most advances will now come from reconsidering the evidence that we have, whether archaeological, textual or epigraphic and posing better-informed questions in the field.

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THE URBAN IDEAL AND URBAN PLANNING IN BYZANTINE NEW CITIES OF THE SIXTH CENTURY AD

ENRICO ZANINI

ABSTRACT

Archaeological evidence and historical texts can be combined to distinguish some of the physical characteristics of Byzantine cities of the 6th c. A.D. They can also be used to define a common conceptual model which Byzantine people of the 6th c. recalled when they pronounced the word *polis*, either when they were defining an existing settlement or when they were planning a new city. This paper considers in particular four cities that were built anew or completely rebuilt in this time. The survival of the idea of the city in the 6th c. East also appears to be significant in understanding the preservation and renewal of this concept in the West Mediterranean, after the dark centuries of the Early Middle Ages.

INTRODUCTION

The evolution of the ideal of the city between 5th and 7th c. is a critical issue to the transformation of the city from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages.¹ Much of the debate on the fate of urban centres at the end of antiquity centres on the question of what is meant by a 'city' in Late Antiquity and in the first centuries of the Middle Ages. Another major interest is how the 'conceptual image' of the city in this period differed between the diverse regions of the former Roman world.

There is, I think, a consensus that the 6th c. was critical for the deepening of regional distinctions. In the West and in Central Europe this century probably saw the greatest political, economic and physical crises to affect the city. In Mediterranean regions, and in

¹ See the proceedings of the international seminar *The Idea and Ideal of Town between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, co-ordinated by G. P. Brogiolo and B. Ward-Perkins within the European Science Foundation project *The Transformation of the Roman World*.

particular in the lands which had remained longer under Byzantine rule, the city generally held its position better in every respect. However, within this picture, regional and sub-regional variations were obviously present. For example, in Britain, the crisis was more serious for some cities than for others;² the continuity of cities in Byzantine Italy³ compares poorly against the flowering of cities in late antique Syria. G. Dragon has described the Byzantine empire of the 6th c. as still being a “mosaic of cities”; in the cities of the Eastern Mediterranean this observation seems to be confirmed and even enhanced by archaeological investigations. These reveal that the Byzantine city of the late 6th and early 7th c., was still in a very healthy condition, capable of surviving disasters of both natural and human origin.⁴ And this seems to be true for both central and peripheral areas.⁵

THE IDEAL OF THE CITY IN THE SIXTH CENTURY: TEXTS AND ARCHAEOLOGY

The continuity seen in many eastern cities raises a further question. Was life in these centres merely a survival of places, buildings, infrastructure and administrative and economic models inherited from Antiquity? Did it represent just an exotic survival of classical urbanism, against a wider negative pattern of change, that came about more quickly and more dramatically in the West? Or, did the classical ideal of the city—with its tie between *civitas* and *civilitas*, linking the city to urban civilization—continue to be a critical and integral part of the culture of people living in Byzantine territories?

It goes without saying that there is no simple answer to such a complex question. Nevertheless, I think that a significant contribution can be made by comparing written sources and archaeological data. This involves an experiment in ‘cognitive archaeology’ to try to understand the ideal of the city shared by Byzantines of the 6th c. In the terminology of linguistics, the question concerns the rela-

² An important example of continuity of urban life, albeit in deeply changed shapes and spaces, has been found at the site of Wroxeter: lastly Barker (1997); but see Ward-Perkins’s critical reflections (1996) 9-13.

³ Zanini (1998) 105-208; Brogiolo (1999).

⁴ Antioch and Apamea are instructive cases here since an impressive series of natural catastrophes and deadly events failed to put a stop to their lives; see Balby (1986); Kondoleon (2000).

⁵ Whittow (1990) 13-20; Walmsley (1996); Tsafirir-Foerster (1997).

tionship between ‘signifier’ and ‘signified’; in the linguistic code of the time—the *langue*, as Ferdinand de Saussure would say—was the word ‘city’ associated with a specific, well-defined image, or was it rather just a remnant of past experience, with a definition of convention, lacking correspondence to the reality of the time? In other words, when a Byzantine of the 6th c. pronounced the word *polis*—or *civitas*, if he was educated enough to know Latin—did a clear and commonly shared picture form in the mind of his listeners, or was it rather an indistinct image, which everyone saw differently?

It is relatively easy to consult the written sources, but this involves a high risk of misunderstanding. If one adds together references derived from the historical and geographical texts of the time, one finds that the term ‘city’ is used for over a thousand different sites, often very different in size, structure, economic importance, administrative status etc. In this respect the *de aedificiis* by Procopius of Caesarea is probably the most important source for the 6th c., notwithstanding the often-discussed limitations of its use.⁶ The places for which Procopius uses the word *polis* are of course innumerable; it is therefore improbable that the word has a single unequivocal meaning throughout the text.⁷ Nonetheless, one can come reasonably close to a model of Procopius’ urban ideal by considering his description of the restoration of Helenopolis in Bithynia.⁸ In this passage, Justinian, undertakes several reconstructions which Procopius lists in a particular order, presumably according to their acknowledged priority. The first monument listed as rebuilt was an aqueduct, destined to supply houses, but also—and maybe above all—public baths. In fact, the Constantinian baths were rebuilt and a second complex was built anew. Then some new churches are listed, of which we don’t know the exact number; these were then followed by a palace, porticoes and a residence for magistrates, until the place assumed, in the words of Procopius, ‘the look of a prosperous city’.

It is obviously not easy to decide how much of Procopius’s tale is reality and how much is exaggeration, to celebrate the prodigality of his sovereign. This element often emerges in the *de aedificiis* and

⁶ On the complex problems connected with the use of this text, in many ways exceptional, see lastly Roques (2000) who collects and synthesises the previous bibliography, and other authors in the same volume.

⁷ It would be interesting to see current interest in the text generate a study on this specific aspect.

⁸ Procop. *Aed.*, 5.2.1-5.

gives the work the character of a panegyric. It is equally difficult to tell whether this report by Procopius actually describes a real building campaign undertaken by Justinian, or by Anastasius or Justin I, or if it should rather be considered as one of the narrative *topoi* frequently found in this work.⁹ Nevertheless, the frequency which one can find, elsewhere in the work, references to aqueducts, cisterns, baths, public buildings, churches, and residences for public authorities, leads one to think that these elements—obviously together with fortification walls—were what characterized a *polis* in the collective ideal or, better, in the conceptual framework, of 6th c. Byzantines.

This impression becomes even stronger if we turn to examine two of Justinian's *Novellae*. These texts are of a totally different nature, but are probably not completely unrelated to the *de aedificiis*. They contain descriptions of the important places within a city in almost identical terms to those used by Procopius. In defining the tasks of the praetors of Lycaonia¹⁰ and Thrace,¹¹ the emperor committed to them the restoration and keeping of public monuments. In first place were named aqueducts, and then roads, bridges, fortifications, ports etc. The similarity between these legal texts and that of Procopius is not surprising, since the historian seems to have drawn on material coming directly out of the imperial chancellery. However, we can accept that the elements listed above continued to characterise the concept of the city expressed by the ruling class of the 6th c.¹² Confirmation of this view is available from epigraphy. In a catalogue of inscriptions referring to buildings constructed by Justinian, recently produced by D. Feissel,¹³ at least one inscription repeats almost to the word the formula used in the *Novellae* and in Procopius' treatise.¹⁴

⁹ It's easily noted that the elements indicated by Procopius largely coincide, with the obvious exception of churches, with those considered by Pausanias to be the essential attributes of a settlement fully entitled to be called a city.

¹⁰ *Nov.*, 25.4.

¹¹ *Nov.*, 26.4.

¹² The same picture can be drawn from the urban building regulations of the time; for example, *Nov.*, 25.4 mentions the necessity of demolishing the private encroachments built in areas set aside for specific public functions. Treatises on architecture and urbanism give the same impression; the so-called "Treatise on Urbanism" by Julian of Ascalon lays down the technical specifications of laws that we can suppose to have been much more numerous and much more detailed than those we know from the written tradition; see Saliou (1994) and (1996).

¹³ Feissel (2000) 91, no. 15.

¹⁴ Here it is worth mentioning a short inscription from Terracina, Italy, which, in the second half or even at the end of the 7th c., explicitly refers to maintenance

The analysis of these texts allows some conclusions to be drawn about the ideal of city and its physical reality at this time. We can see, as it would be expected, a mixture of traditional and innovative urban characteristics. Roads lined with porticoes, aqueducts, baths and administrative buildings were traditional elements of the ancient city which continued to exist in cities in Justinian's empire. Other traditional elements, like entertainment buildings, have disappeared. On the other hand the urban landscape was enriched by two new elements—fortification walls and churches. These aren't exactly new to the 6th c., but their presence in the city was definitively 'normalised' during this period. Perhaps the best illustration of the emergence of a new Byzantine urban identity comes again from Procopius's text; it is the well-known passage about the city of Melitene,¹⁵ in Armenia. This city developed in the age of Trajan on the site of a former legionary *castrum*. It was then progressively enlarged with churches, markets, roads, porticoes, baths and 'all that contributes to the embellishment of a large city' being finally completed by the construction of powerful walls, in two building campaigns, under Anastasius and Justinian.

This is, at least in its essentials, the ideal of the Byzantine city as suggested by the written sources. It can now be compared with and checked against the archaeological data available for the Byzantine cities of the 6th c. It is widely accepted that in the 6th c. the eastern cities of ancient tradition still had an 'urban' look in the classical sense of the term. The great capitals of the empire, Constantinople, Antioch, Jerusalem, the other major cities, from Apamea to Carthage and minor cities in the areas along the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, show uninterrupted continuity in their urban standards, as is regularly confirmed by archaeological investigations. This is far too obvious for our experiment in 'cognitive archaeology'. We enter the field of tautology: if Procopius (and the imperial chancellery and the editors of the epigraphic formulae) described what they saw here and called it a city, then there was no distinction between the traditional definition and reality. More complex and more useful for our experiment are the so-called Justinianic new-towns, that is those

operations in the *forum* of the ancient city. This suggests that a perception of the physical continuity and symbolic value of traditional monumental and privileged areas of the city was still alive even on the periphery of the empire at a time of pressing difficulties; see Zanini (1998) 186-87.

¹⁵ *Aed.*, 3.4.15-20.

cities built *ex novo* or completely renovated under Justinian, or in the first half of the 6th c., if we are not to trust Procopius' panegyric. The very existence of a phenomenon of new urbanism calls for some reflections. At this time in the late antique West, and even in a large part of Italy, urban centres—and with them the very ideal of the city—were seriously risking extinction. In the eastern part of the Graeco-Roman world, the birth of a new generation of cities testifies to the continuity of the urban tradition here and, at the same time, of the shaping of a new ideal of the city, in the proto-Byzantine empire. There are a large number of cities for which the literary sources imply foundation or extensive renovation as a result of the direct intervention of Justinian¹⁶; this correlates with a large number of dynastic names of cities referring to the emperor himself or to the *Augusta* Theodora.¹⁷

Recently their number has been augmented by several sites which are recorded by epigraphy.¹⁸ The grand total could now be near thirty. Moreover, we can add to this corpus a great number of sites which, although they bear no trace of the Justinianic intervention in their names, can be counted as new cities of the 6th c., on the basis of archaeological field results. However, in this paper I will focus on four new cities from which we can discover something useful for our study.

THE NEW CITIES

The four cities in question are: Justiniana Prima (Caričin Grad) in Serbia, Dara in Mesopotamia, Resafa-Sergiopolis and Zenobia-Halebiyye, both in Syria (Pl. 1). It is true that they are far from one another and situated in provinces with different histories, but they appear to have many elements in common. Firstly, they were all built or greatly transformed in the course of the 6th c. on sites that had never before been occupied by an urban settlement; secondly, we

¹⁶ Jones (1964) 719; Haldon (1999) 9.

¹⁷ Jones (1964) 719 points out how the reign of Justinian marked a sharp increase in the number of cities taking imperial or dynastic names (there are in comparison only nine known cities named Anastasiopolis and only four called Zenonopolis). This fits in well with the context of a well-consolidated Hellenistic tradition in the eastern provinces of the empire, particularly in Late Antiquity.

¹⁸ Feissel (2000) 83 and notes 18-19.

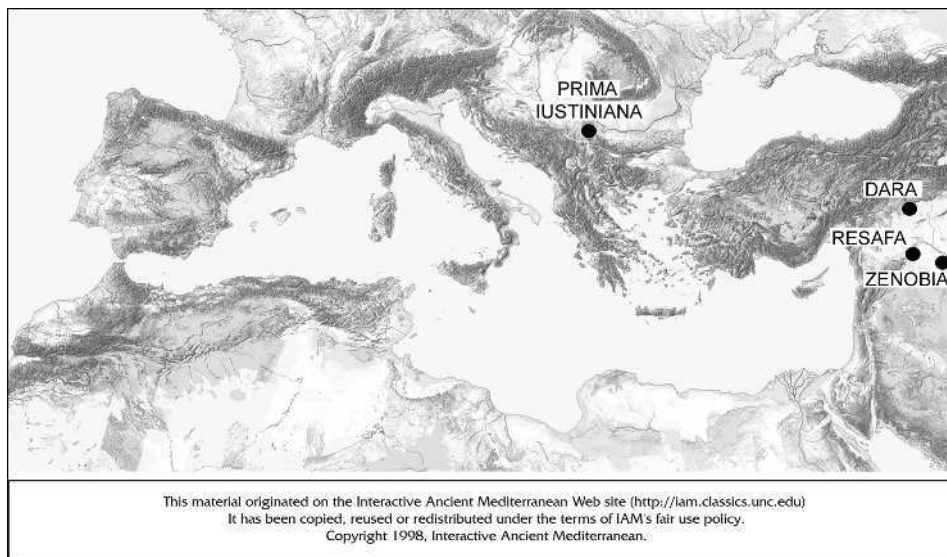


Fig. 1. Map of the Mediterranean basin showing the location of the four cities discussed in the text.

know from textual sources the foundation date of each and often some details of the phases of construction; finally, they all had a very short urban life, being founded and abandoned in less than a century. The individual histories of these cities are sufficiently well-known to be briefly sketched here.

Dara

The oldest of the four cities is Dara, on the south eastern border of the empire, which was founded between 504 and 506 on the orders of the emperor Anastasius (fig. 2). The sources¹⁹ contain detailed reports on the phases of its construction. These provide the best basis for reconstructing the complex institutional, economic and strategic mechanisms involved in the creation a new city at this time. The texts tell us about the procedures followed: the choice of a suitable site, protected by the mountains behind, and with abundant fresh water from the River Cordes; the acquisition of the land, originally the property of the Church of Amida; the despatch of an architect

¹⁹ Zach. Myt. *HE* 6.6 (ed. Brooks (1953)); *The Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite* (ed. Wright (1882)) 70.

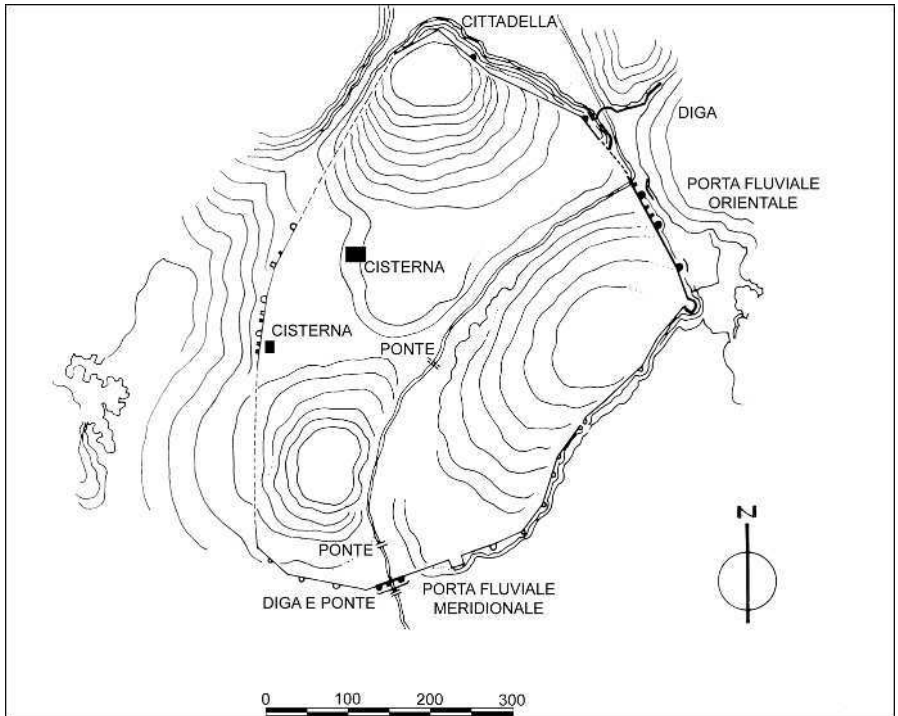


Fig. 2. Sketch plan of Dara.

from the capital with a preliminary draft of the plan of the city; and the tax-exempt status offered to the citizens involved in the building works. Procopius²⁰ writes at length about the restoration the walls and the infrastructure connected with them, as well as on the general renovation of the urban plan undertaken by Justinian a few decades later.²¹ The site, which has never been the object of systematic excavations, can today only be partially investigated by archaeology. Nevertheless, it is still easy to make out the roughly

²⁰ *Aed.* 2.1.11-27; 2.2.1-15.

²¹ The trustworthiness of Procopius's description of Justinian's building at Dara has been strongly questioned in an important article by B. Croke and J. Crow (1983), which marked the beginning of a phase of diffidence towards the general reliability of *de aedificiis*. Their conclusions were later challenged on a historical basis by M. Whitby (1986), while a series of field investigations by Italian archaeologists (Furlan (1984), (1988) and (1994), Zanini (1990)) have yielded new possible evidence that there was a Justinianic construction phase at Dara.

triangular original plan with three corners, corresponding to as many hills, connected by the imposing remains of the walls. The internal organisation of the city is marked by two bridges, an ingenious hydraulic system that controls and distributes the water from the river that crosses the city, an aqueduct, two cisterns, a probable public building and a possible religious structure.

Zenobia-Halebiyye

Halebiyye is similar in many ways to Dara, being likewise an important stronghold on the border in Mesopotamia (fig. 3). The city was constructed in Justinianic times, probably in a series of building operations between 530 and 550, though there might have been an earlier Anastasian phase. It was built on the site of ancient Zenobia, which had been founded three centuries earlier, by the queen of Palmyra of the same name; it had fallen after the Roman conquest of her kingdom.²² In this case too, the physical topography of the site determined the nature of the city's planning. The site is located on the right bank of the Euphrates, against a steep hill, dominating what was in antiquity one of the most important fords across the river. Its walls are still largely preserved, marked by sharply projecting rectangular towers at regular intervals. A citadel rises on the top of the hill and just below are the remains of what appears to have been a vast public building, perhaps a *praetorium*, the military headquarters of the stronghold. The plan of the city is interesting: the centre was marked by the intersection of the two main roads, one of these connected the two city gates, whilst the other connected the citadel to the riverside, where there may have been a small port. The settlement was crossed by a dense orthogonal road network, still little investigated, within which were sited the significant remains of at least two Christian basilicas.²³ The military role of the city was further enhanced by the presence of a fortified settlement on the hill on the opposite bank, known today as Zalebiyye and in all probability corresponding to the Byzantine fort of Annoukas, mentioned by Procopius.²⁴ It is likely that this was part of an articulated system

²² Sources and archaeological data are discussed in detail in Lauffray (1983) and de' Maffei (1990).

²³ Lauffray (1991) 35-47.

²⁴ de' Maffei (1990). 172-77

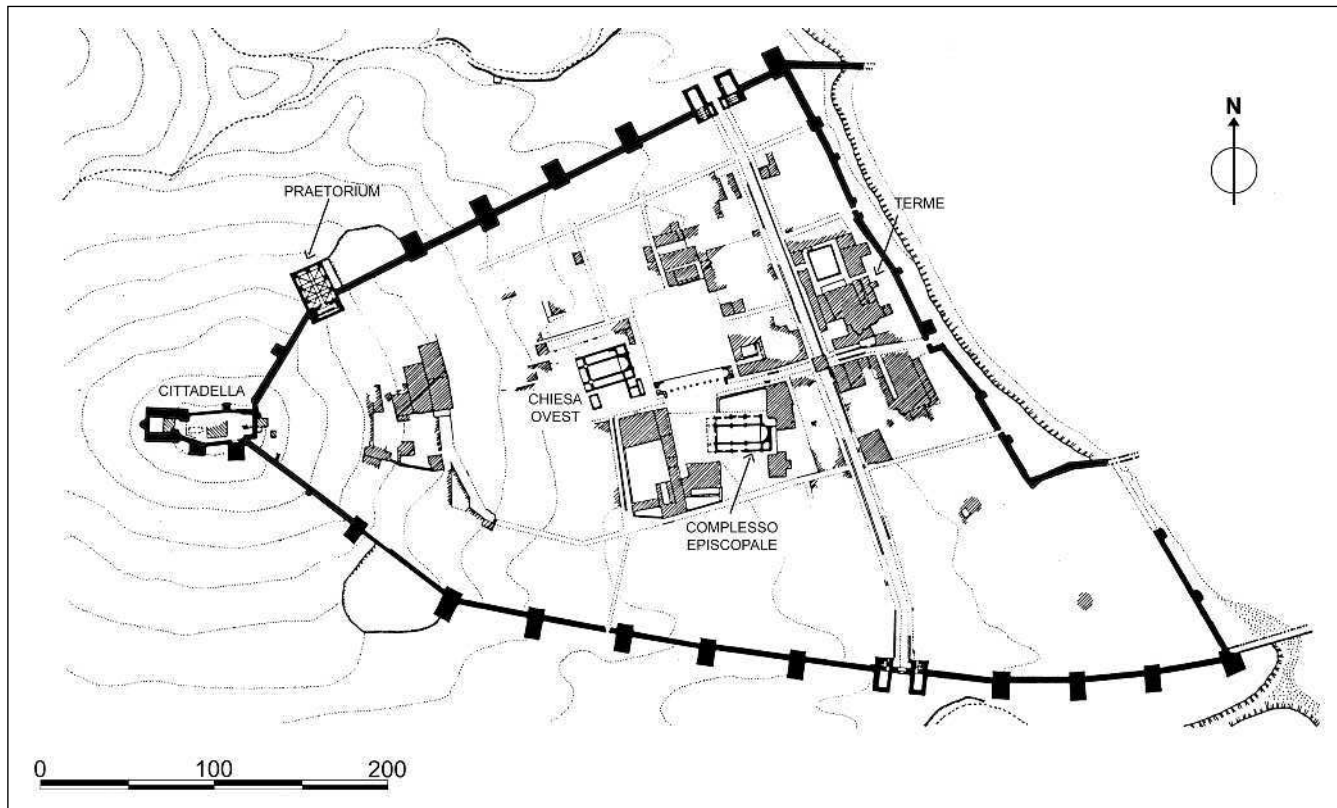


Fig. 3. Plan of Zenobia-Halebiyye, modified after Mango (1978).

of sighting and defence of the fords that crossed the Euphrates.²⁵

Resafa-Sergiopolis

The third case is that of Resafa-Sergiopolis, which is geographically close to Halebiyye (fig. 4). This was in fact a pre-existing settlement, a modest *castrum* on the eastern *limes* of the Roman empire, which became famous as the site of the martyrdom of Saint Sergius, one of the most venerated saints in eastern Christianity.²⁶ It became a centre of pilgrimage and as early as the first quarter of the 5th c. was provided with a *martyrium* to host the remains of the saint. The end of the same century saw the beginning of a first phase of renovation; according to a new interpretation of G. Brands, the first large martyrial church (the so-called Basilica A) was built at this time.²⁷

A few decades later Justinian's strategists judged the site to be a key centre for the control of an important sector of the eastern *limes*; this area was then being fought over by the Byzantines and Persians as well as being the object of expansionist moves by local nomadic populations. Therefore, in a matter of a few years, the pilgrimage centre was transformed into a sizeable fortified city in which three urban functions co-existed together: an administrative and economic centre of an important territory,²⁸ a fortified city and a place of cult and pilgrimage. The works might have been planned by the same architects and they were very probably carried out by the same workforce, who a few years later planned and built the walls of Zenobia-Halebiyye, as these walls show similarities to those of Resafa in the materials, building techniques and structural solutions employed.

²⁵ On the routes followed by the Persian armies in their recurrent attacks against the Byzantine border see de' Maffei (1987); Fowden (1999) 60-67.

²⁶ The sources relating to the birth and development of Resafa have been collected and discussed in detail by Fowden (1999) *passim*.

²⁷ Brands' conclusions, come from his thesis undertaken at the Freie Univ. of Berlin (1994) and about to be published (*Resafa 6. Die Bauornamentik von Resafa-Sergiopolis*); they are summarised and discussed by Fowden (1999) 82-83. Brands' interpretation of Basilica A is based on archaeological data previously discussed by Ulbert (1986).

²⁸ It's worth remembering how the process of transformation of the political and administrative roles of the city began late in the reign of Anastasius, when Saint Sergius' relics were moved to Constantinople. At the same time the bishop of Resafa was given the rank of metropolitan, indicating that perhaps Resafa was now considered an emblem of Byzantine urban civilisation in relation to the Arab 'barbarians'; the relevant sources are collected and discussed in Fowden (1999) 64-66, footnotes 24-30.

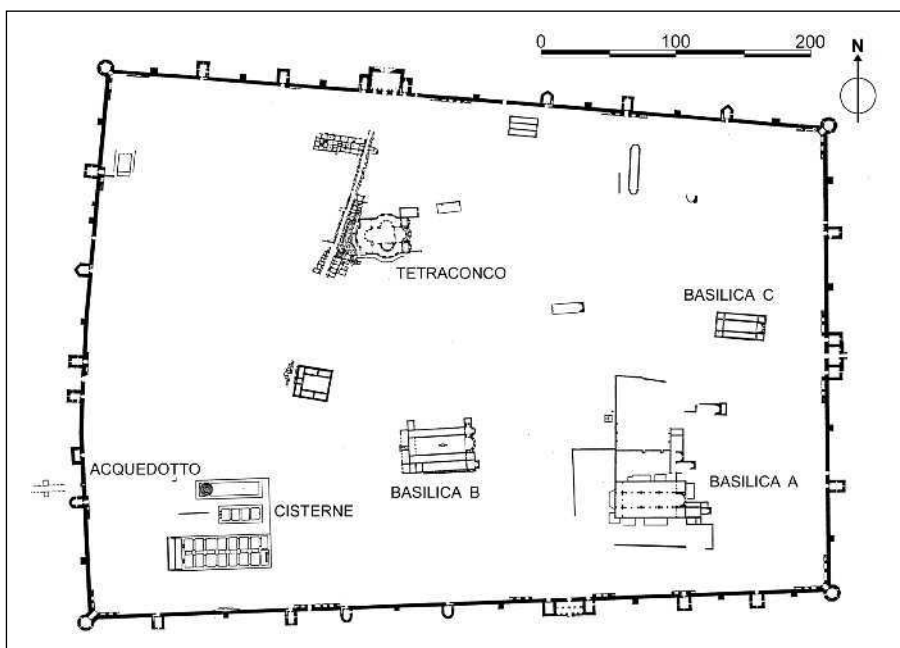


Fig. 4. Plan of Resafa, modified after Karnapp (1976).

Here too the ruins are imposing, from the fortification circuit, that is wonderfully preserved throughout all its length,²⁹ to the four churches so far discovered,³⁰ to the underground cisterns, fed by an ingenious system that channelled and filtered water from sediment.³¹

Justiniana Prima

The last case to be considered (and from its name certainly the most resounding) is that of Justiniana Prima, convincingly linked to the site of Caričin Grad in Serbia (fig. 5). The city, founded by Justinian on the site of the remote village of Tauresium in Northern Illyricum, his birthplace, is actually mentioned least of the four cities by ancient sources. Nonetheless, a series of legal texts, in particular

²⁹ Karnapp (1976).

³⁰ The vast bibliography on the archaeological investigations at Resafa is collected in Ulbert (1989) For the latest excavations see Konrad (1999).

³¹ Brinker (1991).

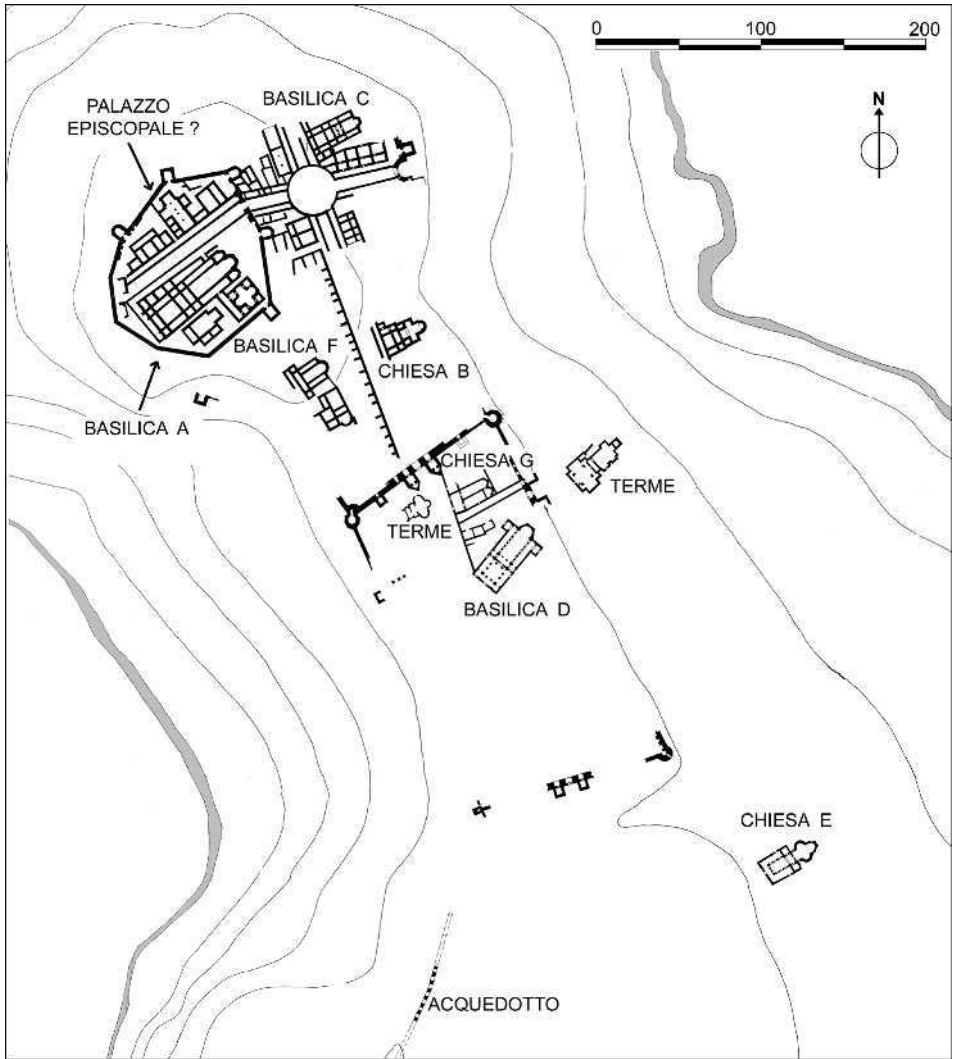


Fig. 5. Plan of Justiniana Prima—Caričin Grad, modified after Duval (1984). For figs 6-11 see plates.

Novellae 11 and 131 of A.D. 535 and A.D. 545 respectively, clearly indicate the administrative, strategic and propaganda value that the new city had in this difficult part of the empire.³² The site is extensively excavated,³³ alone amongst the new cities of the 6th c. The site lies on a flat hill top, taking advantage of a slightly higher area for the acropolis; here the episcopal church was set, with a number of adjoining buildings and a possible palatial complex, perhaps the seat of the ecclesiastical or civil administration. Below the acropolis was the upper city, organized around a *cardo* and *decumanus*. At their intersection was a circular plaza, while all around were built houses and churches. South of the upper city, originally outside the walls but later included within the defensive perimeter, stood two churches and a bath complex. More religious and civil buildings, a bath complex and at least two churches, were sited beyond the outer walls.

TRADITIONAL URBAN CHARACTERISTICS

These cities represent four individual cases, but also belong to a single typology. In fact, from the evidence we have so far, the urban institutions of each and the four archaeological sites seem to share several characteristics, which makes them an interesting case-study of the fate of the city during this period. First of all, I would say that all these cities can be considered part of the classical, Graeco-Hellenistic and Roman urban tradition: their general layout, infrastructure, monuments, and public and private areas correspond by and large to the general physical features normally associated with the typical functions of an ancient city. For the duration of the Classical Age and until late antique times, a city was the place where public authority resided: a city council,³⁴ a provincial governor belonging to the administrative hierarchy of the empire, a military commander or a bishop. It was frequently the place where all these authorities operated, as at Antioch, either distinct from one another or grouped

³² Maksimović (1980); Zanini (1988).

³³ For the history of the excavations at Caričin Grad-Justiniana Prima, see Kondić—Popović (1977); for the most recent investigations by the joint Franco-Serbian missions see *Caričin Grad I* (1984) and *Caričin Grad II* (1990), with notes by Duval (1996).

³⁴ On the complex subject of the institutional and operational continuity of *curiales* in the public administration of cities in Late Antiquity: Whittow (1990) 4-12; Brandes (1999) 29-31; Liebeschuetz (2001) 104-36.

together in various ways.³⁵ As a consequence, a city had to include a certain number of public buildings, intended either for public use or to confer the impression of a recognisable seat of authority.

As for the headquarters of authorities, we are spoilt for choice, because the four new cities contain a sort of anthology of what is today conventionally called the ‘archaeology of power’. At Justiniana Prima we have an acropolis designed to host an authority of the highest rank. It could have been the praetorian prefect *per Illyricum* (if we prefer to widen the role of our city to that of the new capital of northern Illyricum—which it actually became under Justinianic laws of the time³⁶) or the bishop (if we take a more restrictive view of the city’s privileges)³⁷ who was addressed directly by Justinian’s Novels and whose authority was recognized as ranking equivalent to that of the metropolitan of Thessalonica.³⁸ We must also mention the *principia*, identified following the Franco-Serbian excavations in the south corner of the upper city. It had been built during the foundation phase and in the following decades it was the object of a number of building campaigns to enlarge and transform it.³⁹

At Dara, the seats of the civil and military authorities are less precisely defined, but a number of archaeological indications and a careful reading of the sources seem to point to a big building (fig. 6) situated in the centre of the city, on a large artificial terrace, in the depths of which might have been a horrid prison.⁴⁰ At Zenobia, there is no doubt about the seat of the military authority. This found its natural headquarters in the buildings of the fortified citadel and in a large monumental building (fig. 7) placed in the north-western part of the city, which was structurally included in the fortification circuit.⁴¹ This is a complex building, both militarily functional and able to communicate visually the authority of the ruling power; the building, through the refinement of its architectural features, reveals that it was much more than a simple garrison headquarters. At the time of the survey carried out by M. Dunand and J. Lauffray in 1945, the

³⁵ On continuity and changes in the legal status and in political prominence of the city in the 5th and 6th c. A.D. see Liebeschuetz (2001).

³⁶ Maksimović (1980)

³⁷ Lemerle (1954).

³⁸ *Nov.* 11 and *Nov.* 131.

³⁹ *Caričin Grad II* (1990) 123-60.

⁴⁰ Furlan (1988).

⁴¹ Lauffray (1983) 121-23; de’ Maffei (1990) 146-47.

remains of the episcopal complex were still easily identifiable on the ground; this was sited near or even physically joined to the so-called East Church and was immediately next to the intersection of the two main road axes of the city.⁴² At Resafa the features of the archaeology of power, especially as far as the civil and military seats are concerned, appear at first to be less neatly characterised; however, it is worth considering two complexes: the first is the so-called Basilica A, where the relics of Saint Sergius were kept and whose big adjoined buildings could have hosted the episcopal seat; the second is the complex of the tetraconch church, of a type found elsewhere in Syria and north Mesopotamia, that has been linked to important seats of ecclesiastical power.⁴³

A traditional city worthy of its name also had to include some fundamental infrastructure connected with the quality of everyday civic life: roads, aqueducts, public baths etc. These requisites too are amply satisfied by our four cities. At Justiniana Prima, the only city of our group for which we know the plan well, the almost geometric city centre is marked by a circular plaza surrounded by porticoes: this square marks a fundamental stage in the ideal route between the main (south) gate and the acropolis. It follows a pattern typical in the late antique and proto-Byzantine world and reminds one—*mutatis mutandis*—of the series of *fora* set along the axis of the *via regia* in Constantinople.⁴⁴ All Justiniana Prima's roads had porticoes (fig. 8), which is one of the features which gives its urban layout a monumental and somewhat artificial appearance noted by many scholars.⁴⁵ As we have already seen, its layout is essentially orthogonal, with only a few variations owing to the necessity to conform to the land features of the site.⁴⁶ The same planning rigour can't be found in the road system of the lower part of the city, but this was annexed later, after the middle of the 6th c. The same regular layout is found at Halebiyye, where orthogonal axes were followed even more systematically, though this might reflect a reuse and adaptation of the

⁴² Lauffray (1991) 49-80.

⁴³ Kleinbauer (1973).

⁴⁴ On the significance of this focal point in the planning of the layout of Justiniana Prima and on the possible existence of a theoretical plan devised in Constantinople and later adapted to the site see Vasić (1990), reconsidered in Sodini (1993) 145; critical observations in Duval (1996) 326-27.

⁴⁵ See lastly Duval (1996), with synthesis and discussion of earlier bibliography.

⁴⁶ See *supra* p. 207.

previous Roman road system.⁴⁷ At Dara and Resafa the layout is less clear, partly because we really know very little about them. At Dara, the presence of a well-organized road network is implied by the presence of three bridges (two inside and one just outside the walls) that allowed the River Cordes to be crossed. In the case of Resafa, the position of the gates themselves—and the layout of the road network—seems to be strongly conditioned by the Christian monuments pre-dating the urbanisation of the site.

However, the elements of infrastructure to which the architects and the engineers of the 6th c. devoted more attention were those connected to the provision and management of urban water supply, through the use of aqueducts, cisterns and distribution systems. Justiniana Prima was fed by an aqueduct over 30 kilometers long, which entered the city from the south with a long sweep.⁴⁸ A *castellum aquae* was positioned immediately inside the walls, where the aqueduct entered and from where pipelines fed the various quarters of the site and the baths located in the lower part of the city (fig. 9). We have no certain information about the existence of aqueducts and cisterns in Halebiyye, but the city lies on the banks of the river and, in those happy times, with no pollution problems, it was unnecessary to make any big effort, as the great father Euphrates provided all the water needed. The water of the river was certainly used, through an ingenious raising system, to feed the large baths erected in the north-eastern part of the city, near the walls along the Euphrates.⁴⁹ Procopius, in his precise account of work done in this city, attributes the baths to two renowned architects from Constantinople: John of Byzantium and Isidore of Miletus the Younger.⁵⁰

Matters were much more complex for Dara and Resafa. There was a river in Dara too, but it was much less governable than the placid Euphrates and, above all, its flow was seasonal. The River Cordes was completely dry during the long Syrian summer, and wild and torrential during the rainy season. In this instance, the imperial architects gave their best, devising a composite system which exploited the river waters to build up adequate water reserves. Upstream from

⁴⁷ Lauffray (1991) 35-47.

⁴⁸ Petrović (1970).

⁴⁹ Lauffray (1991) 113-29.

⁵⁰ *Aed.* 2.8.25.

⁵¹ Furlan (1984).

the city, a large dam was built,⁵¹ which allowed the flow of water to be slowed, thus filling a reservoir to be used under siege. The water of the river was brought into the city through special sluice gates (fig. 10) protected by grates, for obvious security reasons. Within this structure was an ingenious system of movable stone barriers which regulated the flow and distributed it through a series of secondary pipelines. Along the southern section of the walls a second sluice gate allowed the waters to leave the city. Here a second adjustable dam next to the *proteichisma* allowed a further reserve of water, used to water animals in case of a siege, to be built up; this was stored between the main wall and the *proteichisma*.⁵² This complicated engineering solved the problem of water supply during the rainy season, but could do nothing against the long summer drought, when the River Cordes ran completely dry. To overcome this problem Justinian's *mekanikoi* dug a long aqueduct in the rock, collecting the waters of several springs and brought them to large roofed cistern in the centre of the city, near to the western walls. Traces of the aqueduct are still visible today and can be followed for several hundred meters along the valley of the Cordes.⁵³

At Resafa, right in the middle of the Syrian desert, a similar solution was adopted: the waters, from what must have been a vast catchment area, were brought into the city through a series of very long channels. The water was cleared of sand by a complicated system of filters and decanting tanks, and was then stored in huge underground cisterns with parallel naves (fig. 11). These cisterns, still largely well-preserved near the southwestern corner of the walls, closely resemble the huge Justinianic underground cisterns in Constantinople in some architectural details, such as their superbly woven brick vaults, in the materials used and in their construction techniques. This is another piece of evidence for the existence of connections between centre and periphery, here in the specific field of architecture.

One could go further in enumerating the traditional urban characteristics of these new cities of the 6th c.; however, here, I will underline just one further aspect which I consider to be especially significant. Certainly in the case of Justiniana Prima, but very prob-

⁵² The functioning of the complex system for the management of the waters of the River Cordes is described by Procopius (*Aed.* 2.2.1-21), whose words find a precise correspondence with the archaeological remains still visible on the ground; see Furlan (1984).

⁵³ Furlan (1995).

ably also in the case of Resafa, the city had a suburb, like the cities of the classical tradition.⁵⁴ I think that this can be seen as a strong sign of conceptual continuity of the classical relationship between a city and its territory, which in this respect may argue against the urban model proposed for this area of the Balkans at this time by Andrew Poulter, of an administrative centre which largely excluded the inhabitants of the city.⁵⁵ Just like the Hellenistic and Roman cities, Justiniana Prima had a suburb, that is a transitional zone between the city and what is not the city; critically this was built at or around the same time as the rest of the city. This transitional zone was arranged, typically, like those of ancient cities, along one or more of the main road axes leaving the city. Here public buildings were sited, sometimes of notable importance. These were in our case mainly religious, but there were also other public buildings, such as the so-called extra-urban baths, outside the eastern gate of the lower city. It goes without saying that the suburb of Justiniana Prima (and even more so that of Resafa), have little to do with the suburban areas of the large and medium-sized cities of Antiquity, at least in their dimensional scale, but the simple fact that it was considered normal to plan a structured suburban area from the outset, shows us, I believe, the cultural significance which the founding of a new city in a region recently brought back under Roman control and *civilitas*, assumed in 6th c. Constantinople.

A NEW TYPE OF CITY

Alongside traditional urban characteristics, our four cities also show new features, which somehow distance them from the classical urban canon and allow us to see them as a new type of city. With some simplification, these characteristics can be summarised as follows: as cities they are small, fortified, Christian and imperial.

As far as dimensions are concerned, a simple comparison (fig. 12) of the urban areas of our four centres with those of a few large and medium-sized cities of the ancient tradition (Apamea or Nicaea or Gerasa, to mention but a few) shows that the former are much smaller. This observation does risk being both abstract and arbitrary, since

⁵⁴ There was probably not a suburb at Dara and Zenobia, where defensive considerations clearly prevailed.

⁵⁵ Poulter (1992).

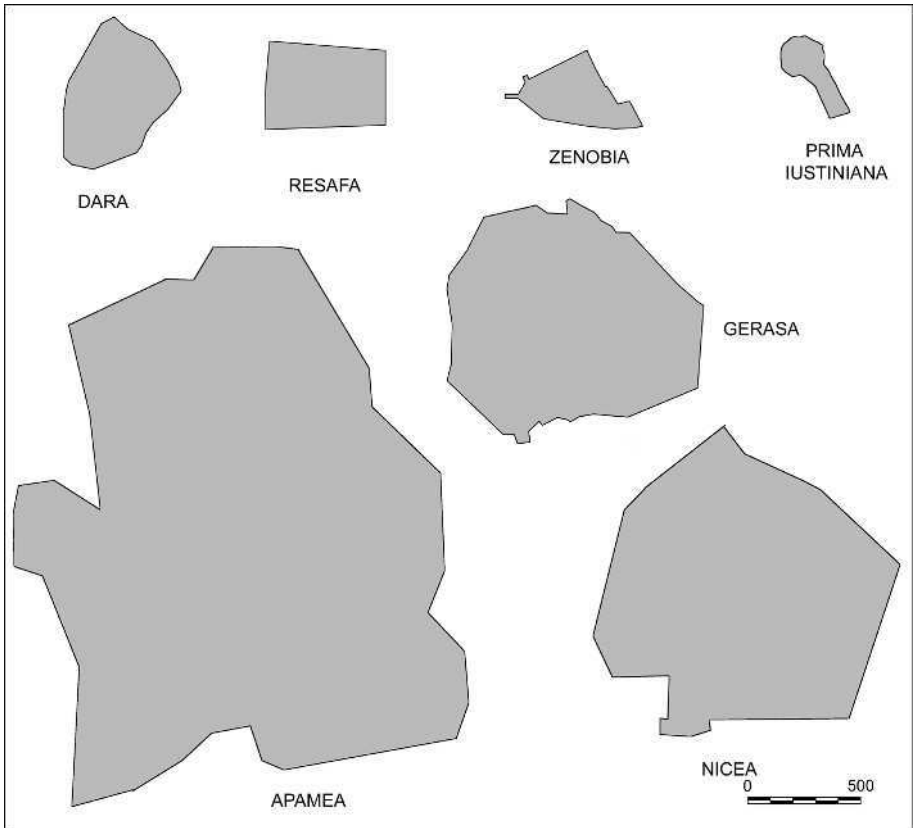


Fig. 12. Sketch plans of some ancient and new byzantine towns redrawn at the same scale.

it is obvious that in Antiquity too there were small cities. On the other hand, if a city like Justiniana Prima, artificial and celebrative, but nonetheless designed to play a key administrative role in the region, was planned with the dimensions of a Roman legionary *castrum*, the choice must somehow be significant. Therefore, if we measure the new cities against the parameter of physical dimension, they are not worthy heirs of the classical tradition; if dimensional reduction entails decadence, then we are definitely facing decadence. But to equate dimensional reduction to a simplification of the ideal of the city might be a bit too banal. It is true that the new cities were not large, but it is also true that, like late antique cities with an established urban tradition, they concentrated within themselves several functions, which defined their relationship with the surrounding territory. In other

words, our cities appear to have been new types in the traditional tripartite classification of Roman and late Roman settlement into the city, the countryside and the defensive centre. They were at the same time administrative centres, focal points in a system of defence and fixed points in the ecclesiastical geography of their respective regions.

In relation to this, the close relationship between each of our cities and the border is particularly important. It is enough to glance at their geographical positions to appreciate this. Of course local circumstance determined the individual aspects of each city, but for all their differences Justiniana Prima, Dara, Resafa and Zenobia are all somehow frontier cities. In some instances the defensive character is clearly dominant, whilst in others strategic and administrative aspects prevail. However, all four cities represent the cultural forefront of Byzantine urban civilisation, facing the territories across the border and their diverse peoples.⁵⁶ Here a window opens onto the cultural and religious conception of the frontier in the Byzantine world. Though this issue is outside the scope of my article, it is worth recalling a brief and significant passage in Procopius⁵⁷ where, writing about the renovation of the fortresses on the Danubian *limes* by Justinian, the historian states that the emperor, through his interventions, not only gave them back their defensive role, but also turned them into real small cities, thickly populated. This statement fully conveys the richness of the significance connected with the ideal of the city at this time.

As late antique cities, but even more because of their position along the border, our new cities were obviously defended by walls. In some cases, the walls had the appearance of monumental, symbolic enclosures, as in the acropolis and in some respect also in the upper city of Justiniana Prima; in others (at Dara and Halebiyye obviously, but also at Resafa) the defensive character clearly prevailed. In every case though, the construction of a fortification circuit appears to be a fundamental element of the new city. The walls not only defended the urban settlement, but at the same time enclosed the urban jurisdiction in a conceptual and physical limit. They also related functionally to the surrounding areas, which the city ruled and defended,

⁵⁶ We have already pointed out how Resafa is often described in the sources as situated in the 'barbarian region'; see *supra* n. 26.

⁵⁷ *Aed.* 4.1.2, 24-30.

receiving in turn their economic support. On the whole, I would say that we see here the beginning of a conceptual shift from city, to defensive city, to city defending a territory. This finds precise correspondence in the terminological shift from *polis-civitas* to *castrum*; an extraordinarily important shift for the understanding of the development of Byzantine cities, in the centuries from the Early to Central Middle Ages.

The attention given to the walls of the new cities went well beyond that necessary for a purely functional level;⁵⁸ they appear to have been the object of specific and accurate planning. For Dara we have precise written accounts⁵⁹ which reveal in detail the procedure followed in designing and building the original Justinianic wall circuit. For Zenobia, the accounts we have may be less detailed, but we are sure of the involvement of two important imperial architects. For Resafa we have no conclusive evidence, but the presence here of the same workforce and, probably, of the same pool of designers who worked at Zenobia, is at least probable given the absolutely identical building techniques employed and by very strong similarities in the overall design of the walls. We have no textual references to the building of the walls of Justiniana Prima, but in this case too the hypothesis of a direct intervention by architects from the capital is supported by their similarity to the walls of the other settlements and by the use of the same building technique (rows of stones alternating with courses of bricks), that was common in Constantinople from the age of Theodosius II and still widely employed in the 6th c.

But, in addition to being small and walled, the Byzantine new city was also—and maybe above all—a Christian city, and it was in the course of the 6th c., and especially in the decades of Justinian's rule, that the Christianisation of urban areas, which had begun in the time of Constantine, two centuries earlier, reached its completion. This phenomenon is particularly obvious in Constantinople, where a simple count of the monuments preserved gives credibility to Procopius's report that in the age of Justinian (or if we prefer in the first half of

⁵⁸ It should be noted that this idea of the significance of the urban perimeter is markedly different from the simple functional idea that characterised Italy where, in Late Antiquity, the care and renovation of city walls is seldom mentioned by written or epigraphic sources; see Christie (2001).

⁵⁹ Zach. Myt. *HE* 6.6 (ed. Brooks (1953)); *The Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite* (ed. Wright (1882)) 70; Procop. *Aed* 2.1.11-27, 2.2.1-15.

the 6th c.) many more churches were built than had been built since the foundation of the city. A similar phenomenon is visible at Justiniana Prima, which is possibly even more significant considering its size. Here, archaeological investigations have so far revealed the existence of eight churches within an urban area of less than five hectares, giving the city a density of churches comparable only to Rome in the Middle Ages. What is also striking about the churches of Justiniana Prima, apart from their number, is the extraordinary variety of types.⁶⁰ This suggests complex cultural influences, almost an architectural cosmopolitanism, and it is, I think, a strong indication of the rich, complex significance, that the designing and building of this city had for contemporaries. A similar picture emerges for Resafa, where Christianisation was a crucial element in the birth of the city in the 5th c. and became—in the age of Anastasius and even more so in that of Justinian—a key element in the urban texture and fundamental character of the city. For Zenobia, we have already pointed out the central position of the episcopal complex. Close to it is at least one other large church.⁶¹ The position of buildings for the Christian cult in Dara is less clear, but in this case too we can easily surmise the presence of several important religious buildings. There are scattered remains relating to a number of churches, one of which can be hypothetically positioned in the south-western quadrant of the city, close to the river and the alleged *praetorium*.

The last, but surely not the least important, innovative character common to the Byzantine new cities of the 6th c., is that they were all founded and developed under direct imperial orders. The direct intervention of the emperor and his closest officials in the restoration and construction of public buildings is a common phenomenon throughout Late Antiquity, especially in the East. This phenomenon became widespread in the course of the 6th c. and was not limited to new cities. However, in the work undertaken on these cities we can perhaps see a coherent, almost centralised standard unity of conception governing the foundation of new cities and their development. This is possibly the most significant point to make.

Literary and epigraphic sources suggest that there was not only an explicit imperial decision behind the founding of new cities and all the operations to restore the old cities or their walls during the 6th c., but there was also what today we would call a 'team of ar-

⁶⁰ Duval (1984).

⁶¹ See *supra*, page 211.

chitects', charged with planning, designing and realising every project.⁶² The way in which interventions were carried out seems to have been repeated almost identically in each case and to have followed a sequence: the central decision; the overall plan drawn up by a pool of architects in Constantinople, based on very accurate information about the nature of the site; the actual realisation on-site of the works to be done, carried out either by the same architects or, more usually, by other, lower-ranking colleagues. In this respect, the case of Dara is again particularly illuminating. The extraordinary works of hydraulic engineering that distinguish Justinian's intervention at Dara were attributed by Procopius to Anthemius of Tralles and Isidore of Miletus; these famous architects were responsible for the construction of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. On the basis of information brought to the capital, the two masters devised a solution to the recurrent flooding of the river and probably gave general directions for the execution of the project. But these great characters did not waste their time in a difficult and perilous journey to the remote province of Mesopotamia. It was therefore another *mekanikos*, Crises of Alexandria, otherwise unknown, but obviously well-acquainted with the problems to be faced, who was charged with the realisation of the project.

Something similar happened at Zenobia. Here, according to Procopius, it was John of Byzantium and Isidore of Miletus the Younger who were the responsible for the second phase of building works. The latter owes his place in the history of architecture for designing the new dome of Saint Sophia, after the original collapsed in 558. Procopius explicitly states that both were very young at the time of the works in Zenobia, so it is not unreasonable to think that they could at this time have taken charge of the execution of the works on the ground, possibly a fundamental step in the *cursus honorum* for a Byzantine architect of the 6th c. The same arrangement could possibly be indicated by epigraphy, which reveals that Isidore was the builder of the fortifications at Chalcis, in Syria at about the same time as he was busy at Zenobia.⁶³ The *mekanikos* Victorinus,⁶⁴ is in many respects a similar figure. He is otherwise unknown, but two

⁶² On architects in the Byzantine world, the observations by Downey (1946-48) are still generally valid, but see also the more recent adjustments by Saliou (1996) 84-91.

⁶³ Fourdrin, Feissel (1994).

⁶⁴ Feissel (1988).

inscriptions found in Albania state that he was responsible for the fortification for Byllis and for the majority of the defensive systems of Thrace, Moesia, Epirus and Illyricum. All we need to do now is use our imagination a bit and, since the site of Caričin Grad is right in the middle of the area in which this architect was supposedly active, to imagine Victorinus designing or rather executing the plan of Justiniana Prima.

Of course, the point at issue here is not to attribute this or that work to this or that architect. What should be stressed is that the involvement of imperial architects is general; this seems to amount to a standardisation of government intervention in these cities, both in the case of total renovations and, especially, in the case of new foundations. When the decision was taken in Constantinople to build a new city in one of the provinces of the empire, a perfectly defined conceptual model was referred to; this could be used as the basis for a well-articulated overall plan, to be adapted to the specific needs of each settlement. It was probably this kind of conceptual model that a Byzantine of the 6th c. recalled when he pronounced the word *polis*, whether he was drawing up the plan for a new settlement, or, more simply, defining the place in which he lived together with his community. If such a conceptual model was so clearly defined in the 6th c. East, the same certainly did not apply, at the same time, in the West, where ancient architectural and urban conceptions had been long decaying. Nevertheless, the survival of the city in the Byzantine world and, even more so, the survival of the ideal of the city in Byzantine material culture, may well have been a key factor in the preservation of this ideal also in Western culture.⁶⁵ I believe that it represents one of the most important factors in explaining the rebirth of cities in the West after the really dark centuries of the Early Middle Ages.

⁶⁵ For the role of Constantinople and its monuments in this process, see Ward-Perkins (2000). It would be interesting in this respect to study the role that the preservation of the classical idea of the city in the Byzantine world (or even the transmission of that ideal and concrete projects) might have had in the rapid development of urban planning in the Early Islamic world, after the conquests. On this see the preliminary study by Hillenbrand (1999).

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CHRISTIAN TOPOGRAPHY IN THE LATE ANTIQUE TOWN: RECENT RESULTS AND OPEN QUESTIONS

GISELLA CANTINO WATAGHIN

ABSTRACT

The study of Christian topography has become increasingly subtle in its appreciation of both textual and archaeological evidence. Despite this, the model established in the 1980s, of an intra-mural episcopal church and extra-mural cemetery churches, seems still to be valid. However, this picture remains provisional; it must not be assumed where evidence is poor. There remain many questions open to investigation. Excavations conducted to a high standard may go some way to resolving these. Nevertheless, urban data remains fragmentary, so historical discussions must remain at the level of models.

CHRISTIAN TOPOGRAPHY: BIRTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Christian topography became established as a research area in late antique and early medieval archaeology at the beginning of the 1970s. It developed against a background of expanding interest in urban history, especially in the transition from the Roman to the medieval town. At this time, scholars started to systematically investigate the distribution of early Christian churches in late antique cities, their relationship to the urban context and their influence on its early medieval development.¹ Following the pioneering remarks of Boggetti, a number of scholars, including Février and Cagiano, established the basic outlines of the topic; the work of the French research group *Topographie Chrétienne*, operating since 1973, provided an example of methodology.² At the same time, the practice of regular excavations in urban contexts, first introduced by British archaeology, gained a wide if not general acceptance.³

¹ Cantino Wataghin (1992); Brogiolo and Gelichi (1998).

² Boggetti (1959); Février (1974); Cagiano de Azevedo (1974).

³ Galinié and Randoïn (1979); Hudson (1981); Biddle and Hudson (1983); Carver

Since the 1970s, remarkable progress has been possible, thanks to the integrated use of archaeological and written sources. Texts, whether documentary, narrative or hagiographical, have been—and still are being—reinterpreted, in the light of more conscious and subtle readings, as can be seen in the published volumes of the *Topographie Chrétienne*.⁴ Archaeological sources have also improved significantly, not only in quantity, but, even more importantly, in quality. Possibly the best example of an improvement in quality comes from the investigations carried out from the early 1970s in the cathedral of Geneva (fig. 1, see plates).⁵ From the outset this project employed advanced methods of stratigraphic excavation and masonry analysis; from the work undertaken it was possible to reconstruct the development of the episcopal group through many phases, from the foundation of the first church in the late 4th c. (fig. 2), through several enlargements, transformations and reconstructions of the 5th and 6th c., up to the foundation of the present cathedral around 1160.⁶ The same methodology has been used elsewhere to reassess early excavations; this has been done at the church of La Madeleine,⁷ whose complexity was not detected during archaeological work carried out at the beginning of the 20th c.; a comparison between the plan of 1977 (fig. 3) and that of 1914/18 (fig. 4) makes clear enough the differences in method involved (fig. 5).

Geneva provides a model of recent work, but there are many other equally significant examples of contemporary practice in Christian archaeology: recent discoveries in cities of varied size and importance—such as Lyon, Aosta, Grenoble,⁸ to mention but a few—have permitted a fairly detailed idea of the distribution of early churches to be established.⁹ Nevertheless, the archaeological evidence remains fragmentary; the total amount of data is small in relation to the number of cities concerned, as was shown by a quantitative survey made a few years ago.¹⁰

(1983); Carver (1987); Carver (1993); Fehring (1996); Brogiolo and Gelichi (1986).

⁴ Gauthier, Picard, Beaujard and Prévot edd. (1986-2000).

⁵ Bonnet (1979).

⁶ Bonnet (1993); Bonnet (1997).

⁷ Bonnet (1977).

⁸ Lyon: Reynaud (1998); Aosta: Bonnet and Perinetti (1986); Grenoble: Colardelle (1986); Colardelle (1995); Baucheron, Gabayet and Montjoye (1998).

⁹ *Les premiers monuments chrétiens* (1995-98). Gauthier, Picard, Beaujard and Prévot edd. (1986-2000).

¹⁰ Cantino Wataghin, Gurt Esparraguera and Guyon (1996).

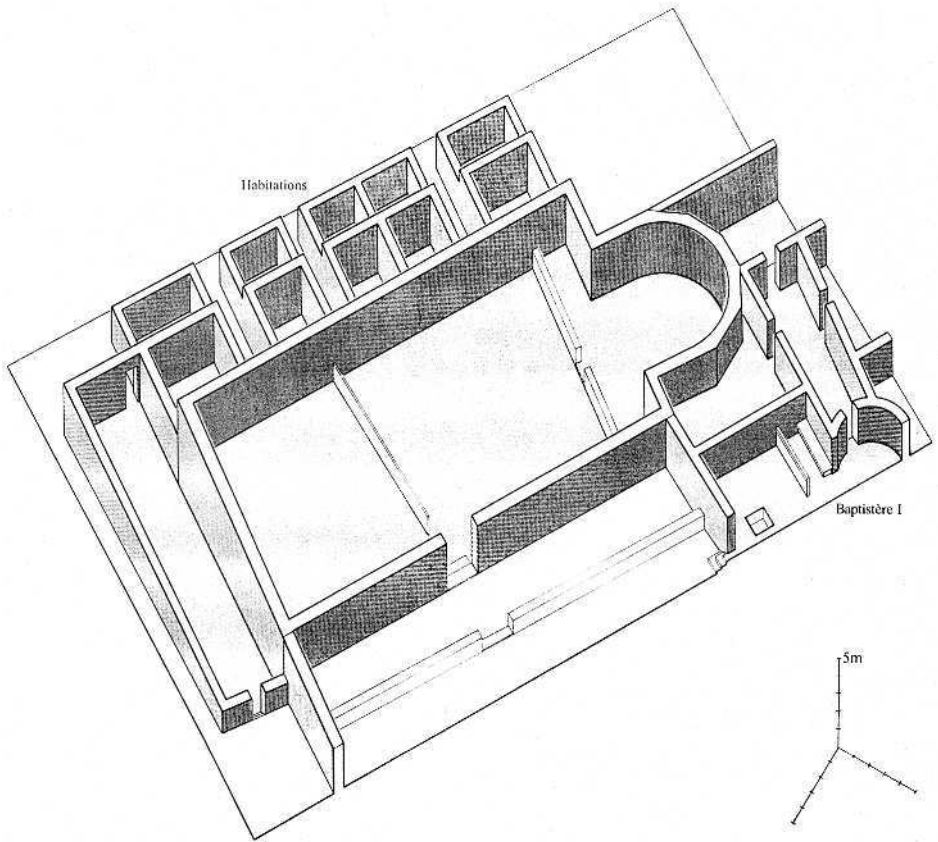


Fig. 2. Geneva, Episcopal group, North Cathedral, phase 1 (Bonnet 1993).

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MODEL

A landmark in the study of Christian topography was the 11th International Congress of Christian Archaeology; this was held in Lyon in 1986, and its main theme was “The bishop and his cathedral”.¹¹ It was the occasion for a wide-ranging survey of the state of the art in this field, which led to a general acceptance of a model for the development of Christian topography that had first been suggested by the scholars of the *Topographie Chrétienne*.¹² According

¹¹ *Actes du XIe Congrès* (1989).

¹² Pietri (1976).

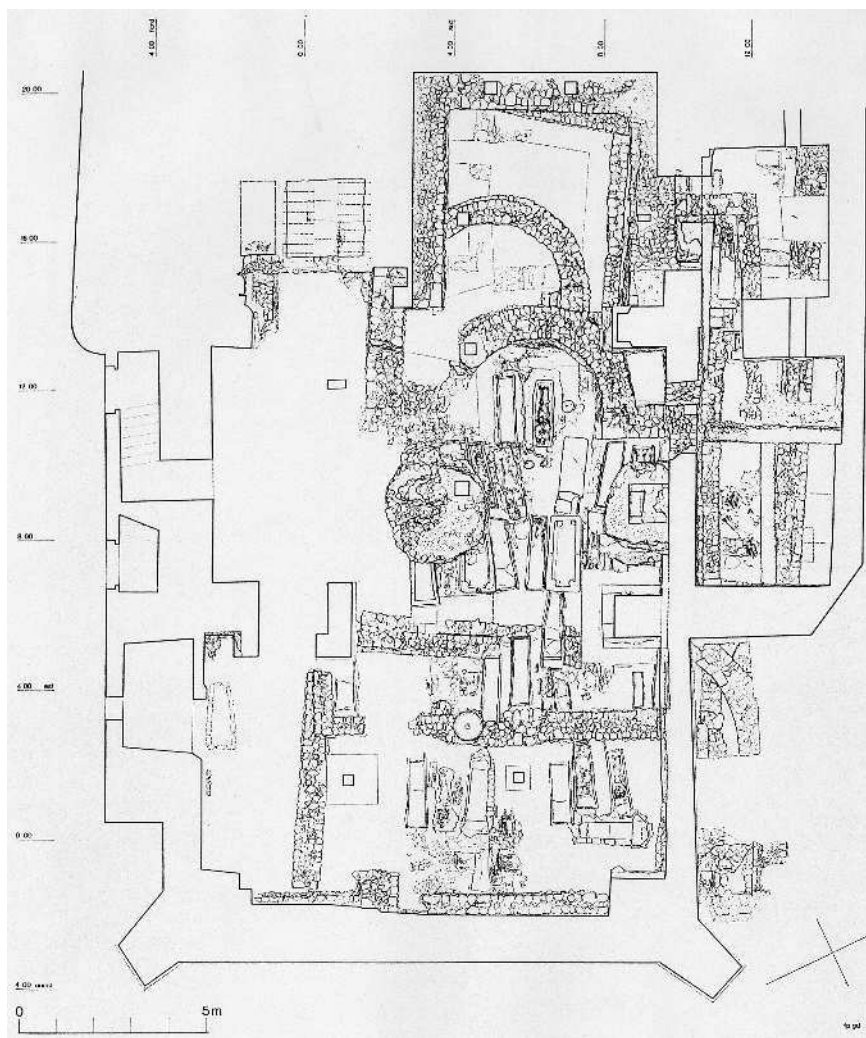


Fig. 3. Geneva, La Madeleine: map (Bonnet 1977).

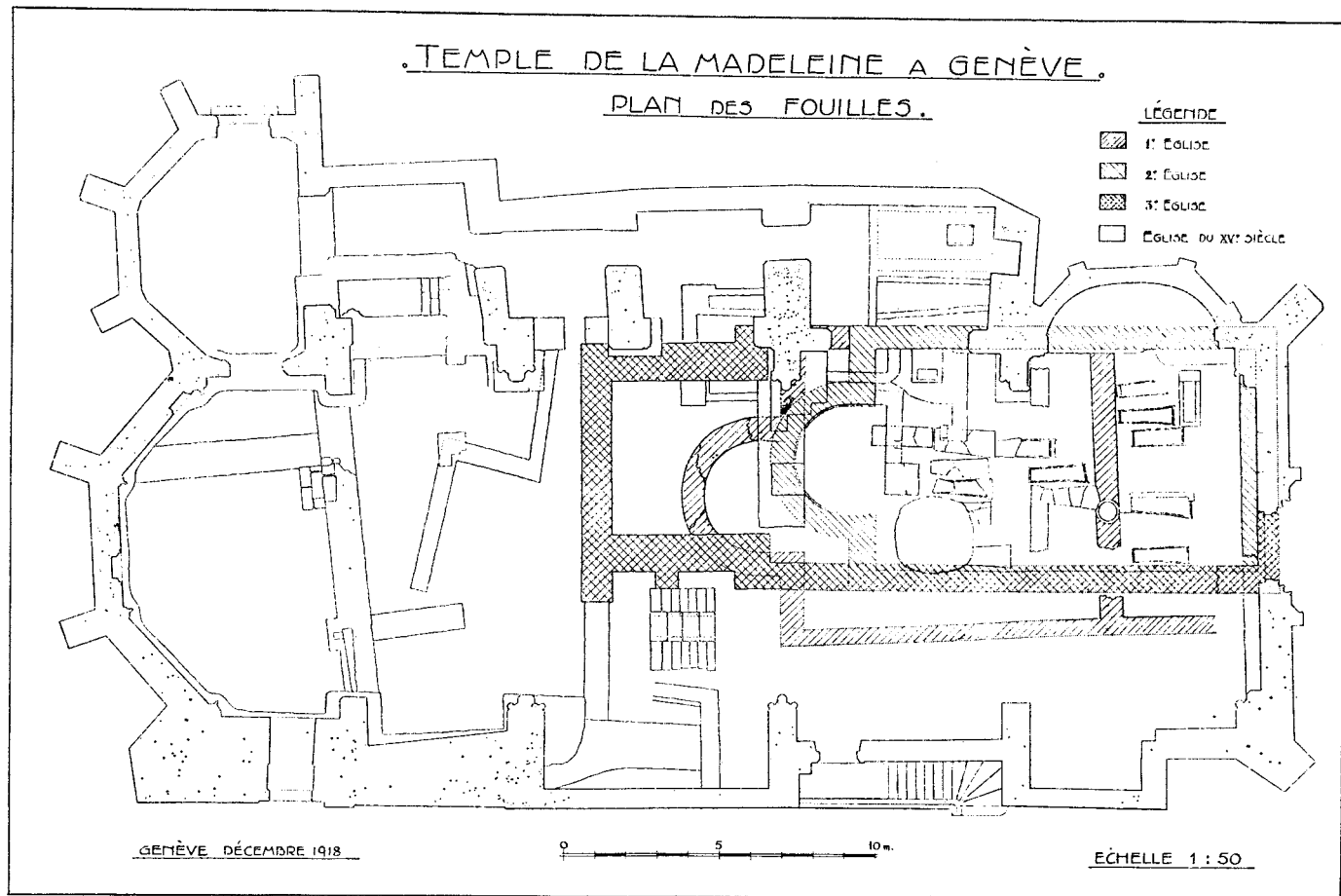
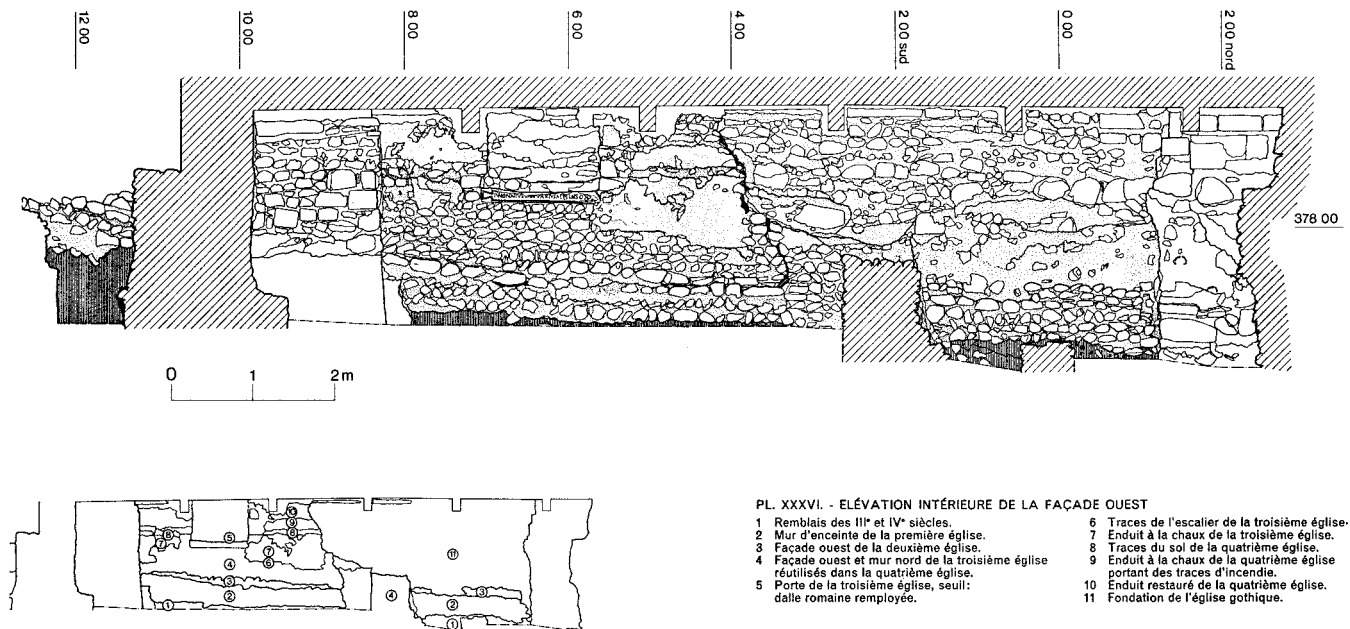


Fig. 4. Geneva, La Madeleine, map 1914-18 (Bonnet 1977).



fp. gd

Fig. 5. Geneva, La Madeleine, masonry stratigraphy (Bonnet 1977).

to this model, the common pattern of early Christian topography was bipolar, made up of, on one hand, an urban church, conventionally known as the 'episcopal' church, and on the other, of a variable number of extra-mural churches. These churches had different, complementary functions: the episcopal or congregational church was the place for formal worship, liturgical use, general and baptismal instruction, with a baptistery and episcopal or clerical domestic quarters attached; extra-mural churches were intended for funerary practices and the cult of the martyrs, which could have involved also the presence of a baptistery.¹³ The model appears to be valid for cities across a wide area, from Rome (fig. 6) to Milan (fig. 7) and Aquileia, from Geneva (fig. 8) to Lyon (fig. 9) and at Aosta (fig. 10), Tarragona, Grenoble (fig. 11) and Paris (fig. 12), to name but a few of a large number of examples.¹⁴

As far as chronology is concerned, there is no evidence for the foundation of churches before the age of Constantine, not even where a congregation, though as large as that in Rome, existed in earlier times. The presence of a bishop seems to be an essential condition for the building of churches, either in intra-urban or extra-mural locations. It can be inferred that Christian topography resulted from a variety of different factors, aside from the spread of Christianity and the consequent growth of the community; these included the position of the Church as an institution, the financial resources of the Church and, last but not least, the search for visibility, being crucial for the appearance of a monumental Christian architecture.

There is not enough evidence to say that the location of the episcopal church within the town followed any specific rule. It could be placed in a central position, or at the edge of the town, close to the fortification wall (a position once assumed to be canonical but represented by less than 40% of cases) or it could be located in a number of intermediate positions (fig. 13-14).¹⁵ In principle, neither the chronology of the foundation of the church nor the possibility of


¹³ Cantino Wataghin, Gurt Esparraguera and Guyon (1996).

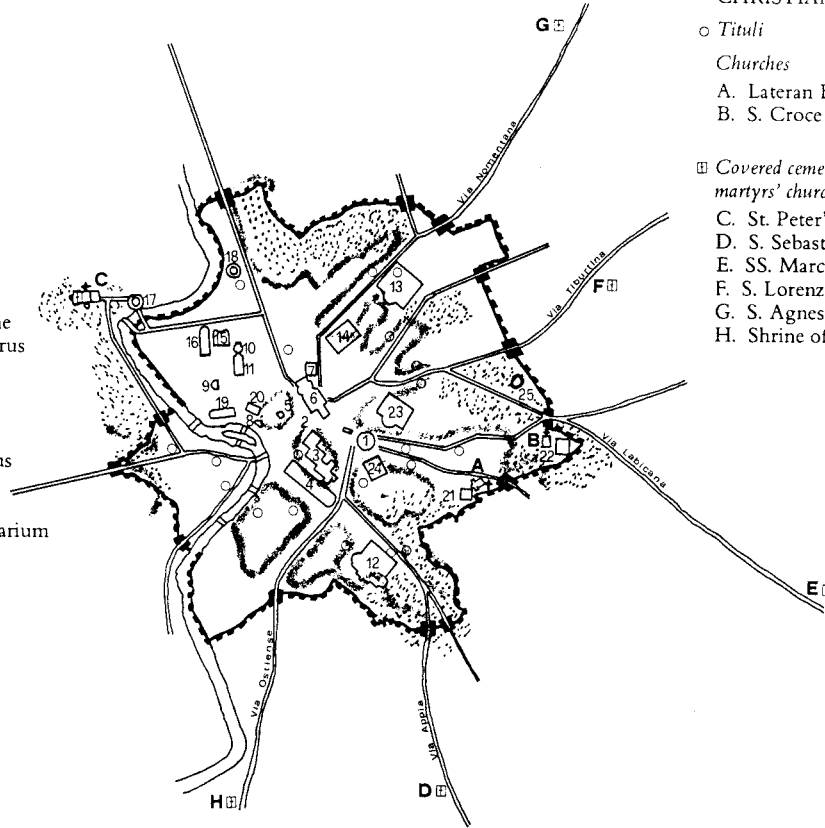
¹⁴ Aquileia: Testini, Cantino Wataghin and Pani Ermini (1989); Geneva: Bonnet (1986); Lyon: Reynaud (1998); and Aosta: Bonnet and Perinetti (1986); Tarragona: Godoy Fernández (1995); Grenoble: Colardelle (1986); Paris: Duval, Perin and Picard (1992).

¹⁵ Testini, Cantino Wataghin and Pani Ermini (1989); Duval (1991); Guyon (1995); Guyon, Boissavit Camus and Souilhac (1995); Cantino Wataghin, Gurt Esparraguera and Guyon (1996).

ANCIENT MONUMENTS

1. Colosseum
2. Forum
3. Palatine
4. Circus Maximus
5. Capitol
6. Imperial Fora
7. Market of Trajan
8. Theatre of Marcellus
9. Theatre of Pompey
10. Pantheon
11. Thermae of Agrippa
12. Thermae of Caracalla
13. Thermae of Diocletian
14. Thermae of Constantine
15. Thermae of Alex. Severus
16. Stadium of Domitian (Piazza Navona)
17. Mausoleum of Hadrian (Castel S. Angelo)
18. Mausoleum of Augustus
19. Circus Flaminius
20. Porticus of Octavia
21. Castra Equitum Singularium
22. Sessorium
23. Thermae of Trajan
24. Claudianum
25. Minerva Medica

GARDENS 



CHRISTIAN BUILDINGS

- *Tituli*
- Churches*
- A. Lateran Basilica
- B. S. Croce
- ▣ *Covered cemeteries and martyrs' churches*
- C. St. Peter's
- D. S. Sebastiano
- E. SS. Marcellino e Pietro
- F. S. Lorenzo
- G. S. Agnese
- H. Shrine of Saint Paul

ROME OF CONSTANTINE, 330 A.D.

Fig. 6. Rome, Constantinian Christian foundations (Krautheimer 1980).

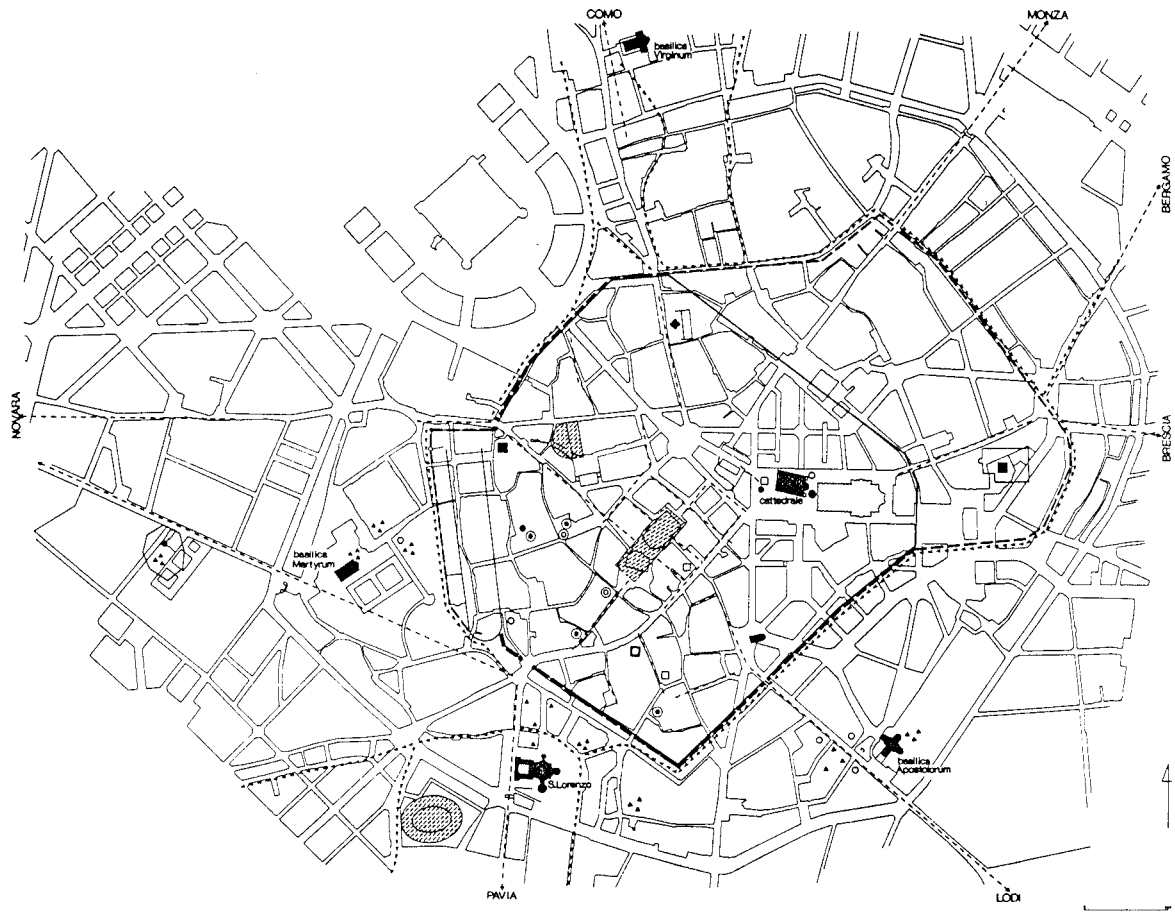


Fig. 7. Milan, Christian topography (Testini, Cantino Wataghin and Pani Ermini 1989).

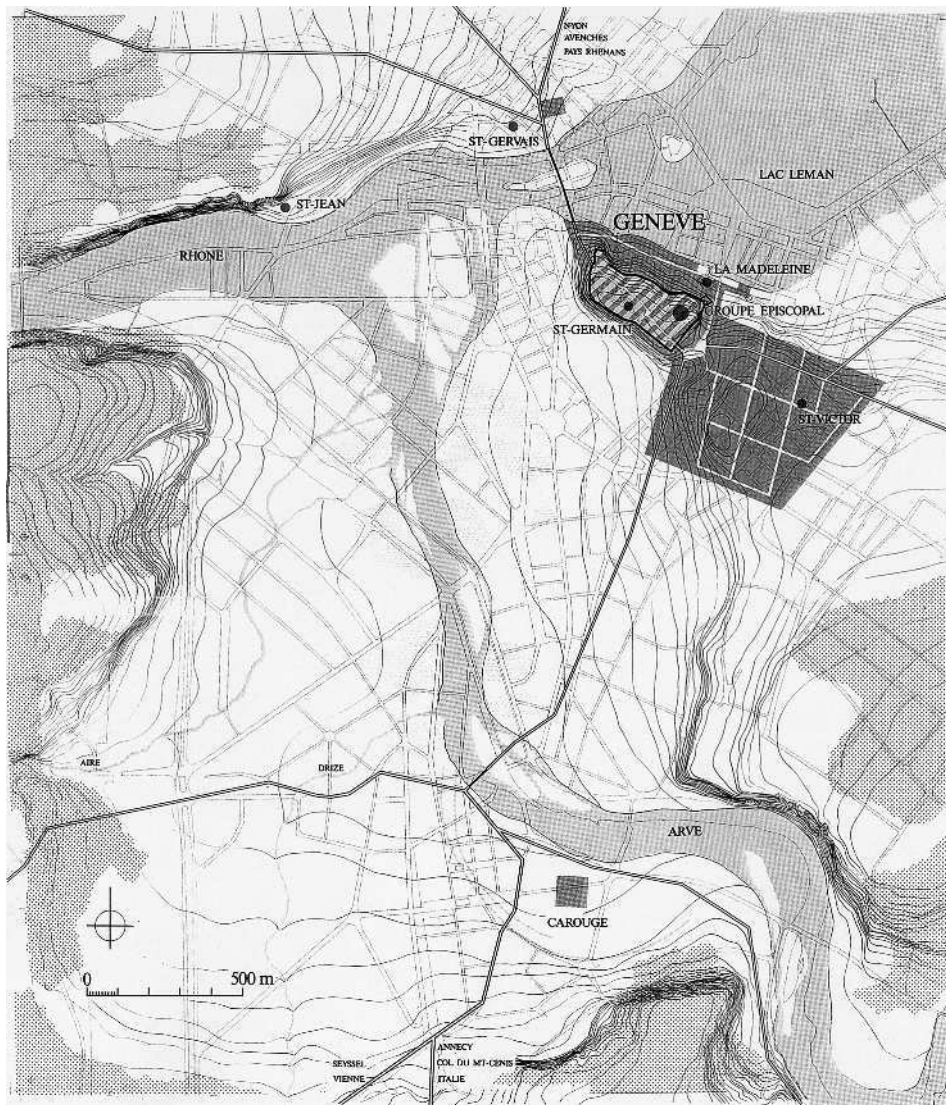


Fig. 8. Geneva, Christian topography (Bonnet 1986).

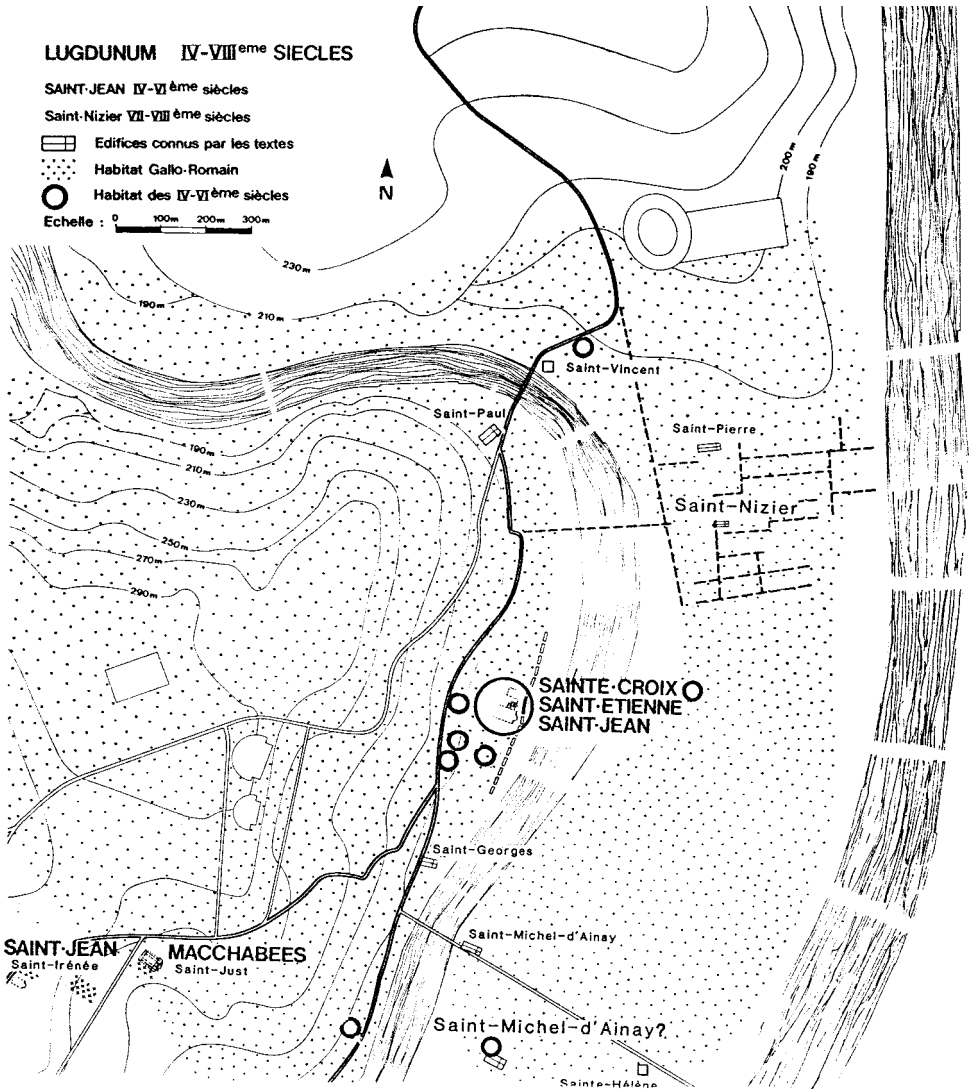


Fig. 9. Lyon, Christian topography (Reynaud 1986).

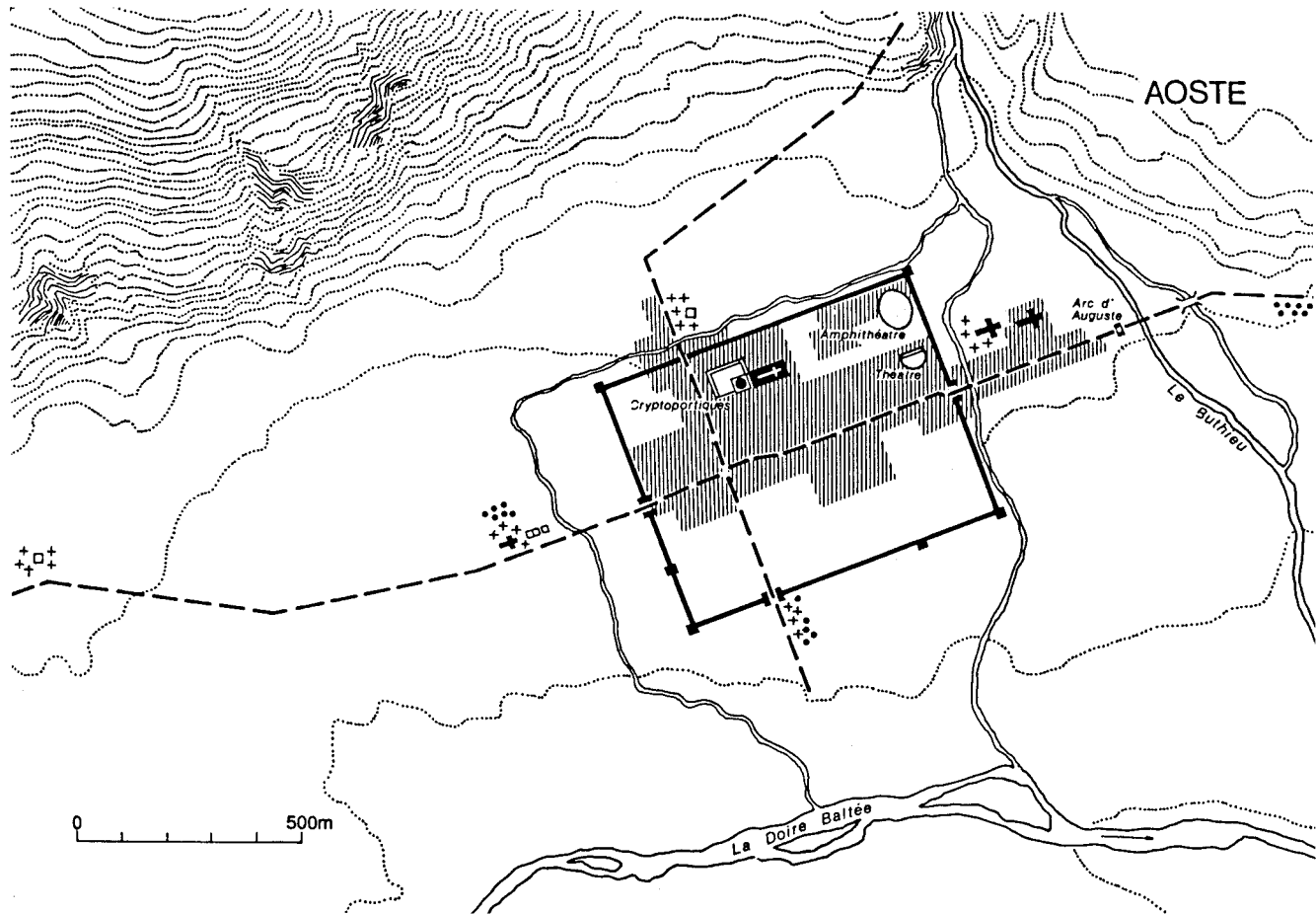


Fig. 10. Aosta, Christian topography (Bonnet and Perinetti 1986).

Plan schématique de Grenoble à la fin de l'Antiquité avec l'emplacement des vestiges archéologiques :

- Villa Belledonne : Haut Empire
 - Saint-Laurent : à partir du Bas Empire
 - Porte Saint-Laurent : à partir du Bas Empire
 - Saint Ferréol : haut Moyen Âge
 - Saint-Antoine : haut Moyen Âge
 - Saint Sixte : haut Moyen Âge
- (Dessin : N. Esperguin, CAHMG).

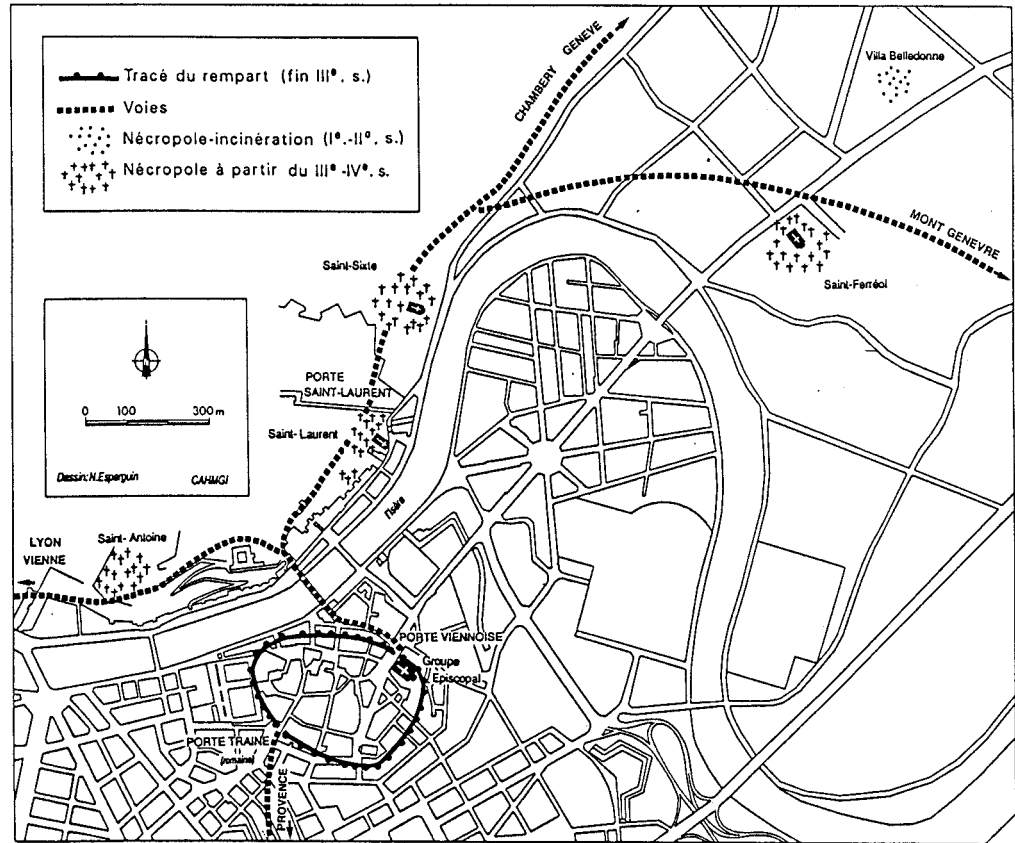


Fig. 11. Grenoble, Christian topography (*Les premiers monuments chrétiens de la France* 1995).

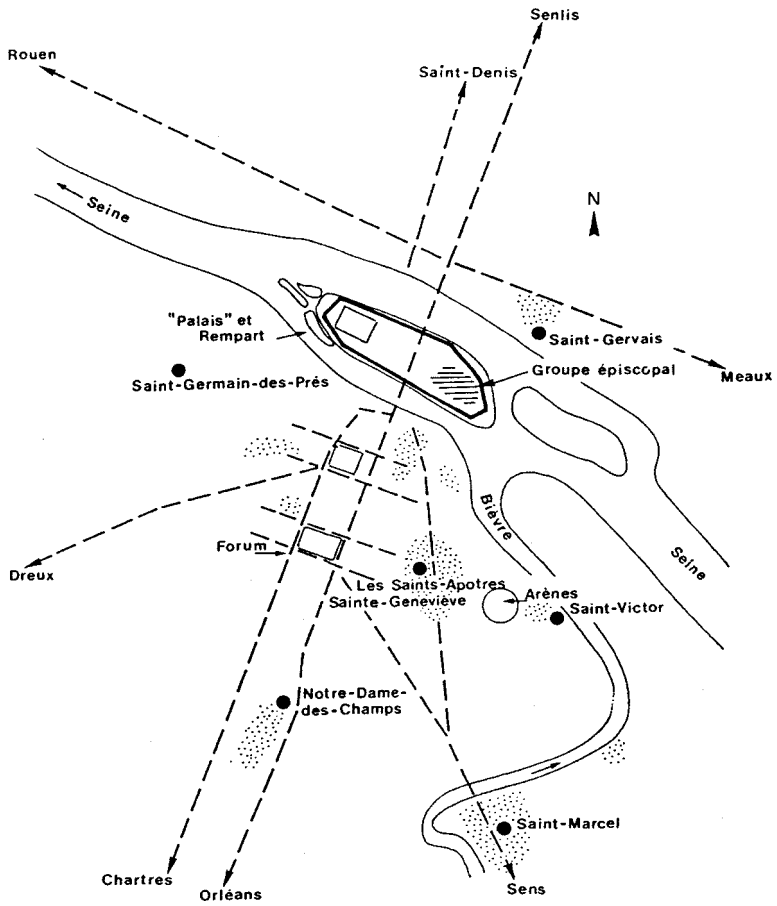


Fig. 12. Paris, Christian topography (Duval, Perin and Picard 1992).

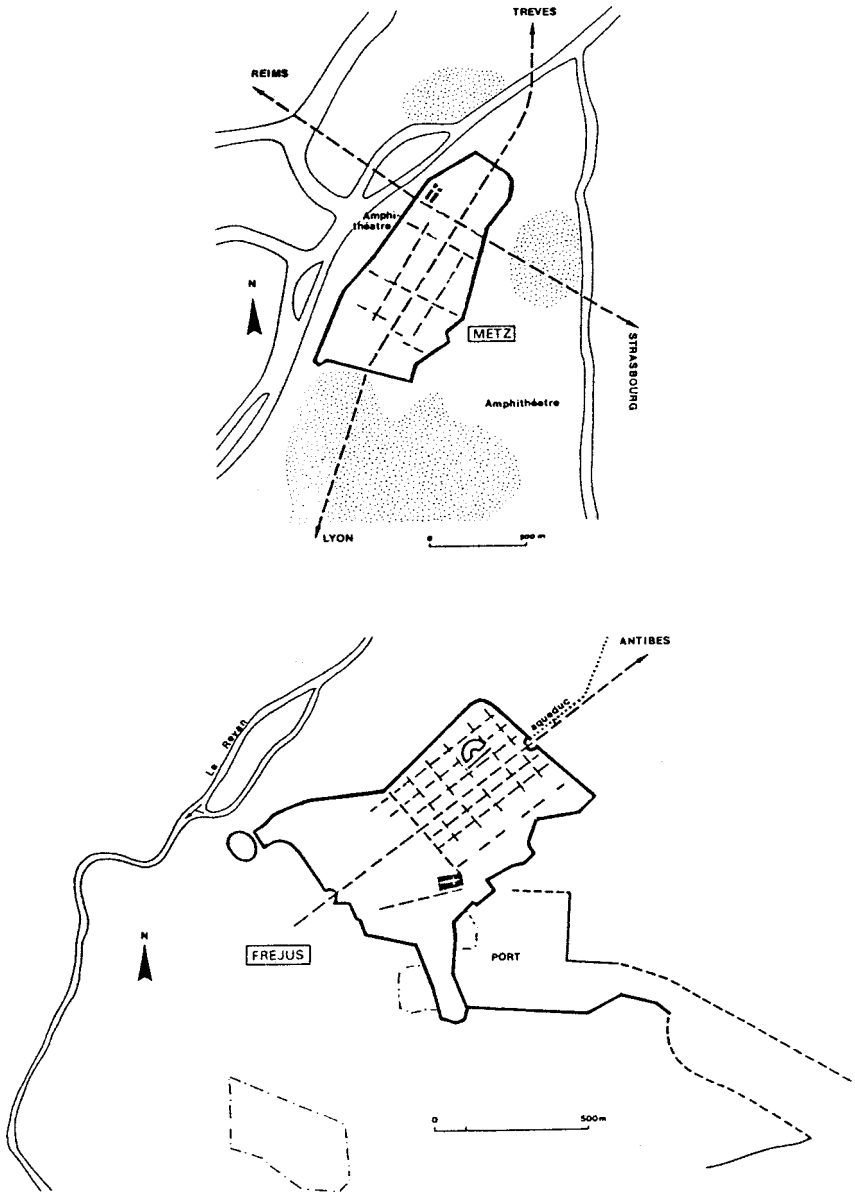


Fig. 13a. Location of the cathedral in Metz and Fréjus (Duval 1991).

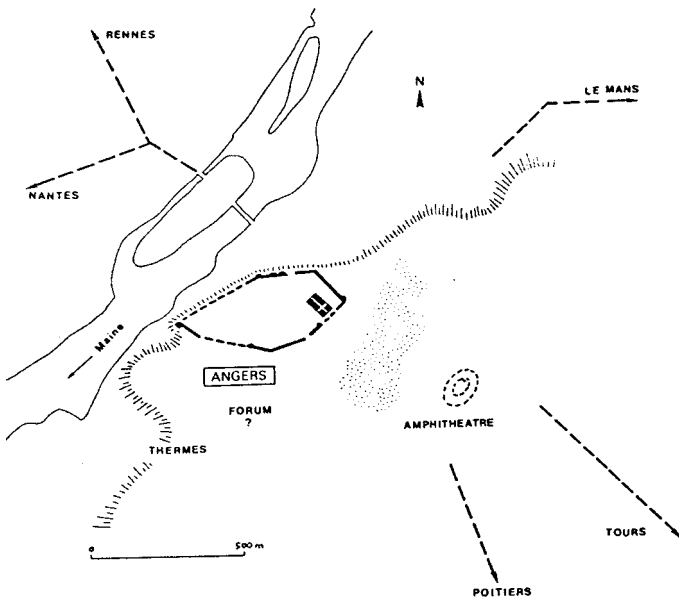
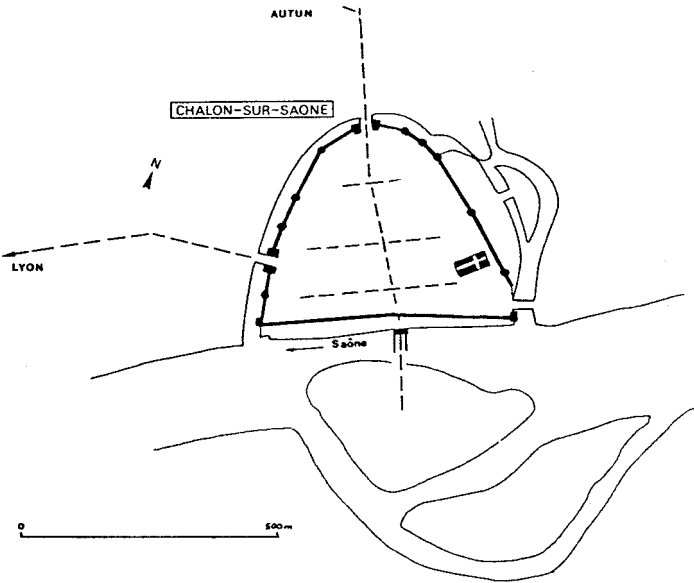


Fig. 13b. Location of the cathedral in Chalons-sur-Saone and Angers (Duval 1991).

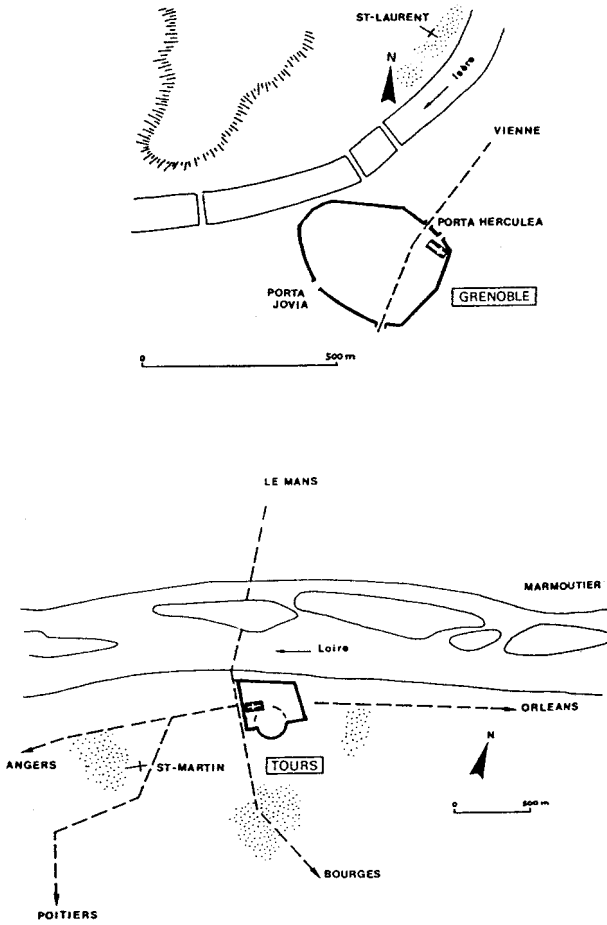


Fig. 13c. Location of the cathedral in Grenoble and Tours (Duval 1991).

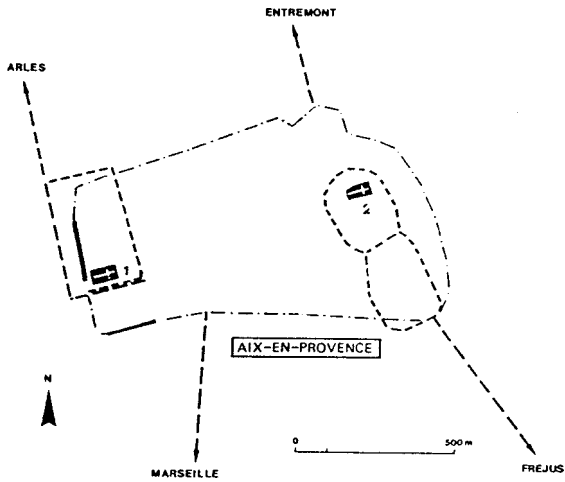
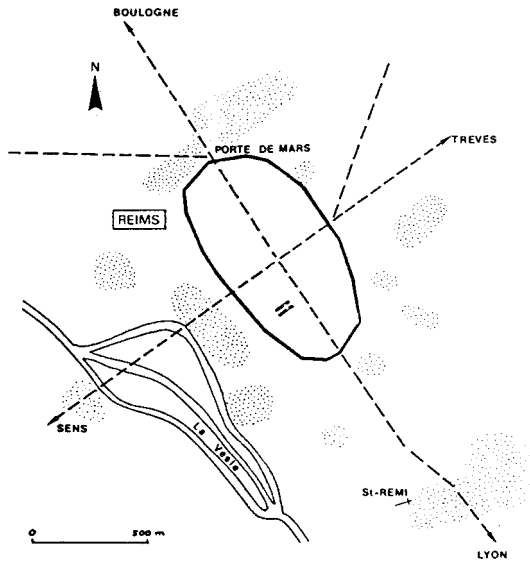


Fig. 14a. Location of the cathedral in Reims and Aix-en-Provence (Duval 1991).

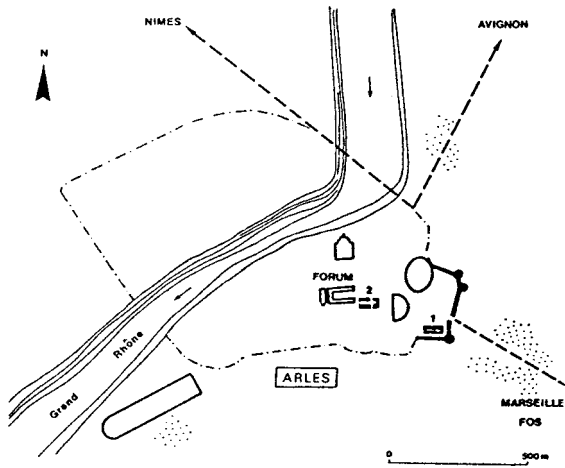
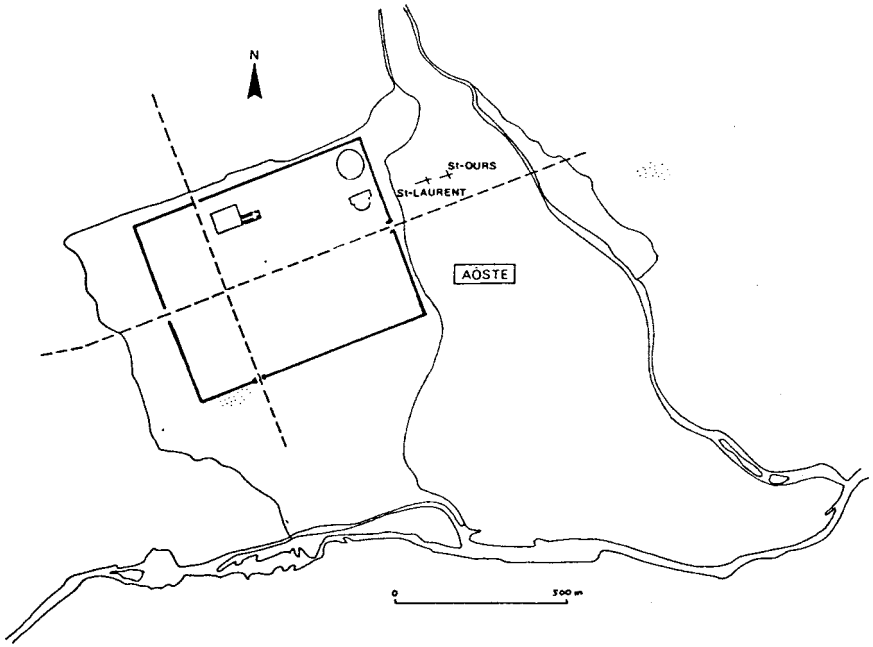


Fig. 14b. location of the cathedral in Aosta and Arles (Duval 1991).

a pre-existing *domus ecclesiae* affect its location; its position seems to have been due each time to incidental factors, such as the needs of the community and the availability of an appropriate building site to construct a church. However, written and epigraphical sources are explicit about the role that wealthy donors played in the foundation of churches; their contribution consisted generally in the cession of a property to be transformed into or replaced by a church: there are many examples either of the reuse of a *domus* for the construction of a church or of the presence of a *domus* beneath it.¹⁶

Because of their function, cemetery churches and *martyria* were built in principle within Roman *necropoleis*, which were located extramurally, in accordance with Roman law; it was here that martyrs' tombs lay and also where Christian cemeteries developed; exceptionally, different locations resulted from the desire to honour the site of a martyrdom, as is the case for the church which was built in the amphitheatre of Tarragona (fig. 15).¹⁷ In Constantinian Rome there seems to have been a desire to mark the main roads out of the city with Christian churches.¹⁸ In Milan also, the location of the cemetery churches and *martyria* founded between the 4th and 5th c. by Ambrose or his successor Simplicianus does not depend on the position of venerated tombs; on the contrary, Ambrose moved the relics of the martyrs "invented" in various places into the churches already built in the suburbs (St Gervasius and Protasius in the *basilica Ambrosiana*, St. Nazarius in the *basilica Apostolorum*). This choice may imply a desire to create a pattern that evoked the cross or to build a wall of sanctuaries protecting the town, intentions expressed by later authors.¹⁹

It is nothing new to say that Christian topography was a powerful factor in the transformation of the town. Its influence was felt in two main respects: firstly, churches became the new foci of the urban grid, as the meeting places of the civic community; secondly, they were an outstanding architectural component of the urban landscape, all the more so as this landscape came to be increasingly made up of low wooden buildings, which become a common feature of

¹⁶ Cantino Wataghin (1999b).

¹⁷ Godoy Fernández (1995).

¹⁸ Krautheimer (1983).

¹⁹ Orselli (1996); Gauthier (1999).

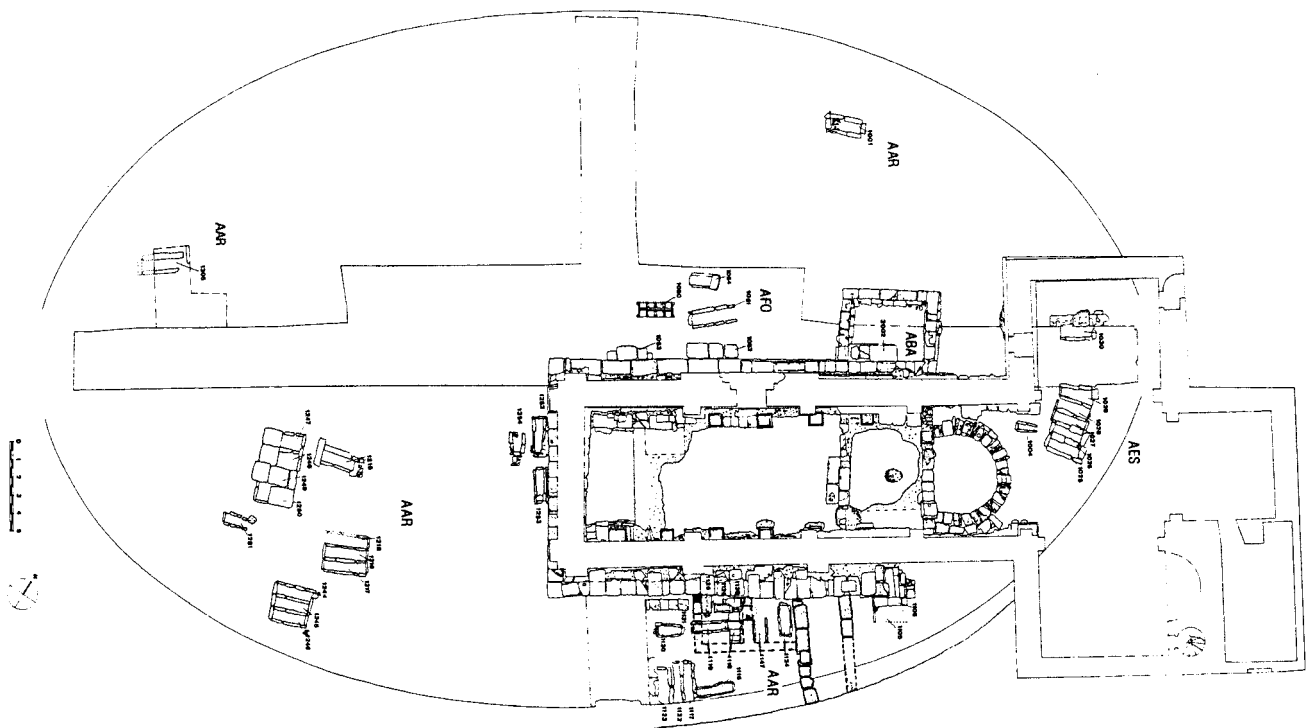


Fig. 15. Tarragona, church in the amphitheatre, plan (Godoy Fernández 1995).

European cities in the 6th-7th c.²⁰ The transformation of the town also affected the suburbs, where cemetery churches increased in number with the spreading of the cult of saints and with a consequent increase in the number of the pious foundations. Monastic communities were often attached to churches for devout reasons and the tomb or relics worshipped in the church gave rise to pilgrimages; these had a range that was more or less in relation to the renown of the saint, whose feast was the occasion for a market.

OPEN QUESTIONS

Although the broad outline of the nature of Christian topography seems fairly clear, the number of open questions is very high. For a large number of cities no archaeological evidence exists to allow traditions concerning the material origins of the local church to be verified. In other cases, the chronology of known archaeological remains and/or their interpretation are still under discussion. To give just a few examples, we can remind ourselves of the debate that is on-going following the assumption that the baptistry of Florence (fig. 16) is a late antique foundation: a possibility, that unfortunately cannot be proven by stratigraphic arguments.²¹ At Milan, a new hypothesis has recently been made about the organization and relative chronology of the episcopal group (figs. 17-18);²² this is at the same time both attractive but questionable: it proposes a complete outline of the earliest, little known buildings; however, it is only based on observations on the Saint-Stephen baptistry, taking the buildings of bishop Theodorus at Aquileia as a model; but for the moment there is no evidence that these buildings did indeed play a comparable role. For Luni, a recent article on the cathedral (which dates from the beginning of the 5th c.) (fig. 19) has suggested that in its last phase the *domus* beneath served as a *domus ecclesiae*; this reopens the debate on the dependence of churches on older, informal places of worship.²³ The discovery of a privileged burial of 5th c. date in Geneva's northern cathedral (fig. 20) raises the question of the possible influence of the

²⁰ Ward-Perkins (1988); Brogiolo and Gelichi (1998).

²¹ Cantino Wataghin, Cecchelli and Pani Ermini (2001).

²² Lusuardi Siena (1997); Cantino Wataghin, Cecchelli and Pani Ermini (2001).

²³ Lusuardi Siena and Sannazaro (1995).

FIRENZE

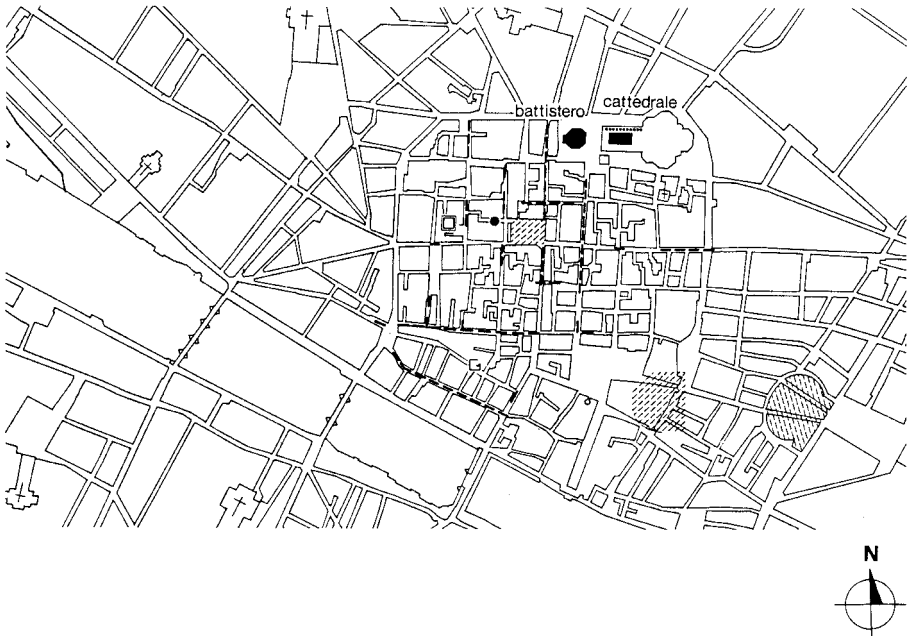


Fig. 16a. Florence, Christian topography (Testini, Cantino Wataghin and Pani Ermini (1989).

cathedral on the entry of burials into town centres.²⁴

It is clear that there is much work still to be done; but in order for results to be reliable some methodological conditions must be met. When archaeological investigations are carried out, they should be on a large scale, according to the method of 'extensive excavation'; experience shows that soundings and trenches can produce more questions than they answer, if their results are not actually misleading. A full exploitation of all the possibilities of current archaeological procedures requires the integration of stratigraphic excavation and masonry studies with scientific methods of analysis; these have to be managed carefully within a strong interdisciplinary framework. Evidence must be collected and recorded to the highest possible standards in order to permit interpretations to be checked and revised long after the formal conclusion of the work on the ground. It is also

²⁴ Bonnet (1993); Cantino Wataghin (1999a).

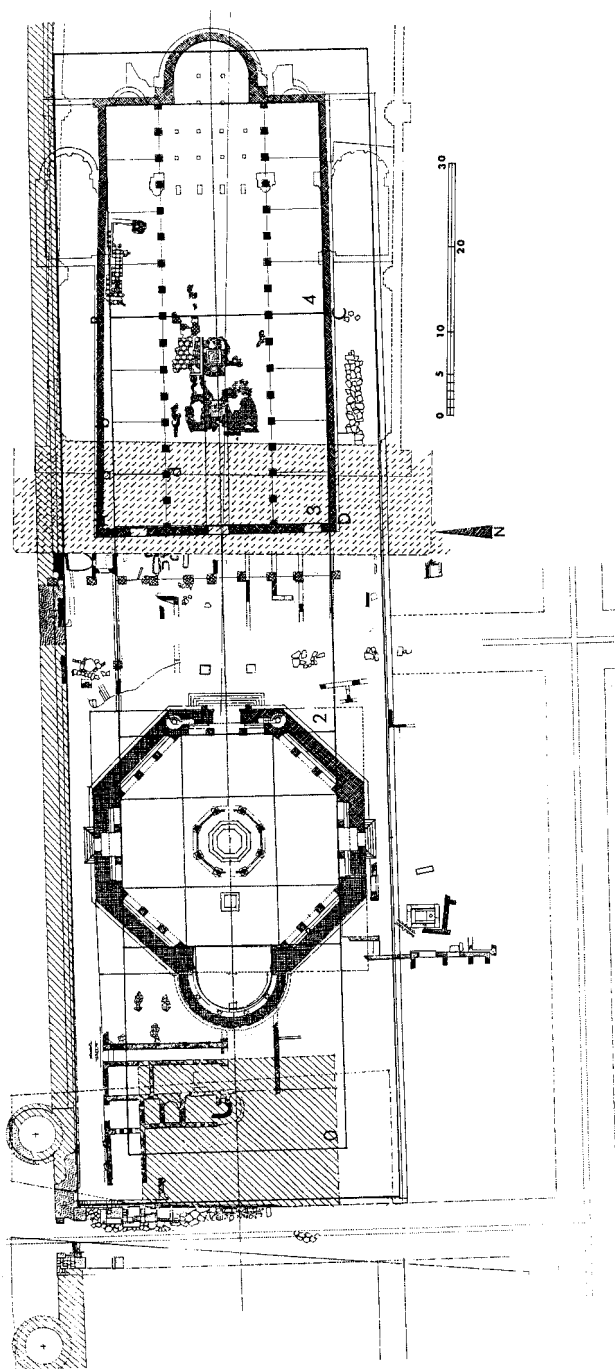


Fig. 16b. Florence, cathedral and baptistry in Late Antiquity, according to Cardini (Cardini 1996).

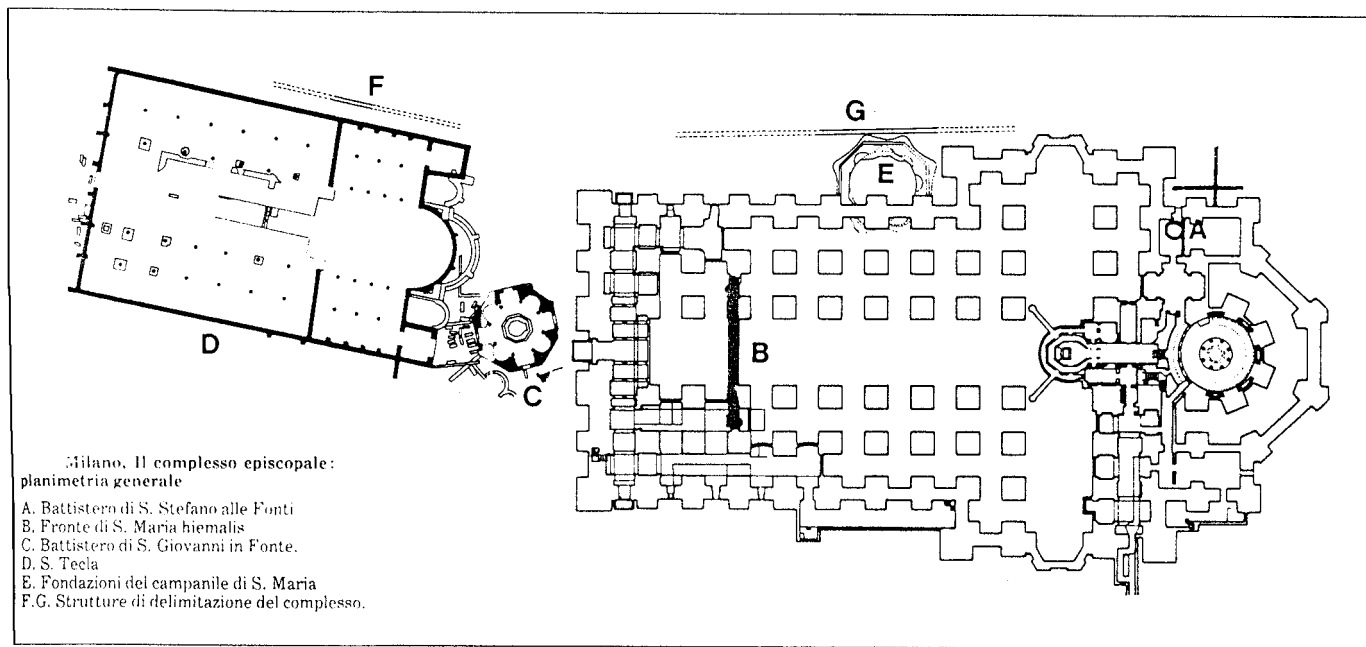


Fig. 17. Milan, episcopal group, according De Capitani.

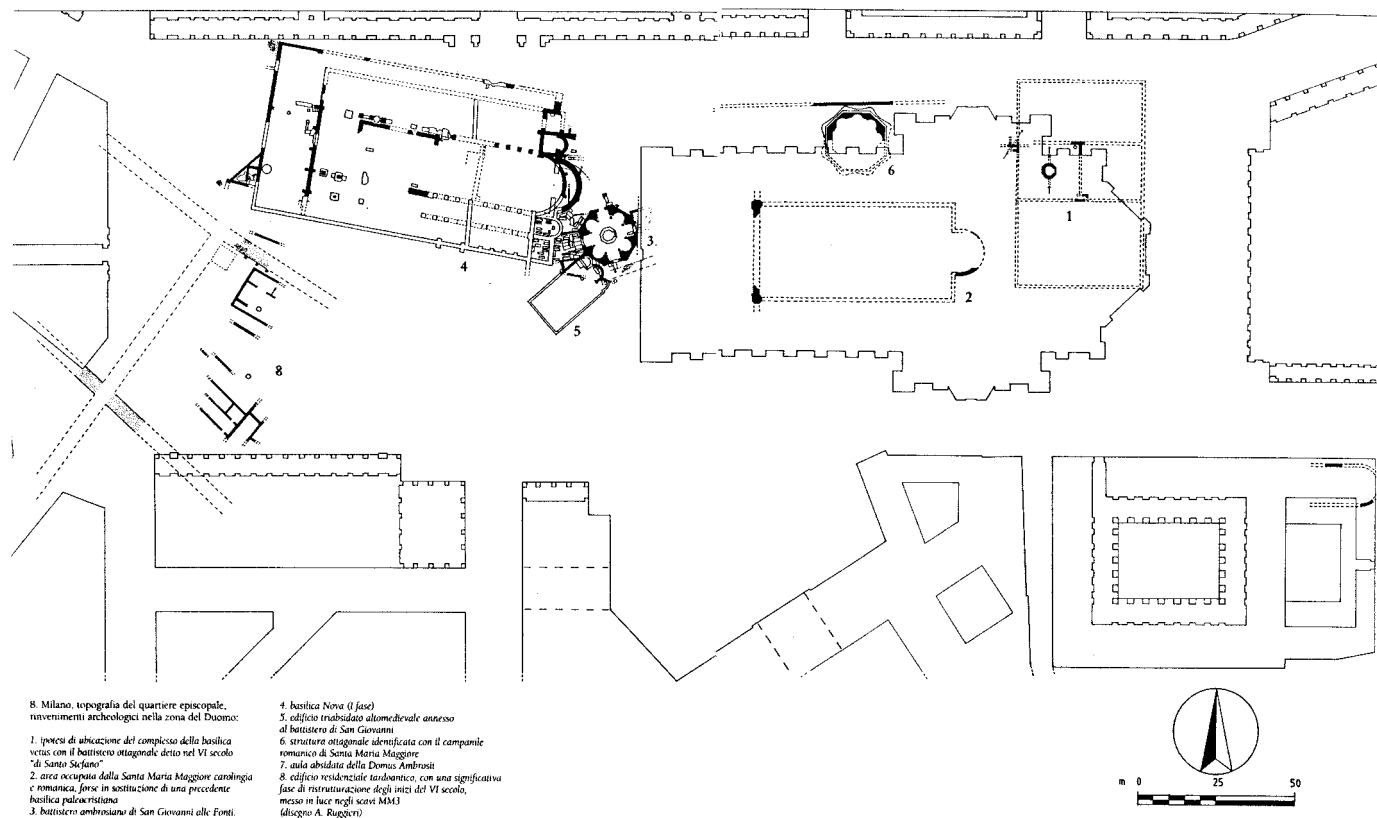


Fig. 18. Milan, episcopal group, according Lusuardi (Lusuardi Siena 1997).

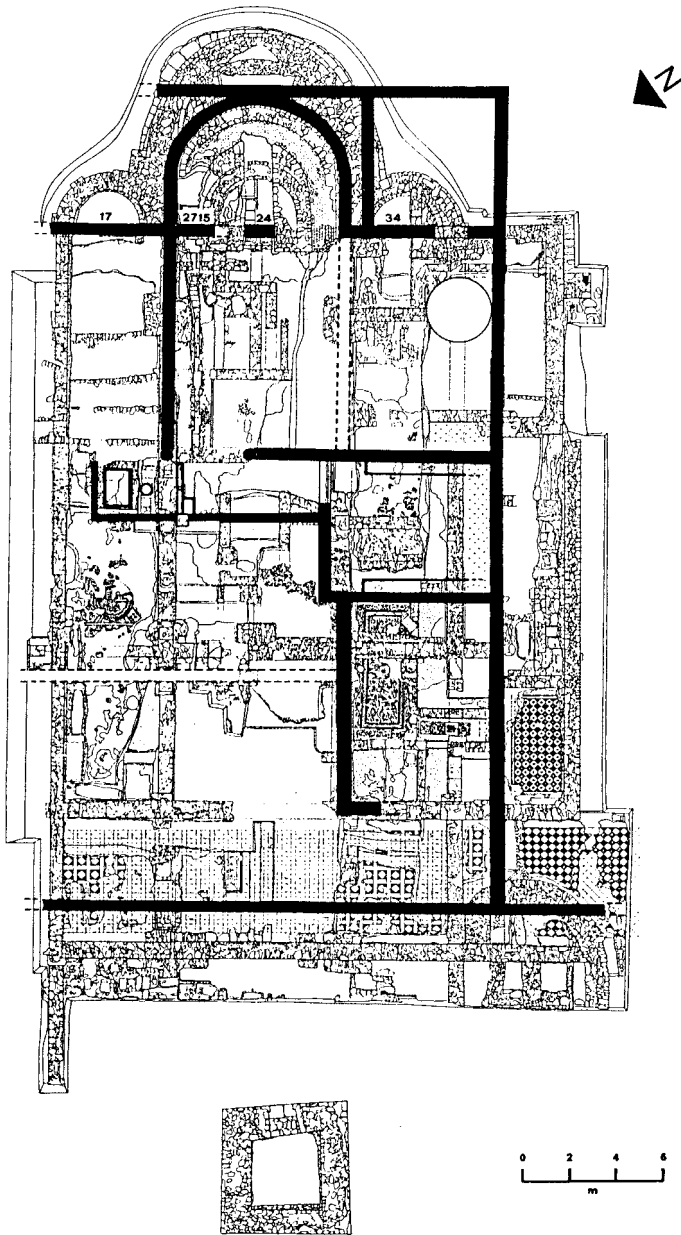


Fig. 19. Luni, plan of the cathedral and the *domus* (Lusuardi Siena and Sannazaro 1995).

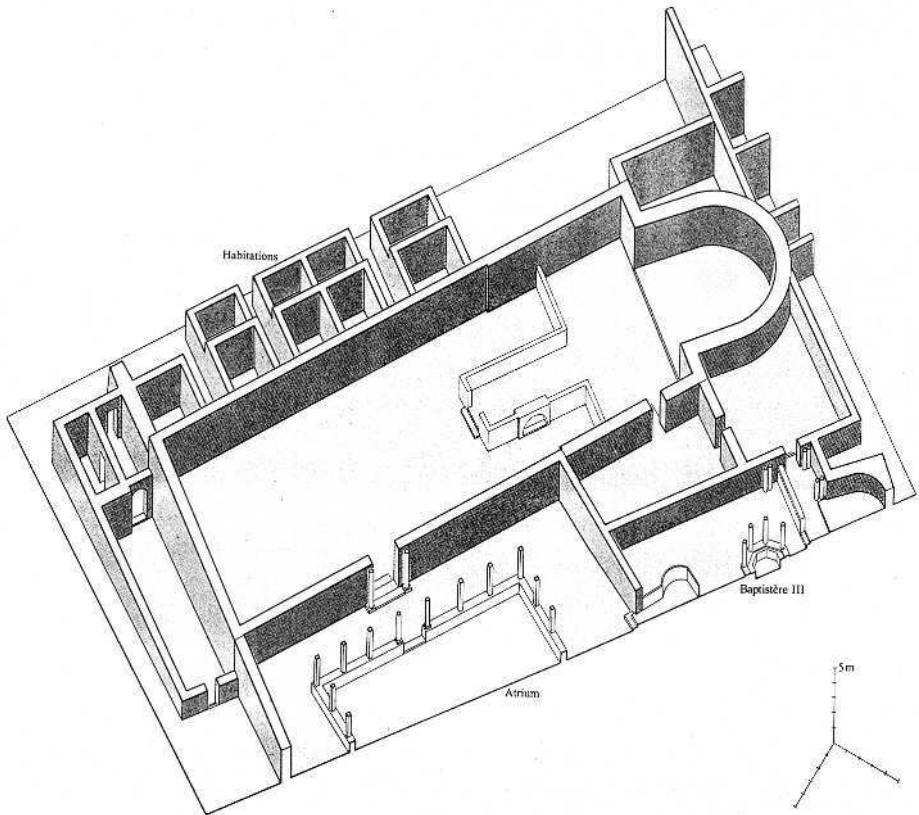


Fig. 20. Geneva, northern cathedral in the 5th century (Bonnet 1993).

important that archaeological and written sources are given equal significance, although each must be considered on its own terms; discrepancies between them may mean that one or maybe both have not been correctly understood.

Even if all the practical and cultural problems hindering large-scale excavations in urban contexts and buildings-in-use could be overcome, the evidence would still remain fragmentary. Interpretation, therefore, still has to concentrate on discussing models. From this point of view, without questioning the general validity of the current model, one cannot conceal the risk that it becomes a sort of cosy shelter to be applied in an indiscriminate way to whatever situation. This prevents peculiarities from emerging and hinders the construction

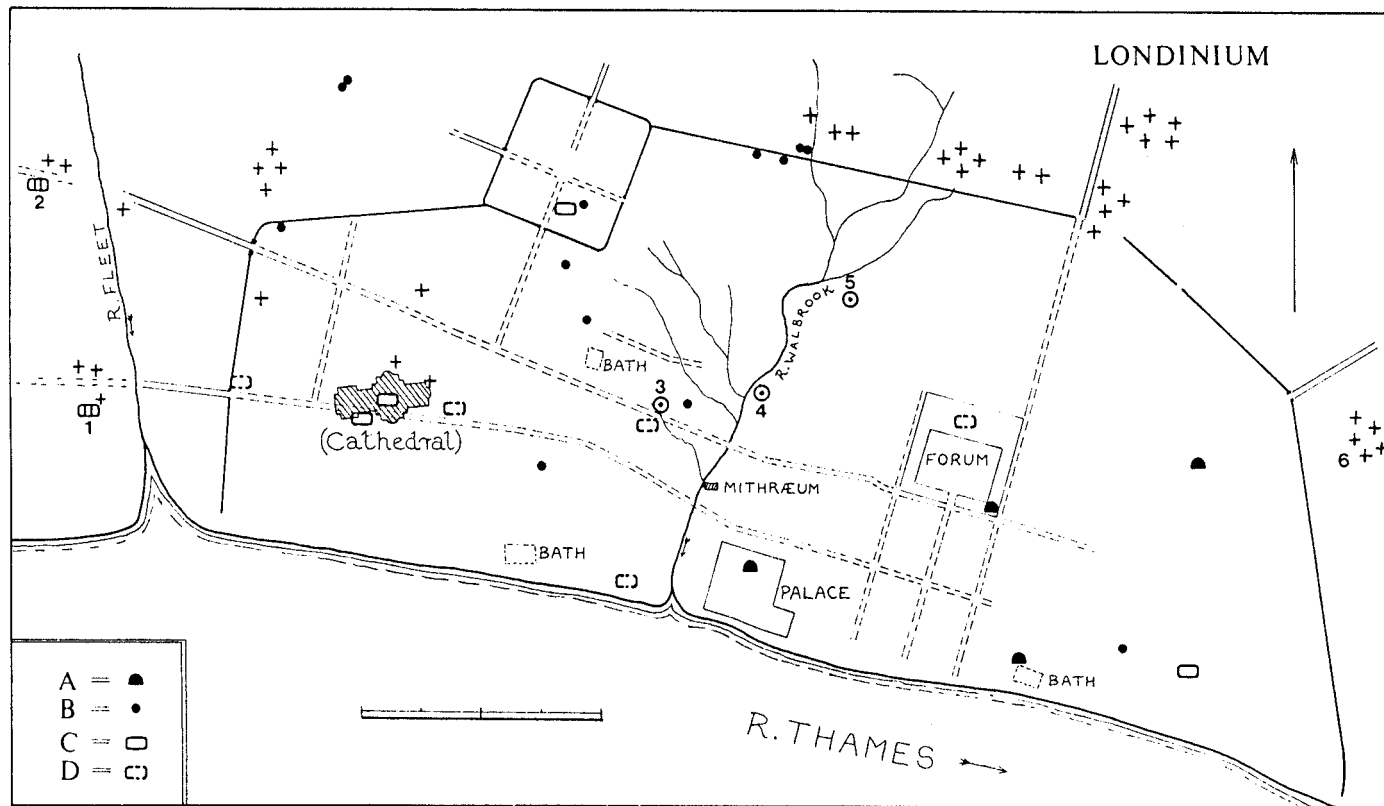


Fig. 21. London, plan of the early medieval town (Thomas 1981).

of complementary or even alternative models. Some 'exceptions' to the model should be more carefully investigated, such as the displacement of the episcopal church from its original location, or the apparent extra-mural position of some cathedrals, as at Florence; or the association in the same church of congregational and cemetery functions, as at Concordia, or at many diocesan centres of Sardinia.²⁵ Furthermore, the present model of Christian topography was built on the evidence provided by Roman towns which were Christianized during Late Antiquity, when Roman urban structures were still recognisable. It does not take into account, except incidentally, cases where the destructuring of urban areas started earlier or where distinctive local religious and civic conditions were important. On the other hand one has to consider that the Paleochristian pattern outlined by the existing model seems to be still effective in British towns,²⁶ where Christian topographies developed after the Roman urban structure had collapsed. We can possibly see in this fact a sign of the strength of the tradition and therefore the validity of the pattern itself, as well as the effectiveness of the Roman mission to Britain launched by Pope Gregory the Great. Here we should conclude that the Paleochristian pattern had become a model to be imitated, out of the premises which had created it: but by this time Late Antiquity was certainly over.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Luke Lavan and Bryan Ward-Perkins for improving the English of this text.

²⁵ Testini, Cantino Wataghin and Pani Ermini (1989).

²⁶ Thomas (1981); Painter (1989).

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TOPOGRAPHIES OF PRODUCTION IN NORTH AFRICAN CITIES DURING THE VANDAL AND BYZANTINE PERIODS

ANNA LEONE

ABSTRACT

An important characteristic of North African cities in Late Antiquity is the appearance of structures relating to artisanal production in unusual settings, often in former public buildings. In this paper I argue for developing a study of this sector, looking not only at products, such as pottery, but also at productive structures and their wider urban location. Archaeological evidence from Tunisia and Tripolitania is analysed, dating from Vandal, Byzantine and also, occasionally, Early Islamic times, relating principally to murex dyeing, fish salting, olive oil production and pottery manufacturing. Lime kilns are also considered.

INTRODUCTION*

The term ‘topographies of production’ refers to the spatial organisation of production sites and their location within urban areas.¹ It is a subject that has received almost no attention in late antique urbanism, despite the importance of production activities in the transformation of classical public buildings.² Topographies of production have attracted few studies even for the Early Roman period; the most important has been that undertaken by Jean-Paul Morel,

* Whilst working on this paper I learnt that Yvon Thébert passed away. I am forever grateful to him for his help in orientating me at the start of my studies on North Africa and for many useful suggestions. I dedicate this paper to his memory.

¹ All the sites mentioned in this article are located referring to the recent *Barrington Atlas* (henceforth *BA*). Fig. 8, in the plates, also provides information about all the Tunisian sites mentioned in the text. The term “Late Antiquity” will here include both the ‘Vandal’ and ‘Byzantine’ periods. However, the definition of this term is still an object of discussion: see for example Giardina (1999).

² For general accounts of urban production sites in North Africa see Potter (1995) 64–102 and Wilson (2001), though in these studies topography was not the main focus. An attempt to reconstruct “topographies of production” for the Vandal and later periods has begun recently at the site of Uchi Maius, where several olive presses (including one established in the forum) have been recorded, from the 5th c. A.D. onwards—see Vismara (1999) 73–74.

on Rome. In this work Morel tried to identify how production spaces were organised, establishing a topography of production for late republican and classical Rome.³ The main elements to be considered seem to be: the overall location of artisanal/manufacturing activities, such as whether they were in the centre or in the periphery of the city; if they were kept separate from residential areas; and if they showed any tendency to locate on particular sites within a city / or if they had an entirely random distribution.

In North Africa, widespread structural evidence for artisanal production within urban centres is a noted characteristic of the Vandal and Byzantine periods. The aims of this paper are two-fold. Firstly, I will explore how the location of sites given over to production changed inside urban areas in Tunisia and Tripolitania, from the 5th to the 7th c. A.D., and occasionally beyond; I will consider not only the broad location of production sites within urban areas but also the kinds of structures in which such activities were set, often former public buildings. Secondly, I will consider what factors might account for the changes of this period, from the re-use of particular building types to the general location of new types of production activities within urban centres. I will not consider the spatial organisation of production sites during the Roman period, but will focus on the transformations brought about during the Vandal and the Byzantine periods. I will also concentrate on *change* or *continuity* in the location of late antique production sites, those that occur in *new* urban or architectural settings; thus I will not analyse in detail existing production sites established in earlier times, such as the northern sector of the circular harbour or the Magon quarter in Carthage.⁴ Finally, because this paper is primarily concerned with topography I will not consider here the economic aspect of urban production, as it would be too wide for this paper and its focus.

³ Morel (1987) 127-28. Morel also analysed the *tabernae*, the markets, the *horrea* etc. These elements are often not easily identifiable in late antique cities. For Pompei there have been a number of studies, such as that of Majeske (1972), analysing the location of bakeries and that of Curtis (1984), on the salted fish industry.

⁴ The northern sector of the circular harbour was used as a production site, from classical times to the 7th c, with several major phases of alteration; for a detailed analysis: Hurst (1994). The Magon quarter: principally Rakob (1991).

LIMITATIONS OF THE EVIDENCE

Before looking in detail at the archaeological evidence it is necessary to define major areas of doubt and uncertainty. Available information is in many cases fragmentary or poor in quality, which significantly affects the use to which it can be put. Generally, recent excavations are reliable and their chronologies are well-defined; difficulties, especially in dating, arise from excavations undertaken during the 19th and early 20th centuries. These excavations were mainly interested in recording Roman and Punic phases, and removed the evidence of later occupation from many sites. For this reason, the topographical information we can obtain is sometimes fragmentary; it will be difficult for future work to fill the gap, because much relevant archaeological evidence has been irredeemably lost. However, new excavations specifically directed at knowledge of the Vandal, Byzantine and Islamic phases will certainly enable a better understanding of urban change to be established. Complex site histories also make it difficult to distinguish production structures of different dates. For example, many sites were continuously occupied, or abandoned for a short period after the Arab conquest and then reoccupied, in both cases often being inhabited until the 9th/10th c.⁵

To make matters worse, there has been no research into the typological evolution of production structures. For example, differences between olive presses of the Byzantine and Islamic periods have not been seriously researched. At present, it does appear that there is a similarity between Byzantine and Islamic archaeological evidence. This suggests continuity in production technology from at least the 6th to the 8th/10th c., when many former urban sites were definitively abandoned. However, it is also possible that Byzantine presses remained in use many centuries after they were built; these structures

⁵ Serious studies of the post-classical history of African sites have begun only recently. For a first approach see Gelichi and Milanese (1998) 477-80, giving a synthesis of the principal sites where continuity or abandonment has been recorded. At Rougga (Tunisia) and Sétif (Algeria) continuity can be seen; the latter had a complete re-urbanisation only in the 11th c. In contrast at Cherchel (Algeria) evidence of a hiatus has been recorded—Gelichi and Milanese (1998) 478. Another interesting site is Sidi Ghrib, abandoned in Byzantine times and then reoccupied in the Islamic period, perhaps as a *fondouk* (rest-house found mainly along the caravan routes), with insertion of a forge: Ennabli and Neuru (1994a), (1994b). Significant for the amount of information is also Belalis Maior—Mahjoubi (1978).

were imposing and could survive for a long time.⁶ Only through further excavations will this subject advance.

PRODUCTION IN THE CITIES OF LATE ANTIQUE AFRICA

North Africa was one of the richest provinces of the Roman empire: a great variety of goods were produced here. Of the many production activities that characterised the North African economy, the most important to be identified by archaeology were murex dyeing, fish salting, olive oil and pottery manufacture.⁷ Olive presses and pottery kilns are comparatively well-recorded. In contrast, it is not always easy to identify murex dyeing or fish salting. Nevertheless, evidence for all of these production activities will be examined here, in order to provide a rounded survey of the available information.

MUREX DYEING AND FISH SALTING

Garum production and murex dyeing were both very important to the economy of African coastal cities. They are attested principally by historical texts.⁸ For *garum*, distribution patterns of ceramic containers used can also be considered an important source, shedding light on the extent of trade.⁹

Despite a significant number of texts relating to murex dyeing activity in North Africa, few structures directly connected with it have ever been excavated. Most evidence for murex extraction comes from

⁶ General study of press technology and consideration of continuity: see Frankel (1999) 176. General information on historical sources on technology used for olive oil production see Humphrey *et al.* (1998) 159-61.

⁷ Textile production was probably an important element in the North African economy, though difficult to identify archaeologically; it is however attested at Carthage, in the northern sector of the circular harbour: Hurst (1994).

⁸ Historical sources recording murex dyeing production exist for many periods: from Pliny (*HN* 9.126) to the *Notitia Dignitatum* occ. 11.69 (dated to the late 4th/early 5th c. A.D.). For a general collection of sources see Drine (2000) 93-94; see also Humphrey *et al.* (1998) 360. For a collection of sources relating to *garum* production see Curtis (1991) 6-15.

⁹ It has been argued that "Africano Grande" amphorae were probably used to transport *garum*. For later forms the contents have not been established. For an attempt see Ben Lazreg *et al.* (1995) 128.

the presence of murex shells, such as those reused in mortar in the Byzantine wall of Lepcis Magna¹⁰. At Meninx (fig. 8 n° 13), in the Vandal period, a series of vats have been recorded, that may possibly be related to murex dye extraction, though no certain examples of this type of production are known. The area is on the shore, at about 250 m south of the forum of the city. This activity stopped here immediately after the Byzantine conquest.¹¹ It must also be pointed out that we do not have to date any certain evidence of murex dyeing activity in the Byzantine period for Tunisia and Tripolitania. Although location analysis is not possible here, it should be noted that structures for murex dyeing within cities of all periods were generally placed along the coast, as attested for instance at Constantia (mid 5th c. A.D.) and probably Dor (4th-6th c. A.D.) in Palestine.¹²

The major period of *garum* production in North Africa does not start before the late 1st c. A.D. It falls off somewhat in the 3rd c.; according to Curtis, some of the salteries went completely out of use or “drastically” reduced their production at this time.¹³ Archaeological evidence relating to *garum* production is known for imperial times, for instance at Neapolis (fig. 8 n° 5); here, in the Nymfarum Domus, a complex was in use from the second half of the 1st c. A.D., but was progressively abandoned from the 3rd to the middle of the 4th c. A.D.¹⁴ Archaeologists have found no African *garum* production centre after the 5th c., the latest to be in use being the salteries at Lixus, and possibly Kouass, Tahadart and Tipasa.¹⁵ Only at Carthage have production sites been suggested: it has been supposed that basins found in room 16 in the north sector, a production site in the circular harbour, were used for *garum*¹⁶ and at rue 2 mars 1934, in the

¹⁰ Romanelli (1970) 14. See also Blanc (1958).

¹¹ Isle of Djerba—BA map 35 Tripolitana C1. General study of the territory: Fentress (2000). The production site was identified from aerial photographs, which revealed a theatre, circus, forum, amphitheatre and a series of basins stretched out along the coast: Drine (2000) 87. Two areas have been excavated. In general on the excavation see: Drine (2000) 89-93. The proposed chronology is based on pottery evidence—see Fontana (2000).

¹² See Kingsley, in this volume: p. 124.

¹³ Curtis (1991) 69.

¹⁴ Sternberg (2000) 137-38. Today Nabeul BA map 32 Carthago G4.

¹⁵ Curtis (1991) 69.

¹⁶ Hurst (1994) 94. No certain elements relating to *garum* production were found here; the principal production activity recorded was cloth-working. Hurst proposed the site as an imperial *gynecoium* (an official clothing factory).

same area, 6 further basins were found, for which the same use has been proposed.¹⁷ In both cases the structures were located close to the shore and in the vicinity of the harbour. For the Byzantine period no certain archaeological evidence relating to *garum* production and fish salting has been clearly recorded until now in Tripolitania or Tunisia. Curtis has suggested that in this period North African *garum* production experienced a serious crisis.¹⁸ It may be that the production of *garum* in North Africa decreased in the Byzantine period, though it is possible that lack of evidence could result from the confused and partial archaeological data available.

OLIVE OIL PRODUCTION

Two principal elements of the northern African economy in Late Antiquity were the production of olive oil and the manufacture of pottery, which were strongly interrelated activities. The structures connected with them are massive and easily identifiable and so merit to be considered in detail. Unfortunately, evidence relating to olive oil production in urban areas is particularly badly dated, and evidence might be assigned either to the Byzantine or to the Early Islamic periods. This uncertain situation makes interpretation difficult. A recurrent theme, however, is the reuse of classical public buildings and public spaces.

The Vandal Evidence

The only press dated to the Vandal period is that recently recorded at Uchi Maius (fig. 1 and fig. 8 n° 3). In the forum here was found an olive oil production centre, in use from the second half of the 5th c. until the end of the Vandal period.¹⁹ This chronological range corresponds to an increase in North African commercial activity

¹⁷ Hurst (1994) 97. This identification is uncertain; it was first proposed that the basins were used for cloth-working; it was later argued that their use for *garum* cannot be excluded. For difficulties in distinguishing between structures used for *garum* production and those used for murex dyeing see Curtis (1991) 65-66.

¹⁸ Curtis (1991) 69: "The decline in salting..in Zeugitania may have mirrored the crisis...at the same time...in Spain".

¹⁹ Located in Northern Tunisia, today Henchir ed Douimas—*BA* map 32 Carthago D4. Gelichi and Milanese (1998) and (1995); Vismara (1999) 73-74: in the area of the forum an inhabited quarter also developed.

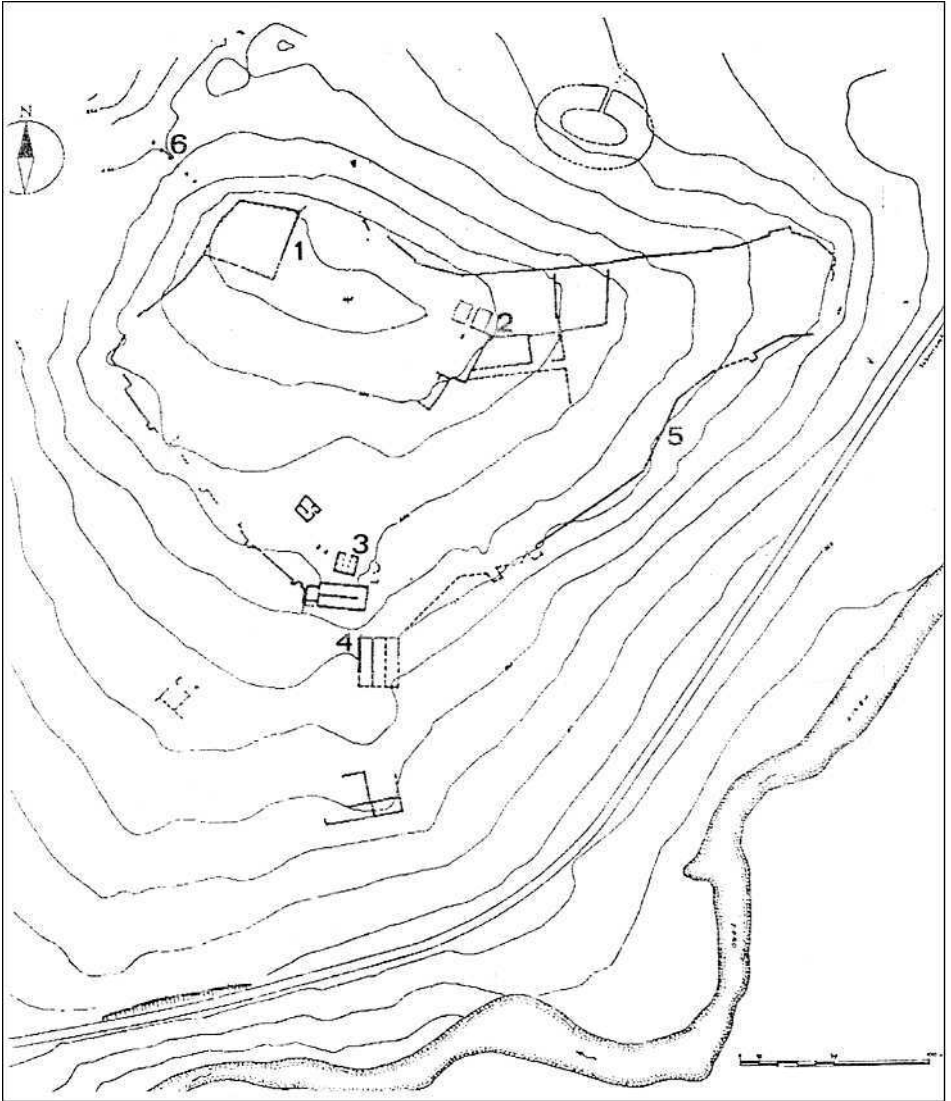


Fig. 1. Plan of Uchi Maius—Location of principal urban monuments: 1. Citadel; 2. Forum; 3. Marabout; 4. Cistern; 5. City walls; 6. Aqueduct - from Gelichi and Milanese (1995)

attested by the ceramics. For instance, African red slip pottery shows, from the same period, the creation of new forms and a wide distribution across the whole Mediterranean;²⁰ a similar trend can be seen in the amphorae, often containers for the olive oil itself. In the Vandal period, especially in the late 5th c., new forms were created, principally characterised by both wide-bodied amphorae and very thin spatheia.²¹

Byzantine and Islamic Presses

Evidence for the Byzantine and early Islamic periods is more problematic, as most of the archaeological remains are not closely datable. I will consider first all presses that can be reasonably attributed to Byzantine times, followed by the uncertain evidence. It should be pointed out that most of the evidence for which it is possible to identify a chronological range relates to the second half of the 6th c. A.D. onwards.

Dated Presses

Starting from the North, in Zeugitania, at Asadi²² the Christian Basilica was enlarged in the second quarter of the 6th c., and an olive press was placed in an adjoining room, which was probably abandoned after the Islamic conquest.²³ Unfortunately here limited information on the site precludes further comments on the precise topographical situation. Belalis Maior (fig. 8 n°7) is similar; here an olive press was built in a room annexed to a small building. This has been identified as a Christian cult structure, built during the 6th c. in the west part of the city.²⁴ All around this building, a larger production and residential quarter was built, that was in use also in the Islamic period.²⁵

²⁰ Tortorella (1998) and Mackensen (1998).

²¹ Spatheia are long and thin, favouring the storage and transportation of more goods. General synthesis on late amphora production: Keay (1998) and Panella and Sagui (2001).

²² Modern Jedidi, located at about 8 km north east of Segermes. See *BA* map 32 Carthago F4.

²³ Bejaoui (1986) and Ben Abed *et al.* (1993) 491: the olive press was adjoining the vestibule and the sacristy of the church. The olive press was certainly in use during the second phase of the basilica.

²⁴ Now Henchir el Fauar.; *BA*, map 32 Carthago D3. Mahjoubi (1978) 246-54 and Mahjoubi (1983).

²⁵ In this phase another press was probably inserted in the religious building's apse: Mahjoubi (1978) 254 n. 674.

In terms of the topography of the Early Roman city, it might be suggested that the structure was located in a peripheral sector. The church building was constructed above an earlier structure, identified by Mahjoubi as a possible sanctuary, perhaps dedicated to Ba'al-Hammon-Saturn;²⁶

The presence of an olive press, related to a church and located in the periphery of the city, has been recorded at Sufetula (fig.8 n°10) in Byzacena. Here, adjoining the basilica of Saint Gervasius, Protasius and Tryphon (basilica V), an olive press was built across the principal street crossing the city (fig. 3). In this sector, during the Byzantine period, were also constructed two fortlets and a late baths²⁷ (fig. 2). Duval has suggested that the installation of the press took place in a late phase, probably in the 7th c., on account of the higher level of the floor.²⁸ Here too, production activities were located next to a church inside a residential area and were protected by the presence of fortified structures.²⁹

An association between a Christian religious complex and an olive oil production site has also been recorded at Mactaris (fig.8 n°9), in Byzacena. Here a structure named as the *Basilica Juvenes*, located near the old forum of the city, was transformed into a church in the 4th c. In the Byzantine period the church was partially restored and at the same time an olive press was established in the old peristyle.³⁰ It has been suggested that the complex was in use until the 11th c., when it was used for housing. The area is located in the centre of the city, close to a Christian cemetery.³¹ Similar evidence has also been recorded at Lepcis Magna, where in the 6th-7th c. an olive

²⁶ For a detailed study of the underlying complex and its identification see Mahjoubi (1978) 246-51.

²⁷ Today Sbeitla. *BA* map 33 Theveste-Hadrumetum D2. Duval (1964) 103 and (1999).

²⁸ Duval (1999) 931. He suggests that this part of the city survived for a long time, probably until the 10th c.

²⁹ For a general study of Sufetula in the late phase see Duval (1964) and more recently Duval (1990) 512-14.

³⁰ *BA* map 33 Theveste-Hadrumetum D1. Picard (1957) 130 and Bourgeois (1984-85) 188.

³¹ In the same area was a building labelled the "édifice Chatelain", probably a late *édifice à auges* of the 4th c. or later. Today it has been completely destroyed. See Picard (1955-56) 174 and Picard (1957) 137. For issues relating to *édifices à auges* see Duval N. and Duval Y. (1972), Duval (1976), Duval (1979), and Nestori (1980-82).

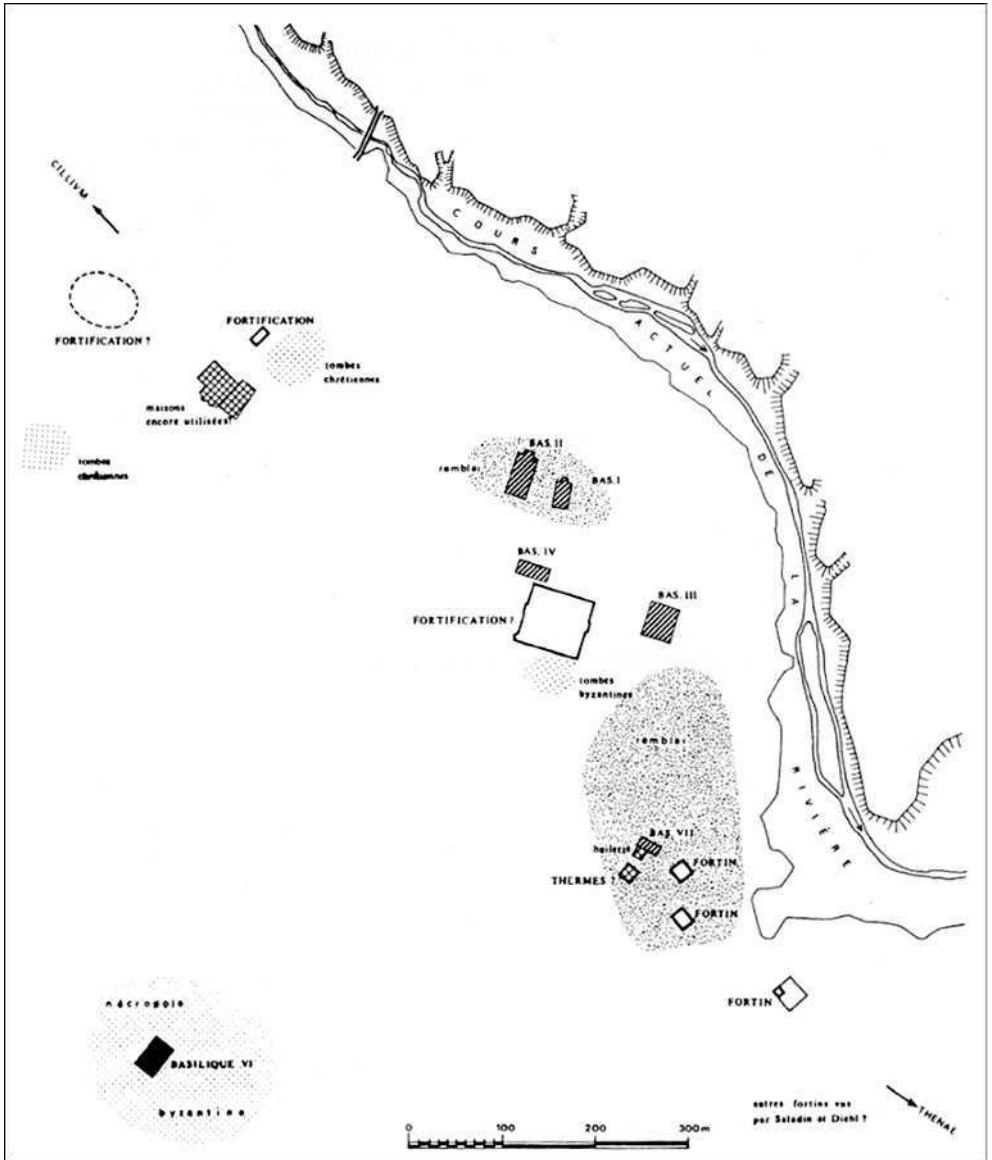


Fig. 2. Plan of late Sufetula—from Duval (1990)

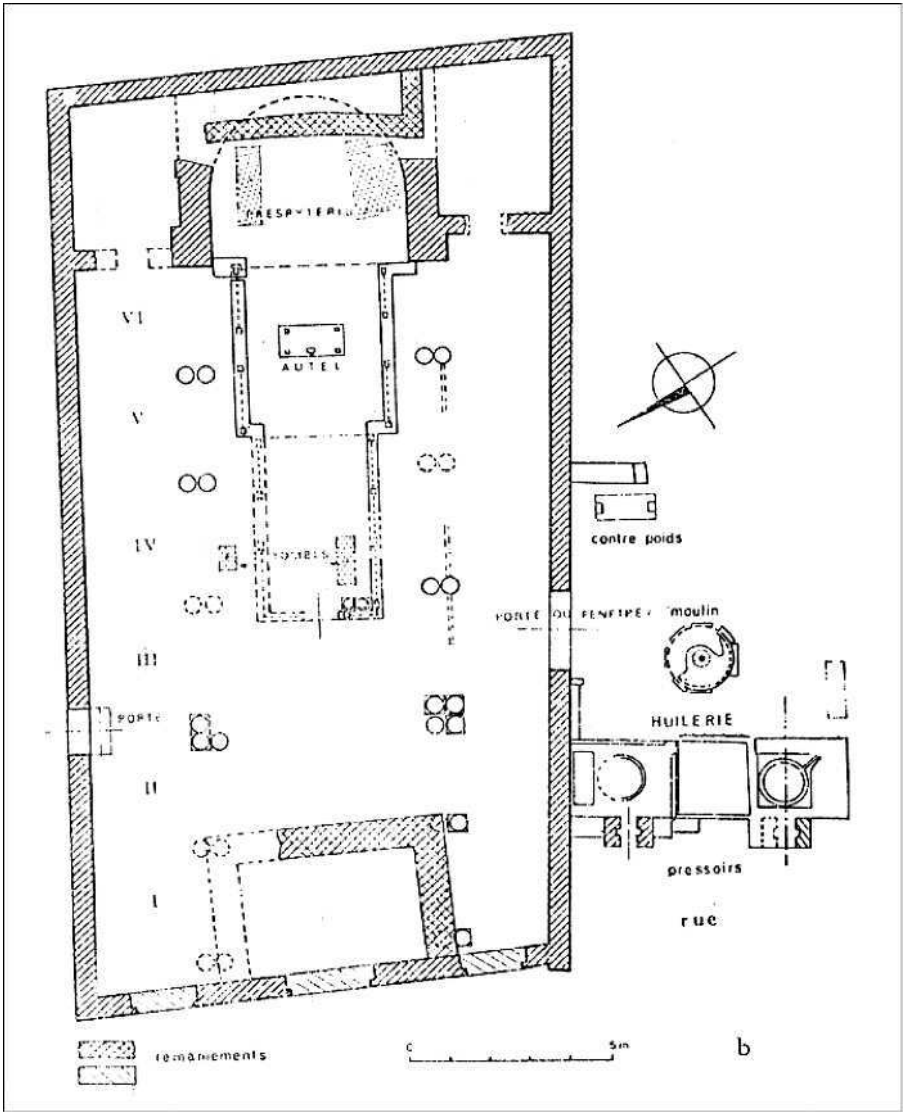


Fig. 3. Plan of the church and olive press—from Duval (1999)

press was annexed to the church in the old forum, inside the Byzantine city wall.³²

Poorly Dated Presses

Poorly dated presses are mainly located in reused public buildings. At Lepcis Magna, a late olive press was placed in the gymnasium of the Hadrianic baths, near the Severan colonnaded street.³³ At Sabratha, in the same province, an olive mill is recorded immediately inside the Byzantine defensive wall.³⁴ At Thurburbo Maius (fig. 8 n° 6) the *Capitolium* and the Temple of Mercury were re-used and an entire new production quarter have been recorded (fig. 4). Evidence of residence/manufacturing has been found along the east side of the *Capitolium* street, where rooms with large jars for storage set into the floor have been discovered.³⁵ In the basement of the *Capitolium*, and nearby, olive presses were found. The area seems to have been in use in the 7th c. and in the Islamic period; a chronological reference point is provided by a 7th c. coin-hoard, containing early 7th c. coins of Phocas and Heraclius. A late chronology is also confirmed by the presence of ARS pottery, decorated with Christian symbols.³⁶ Islamic occupation of the site, is indicated by some pottery fragments probably datable to the 11th c.³⁷ The description of the excavation is not very

³² De Miro (1996) and (1997). The olive press was built against the eastern wall of the Basilica. It was initially dated to the 5th c. A.D.—De Miro (1996)—but was then re-dated to the 6th c.; it was also possibly in use in the 7th c.—De Miro (1997). For the pottery found and the dating evidence see De Miro (1998) 171.

³³ Wilson (2001) n. 41.

³⁴ Wilson (1999).

³⁵ BA map 32 Carthago E4. Archaeological data are not clearly reported. Arab pottery of the 11th c. A.D. seems to have been recorded in the fill of 12 silos in the ground on the south-west between the forum and the Capitolium, Poinssot and Lantier (1925) LXXVII.

³⁶ Description is unclear, Poinssot and Lantier (1925) LXXIX: « ...Dans les maison de basse époque (located on the east on the other side of the rue du Capitole) on été trouvé des restes des grands plats chrétiens à couverture rouge vernissée et décorés de motifs estampés, bœuf, coq, colombe, croix parfois renfermée dans un cœur, et un certain nombre de tessons, les unes ornés d'incisions, les autres de reliefs de peintures ... ». The coins were found in one house: Poinssot and Lantier (1925) LXXIX. Poinssot and Lantier (1925) LXXXIV suggests that these houses (de basse époque) were occupied in the Byzantine period; on the other side, near the Capitolium, it seems they found Islamic period pottery, suggesting occupation at this time. From the report it is hard to define which structures were Byzantine and Islamic.

³⁷ Poinssot and Lantier (1925), Maurin (1967) and Frensd (1983). The dating of



Fig. 4. Thuburbo Maius—Olive press in the Capitulum

precise and it is not possible to understand, for instance, when the olive presses were inserted into the basement of the *Capitolium*. Theoretically, they could belong to any period after the *Capitolium* ceased to be used as a pagan temple.

POTTERY PRODUCTION

Important evidence also comes from pottery production. The two main dated production sites reuse large bath complexes for pottery kilns. They are located in two different provinces: the first producing fine ware at Uthina (fig. 8 n° 4) in Zeugitania, not far from Carthage, and the second, at Leptiminus (fig. 8 n° 12), producing amphorae, on the coast of the province of Byzacena, close to the presumed capital

some of these presses is complicated, because often, sites were occupied or re-occupied after the Islamic conquest, as at Bulla Regia. Here, in the Baths of Julia Memmia, parts of a press dated to the 9th c. were recorded recently: Broise and Thébert (1993) 391.

Hadrumetum (modern Sousse). At Uthina two different areas of pottery production have been identified: one in the reused Baths of the Laberii and another one in the periphery of the town; both kilns produced African red slip pottery and were in use from the second half of the 5th c. until the end of the 7th c. A.D.³⁸ (figs 5-6).

Leptiminus (fig. 7) was already an important production centre in the Roman period. Kilns producing “Africano Grande” amphorae have been recorded across the city and the production of African red slip pottery has been suggested.³⁹ Recent excavations have recorded evidence of industrial activities in the reused East Baths, during the 6th and the 7th c. At this time the structure housed a large production site with activities including butchery, metalworking and glass production;⁴⁰ the most substantial evidence is for amphora production, with the forms Keay LXI, VIIIA, Keay LXII A and E being manufactured here, the latter being probably the one of the latest produced in North Africa following the chronology proposed by Keay.⁴¹ The reuse of baths for pottery production has been recorded also at Carthage in the Antonine baths.⁴² Obviously buildings of this type were particularly adaptable to such a function as they were strong structures, with numerous tanks, and the insertion of kilns was facilitated by the presence of fire-resistant building materials in the heating system.

It is also significant to that the two examples of new production sites cited here are both located along or close to the coast. The Antonine Baths at Carthage (fig. 8 n° 1) are close to the waterfront

³⁸ BA 32 Carthago F2. Barraud *et al.* (1998) 146. Main forms made in Laberii Baths: Hayes 96,97,99B,98,99A: Mackensen (1998).

³⁹ BA 33 Theveste-Hadrumetum G1; Mattingly *et al.* (2000).

⁴⁰ This evidence and the material found in the excavation suggests a very organised production site, perhaps state-controlled. The complex on the north side of the circular harbour at Carthage has been similarly interpreted; this was in use for the whole Byzantine period; imperial control has been proposed here—Hurst (1994) 68 and 93.

⁴¹ For the pottery from the excavation see Dore (2001). On these amphora forms see, in general, Keay (1998). Their presence may indicate olive oil production around the town. Keay has proposed that they were used to transport oil; but there is no direct evidence. They occur most frequently on the Spanish coast, but are common in Italy and Gaul.

⁴² Lézine (1968) 67-73, see 69 particularly. Sadly, we do not have detailed information about the pottery types produced in this sector of the city. A pottery kiln was also set into a bath at Tiddis at some point during medieval times—Lassus (1959) 191.

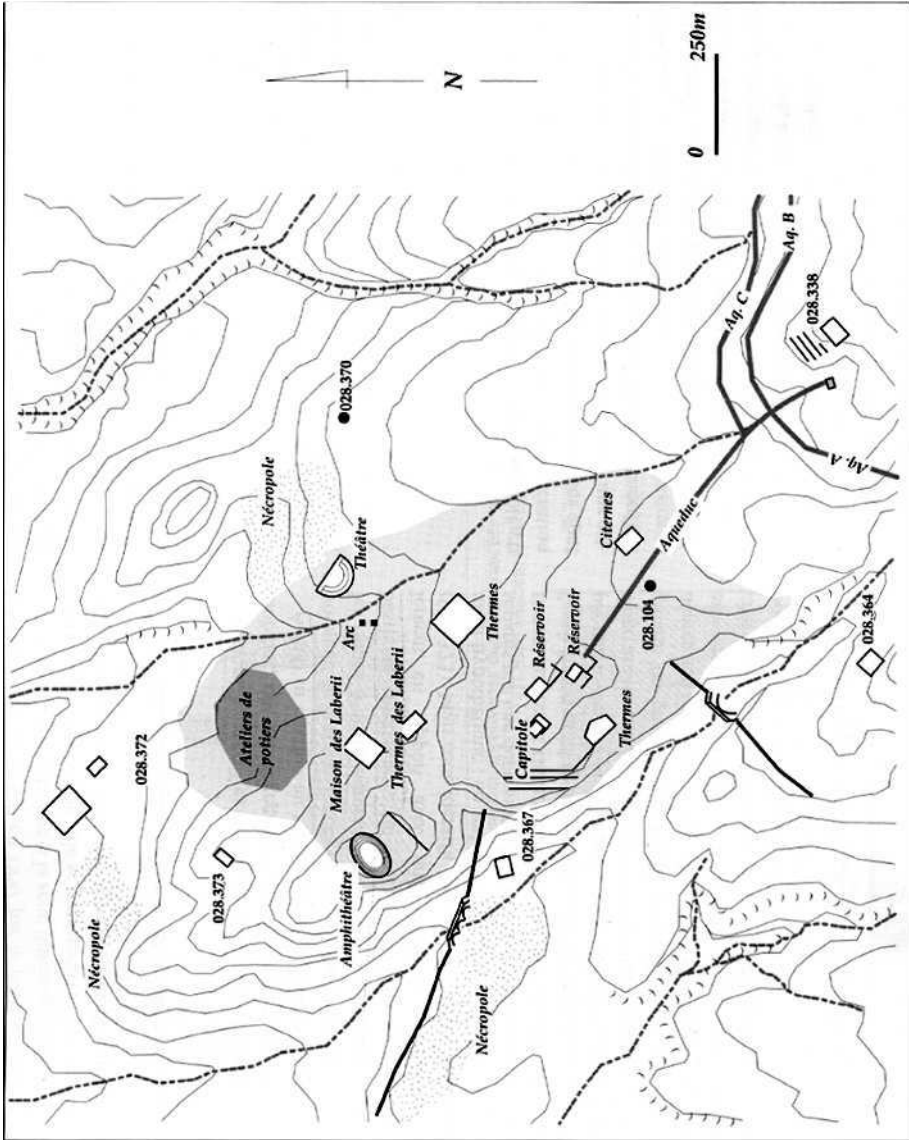


Fig. 5. Plan of Uthina—from Barraud *et al.* (1998)

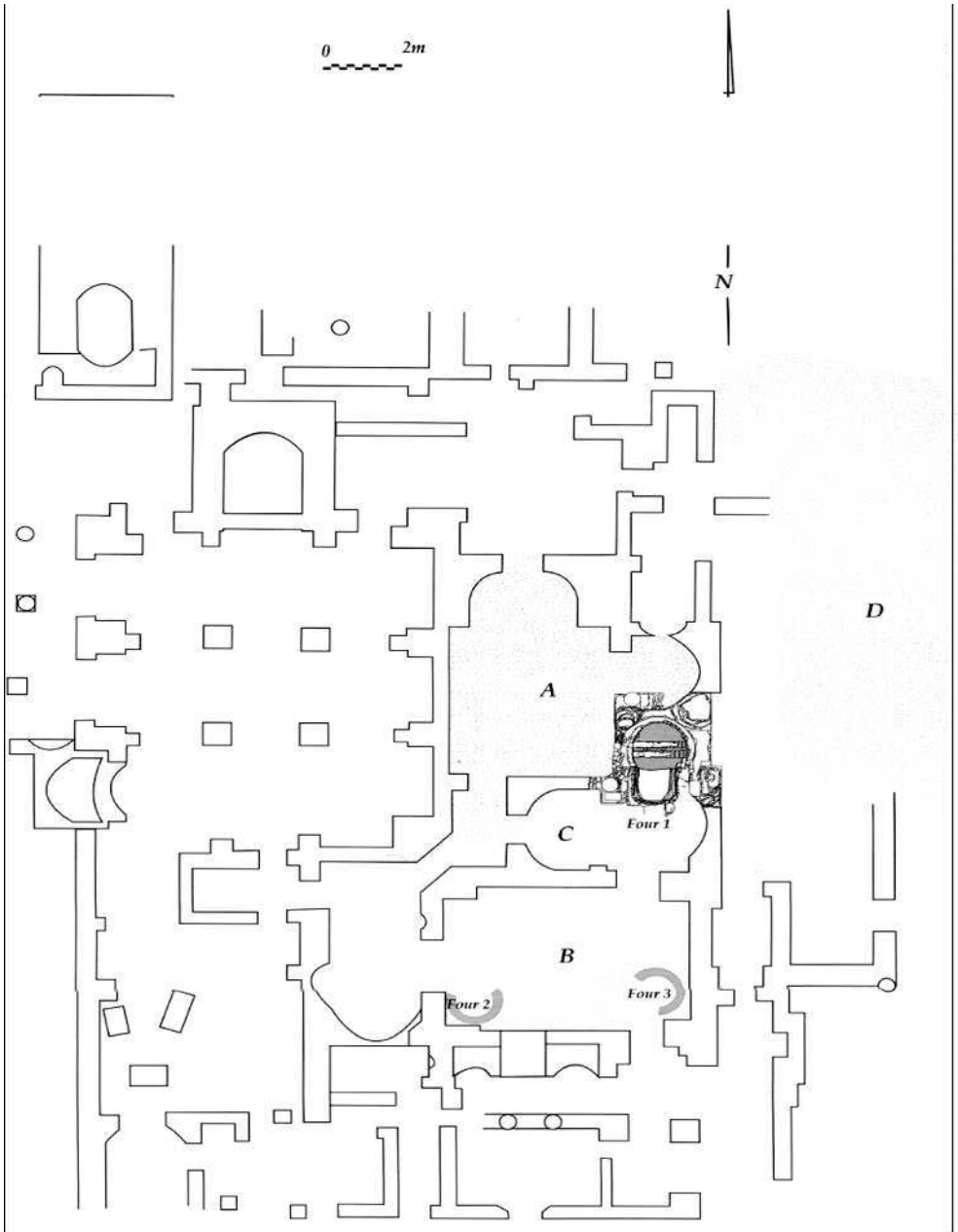


Fig. 6. Uthina—Baths of *Laberii* with location of the pottery kilns—from Barraud *et al.* (1998)

and the East Baths in Leptiminus are close to the harbours.⁴³ Further information from both cities also seems to support a pattern of association. At Leptiminus, Stirling,⁴⁴ anticipating data from the field survey, noted that Roman kiln sites ringed the fringes of Leptiminus; however, from Vandal and especially Byzantine times, they were mainly located along the shore.⁴⁵ A similar trend has been recorded also at Carthage, where an increase in the number of pottery kilns found along the shore is recorded for the late 6th/7th c. A.D.: pottery kilns were found in the vaulted stores and on the quay of the rectangular harbour⁴⁶ and also on the island in the middle of the circular harbour.⁴⁷ The presence of kilns was here closely connected to residential areas. The general situation recorded in the harbours area in Carthage continued in the Islamic period. Lepcis Magna provides similar evidence for the early Islamic period. At this time a pottery kiln associated with houses of the 9th-10th c., has been recorded in the Flavian temple, inside the Byzantine wall, near the shore⁴⁸ and further kilns, associated with houses of the same period have been found in the harbour of the city.⁴⁹

LIME KILNS

One further class of structure remains to be considered: lime kilns. These do represent production, as they were used for making lime for mortar and plaster used in building work. Lime kilns are recorded in both public and private complexes. They have been assigned principally to the Byzantine and Islamic periods, although they are

⁴³ At Uthina, the only inland site with useful information, pottery kilns were mainly located along one main road.

⁴⁴ Stirling (2001) 68-69.

⁴⁵ This evidence is from coastal cities only; that inland appears different: Peacock *et al.* (1989), Peacock *et al.* (1990).

⁴⁶ Humphrey (1980) 99 notes the similarity of changes in the two harbours; both of them were invaded by graves.

⁴⁷ Hurst (1992) 88-89 and Humphrey (1980) 98. It is not firmly established if the kilns date to the 6th or 7th c. A.D.

⁴⁸ Fiandra (1974-75).

⁴⁹ Information provided by M. Munzi and E. Cirelli at the seminar "*Transizione delle città dell'Africa del Nord tra tardo antico ed altomedioevo*" held at the University of Siena, 17 March 2001. See also General notice in Fiandra (1997) 251 and in Laronde (1994) 997.

not well-dated. A good example comes from Sabratha, in Tripolitania, where a domestic quarter was erected around the Temple of the Unknown Divinity, probably in Byzantine times. In the north-west corner of the temple area lime kilns have been found.⁵⁰ The temple was, as attested by archaeological evidence, probably abandoned after an earthquake in A.D. 365 and later reoccupied. At Leptiminus (fig. 8 n° 12) in Byzacena a large number of lime kilns were built over part of the cemetery of site 10, probably in late antique or Islamic times.⁵¹ Another kiln was built in Bulla Regia (fig. 8 n° 2) in the 'Maison de la Chasse', though the chronology is uncertain.⁵² Similar evidence has also been recorded also in the forum of Uchi Maius (fig. 8 n° 3),⁵³ where a lime kiln was established at some point during the 6th c. The forum here had already been transformed into an olive oil production area during the Vandal period (see above), and had thus probably lost its function as a public square (fig. 1). Finally, lime kilns were recorded at Bararus (fig. 8 n° 11), again in the forum of the city, probably dating to the Islamic period; as noted earlier, this sector was inhabited until the 8th-9th c. A.D.⁵⁴ Overall, the only important spatial factors affecting the location of lime kilns appear to be the presence of inhabited areas, though they often favour the centre of cities, close to or in imposing buildings; both public and private structures were invaded by them.

PATTERNS OF LOCATION AND POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS

This paper aimed to explore changes in the location of production activities and to suggest possible reasons for them. In the opening paragraph, significant issues were identified as the intra-urban/peripheral location of artisanal activities, their proximity to residential areas, and the nature of their distribution within cities: either structured

⁵⁰ Joly and Tommasello (1984) 8. In the same area were also found late graves.

⁵¹ Ben Lazreg and Mattingly (1992) 177, fig. 1 179, 190, 195, 201.

⁵² This information was provided by Y. Thébert, whom I thank. He suggested that the kiln could be Islamic. The site is located in the Medjerda valley, near modern Jendouba: *BA* map 32 Carthago C3.

⁵³ Gelichi and Milanese (1998), (1995); Vismara (1999) 74. Uchi Maius is now Henchir ed Douimas: *BA* map 32 Carthago D4.

⁵⁴ Guéry (1981) 99. Insertion of lime kilns is not certainly dated. Now Henchir Rougga, in Byzacena: *BA* map 33 Theveste-Hadrumetum G2.

or random. It has not been possible to study all production activities in these terms. *Garum* and murex dyeing activities did not yield much useful information; however, olive presses, pottery kilns and lime kilns provided enough data to enable some patterns of location/ association to be suggested.

Firstly, there was a tendency for olive oil production, particularly in the later Byzantine period, to occur intermixed with housing within the city walls, often close to a fortified complex and near to a church, to which they were frequently annexed. Secondly, pottery kilns were found in coastal cities, where they were often located along the shore, though only recorded clearly at Leptiminus and possibly at Carthage. Pottery kilns also sometimes re-used bath buildings. Finally, lime kilns were associated with late inhabited areas and seem to be distributed in both public and private buildings in the centres of cities or in imposing structures elsewhere.

In suggesting possible explanations for the distribution of production activities in un-traditional locations, there seem to be three main alternatives. The first is that they represent an ordered evolution of the Late Roman city, with the pragmatic adaptation of redundant public buildings to house production activities, located in relation to traditional commercial pressures; the second alternative is that new locations for craft production relate to new priorities and planned change within urban centres. The third is that they represent a phase of disintegration in the fabric and function of urban settlements. In this process they might have taken on some of the roles and characteristics of sites in the countryside, such as the processing of agricultural produce.

Ordered Evolution

The first alternative seems to relate best to the Vandal and Byzantine periods. During one or both of these periods the traditional manufacturing activities of pottery, and possibly cloth dyeing and *garum* production, continue to be present in cities, as they had been for several hundred years. It is very likely that these activities were still governed by the same commercial location pressures which shaped them during the Roman period. In this respect the possible link between pottery kilns and the seashore during the Byzantine period should be mentioned; this could relate to the necessity of maintaining

easy communications and possibly also the tendency to bottle goods just before export.⁵⁵ The use of bath buildings for kilns from the Byzantine period onwards is also interesting. These buildings offered ready-made fire-proof structures and could be pragmatically adapted. Artisans may have chosen these sites because a privatisation of large numbers of public buildings and public spaces made available many advantageous locations that could be exploited.

The hypothesis of a privatisation of public space is based on a correlation between the beginning of the transformation of public areas of the classical cities into private spaces and the occupation of Tunisia by the Vandals.⁵⁶ The occupation of the forum of Uchi Maius with housing at this time is not an isolated case.⁵⁷ Unfortunately dated archaeological evidence is rare, and it can only be said that the phenomenon of private occupation of public areas has been recorded at various sites in Tunisia starting from the 5th c. onwards. For instance, the forum of Belalis Maior⁵⁸ was transformed into an area of housing; similar evidence is recorded along the *cardo maximus* at Carthage⁵⁹ or in the forum in Bararus.⁶⁰ Many traditional public buildings were abandoned and destroyed, then transformed to serve three main different functions: as areas of private housing, as funerary complexes, such as the theatre of Carthage,⁶¹ or as production sites,

⁵⁵ It is unlikely that the location close to the sea shore relates to the need to obtain salt water for pottery production, as this has been equally important during the early Roman period. The importance of salt water in pottery manufacture in North Africa has been suggested by Peacock (1984b) 263-64.

⁵⁶ The privatisation of public space provides a legal context for the establishment of production sites within Late Antiquity. Several studies related to the 'privatisation' of public buildings have been produced recently, in an attempt to reconstruct the stages of this phenomenon. Book 15 of the *Codex Theodosianus* provides many legal references to the control of public structures: Janvier (1969). For a general synthesis see Saradi Mendelovici (1990). For a collection of the sources: Cantino Wataghin (1999) 735. Sadly, we have no evidence for Vandal times.

⁵⁷ An inhabited quarter also developed around the area of the forum: Vismara (1999) 73-74.

⁵⁸ Mahjoubi (1978) 252. See Thébert (1983) 111.

⁵⁹ Deneauve and Villedieu (1977) 98; Deneauve and Villedieu (1979) 151 : generally dated to the 5th, 6th or 7th c. A.D. Not all public buildings at Carthage lost their original function. We know for instance that while the theatre and the bath were abandoned, the circus and the amphitheatre continued to be in use.

⁶⁰ Guéry (1981) 97: evidence of a floor of a possible house dated between the 4th or the 5th c. has been recorded in the forum. Then in the late 6th c. a house was built against the portico and some time in the 7th c., a fortress was built.

⁶¹ Destruction upon the Vandal capture was followed by poor housing, then graves : Picard and Baillon (1992) 13.

as in the case of Uchi Maius. It is difficult to re-construct the process of transformation of these areas/structures in the Vandal period. It is possible that there was an ordered transfer of public areas to private ownership as part of the re-organisation of landholding by the Vandal state, characterised by extensive confiscations and re-distributions,⁶² which took place in the 5th c. Alternatively (and more likely), buildings may have been simply abandoned and their ownership usurped. Unfortunately textual sources do not permit us to clarify this. In any case, a large number of potential buildings became available inside an already existing and still densely inhabited urban texture. It is therefore likely that at least some of the unusual locations for craft production relate to the pragmatic adaptation of old urban environments to new priorities; this does not, however, necessarily signal any kind of economic changes in the roles of cities.

A New Urban Organisation?

Other aspects of the productive evidence cannot be explained in terms of a pragmatic evolution of the classical city, but suggest that elements of a new urban organisation were developing. The connection between religious complexes and olive oil production structures, often adjoined, falls into this category, especially from the end of the 6th c. A.D. This might suggest that there was a deliberate connection between the presses and the Church. Recent studies have shown a connection between productive centres (for pottery, glass, bricks, etc.) and churches in different parts of the Roman Empire, such as at Torcello, Tebe (Teassaglia), Florence, Cornus (Sardinia), Caričin Grad (Serbia).⁶³

⁶² Courtois (1955) 278 suggests that these re-distributions were widespread. In the *Vita Fulgentii* (1) it is specifically stated that large confiscations and re-organisations took place in Zeugitania. Procopius (*Vand.* 2.6.9) however, does not make any geographical distinction, but (*Vand.* 1.5.12) clearly attests to exemption from taxes of all Vandal properties and reports that Geiseric destroyed all the documents relating to tax collection that had been in use in Late Roman times (*Vand.* 2.8.25). It is not clear from this whether tax payments continued under the Vandals or not; Courtois (1955) 258 suggests that they probably continued. We do not know whether production activities, located in former public buildings/areas, were controlled by the State or not, or if a production system controlled by the State survived in this century. Archaeological evidence seems in one case to suggest the absence of a centralised organisation, as for instance the circular harbour in Carthage, a focal point for the state oil collection and re-distribution at least from the 4th c. A.D.—Peña (1998)—was abandoned.

⁶³ For a detailed collection of all this data see Martorelli (1999).

This evidence cannot exclude the idea that the church played a significant role in the organisation both of production activities and of public space, at least in the later Byzantine period when this association seems to have been more common. This connection between the Church and olive oil presses could be interpreted as indicating that olive oil production was undertaken in a well-regulated fashion during the Byzantine period. The association of Byzantine presses with not just churches but fortresses also suggests that at least during this period production may have been consciously regulated in an urban setting by political or religious authorities. Government regulation of artisanal activity is also suggested by the well-organised production centres recorded at Carthage and Leptiminus. It is possible that a significant quantity of olive oil was still destined for export. Moreover, it has also been suggested that the re-location of olive presses in urban areas was probably connected with an increased necessity to control rural oil production.⁶⁴ Only further work, on the scale and organisation of rural production and on oil amphorae exported from Africa to other regions in this period, will help to advance this question further.

Urban Decay

Thus far, it has been suggested that changes in the location of production may relate to fairly structured processes. However, at least part of the evidence could also be seen as reflecting disintegration in the fabric and function of urban settlements. The location of lime kilns within public and private structures in city centres, their lack of respect for the traditional urban framework of antiquity and their association with areas of habitation suggest that they were connected with the spoliation (burning marble for lime) and indeed the destruction of the monumental fabric of African cities for primarily domestic building, not significant public or private projects. Unfortunately, imprecise dating does not permit us to assign a larger number of lime kilns to either the Byzantine or Islamic periods, preventing further analysis; even so, lime kilns seem to represent positive evidence of decay in the urban fabric.

The location of installations for the processing of agricultural produce within urban areas, dating mostly from the late 6th c., was

⁶⁴ Roskams (1994) 4.

not very common prior to Late Antiquity and seems at least in part to be related to changes in the function of urban settlements. Nevertheless, it does appear that some presses, especially those well-dated to the Byzantine period, can be associated with churches. Later, by the 8th/9th c. it seems that cities were still occupied by olive oil presses, distributed widely across urban areas, as for instance at Thurburbo Maius, or Belalis Maior. Recently, for instance, a screw olive press, in use in the Islamic period, has been found in the so-called 'Basilica of Carthagenna' at Carthage.⁶⁵ Two other elements belonging to the same kind of press were found on the Byrsa hill and in the Antonine baths, suggesting that perhaps, in the Islamic period, olive oil was also being produced in these parts of Carthage. This evidence supports a possible less ordered view of olive oil production, with household units in the Arab period. As such, the location of these presses could be interpreted as indicating a progressive convergence of the roles of villages and cities. It is also possible that zones of cultivation developed inside urban areas. At Carthage, archaeological evidence for cultivated sectors in the Byzantine period on the edge of the city,⁶⁶ seems to suggest the existence of small sectors, rather than extensive cultivation, probably for the self-subsistence of the inhabitants.⁶⁷

Major alterations in urban structure can also be detected from the later Byzantine period. Cities now seem to have been reduced to small inhabited nuclei characterised by the presence of a church and a production site, often connected to a fortified complex.⁶⁸ This

⁶⁵ Ennabli L. (2000) 129-30. The screw press is unknown until this date in Tunisia and Tripolitania, though it is possible that screw presses might have been used before the Islamic period; in Morocco they are recorded from the 3rd c. A.D. It is very hard to reconstruct the organisation of Islamic Carthage, principally because of the loss of evidence caused by clearance excavators in the earlier 20th c. Islamic evidence for the city has been assembled by Vitelli (1981).

⁶⁶ e.g.: see the Av. Bourguiba Salamboo quarter, in the southern periphery of the city, close to the city wall, where a production complex, probably related to a house, was built at the beginning of the 7th c.: Hurst and Roskams (1984).

⁶⁷ The presence of cultivated plots in Rome has been recorded recently in the excavations of the Imperial Fora. See in general and for further bibliography: Meneghini (2000a), (2000b), Santangeli Valenzani (2000).

⁶⁸ This evidence has been outlined clearly for Sufetula—Duval (1990) 512-13. The nuclei can include *horrea* as in the case for instance of the Basilica Juvenes in Mactar. We have no evidence to determine the official status of such sites, though they appear to be structured; it is possible that they were meeting places and occasional places of exchange.

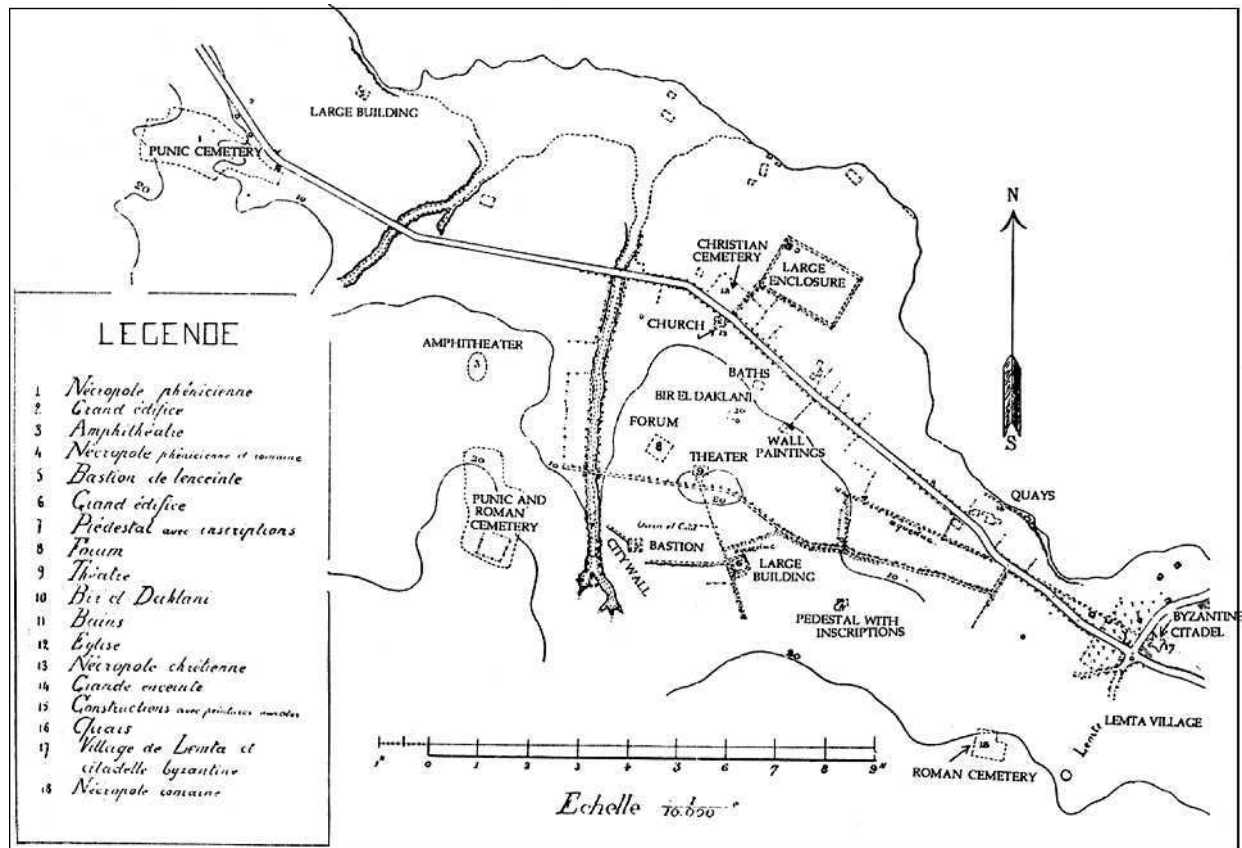


Fig. 7. Plan of Leptiminus—from Ben Lazreg and Mattingly (1992). For fig. 8 see plates.

phenomenon is recorded in particular from the later Byzantine periods, attested by the case of Sbeitla (fig.2) and probably continued in the early Islamic period; it can perhaps be explained as a consequence of insecurity and the desire to protect both machinery and goods produced. It is also possible that the location of pottery kilns along the shore at Leptiminus and Carthage may also be due to a desire of the manufacturers to be close to the fortified enclosure, as city contracted to a narrow zone along the coast (fig.7).⁶⁹ At Lepcis Magna early Islamic kilns have been recorded in the Flavian temple, located inside the Byzantine wall close to the shore.⁷⁰ At both Carthage, Lepcis and possibly in Leptiminus, the location of the pottery kilns along the shore also corresponds to the presence of inhabited sectors in the same zones, suggesting that production and residential areas were progressively intermixed, both located along the coasts and the landing places.

CONCLUSIONS

The evidence considered here has shown that there are patterns to the re-location of production activities in late antique urban landscapes. Nevertheless, in evaluating their significance to late antique urbanism two points must be borne in mind. Firstly, although similar urban phenomena were experienced in many parts of the Mediterranean during Late Antiquity, the chronologies of these changes vary greatly and are best considered primarily in a regional, or sub-regional, context.⁷¹ Secondly, it must be stressed that individual cities often experienced quite different processes of de-structuring and re-structuring; this limits the extent to which generalisations can be made. Thus, the comments made here relate strictly to Tunisia and

⁶⁹ It is not possible to exclude this aspect (as the evidence of the relics transferred probably from the Basilica Maiorum—located in the northern suburb of the city—in the 7th c. to the southern part of the city to the church of Bir el Knissia seems to suggest—Stevens (1995)—was connected with the presence of an important inhabited area displayed around the harbours in this century. Destruction in the 19th/20th c. especially in the south of Carthage does not allow further data to be obtained to evaluate this evidence.

⁷⁰ Fiandra (1974-75). See above on 'Pottery Kilns'. Here too the Byzantine city was along the shore, by the harbours.

⁷¹ Gelichi and Milanese (1998) 478.

Tripolitania, and are advanced tentatively, and only so far as the fragmentary and poorly dated archaeological evidence allows. Here, further detailed survey and excavation work is needed to advance the subject. Studies in other regions, especially Asia Minor and the Levant, where late antique and early Medieval urban landscapes are relatively well-preserved, would also help to put the African evidence in context.

Because of these limitations, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions. However, the North African evidence does suggest that the establishment of production sites in unusual settings should not universally be interpreted as part of urban decay. The locations of production centres might still relate to the practical commercial choices made by artisans over several hundred years. Others might reflect changes in the political organisation of production, such as perhaps can be seen in the association of olive presses with churches, or a desire for security, as seen in their proximity to fortifications.

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY AND VISUALISATION: THE VIEW FROM BYZANTIUM

RICHARD BAYLISS

ABSTRACT

This paper will explore the relationship between the methodologies used in archaeology for recording buildings and landscapes and the development of computer visualisation technology, with specific reference to late antique and Byzantine archaeology. The principal aim is to highlight the applicability of visualisation technologies as the critical solutions to the presentation and investigation of survey data and reciprocally to demonstrate that meaningful computer visualisations benefit from a secure underpinning of archaeological survey data. My intention is to show that computer visualisation should not be seen solely as a vehicle for archaeological reconstruction but rather can be viewed as an integral part of the process of interpretation. The first of two case studies is the Anastasian Wall Project, a survey of a massive linear fortification in Turkish Thrace, which presented a series of practical problems both in terms of data capture and representation. The applicability of computer-based techniques for the integration and visualisation of various forms of survey data will be further investigated through the study of the Alacami, a multi-period Byzantine church in Cilicia, before some final comment is made on the current and potential roles of computer visualisation in Byzantine archaeology.

INTRODUCTION: THE ETHICS OF VISUALISATION

For most of us, our knowledge of the role of computer visualisation in archaeology has been formulated by exposure to the high-budget animated sequences that are now an essential part of any respectable television documentary. The sterile, polygonal and uninhabited computer-generated scenes experienced by the audiences of the early 1990s, have been replaced by deeply textured ancient environments occupied by realistic (or at least mobile) characters. This

has had a tremendous impact on public perceptions and expectations of archaeology in general.

The vital link between archaeological interpretation and the representation of an archaeological site is therefore increasingly under threat, as graphical ideals take precedence over historical reality. The pursuit of a perceived reality in computer visualisation has also inevitably led to additional compromises in the historical and archaeological integrity of computer visualisation methodologies. Equally, computer visualisation in archaeology has developed with a pace that has effectively outstripped significant academic debate on the ethics and theoretical basis of its applicability.¹ The awesome possibilities of computer reconstruction and visualisation techniques and the speed of their development have therefore initiated something of an abandonment of conscience over matters of authenticity and the ethics of definitive representation. In Alan Sorrell's famously murky illustrations of reconstructed landscapes, areas of uncertainty were obscured with either thick smog or a deeper gloom. Attempts to convey such uncertainties within virtual worlds or computer visualisations have thus far been limited.² Although some are now actively encouraging the abandonment of realism, recent publications on virtual archaeology clearly demonstrate that many others continue to seek its justification.³

To further compound the problem, techniques of visualisation have now achieved a level of complexity that is beyond the abilities of many archaeologists either to comprehend or to employ and the responsibility for their implementation and development has moved more firmly into the realm of the computer science and the graphics industry.⁴ Hence we tend to find that computer visualisation technologies are employed as an adjunct or by-project of archaeo-

¹ For the key problems of archaeological visualisation see Miller and Richards (1995), Ryan (1996) and Eiteljorg (2000). The most active advocate of theory in archaeological visualisation has been Mark Gillings (see various references in bibliography including work with G. Goodrick). My thanks to James Crow and Glyn Goodrick for their comments on the final drafts of this paper.

² Sorrell (1981) and his reconstruction painting of 9th-11th century Constantinople in Talbot Rice (1969) 120. The exception is the work on hyperreality in VR, see Goodrick and Gillings (2000).

³ Forte and Siliotti (1997), Barceló, Forte and Sanders (1998) and various papers in Fisher and Unwin (2002).

⁴ This is demonstrated by the complexity and diversity of data acquisition and visualisation techniques outlined in Barceló (1998).

logical research rather than as an integral part. This marginalisation of archaeological research agendas has done much to exacerbate academic scepticism over the potential role of these techniques within 'serious' archaeology. Interestingly, this problem was recognised as far back as 1993, by the then departing Chairman of the *Computer Applications in Archaeology* (CAA) association.⁵ Those were the halcyon days of computer archaeology when geographical information systems (GIS) were the answer to every archaeologist's prayers and future archaeologists were to be afforded great benefits from full immersion within virtual worlds.⁶ Such utopian ideals have more recently diminished and while GIS has undoubtedly found its niche in archaeology, the status of computer visualisation and virtual reality (VR) is as yet unproven.⁷

This paper aims to introduce the concepts, techniques and ethics of computer visualisation to late antique and Byzantine archaeologists, through the critical discussion of two Byzantine-period field-work projects in which computer-based methodologies have formed an integral part: the Anastasian Wall Project and the Alacami Project. The context and surviving composition of these structures could not be more different: one, a landscape study of monumental linear engineering works surviving in deep forest, the other a highly detailed survey of a multi-period basilica on the edge of a Turkish town. The survey methodologies for both of these projects will be outlined and I will show how computer visualisations can be and should be derived from this primary archaeological data. Through the use of these case studies I will also emphasise the importance of ethical portrayal in computer visualisation and at the same time show how such techniques can be employed as fundamental interpretative elements of a research programme. Finally, I hope this paper will demonstrate how effective results can be achieved using relatively straightforward techniques and software, allowing archaeologists themselves to adopt a more significant role in their implementation.

⁵ Reilly (1995).

⁶ Miller (1996).

⁷ For a critical look at utopianism in computer archaeology see Huggett (2000).

THE ANASTASIAN WALL PROJECT

By A.D. 400 the wealth and population of the Emperor Constantine's new city on the Bosphorus was fast approaching that of Rome. As the population of the city expanded, so did the requirements and expectations of its inhabitants. This led to a proliferation of building activities, which, in a mere 200 years, saw the construction within the city of a palimpsest of affluent public and private structures. The early 5th c. Theodosian Walls of the city separated populated Constantinople from its immediate hinterland and provided an enduring defence against would-be assailants. The deteriorating situation in the Balkans prompted the emperor Anastasius (491-518) to commission the construction of an additional, outer fortification, some 65 km to the west of the city walls. The Anastasian Wall is over 56 km long and traversed the hills of central Thrace from the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmara. It was undoubtedly a massive achievement of engineering, requiring substantial human and financial resources, intended to protect the city and its hinterland from all but a naval assault (fig. 1).⁸

The Anastasian Wall Project began in 1994 with the aim of producing a record of this great early-6th c. outer fortification. However, this detailed survey was part of a broader strategy, in which study of the city's hinterland would contribute to a fuller understanding of the city itself. In addition to the survey of the Wall, therefore, project researchers began an investigation of the water supply system for the Byzantine city, extensive evidence for which survives in the vicinity of the Wall. The pre-Constantinian water supply system was clearly inadequate for the sustenance of the rapidly expanded city, and thus a new system was begun under Constantius II, which within a hundred years probably rivalled that of Rome as the most extensive aqueduct system in the ancient world.⁹ The main branch of the system—the completion of which was celebrated during the reign of the emperor Valens—was a staggering 250 km long, nearly three times the length of Rome's longest aqueduct, the Aqua Marcia. The remains of this endeavour survive in the dense forests of Thrace

⁸ The principal publication on the Anastasian Wall is by Crow and Ricci (1997). Fieldwork reports have appeared from 1995-2001 in the *Bulletin of British Byzantine Studies* and *Anatolian Archaeology*. See also the website http://museums.ncl.ac.uk/long_walls/index.html.

⁹ Bayliss and Crow (2000) and Bono, Crow and Bayliss (2001). This research is undertaken in collaboration with Professor Paolo Bono (hydrogeologist) of "La Sapienza" University, Rome.

in the form of impressive bridges, sub-surface channels and several long and deep tunnels. Within the city the channel passed over the water bridge known as the Aqueduct of Valens, which at nearly a kilometre in length is still a prominent feature within modern Istanbul. Within the walls of the city nearly a hundred Byzantine cisterns have been identified, including three giant open-air reservoirs and several substantial covered cisterns in the vicinity of the urban centre. This research into the water supply of the city was a natural continuation of the Anastasian Wall Project, particularly in terms of the survey methodology which was required to provide precision over the large geographical area of Turkish Thrace.

Survey Methodology

In 1994, whilst standing on top of a high exposed hill known as Kuşkaya in central Turkish Thrace, the directors of the Anastasian Wall Project surveyed the scene below. To the north and south, the Wall could be seen snaking off towards the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara respectively. ‘How do we begin to survey such a thing?’, they asked. What they were looking at however was not the Wall itself, but its familiar signature within the dense forests: an elevated band of trees that grew along the top of the Wall mound, visible as a dark-green linear shadow within the otherwise monolithic panorama (fig. 2).

The difficulties presented by this harsh forested terrain had contributed significantly to the limited nature of previous research and publication on the Wall and the water supply system. Consequently our understanding of their composition and context was piecemeal and cursory. Despite the limited budget, small field-working team and the often-underestimated problematics of working abroad, the team were nevertheless able to implement an integrated methodology to produce an archaeological record of the remains of these substantial engineering works. These included terrestrial (Total Station) and GPS (Global Positioning System) survey techniques, hydrogeological investigation and hydrological analysis on the water channels and spring sources, database and GIS (Geographical Information System) resource management, geophysical survey and more traditional techniques where appropriate. In addition, by applying techniques of computer visualisation to our survey data we have been able to see, for the first time, the physical impact of the Wall on its surrounding topographic context (fig. 3).

The field methodology of the project has developed significantly since the project began in 1994. The survey commenced with modest ambitions, with detailed Total Station surveys in two relatively accessible areas, at Derviş Kapı near the centre of the Wall and towards the northern end in the Evcik sector (fig. 1). In both areas the survey team systematically recorded surviving facing blocks and the core of the Wall. Where neither was visible, the top and bottom of the Wall earthwork was recorded, unless accessibility was significantly confounded by vegetation, in which case a single line of points simply marking the route of the Wall was recorded. At the same time a condition survey was carried out and referenced to the Total Station survey to produce a complete assessment document of the Wall within the survey zone.

As well as the Wall itself, a series of outworks were surveyed around Derviş Kapı, where a substantial outer ditch and counter-scarp were recorded in detail (fig. 4). No additional defences were found on the northern sector of the Wall, where the ground in front of the wall sloped away considerably, presumably rendering outworks superfluous. Both surveys were continued in subsequent seasons as forest clearance by the Ministry of Forestry (Orman Bakanlığı) opened up new areas for investigation. This same methodology of detailed position and condition survey following forest clearance was applied to several other zones along the Wall. Only on two occasions did the research aims require independent forest clearance, most notably for the survey of a surviving Wall fort, the Büyük Bedesten, carried out in collaboration with a local workforce in 1998.

The increased availability and improved efficiency of GPS equipment through the 1990s has allowed us to integrate the disparate and disconnected terrestrial survey zones on a single co-ordinate system to centimetre accuracy.¹⁰ In addition, it has proved crucial for the elucidation of the water supply system, which required reliable measurement of the relative elevation of water channels over very large distances. Thus we have been able to transform the entire positional data set for both the Anastasian Wall and the water supply system into a WGS-84 co-ordinate system. These geographic coordinates can therefore be projected onto either the Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) Zone 35 North grid, used in the Turk-

¹⁰ Perhaps the most significant development was the removal of Selective Availability (the intentional degradation of GPS signals) in May 2000, meaning that civilian users of GPS can now achieve much higher accuracy positioning than was previously possible (Satirapod, Rizos and Wang (2001)).

ish national mapping programme, or onto the Mediterranean Grid, used on the 1943 British topographical map series of Thrace (1:25000).¹¹

Visualisation on the Anastasian Wall

Around 75% of the Anastasian Wall is buried deep within the forests of central Turkish Thrace making it extremely difficult to conceptualise the physical relationship between the monument and its landscape context. The data acquisition strategy outlined above was clearly only one step towards the production of a legible record of the Wall and water supply system, but presentation of the data in a meaningful way remained problematic. A simple line on a small-scale map clearly would not allow adequate representation of the structure and the details of the Wall. On the other hand, to show the detail of the monument at a larger scale would require a series of fragmented and potentially confusing plans. Although both techniques were employed with relative success it was felt that neither gave a satisfactory overall impression of the Wall.

In addition to the above, opportunities to obtain general perspective photographs of the Wall were extremely limited. Our photographic archive comprises mainly close-quarter shots of masonry fragments protruding from deep undergrowth, with the occasional broad panorama of the Wall's most visible signature: the aforementioned elevated line of trees (fig. 2). However, the digital data acquisition strategies have enabled us to employ computer visualisation techniques to provide solutions. An oblique aerial view of a rendered digital terrain model (DTM) clearly allows a broader perception of the Wall in relation to its surrounding landscape (fig. 3).

Map, Survey and Model

The major challenge in producing a landscape visualisation of the Wall was that of gaining appropriate levels of detail for both the immediate Wall corridor and the broader topographical context. The detailed data was collected over three seasons (1994-6) using Total Station surveying instruments. This included a full record of the surviving remains of the Wall, both face and core, along a 3 km stretch extending either side of the major road crossing at Derviş Kapı, together with a detailed survey of the immediate topograph-

¹¹ British Library reference: MAPS 43986.1 (M.D.R. 629).

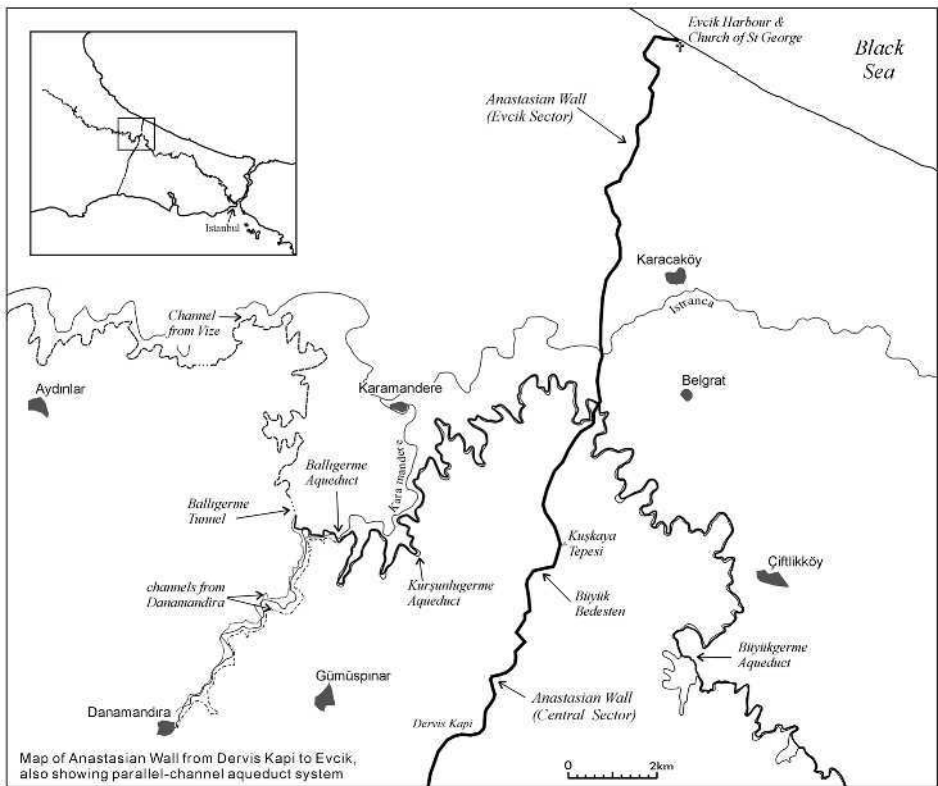


Fig. 1. Map of Thrace showing the Anastasian Wall and the long-distance water supply system. For figs 2-3 see plates.

ical context of the Wall, including its outworks (fig. 4). This was our most intensive zone of survey on the Wall and thus provided a viable data set for visualisation. A broader context of around 16 km was subsequently digitised using intelligent point selection from a single 1:25000 map of the region.

LSS survey software was used to generate digital terrain models (as triangulated irregular networks or TINs) of both the map and terrestrial data.¹² This data was transferred directly into AutoCAD® and geo-referenced using common control points within the two data sets. The potential variation between the quality of the data from the 1:25000 maps and that of the micro-topographic point data close

¹² LSS survey software is produced by McCarthy Taylor Partnership (www.mccarthytaylor.com).

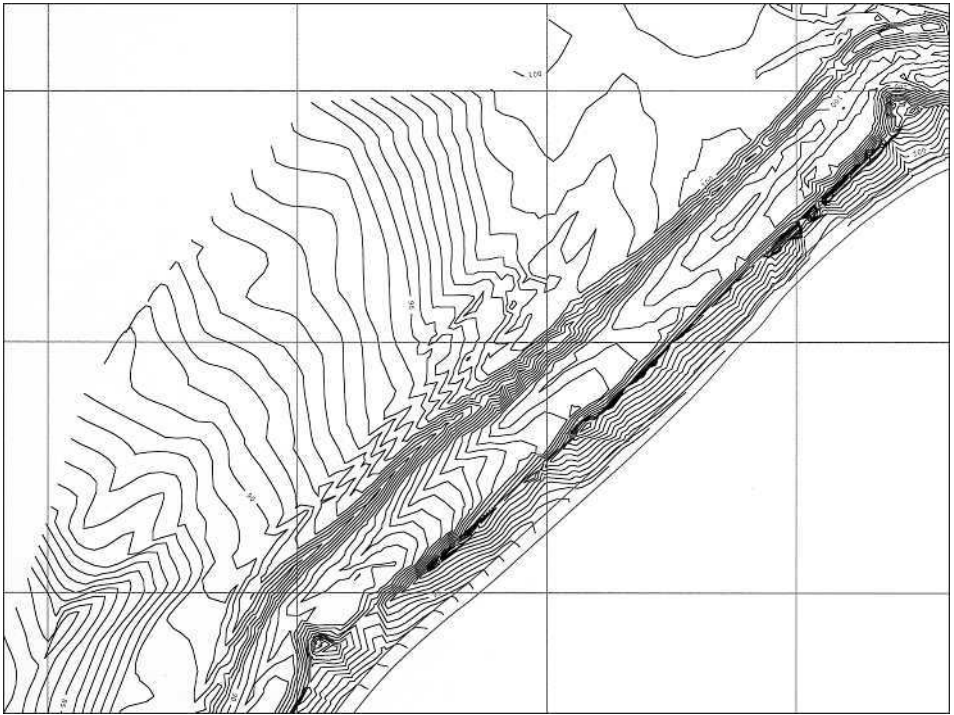


Fig. 4. Topographical survey of the Anastasian Wall at Derviş Kapı (100 m grid). For figs 5-10 see plates.

to the Wall was obviously a serious consideration, but the boundaries between the two were unexpectedly contiguous. It was then possible to employ the survey of the surviving facing blocks and core as a footprint for modelling the Wall (fig. 3).¹³

The model of the Wall remains relatively crude, as the priority was not to reconstruct, but to provide a context for data that had been collected directly from the surviving monument. The height and appearance of the Wall remains a major question and presented the sole element of 'reconstruction' in the model. There are very few surviving linear fortifications from which comparisons could be drawn, but many 6th c. urban circuits are known throughout the

¹³ These post-survey techniques were devised and implemented by the author, with the assistance of Glyn Goodrick and Mark Jackson of the Department of Archaeology, Newcastle University. For a detailed explanation of 3d model creation and visualisation see Barceló (1998).

eastern Mediterranean. After considerable deliberation therefore, a height of c. 12 m was adopted based on near-contemporary parallels at Resafa and Dara on the eastern frontier.¹⁴ The positions of windows/loopholes on the towers are equally an unknown factor, and although several substantial gateways and posterns have been found at various places in the central and northern sectors they are too few to suggest a consistent system. It was only recently that the remains of merlons were found within the Wall debris, thus enabling us to suggest that the Wall was crenellated: a feature that could previously have been supposed, but not substantiated. These elements were therefore largely omitted from the model.

To obtain approximated photo-realistic textures a standard 'ashlar wall' texture map was composed from photographs of the Wall and applied to all the visible surfaces of the Wall model using Accurender[®] raytrace and radiosity software, which works directly within AutoCAD[®].¹⁵ Environmental components of the model, such as the landscape texture, lighting and background were defined and renderings were produced from a variety of viewpoints.¹⁶ The processed images give an impression of the Wall's impact on its landscape context that is clearly not bound by the aforementioned limitations of scale. In addition, the viewer gains an oblique perspective on the arrangement of the forts and an appreciation of the varieties of tower forms present on this stretch of Wall. The viewer is thereby presented with a perspective of the Wall that is impossible to obtain today through other aerial means due to the dense forest coverage.

Limitations of the Wall Model

There are several representational limitations of this image that must be considered. In the first instance, it should be remembered that the topographical survey data represents a modern ground surface, so the banks will have been eroded and the ditches gradually infilled since their original construction. The juxtaposition of this data with the Wall—reconstructed to a hypothetical 6th c. phase—therefore creates something of a visual illusion, an uncomfortable combination of modern actuality with speculation on the past. A second area

¹⁴ Karnapp (1976), Croke and Crow (1983).

¹⁵ Accurender is produced by Robert McNeel & Associates (www.accurender.com).

¹⁶ For the principles of raytrace and radiosity rendering see Barceló (1998) 21. The significance and implementation of photo-realism is discussed in Chalmers and Stoddart (1996).

of difficulty relates to the broader composition of this modern landscape and the integration of the high-resolution survey data with the low-resolution map data. The survey data represents the surface morphology at ground level. However, the map data is derived from aerial photogrammetry and is therefore more representative of the forest canopy than the ground surface. This factor also made it difficult to decide on a suitable surface texture for the landscape and ultimately a generic grass-like texture was adopted, giving the landscape the unfortunate appearance of a freshly mown lawn, but avoiding over-complication of the visualisation. The compositional elements of the visualisation are therefore wholly abstract, somewhat contradictory and perhaps slightly misleading. However, given the intention of the visualisation project (to provide a broad perspective on the Wall within a landscape context stripped of vegetation), the effect of these incongruities is relatively marginal.

The Fort in the Forest

Similar techniques were employed to produce a visualisation from the results of a micro-topographic survey on the best-preserved fort on the Wall, known as the Büyük Bedesten (fig. 5). However, in this case the visualisation of the fort was designed solely as a means of providing a representation of the survey data and no reconstruction was attempted. Hence this visualisation essentially acts as a primary archaeological record and not as an attempt to provide interpretation (fig. 6).

The principal elements of the visualisation are the digital terrain model generated from the survey data, the surviving walls of the fort, the fallen blocks from the collapsed walls and the broader topographical context. Masonry was only modelled to its actual surviving height and was provided with photo-realistic textures from on-site photographic documentation. The positions of the fallen blocks were recorded with a single point during the survey. The random block effect seen on the visualisation was achieved by creating several versions of a solid block with different rotations and randomly applying them to the recorded positions. The forested backdrop was created using Vistapro 3.10 and represents the area for which survey data was not gathered.

The surrounding landscape (with the essential scale and north arrow) is the only element of the visualisation that could be described as fictitious. The image does not therefore demonstrate how the fort *might* have looked, but instead clearly shows the surviving elements

from an informative oblique and aerial perspective. In this sense the results can be equated to a simulation of aerial reconnaissance, except that the operator effectively gains control of the weather, lighting, viewpoints and other atmospheric variables, to create the appropriate conditions for optimum visibility.

The survey therefore acts as a filter for the visualisation, allowing the removal of visually distracting elements, such as the variable texture of the vegetation and more recent human impact on the site. The result is that pertinent and relevant elements such as the surviving masonry and fallen blocks in the fort are clarified while the texture of the landscape is homogenised to provide a clear image of the archaeological remains.¹⁷

The kind of landscape visualisation outlined here constitutes an entirely different visual medium to the traditional contour or hachure plot, the latter being popular in archaeology because of its arguable efficacy for representing artificial earthworks within a complex natural landscape.¹⁸ The visualisation of the digital terrain model directly from the survey data is arguably a less subjective method than the hachure survey although to some degree this depends on the data acquisition strategy. However, it is the immediate legibility of such computer visualisations that underline their intrinsic value. They can generally not be employed as scaleable metric illustrations from which the viewer can obtain dimensions, so their role remains primarily as informative complementary media to the hachure or contour plan. Equally, the efficacy of the visualisation as a didactic tool depends on the medium in which it is displayed and a computer-based presentation of visualisations is considerably more effective than the printed images within this publication.

¹⁷ Clarification at the expense of realism in the representation of an archaeological object or site is of course a well-established technique of archaeological illustration. In lithic or ceramic drawing, for example, attention is paid primarily to the features that elucidate the object's manufacturing process or those that might be described as decoration, with less attention given to the overall variations in texture or tone (see Pringle and Moulding (1997) 22).

¹⁸ The argument for hachures is presented by Bowden (1999) 65-7, while the advantages of computer visualisation in landscape representation are argued by Fletcher and Spicer (1992).

PRIMARY ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA AND THE INTRODUCTION OF END-USER INTERACTION: THE ALACAMI 3D MODEL

The critical emphasis on primary archaeological data in computer visualisation is fully illustrated in this second study, as we move beyond Constantinople to the eastern province of Cilicia near the modern city of Adana. On the outskirts of the nearby market town of Kadirli is an elegant disused mosque, known as the Alacami (fig. 7). The mosque was created by adapting a medieval chapel built within the empty shell of an Early Byzantine basilica, which was itself raised on the site of an earlier tomb. This is the last surviving monument from the ancient Roman and Byzantine city of Flavia and its remains present a microcosm of the history of the city. A digital survey of the structure was carried out in 1997 and the data was employed not just for the production of series of plans and elevations but also for the creation of a detailed three-dimensional reconstruction of the church in its primary phase (figs 8-10).¹⁹

The Alacami provides an ideal subject for the implementation of computer visualisation techniques, since the walls of the basilica still stand to the height of the cornice and there is reliable evidence for the superstructure and the arrangement of the interior. Hence the speculative element of the reconstruction is relatively minimal. The motivations for the production of a computer model were then twofold. First, in a manner similar to the visualisation of the Wall fort, the modelling project allowed us to effectively filter out the later modifications to the original building, which confounded the conceptualisation of the original form. Equally, we were also able to reinstate original elements for which there was conclusive evidence, as for example in the case of the clerestory.²⁰ Second, an extensive series of mosaics and *opus sectile* pavements were excavated in the 1960s on both the interior and exterior of the building. Mary Gough recorded these pavements in a series of remarkable watercolours at the time of the excavation, but the mosaics themselves were subsequently reburied. The addition of these images to the visualisation scheme

¹⁹ The principal publication is Bayliss (1997). The results from the 1997 season can be found in Bayliss (1999a,b) or on the website <http://museums.ncl.ac.uk/alacami/index.htm>. For previous discussion on the Alacami 3d model see Gillings (1999) and Goodrick and Gillings (2000).

²⁰ A clerestory is a vertical extension of the nave above the height of the aisles to provide elevated lighting.

has enabled us to begin to appreciate the overall composition of the decorative programme. The significance of a mosaic is often judged on its art historical or aesthetic qualities and consequently the importance of context can become marginalized. Displaying the mosaics within a modelled architectural space underlines the importance of positioning, spatial significance and visibility in the decoration of interior space. This is particularly relevant within a church, where different architectural zones are charged with meaning by the liturgy and processional movement that takes place within them. Such visualisation strategies potentially provide an engaging and stimulating medium through which to address these issues.

The Composition of the Alacami Model

The model is undoubtedly a highly effective visual method for presenting the primary data from the surveys and excavation. Equally, the process of reconstruction also forced us to address questions regarding the composition of individual elements of the building. This was particularly the case when considering the form of the superstructure, an issue that is often overlooked by archaeological studies where the primary interpretative medium is the two-dimensional ground plan.²¹

The primary archaeological data used in the model were derived from:

1. ground-plan and topographical survey of the site.
2. photogrammetric recording of surviving walls, applied (as surface decals) to the modelled surfaces.
3. excavations to clarify some details of the building—the west steps, subterranean chamber and the chancel area.
4. digitised maps (1:1000 map) to provide topographical data of the local environment.
5. on-site photo documentation for photo-realistic textures.
6. watercolour illustrations of the excavated mosaics.

This example clearly demonstrates how the individual elements of the 3d model can be explicitly derived from the results of the on-site

²¹ The need to move beyond the 2d plan is emphasised by a number of scholars (e.g. Gillings (2000)) as one of the principal advantages that computer visualisation technology has to offer to archaeological interpretation. Others (e.g. Eiteljorg (2000)) have also commented on the use of modelling projects as a means of structuring thought and interpretation on the mechanics of a building. Some VR systems are under development that allow the structural elements of a VR model to be modified and scaled by an end-user, see Ryan and Roberts (1997).

survey. In particular, the photogrammetric elevations enhance the visualisations in a number of significant ways. On an immediate visual level they enable the actual surface composition of the surviving walls to be incorporated within the model. More importantly they also provide a visual mechanism to demonstrate the surviving extent of the walls, thereby showing the extent of the reconstructed content. This is also an effective method for presenting the details of elevation drawings and for demonstrating their physical location in relation to the structure, which is often difficult to convey in a two-dimensional paper drawing.²²

Virtual Reality and the "Bubbleworld"

So far we have looked mainly at static visualisations produced from complex 3d models. These are single-image renderings processed from a pre-designated viewpoint. If a sequence of such views is produced, by moving either the camera or target viewpoint, a series of single images can be combined to produce an animation. Rendering even a single image is usually a lengthy process although this varies greatly according to the power of the computer used. The production of a 20 second animation will nevertheless certainly require a significant period of processing time. This explains the problem of facilitating end-user interaction, for the purposes of which each frame would have to be processed continuously, as the viewer makes choices about which parts of the model to explore. Relatively smooth simulated motion requires the processing of at least 30 individual frames for each second of animation. Therefore virtual reality (VR) models that allow a degree of interactivity are generally much more primitive and crude than pre-programmed high quality animations, due to the limitations imposed by the time taken to process the images.²³

In the case of the Alacami, when attempts were made to convert a non-textured version of the Alacami 3d-model into VRML (standard VR format), the resultant VR model could be explored on a reasonably powerful computer at the staggering rate of one frame every 40 minutes. In order to provide a degree of interactivity, without

²² This can be a much more significant issue when dealing with a substantial decorative programme covering all interior surfaces. A very successful example of this technique employed in such circumstances is the visualisation work undertaken on the Egyptian tomb of Sen-nedjem by Terras (1999).

²³ See for example, the cumbersome VR models in the Multimedia Zone on the BBC's History website, http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/multimedia_zone/3ds/index.shtml (last access Jan 02).

having to significantly reduce the level of detail within the model, a panoramic viewing system was used, known as the Bubbleworld.²⁴ A number of fixed positions are defined within the model and from each location a series of single-frame renderings are produced in order to achieve full 360 degree coverage from each position. The images from each location are stitched together seamlessly and warped to produce a single image of the entire 360 degree field of view. When the viewer is situated at a particular location, they only see a small part of the image. Rotation of the viewpoint therefore gives the impression that a 3d space is being occupied. Further movement within the model is facilitated by connections or ‘hot-spots’ between different Bubbleworld locations. Although exploration of the model is effectively limited to a series of fixed points, the viewer is still presented with choices about where to look and which path to follow. The Bubbleworld technique therefore allows the detail incorporated into the model to be maintained within a semi-dynamic visualisation system. At the same time Bubbleworld files are pre-rendered single images and so can be relatively small and hence served over the Internet.

Realism and Authenticity in the Alacami Model

Despite the level of detail afforded by the quality of the surviving material at the Alacami, the visualisations retain the sterility that is typical of this kind of technique. It is, however, worth bearing in mind that this 3d-model was constructed between 1994 and 1998, predominantly using the DOS-based AutoCAD[®] Release 10 software. More recent models of similar subjects demonstrate the levels of detail and texture that can now be simulated, as for example in the reconstruction of the church of St Symeon the Younger near Antakya (anc. Antioch).²⁵ Although advances in software enable us to produce more visually compelling results, we should be aware that the more realistic a visualisation appears, the more it can seem like an authentic portrayal, even if many elements remain a matter of speculation. This problem is readily apparent in the contrast between the model of the Alacami, which is almost intact and that of the Church of St Symeon, for which the evidence is extremely fragmentary. The greater

²⁴ Goodrick (1999), Goodrick and Gillings (2000), Dykes (2002). These techniques are more commonly employed with real-world panoramas to provide “virtual tours” of houses on the property market or luxurious holiday apartments.

²⁵ Kondoleon (2001) 217-221.

attention to texture and lighting makes the latter undoubtedly seem more realistic, despite the more limited nature of the primary evidence.

Despite the obvious reluctance of many model designers to indicate the extent of speculative content within a visualisation, there are many techniques that can be successfully employed, for example that of lightening or bleaching-out the less certain elements.²⁶ In the case of the Alacami 3d model, the Internet has been the principal medium of dissemination and therefore more could have been done to exploit hypermedia technology in order to provide additional information on the composition of the 3d model. In particular, the visualisations could have been coded as image maps and embedded with spatially positioned data comprising photo documentation or explanatory material appropriate to the location. In this way each zone of the image could have a readily accessible explanation for the archaeological interpretation, should the viewer wish to see it. The ability to provide this kind of intra-site GIS documentation as a fundamental component of a visualisation is one of the great strengths of hypermedia and its integration within dynamic virtual reality systems is likely to be one of the major advances over the next few years in this field.²⁷

Software advances may tempt us to add further elements of realism to a 3d visualisation. Yet there are aspects of the Alacami that we will simply never know and so should not attempt to reconstruct, for example, how either the interior or exterior of the walls were rendered, how the chancel area was composed and how the interior was fitted and embellished.²⁸ Current technology would also allow us—if we wished—to populate the church with a clergy and congregation, and to provide a fuller sensory experience by filling the church with Byzantine chant.²⁹ At present all these elements must

²⁶ Eiteljorg (2000) fig 8.

²⁷ Brown, Kidner and Ware (2002); Haklay (2002). See for example the electronic indexing system based on 3d photogrammetry used for the documentation of the Monastery of St Dionysios on Mt Athos, <http://www.gisdevelopment.net/events/isprs/2001/ts6/isprs6004pf.htm> (last access Jan 02).

²⁸ Here the archaeologist responsible for the integrity of the model should define the thresholds of authentic representation. For example, it is probably reasonable to reconstruct a entire tiled roof from a few tile finds, so long as the form of the superstructure is known, as was the case with the Alacami. Careful and minimal use of comparative evidence also has an obvious role in this process.

²⁹ The 3d reconstruction of the Romanesque cathedral at Santiago in north-

still be imagined, and we have to question how far we would wish to pursue such objectives. As it stands the Alacami 3d model acts primarily as an integrated display medium for the primary archaeological data. The reconstructed elements are structurally significant, but based on sound *in situ* evidence and there is little attempt to enhance the model further in the quest for realism.

THOUGHTS FOR THE FUTURE: COMPUTER VISUALISATION AND BYZANTINE ARCHAEOLOGY

The sites in this study are not the only examples of computer visualisation in late antique and Byzantine archaeology that have been attempted to date. Probably the best-known applications of visualisation techniques to Byzantine monuments are those that have been produced by Tayfun Öner for his *Byzantium1200* web site.³⁰ The site features a collection of stunning computer-generated images of the Byzantine monuments of Constantinople as they may have appeared in A.D. 1200. Most are based on 3d models produced by Öner, an engineer who has worked on several other archaeological reconstruction projects. His work is given academic credibility through the involvement of the leading Byzantine historian and topographer Albrecht Berger. For several monuments Öner has bravely attempted complete reconstructions, even though the supporting evidence varies significantly in both quantity and quality. The model of the Church of the Holy Apostles, for example, is based both on the historical sources and the surviving churches that it inspired. By contrast, the Church of SS Karpos and Papylos is reconstructed in its entirety based solely on the surviving substructure. The considerable effort that has undoubtedly gone into this work does not warrant criticism, particularly as the site clearly presents work in progress. However, it is worth pointing out that the academic potential of this work could have been realised further, if the images were accompanied by subjective evaluation and contemplation on the nature and authenticity of their content. The site pre-

west Spain presents a stunning example of the detail and realism that can be achieved with current technology, appropriately in this case with a church interior. An interactive multimedia cd-rom is available via the publisher's website www.fbarrie.org, but sample images and an important review are presented by Gerrard (2001).

³⁰ <http://www.byzantium1200.org>.

sents a considerable opportunity to promote discussion and debate on the urban fabric of Constantinople, particularly given Öner's ultimate intention, which is to map his structures onto a digital terrain model derived from Muller-Wiener's topographical map of the city.³¹

The creation of a 'virtual' Constantinople as a vehicle for debate would undoubtedly both benefit and facilitate the study of the city's Byzantine topography, particularly if accompanying qualitative and bibliographic information was incorporated in a form in which it could be both consulted and queried as a dynamic spatial information system. Istanbul, which has a population of around 11 million people, was the capital of a Mediterranean Empire for some 17 centuries. Its continuous occupation over this long period means that our understanding of the historical topography of the Early Byzantine city is extremely fragmentary, composed primarily of historical sources and the archaeological evidence from beneath the later Byzantine, Ottoman and modern Turkish city. It is therefore extremely difficult to visualise the Early Byzantine city, not merely in terms of the appearance and function of individual buildings, but also to perceive the spatial dynamic of the living city and to appreciate the multi-vocality and interoperability of its places and spaces.

Therefore, it is not merely for the purposes of data presentation and interpretation that computer visualisation can impact on Byzantine archaeology. Current trends in archaeological theory on urbanism are paving the way for the use of VR to address questions regarding the spatial and experiential composition of such complex sites. In her book, *The Urban Image of Augustan Rome*, Diane Favro introduced us to a visually rich descriptive 'walk-through' of a *Virtual Rome*, both before and after the Augustan transformation of the city. This approach drew on the groundbreaking work of urban geographical theorists such as Kevin Lynch, which has also been applied to the study of late antique transformations in the built environment.³² In her attempts to visualise buildings in broader contexts and to imagine urban vistas and viewsheds, Favro highlighted the future role of VR as a medium with which to facilitate such

³¹ Müller-Wiener (1977). It is unfortunate that the momentum behind the site has significantly declined, with no new input for nearly two years.

³² See Favro (1996), Lynch (1960, 1984), Wharton (1995), Bayliss (1999b), in addition to other work evaluating or inspired by Lynch's approaches to the study of ancient urbanism, such as Yegül (1994), Ellis (1995), Carl, Kemp, *et al.* (2000).

approaches.³³ Her vision is now being implemented as part of the Rome-Reborn project, within which she is performing a key role. This began in 1995 with the aim of producing contextualised computer reconstructions of ancient and medieval Rome and is now producing some significant results.³⁴

Increasingly, computer software will allow us to provide complete reconstructions of structures and sites and to introduce ever more compelling elements of realism. Hardware development and improved accessibility to specialist VR centres will also encourage the development of more immersing VR experiences.³⁵ Yet if we, as archaeologists, maintain research-led objectives for visualisation projects our virtual worlds might not be very realistic, but they will be useful. Rather than following the technology trend towards full immersion we can therefore perhaps spend more time thinking more carefully about how computer visualisation can empower our research.

Considerable debate has surrounded the terminology of VR, but not enough thought has yet been given to its potential impact on archaeological research.³⁶ With any Human-Computer Interface that claims to be virtual reality, the question remains as to whose reality is actually represented. The vigorous nature of academic debate on any particular issue of historical authenticity should constantly remind us that there is no single knowable past, which all would either accept or recognise. In this context, the significant body of work produced by those concerned with the ethics of experimental reconstruction should not be (but often is) overlooked.³⁷ However much some may strive for complete immersion within a virtual construct or synthetic/hyperreal environment, ultimately we are only immersing our 21st century selves together with our own cultural baggage and preconceptions. Further work on the theoretical justification for VR and computer visualisation is therefore required, but perhaps more

³³ Although generally seen as an analytical application for GIS, viewshed analysis has recently been approached more reflexively through the use of three-dimensional visualisation systems (Gillings and Goodrick 1997).

³⁴ Frischer, Favro *et al.* (1998). See also <http://www.aud.ucla.edu/~favro/rome-reborn/> (last access Jan 02) and <http://www.cvrilab.org/> (last access Jan 02). Ongoing work at Sagalassos in Pisidia is proceeding along similar lines with some impressive results, see Matens, Legrand *et al.* (1998).

³⁵ Forte (1998).

³⁶ Gillings (2000, 2002).

³⁷ See for example various papers in Stone and Plane (1999), particularly the introduction.

specifically visualisation needs to be integrated as a medium for interpretation and structured thought within our research programmes.³⁸

Some attempts have been made to address this problem by exploring the possibilities of creating adaptable virtual worlds, not just VR constructs that can be modified by the user, but models that can be transformed in order to examine how various social groups might have perceived sites and spaces.³⁹ Approaching questions of accessibility, visibility and perception using such techniques has obvious value for Byzantine archaeology, especially for example in the case of church architecture and the perception of interior design and decoration.

The difficult union between archaeological theory and VR technology is an essential response to doubts over the role of VR in academic research, particularly with regard to the problematic areas of reconstruction, realism and embodiment. Quantifiable success in these areas has to date been extremely limited, with attention paid more to the rhetorical value of VR as an integral part of the enquiry process rather than its actual benefits to ongoing archaeological research.

The case studies presented here have focussed on the role of computer visualisation not as a compelling medium for producing virtual worlds or reconstruction illustrations, but as a means of providing engaging solutions to traditional problems of visualising the primary archaeological record. The potential for data integration and filtration as outlined in both studies, has clear significance for late antique and Byzantine archaeology, which is characterised by complex multi-period standing structures often requiring a variety of data acquisition techniques for the recording process. The role of survey-based computer visualisation as a complementary medium for interpretation and realisation of archaeological sites is therefore well established and has been demonstrated here as an integral component of research programmes involving both broad landscapes and complex multi-period structures. Computer visualisations of this kind should not, however, be seen as either end-products or inferior

³⁸ Examples of VR applications used to directly address research questions can be found in the recent research at the Neolithic monuments of Avebury by Goodrick and Gillings (2000) and at Thornborough by Goodrick and Harding (2000).

³⁹ See for example the alternative versions of the Santa Maria Maggiore model in Frischer, Favro *et al.* (1998) and the Gummidging technique of Goodrick and Gillings (2000).

doppelgangers of the original constructions.⁴⁰ They provide a means of engaging with the archaeological record in an otherwise unattainable way and as such generate their own dialogues and biographies. All the visualisations presented here are in themselves original constructs, based more on the remains as they survive today, than on any contemplation of how they might have looked or have been perceived. If some would call this virtual reality, then it must be accepted that the reality embodied in these works, both in terms of their source data and the viewer's perceptions, is an entirely contemporary one.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Digital Terrain Model (DTM / DEM / TIN)—a method of storing elevation data digitally, used principally for contour interpolation or three-dimensional display. Data is most commonly stored either in a uniform grid (*Digital Elevation Model*), or as irregular spot elevations at critical points joined by lines to construct a triangulated surface (*Triangulated Irregular Network*).

Geographical Information System (GIS)—a suite of computer-based tools used for collecting, managing, analysing and displaying spatial data.

Global Positioning System (GPS)—a system for providing precise location based on data transmitted from satellites. Developed by the U. S. military, GPS is now widely used in surveying and navigational situations.

Intelligent Point Selection—a non-random sample of spatial points used to describe a topographical surface based on a defined and subjective set of criteria, for example the tops and bottoms of slopes. Used for the creation of Triangular Irregular Networks.

Micro-Topographic Survey—topographical survey in which surface morphology is recorded in high detail.

Photogrammetry—uses scaled overlapping stereo-images to produce planimetric and topographic maps primarily of the earth's surface but also used for features in the built environment, in particular building elevations. Photogrammetry makes use of control points by which photographs are registered to the location of features identified in terrestrial or building surveys.

Photorealism—used in the context of computer visualisation to define rendered images of a quality that can approximate to a photographic image.

Rendering—the generation of a two-dimensional static image or frame of animation from a three-dimensional computer-generated model.

⁴⁰ Gillings (1999).

Total Station—(electronic tacheometer) electronic digital theodolite capable of measuring distances as well as horizontal and vertical angles.

Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM)—a series of 120 coordinate systems based on the Transverse Mercator projection and designed to provide world-wide coverage.

VRML—an open standard for 3D multimedia and shared virtual worlds on the Internet.

WGS-84—World Geodetic Reference System of 1984 is a global datum widely used as the base datum for the processing and conversion of data from one datum to any other datum. The Global Positioning System (GPS) is based on this datum.

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THE POLITICAL TOPOGRAPHY OF THE LATE ANTIQUE CITY: ACTIVITY SPACES IN PRACTICE

LUKE LAVAN

ABSTRACT

The political topography of the late antique city is a subject that has been largely neglected. This is largely because research has concentrated on new buildings, mainly churches, rather on than the re-use of older structures and because textual evidence has been neglected. In this article aspects of political topography are examined in terms of ‘activity spaces’. This involves studying discrete units of human activity, plus their material setting, whether this involves a specific building type or not. All source types are used to create a general narrative, which here mainly concerns cities of the East and Central Mediterranean. Emphasis is placed on changes that this approach can bring to our understanding of urban life.

INTRODUCTION

In my first paper, I suggested that the study of ‘activity spaces’ might particularly suit political and social aspects of the late antique city. In this second article I consider the application of this approach to political topography, that is the spaces in which institutionalised governmental activities were carried out. Some of these, such as praetoria or city council chambers, had distinct architectural settings, and others, such as provincial law courts, did not. I do *not* actually wish here to describe our general knowledge of these activity spaces in full, according to the method set out in my first article.¹ Rather, I wish to use a series of case studies to explore how this approach, especially the establishment of a clear idea of spatial function through all available source types, can alter our historical understanding of the late antique city. To do this I will examine: spaces that are

¹ I am currently attempting this elsewhere for praetoria, city council chambers, agorai and other political spaces.

particularly difficult to identify architecturally; spaces that have been unreasonably neglected because they occupy old rather than new buildings; spaces that can be easily misinterpreted by an architectural approach; spaces where important secondary functions have been missed; non-architectural spaces that deserve to be considered more fully in their urban context. All of these topics will be considered at a synthetic level, and relate to the monumental cities of Late Antiquity, from the mid-3rd to 6th c. A.D., mainly in the central and eastern Mediterranean.

SPACES MISSED

Praetoria

Probably the most neglected political space of the late antique city is the civil praetorium.² This was the official residence and administrative headquarters of the civil governor of a province and was typically found in his metropolis. It has received far less attention than it merits as its architectural remains have proved difficult to identify archaeologically. This is largely because its form derives much of its character from high-status residential architecture, but also largely because praetoria frequently reused earlier monumental structures within built-up urban areas.³ Epigraphic finds seem the best way to make identifications, and from examples selected on this basis a certain level of architectural coherence does seem to emerge: they seem to differ from ordinary houses by the normal presence of large courtyards, offices, shrines and, sometimes, large audience halls open to the street, features which interestingly reflect the compounds of the principia building in a military fortress, where praetoria are split into this administrative building and an entirely residential structure.

It is ancient texts which provide the clearest idea of the spatial functions of these complexes. These make clear that praetoria were, up to the early 7th c., both official residences of governors and their administrative headquarters. They could include prisons, tax offices, archives and horrea, as well as being social centres for the *honorati* of

² For all of this see Lavan (1999) and (2001a).

³ Re-use of earlier structures: known through archaeology at Gortyn, Ptolemais and Caesarea Maritima (twice) and through texts at Constantinople and Antioch (twice): Lavan (1999) 145-47, 153-58 and id. (2001a) 43-45.

a province. It was the centre of much civic as well as provincial administration, as the governor now oversaw urban politics to an unprecedented degree, through the authorisation of most building works, the appointment of magistrates and sometimes direct intervention in the provision of civic services.⁴

Significantly, it appears, from the combination of information provided by both literary sources and archaeology, that the preferred location for praetoria in Late Antiquity was on the forum/agora, rather than on the edge of the city, as had been more common in the early imperial period; examples of this location occur at Constantinople, twice at Antioch, at Gortyn and perhaps at Athens, which were chosen as sites of new praetoria in this period, as well as at Carthage.⁵ This is highly significant, as it shows that praetoria, like late antique governors themselves, were acting at the heart of civic political life. Indeed the praetorium, with its prisons, ceremonial courts, offices, archives and audience halls represents the most developed public building ever placed on the ancient agora. Seen against the evolution of Roman provincial administration, which was now drawn increasingly from local people, this has a certain sense. Provincial and civic government were in the course of merging, marking the most mature stage of political life seen in the Roman empire. In this light the siting of praetoria on agorai can be seen as culmination of its monumental history. The Palace of the Giants on the Agora at Athens, thus need no longer be seen as marking a rupture with the monumental history of this square; rather it can be considered to mark the latest stage of its evolution as a civic meeting place, when a comprehensive centre of urban government and direct channel to the imperial court took its place at the heart of urban political life.⁶

⁴ Involvement of governors in civic life: Lewin (2001); Liebeschuetz (1972) 131-33, 165-67; Bowman (1971) 90, 97 and elsewhere.

⁵ Locations of praetoria: Gortyn on agora; Constantinople on Forum of Leo: Lydus *Mag.* 2.20-21; Antioch on Hellenistic Agora and Forum of Valens: Malalas 10.10, 13.4, 13.30. See discussion in Downey (1961) 621-30. Athens, Palace of Giants: Frantz (1988); although not identified from its inscription, it is a possible candidate as a civil praetorium on account of the similarity of its plan to the palace of the *Dux Ripae* at Dura Europos.

⁶ This was true for both *officiales* and eventually provincial governors: see Lavan (2001b) 45-117. For this integration of *officiales* within provincial social structures see Banaji (2002) 115-33.

TRADITIONAL SPACES NEGLECTED

Fora/agorai

Some activity spaces have been neglected because of their continued use of traditional civic architecture dating to earlier periods: most prominent amongst these are the meetings of city councils (*curiae/bouleuteria*) and *fora/agorai*. *Fora/agorai* were the primary social and political centres of Roman cities, but are widely perceived as being in decline in Late Antiquity. I would suggest this is an exaggeration. It is the result of too much concentration on the most obvious archaeological evidence, that for abandonment; this has overshadowed other classes of evidence, including the testimony of archaeology, for continuity of use and for traditional functions. Although abandonment evidence is dramatic, it is often actually poorly dated; generalised datings to Late Antiquity over-simplify the chronology of change.⁷ There is in fact much literary evidence for the survival of *fora/agorai* as social and commercial centres in the 4th and early 5th c.⁸ At this time judicial hearings continued to be held here;⁹ imperial letters could be read out to the public in the forum.¹⁰ Up to the second quarter of the 5th c. honorific statues were still being dedicated on *fora/agorai* in significant numbers in many parts of the Mediterranean.¹¹ There is also much textual, epigraphic and archaeological evidence not only for repair in this period but for the building of new *fora*. Major public works were undertaken at Rome under Diocletian and various urban prefects; at Constantinople new *fora* were built under Constantine, Theodosius I, Arcadius and Leo; at Antioch a new forum was constructed under Valens. In provincial capitals such as Corinth, Ephesus, Side, Aphrodisias and Corinth,

⁷ Poor dating of abandonment: egs from Africa in Potter (1995) 66-71.

⁸ *Fora/agorai* as social centres 4th/early 5th c—a selection: Nicomedia Lib. Or. 1.65-74, Soz. 4.16.12; Ephesus ACO 1.1.5.14; Ankara Lib. Ep. 298; Antioch Lib. Or. 29.2-4; Alexandria Rufinus HE 2.22-30, Athanasius Hist. Ar. 55-56; General John Chry. in Matth. 1.17, Sozom. HE 7.6, 8.18). Arles cited at end of this section. *Agorai* as shopping centres at time of Julian: Sozom. HE 5.9, Theoderet HE 3.9.

⁹ Judicial cases: Trier Dionisotti (1982). 104-105; Carthage Augustine Conf. 6.9; Ptolemais Synesius Ep. 41.

¹⁰ Imperial letters read out in forum/agora: Trier (4th c.) Dionisotti (1982) 104-105; Ephesus (A.D. 431): ACO 1.1.5.14; Alexandria (A.D. 482): Zach Mytilene HE 5.7, id. *vita Severi* 41-42.

¹¹ 4th c./ early 5th c. statues in forum/agora at Tarraco, Corduba, Corinth, Aphrodisias, Ephesus, Antioch and Lepcis Magna: Lavan (2001b) 300-301.

fora and agorai saw major repairs.¹² Against this there are very few fora/agorai in the eastern and central Mediterranean where abandonment can be conclusively dated to the 4th or early 5th c. This leads to the conclusion that up to the early or mid-5th c. one cannot talk about a relative decline in the forum/agora, especially not a loss of its function. Architectural decay did occur before this time in some regions, such as Gaul and Spain, but even here it may be related to wider urban changes, not a decline of the functions of these spaces. This is demonstrated by a later 5th c. honorific dedication from the decaying provincial forum of Tarraco; this renders at least credible literary evidence from the same years that attests to very traditional activities being carrying out in the forum of Arles, which archaeology has shown to have been in a similar state of dilapidation.¹³

Curiae/Bouleuteria

Meetings of city councils were a critical occasion in the political life of the Roman city. There has been a major monograph study of the architecture of curiae/bouleuteria: Jean Balty's *Curia Ordinis*. However, the focus of this work is architecture as built; consequently, it contains little information on the later Roman period. Nevertheless, texts and epigraphy show that meetings of city councils remained critical events in late antique cities up to at least the middle of the 5th c. It was here that the curiales of a city discussed the financing and organisation of public services and building works, the collection of taxes, embassies and honours voted to members and outsiders. Although this did in some regions, during the 4th c., become more a matter of reactions to the directives of curators and governors rather

¹² Restoration and new building on fora/agorai in the 4th c.: Rome under various Urban Prefects: Ward-Perkins (1984) 42; Constantinople for new fora of Constantine, Theodosius I and Arcadius see Müller-Wiener (1977). In the first half of the 5th c. new fora continue to be built at Constantinople, up to Leo: Mango (1993). Antioch under Valens: Malalas 13.30. Restoration in provincial capitals: Corinth Kent (1966) 165-67, nos. 504-505; Ephesus Foss (1979) 82 n.70; Side Robert (1951) no. 219a; Aphrodisias Roueché (1989) no. 22. Restoration in ordinary cities: Italy recorded by literature and epigraphy: *Lib. Pont.* 1.186 (Naples restoration by Constantine), *CIL* 5.7781 (Albegna); Africa *CIL* 8.24095 (Capasa), *ILAlg* 1.2107 (Madauros), *IRT* 246 and *IRT* 543 (Lepcis Magna).

¹³ Evidence of function can be separated from evidence for appearance if monumental decay is total, not particular. Tarraco dedications continue until A.D. 468/472 (*IRT* 94-97 and 100), despite general decay from around the mid-5th c: Taller Escola d'Arqueologia (1989). Arles: Sid. Apol. *Ep.* 1.11.7; *V. Caesarii* 1.31, 2.30, 2.39. See Gauthier (1999) 204 and Loseby (1996) 55 for this problem.

than sovereign decision making, the *curia* still met, for fully half of Late Antiquity.¹⁴

The non-architectural aspect of this space was arguably as significant to its physical appearance as the building in which meetings were held. A decline in numbers is well documented but was relative. Timgad had around 200 councillors in the 360s; Oxyrhynchus seems to have had at least 50+ in 370. Libanius talks of a city with only one councillor left, but the disappearance of small municipalities was not new. More significant was the reduction of Antioch's 600 by several hundred during the mid-4th c. Nevertheless, legislation, inscriptions and correspondence suggest that numbers stayed at or above a working minimum until the 430s. In Africa and Asia Minor, to the mid-5th c., traditional magistracies were still being completely filled in at least some cities.¹⁵ In the West councillors sat often around three sides of a rectangle on wooden chairs—in the East they sat in an arc on the stone seats of the bouleterion. Many still wore formal *togae* or *himatia*, though some of those with imperial rank did wear the *chlamys*.¹⁶ Business was well-ordered, with proposals, speeches and acclamations being recorded in minutes, of which we have examples from two cities in Egypt. Ten senior decurions, who had a semi-constitutional basis at the time, decided much; they may have sat around the president and the notaries in the centre of the arc. In the East a wider public audience might also attend.¹⁷ Honorific statues and portraits, significant inscriptions and, at first, altars, might decorate the space where they met.¹⁸ City councils as an institution lost executive control in the East by A.D. 500 at the latest, being

¹⁴ On the business of city councils see Jones (1964) vol. 1 724-63, vol. 2 1298-1313; Lepelley (Paris 1979) vol. 1; Petit (1955) and Bowman (1971).

¹⁵ Magistracies in 4th-early 5th c. Africa: Lepelley (1979) vol.1 149-69. Magistracies in the East, 4th and some 5th c.: Lewin (c.1995) 92-95, with someone doing all offices twice at Stratonicia, prob. 5th c.: Varinlioglu (1988).

¹⁶ Statues of civic notables in Late Antiquity reflect both costume types. Lydus *Mag.* 3.49, talks about *curiales* of the later 5th c. still wearing the *toga*. *Chlamys*: Lib. 22.6.

¹⁷ Theoretical numbers: Jones (1964) 724, 1298; Balty (1991) 7. Timgad: Chastagnol (1978). Oxyrhynchus: *P. Oxy.* 17.2110. One councillor: Lib. *Ep.* 696. Reforms of Julian adding 200 to Antioch: Julian *Misop.* 367d. 600 down to rhetorical 60 at Antioch: Lib. *Or.* 2.33, 48.3. Minutes from Egypt: Bowman (1979) 32-34; van Minnen and Worp (1989). Official records are known in early 5th c. Africa and throughout the West into the 6th c. and beyond: Lepelley (1979) vol.1 163, Liebeschuetz (2001) 131, 136. Public at Antioch: Lib. *Or.* 2.36, 31.36-40; Alexandria A.D. 416: *Cod. Theod.* 16.2.42.

¹⁸ Statues: eg Rouché (1989) no. 56; Bartocini (1950) 36-37; Malalas 14.8. Portraits: Lib. *Or.* 2.10, 42.43.

replaced by committees of high-ranking notables. In the West after the mid-6th c., the actions of city councils are attested by nothing other than the formulae of land transfers; here too power devolved to leading men and the bishop.¹⁹

The architectural setting of meetings of city councils, in traditional curiae and bouleuteria buildings, was equally institutionalised. Surprisingly, evidence for the continued use or abandonment of curia/bouleuterion buildings and related structures during Late Antiquity has not been studied. The “notables” led by the bishop, are only attested meeting in episcopal palaces, perhaps the natural home of this body, but not in the traditional curia/bouleuterion; this makes a study of the use of city council chambers politically important in tracing the end of the city council meetings.²⁰ Epigraphic evidence from Africa reveals that restorations of curiae did in fact take place in many ordinary cities in during the 4th c. A re-examination of the buildings themselves shows a similar pattern of repair and rebuilding. For example at Lepcis Magna the curia was moved into a new structure and that at Sabratha was built anew.²¹ Repairs in *spolia* can be traced for a number of bouleuteria in Asia Minor, in provincial capitals and ordinary cities.²² The small number of dated repairs are 4th c.; they maintain the original layout of these well-defined buildings in their entirety. This ought to be taken primarily as evidence for the continued meeting of the council, especially if there is epigraphic evidence elsewhere in the city for the *boule*'s existence. It is also clear that many bouleuteria in this region were spared spoliation in the later 4th and 5th c., whilst neighbouring temples were demolished to their foundations. Demolitions and conversions of bouleuteria to other functions in the Asia Minor and the East seem when dated to relate mainly to the 6th c; an absence of reuse for other purposes in the 5th c. in this region perhaps also suggests continued use at this time. However, there is so far no positive evidence of mainte-

¹⁹ Transition to notables: Laniado (2002) and Liebeschuetz (2001) 104-36 .

²⁰ Notables meeting in *secretion* of bishop at Mopsuestia, (A.D. 550) *Mansi* 9.275-90; possibly in *secretion* at Anastasiapolis, late 6th c.: *Life of Theodore of Sykeon* 76, 78. Possibly at Hadrianopolis, Paphlagonia, where an imperial letter to city notables was published in the *secretion* of the bishop, under Justin I or Justinian: Feissel and Kaygusuz (1985) .

²¹ Epigraphic evidence of repairs at 7 cities in Africa: Lepelley (1979) vol. 2, 295. Lepcis: Balty (1991) 39-42; Sabratha and Rome rebuilt: Bartoccini (1950) 29-35; Bartoli (1963).

²² Repair: Nysa, Ephesus, Heracleia am Latmos, Sagalassos; differential spoliation at Ephesus, Termessos and probably at Priene. I will be publishing this research shortly.

nance for the 6th c. and there is no example at all of Justinianic interest in city council chambers in Procopius' *de aedificiis*, barring the Senate House at Constantinople, suggesting that traditional council meetings in the East ceased to take place by this time.²³

SPACES MISINTERPRETED

Statues

Surely nothing could be more material, more architectural a monument than a statue. Here it would seem that we can engage directly in the interpretation of its physical features on the basis of typological comparison or from considering texts found on its base.²⁴ However, such an approach risks serious misinterpretation. I would suggest that to properly understand late antique statues, of governors or emperors, one needs first to grasp their ancient function, from a wider collection of source material, including texts. From literary sources it is clear that imperial statues and other images were both quasi-religious objects and symbols of the emperor's power. As such they were the focus of religious rituals expressing loyalty to the emperor. They were received and copied in the provinces as part of the recognition of a new ruler, and were used by governors to directly support their own actions. The traditional honorific function in imperial statues was still sometimes present but was now greatly overshadowed by sacred and symbolic usage.²⁵

Statues of late antique governors on first consideration seem similar to imperial statues. They represent the largest group of statue dedications after emperors, often the majority of the remainder. Examples of actual torsos known from the Aegean seem normally to reflect Constantinopolitan dress, with military cloaks. Surely these statues were also 'symbols of government power'? In a study of the only three complete examples known, from Aphrodisias and Ephesus,

²³ City council chambers converted to new functions: *Aphrodisias* Rouché (1989) no. 43; *Ptolemais* Goodchild and Kraeling (1962) 92; *Scythopolis* (demolished) Foerster and Tsafir (1988-89) 18-19. *Salona* Clairmont (1975) 54-56, a possible example.

²⁴ On late antique statues see Smith (1999) and (1997). For epigrams from governor's statues see Robert (1948).

²⁵ Use of imperial images by governors in tribunals and all places where authority required: Severian *de Mundi creatione Or.* 6.5 and the depictions of the Rossano gospels, mentioned above. Religious rituals around imperial statues, up to at least A.D. 425: Socrates *HE* 6.18; *Cod. Theod.* 15.4.1 (A.D. 429); *Cod. Iust.* 1.24.3 (A.D. 439). See Delmaire (1996) 46-47 for quasi-religious status.

R. R. R. Smith has suggested that severe facial features of these statues can be seen as communicating the virtues of office alluded to by the inscriptions on their bases. Although Smith does not go so far, it could be easy to proceed from these observations to describe these statues as symbols of government power, similar to images of the emperor.²⁶

Study of all the sources in a wider context reveals that they are in fact very different from imperial statues. Firstly, no religious qualities are ever attributed to images of governors; neither was it treason to attack them. Furthermore, there is no known example of the use of such an image to bolster a governor's power/authority. The distribution of where statue bases were erected and a study of who erected them is also most revealing. In Africa Proconsularis and Italy, where many high-ranking senators served, statues, especially those put up by small cities, name governors as patrons. Identical monuments were also erected by client cities in the houses of senators at Rome. This suggests that, whilst the influence of the governor was recognised in these monuments, this was in response to what individual governors could do next for their clients rather than an attempt to appease them in office.²⁷ The one body from whom one might expect pressured, involuntary dedication is the provincial assembly. However, examples of such dedications are actually very rare, in all parts of the empire, indicating that they were not at all automatic; examples dedicated by members of a governor's *officium* are even rarer.²⁸ This suggests that statues of governors are not symbols of government power, but rather traditional honorific monuments—rewards for good behaviour in office, which is in fact what the texts on their bases say. Ammianus makes clear that in the late 4th c. the senatorial class had in no way lost or changed its traditional taste for seeking the honours of a gilded statue.²⁹

This fits well with our wider image of civil governors who largely ruled by consent and do not seem usually to have had decisive co-

²⁶ Interpretation of governors' statues: Smith (1999) 183-87.

²⁷ Governors named as patrons outside of provincial capitals in pre-Vandal Africa, at Madauros, Bulla Regia, Gigithis, Sabratha and Cuicul: see entries in Lepelley vol.2. For Italy see catalogue in Ward-Perkins (1984) 231-35—which also shows statues erected by client cities in Rome .

²⁸ Horster (1998) 49-51 The coercion of a provincial delegation is recorded in Ammianus 30.5.8-10 as having been attempted by Petronius Probus, under Valentinian I. He did not succeed, even though he was praetorian prefect, not a lowly *consularis* or *praeses*.

²⁹ Ammianus 14.6.8, 21.10.6.

ercive power.³⁰ An alternative explanation of the predominance of statues set up to governors is that they represent a continuation of the civic honorific tradition of statue dedication; they seem to reflect the assimilation by governors of much responsibility for civic life from the early 4th c, in a process by which they had come to resemble more a mayor than Julius Caesar in Gaul or Vespasian in Judea, the almighty representative of Roman government in the provinces. It seems in fact that the physical appearance of the statue and the rhetorical aspect of the texts on its base has little to do with its function. As Smith largely recognises, most aspects of the appearance of the statues which have been identified from Aphrodisias and Ephesus seem to be shared with representations of notables who were not governors, and to be a reflection of wider court style; the rhetoric on the dedicatory inscriptions is similarly unparticular, reflecting the absolutist moral rhetoric seen in government law codes. Thus the appearance of the sculptures reflects not specific attributes of the office of governor but a more general *image of power*, derived from the imperial court.

Further interpretative difficulties may arise for other monuments thought by modern scholars to relate to attempts to communicate 'power'. Noel Duval has suggested that interest in an 'architecture of power' in imperial residential architecture may have its origins in modern experience of the architectural experiments of 20th c. dictators.³¹ It may be anachronistic when applied to Late Antiquity. From the texts it seems that imperial rank, formal symbols of office, visible clients, wealth and distinction in classical learning were the keys to most political and social encounters, rather than the shape of one's audience hall. Reception rooms could have certainly helped to signify social power, especially in relation to clients; however, we should reflect as to whether this architecture was *primary* in communicating power, or was in part more a fashionable backdrop.

³⁰ Governors seem to have essentially ruled by consent, with usually no daily access to overwhelming force: Lendon (1997) 231-36 and Brown (1992) 22-25. Many governors were murdered in the exercise of their functions: Amm. Marc. 14.7.6; Lib. Or. 20.3; Theophanes *Chronographia* year 5891; Socrates, *HE* 7.14; John of Nikiu *Chronicle* 89.35. Praetoria attacked or burned: Caesarea: Malalas 18.119. Thessalonica (attempted): Malchus frag 20: 11-12. Antioch: Malalas 16.6; Constantinople A.D. 532: Malalas 18.71. Others governors took on their metropolitan bishops or local aristocracy and lost, badly: Lavan (2001b) 55.

³¹ Duval (1986) 465. See for example Brown (1992).

ACTIVITY SPACES WITH NEGLECTED SECONDARY FUNCTIONS

The Political and Social Functions of Churches

The political and social functions of late antique churches have been neglected, in favour of their religious role, the dominant factor behind their architectural design. This is despite the importance of this topic for understanding the rise of the Church in the period. The forum/ agora certainly loses its pre-eminent political and social position in the mid to later-5th c. By the mid-6th c. new fora were rare, and were but a fraction of the size of their predecessors; some had fallen into decay, within otherwise monumental cities; many were built over.³² Statue dedications were now rare or non-existent. What has been less studied is what precisely happened to the spatial functions that once took place here—did they disappear entirely, or were they relocated elsewhere?

The answer probably lies in part in the growth of political and social activities around cathedrals and other churches, from the early years of the 5th c. Starting from this time imperial letters were read out in churches. From the second half of the 5th c., inscribed copies of imperial decrees, including some on secular matters, are found at the Cathedrals of St Mary and St John at Ephesus.³³ Imperial statues, often displayed in the forum, traditionally provided an official focus for ceremonies professing loyalty to the emperor and provided sanctuary to those who clutched them as suppliants. The emperor was now honoured by the prayers of the faithful within the church walls, where sanctuary had also become available. The governor Andronicos was keenly aware of the implications of this practice for episcopal power in his struggles with Synesius, metropolitan bishop of Ptolemais; he hammered his ordinances denying asylum in churches to the very doors of the cathedral of the city.³⁴

³² Fora/agorai of 6th c. small: Justiniana Prima (c.28m diameter); Arif, Lycia (c.15mx20m). Fora/agorai built over by churches: Aix: Guild et al. (1988) 17-64; Diana Veteranorum Duval (1977) 847-73; Pergamon Dörpfeld (1902) 16f and (1904) 114f; Knidos: Özgan (1998) 208 fig. 1. Decay and fora built over in Africa, Italy and elsewhere: Potter (1995) 63-98. Decay at Apamea, Gerasa, Petra: Liebeschuetz (2000) 43, 48, 49.

³³ Imperial/royal letters read in Church: Gen: John Chry. *in ep. sec. ad Thess.* 3.4; Edessa (possible) *Chronicle of Joshua Stylites* 34 (A.D. 498/99); Constantinople: *Chron. Pasc.* Olympiad 352 (A.D. 628); Vandal Africa: Victor of Vita 2.38. Their display: Feissel (1999) 121-32.

³⁴ Asylum at statues: *Cod. Theod.* 9.44 (A.D. 386) = *Cod. Just.* 1.25. Sanctuary

Judicial audiences before bishops had also developed increasing importance, at least from the later 4th c., and took place either in episcopal residences or in, or before, churches. As noted above, in the 6th c., meetings of councils of notables, which had replaced the *boule*, might now take place in the episcopal palace.³⁵ Procopius reveals that at least in major cities of the mid-6th c. the agora remained an important centre, perhaps still the principal focus of social life.³⁶ But, the atria of churches had also become popular meeting places; beggars could now be found here as well as in the agora.³⁷ The existence of atria at several churches within a single city may well thus have been a significant factor in the demise of many fora/agorai. However, it is only through an understanding of the functions of both of these spaces that their evolution can be connected.

NON-ARCHITECTURAL ACTIVITY SPACES

The Law Courts

By moving away from architecture to human action one is able to consider non-architectural activity spaces, such as those which took place in the street rather than in buildings, or in a variety of architectural settings. One of these non-architectural spaces was the provincial governor's law court. In the life of a provincial capital it was of similar importance to the praetorium. The function of the court was not only to dispense the highest legal judgement in a given province, but it was also a place where social structures were pub-

in churches: *Cod.Theod.* 9.45 (A.D. 392-432). Prayers for emperor in church: onwards from Tert. *Apol.* 30; well established in 4th c.: Ewig (1976) 3-71. Andronikos: Synesius *Ep.* 42.

³⁵ Judicial audiences before bishops: Jones (1964) vol. 1 480-81. Before a church at Alexandria: Leontius N. *v. Jo. Eleem* 5. Governor perhaps imitating this practice at Edessa: *Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite* 29. Notables meeting in *secretion* of bishop: see note 20 above.

³⁶ Agora as important element of prosperous city, mid-6th c.: Procop. *Aed.* 2.10.19-22, 3.4.18, 6.5.10-11, 6.6.13-16. Church and agora both as places to socialise: Procop. *Anecdota* 26.11. Tradesmen in atrium of cathedral at Edessa: *Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite* 32.

³⁷ Beggars in agora late 5th to early 7th c.: Constantinople Procop. *Anecdota* 24.7; Alexandria Leontius N. *v. Jo. Eleem* 27. Also around churches: Rome Procop. *Anecdota* 26.28-30; Constantinople Procop. *Anecdota* 26.28-30; Edessa *Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite* 43; Alexandria Haas (1997) 253. This does of course largely relate to the Church's charitable activities but is still an important change in patterns of social life.

licly defined, in the battles of the well-to-do and through the selective use of torture, in accordance with a person's social status as one of the *honestiores* or *humiliores*. Legal spectacles would for this and other reasons attract a great deal of attention; in the writings of Synesius and Libanius they represent a key occasion in the social and political life of a provincial capital; the law court would seem to have been a distinctive attribute of *metropoleis*, as in many and perhaps most provinces the old judicial assize tour seems to have ended.³⁸ Libanius lists the law courts, amongst porticoes, libraries and temples, as being principal amongst the attributes of Nicomedia, *metropolis* of Bithynia, after the earthquake of 358; it was also one of the three places in Alexandria, along with the theatre and the bouleuterion, from which *parabalani* were banned in A.D. 416.³⁹

The material appearance of the law court has also been unfairly neglected. The architectural setting of late antique law courts varied: they were held in civil basilicas, in bath buildings and there is one example of a governor's court held in a church, raising the possibility that very 'Roman' activities might have been carried out in non-traditional spaces in Late Antiquity.⁴⁰ However, the law courts were most strongly visually defined by their non-architectural aspects. It is possible to reconstruct these in considerable detail from texts, mainly of 4th c. date, and depictions, of 5th and 6th c. date. The texts provide a lot of details about the personnel usually present at public hearings: the governor, who sat alone or with *honorati*; the *cornicularius*, who managed the court; the *assessore*s, who gave the governor legal advice; the *exceptores*, taking notes; the advocates, witnesses and the accused. We hear at least the basics about the procedures followed: speeches by lawyers, inquisitorial questions from the governor and the use of torture, which is recorded vividly.⁴¹ Depic-

³⁸ For the probable end the governor's assize tour, in most regions, see Lavan (2001b) 51-53.

³⁹ See the earthquake description Libanius *Or.* 61.7-10. Alexandria A.D. 416: *Cod. Theod.* 16.2.42.

⁴⁰ Law courts in bath buildings at Byzantium and Antioch in the 3rd c: Feissel and Gascou (1995) 67-72, 78-89. At Edessa in winter baths in 497/98: *Chronicle of Joshua Stylites* 43. A tribunal built into the 'Byzantine City Bath' at Ptolemais may have served this purpose: Kraeling (1962) 166; so too may have the hall of the western bath building at Scythopolis, which is covered in minor mosaic dedications by governors: Mazor (1987-88) 14-17. Law court held in/before church at Edessa 497/98: *Chronicle of Joshua Stylites* 43.

tions from the 5th and 6th c. show the governor on a throne or bench, with a tribunal or footstool. He is consistently flanked by guards. In the trial scene 'Christ and Barabbas' from the Rossano gospels these soliders hold imperial *imagines*. On three depictions a table with a table cloth (twice white) is placed before the governor, probably to receive the imperial portraits that gave the court authority; on two occasions the cloth itself is decorated with them.⁴² The governor, on almost all depictions, clutches a scroll, probably his codicil, his letter of appointment from the emperor. The military cloaks worn, with diamonds in different colours, also confer imperial rank on him and his *officiales*. Other aspects of the court, such as an *exceptor* taking notes into writing tablets (twice) and a group of lawyers in togas (once) are also depicted.⁴³

Although we have no certain depictions of *honorati* sitting on the governor's bench for the 6th c., there is much in common between the literary and suprisingly consistent pictorial evidence. This suggests that the visual image of the law court was sharply defined in the minds of contemporaries. Architecture receives almost no attention in these depictions. It thus seems clear that the non-architectural aspects of the law court were most significant in its operation—the building used could vary; it conferred none of the authority brought by official imperial portraits, and inspired little of the terror imparted by the combs, racks and pokers of the governor's torturers.⁴⁴

The Adventus

A second non-architectural activity space, that has in fact received much attention for both its spatial function and appearance, is the *adventus*. This was the ritual of welcome by which cities greeted in-

⁴¹ Textual sources on 4th c. courts: Dionisotti (1982) 104-105, Lanata (1973), Jones (1964) vol.1 517-522 Lavan (2001b) Libanius *Or.* 33 and 56. *Honorati* sitting with the governor: Lib. *Or.* 56.4 see Liebeschuetz (1972) 190. Torture: eg Dionisotti (1982) 105; Jerome *Ep.* 1; Synesius *Ep.* 41.

⁴² Such tables, with codicils bearing imperial portraits, appear in the *Notitia dignitatum* as part of the symbols of office of several governors: Berger (1981) figs 1, 23, 24, 46, 48.

⁴³ For visual details of governor's court see not only the Rossano gospels: Loerke (1961) 171-95, but other depictions such as the *situla* in the British Museum, London: no. 267 or the depiction of Joseph as governor of Egypt on the *Cathedra* of Archbishop Maximian at Ravenna. Torture apparatus, 4th c.: Dionisotti, op. cit. 105, line 75 and 119. Jerome *Ep.* 1. Synesius *Ep.* 41.

⁴⁴ Just as the priest, bread and a communion cup could be the most important spatial elements in defining a church in the minds of late antique people, rather than columns, domes or mosaics: e.g. Athanasius *Apol.c.Ar.* 11; Socrates *HE* 1.27.

coming dignitaries *en masse*, whether emperor, governor or bishop. It is attested throughout Late Antiquity and an example of an *adventus* to receive imperial images is even recorded in A.D. 787.⁴⁵ In this ritual greeting local communities could, through co-ordinated chanting, demonstrate their appreciation or present complaints. Through careful choreography and precedence they could also illustrate and confirm the relative social grades within their city. As such it was one of the most important political activities to take place in a city, that could define a city's relationship to a new ruler. Unpopular governors or bishops sought to avoid the *adventus* by entering in secret, though such a gesture could lead to violent public protest.

Texts give us plenty of spatial information about material objects used in the *adventus*, such as the dress of the reception party, the incense burnt and candles held, and on occasion even tell us about hymns sung. The reception order of different classes of people is also known, and seems to have been to some extent standardised. Here it cannot be claimed that a preoccupation with buildings has caused the neglect of either the function of this ritual or its non-architectural material aspect. The *adventus* for both governors and emperors has been well studied and it is not necessary to repeat this work here.⁴⁶ Rather, I wish to suggest that the separation of textual and archaeological studies has led to a neglect of the urban architectural setting of this and other public ceremonies. Despite not being enclosed by a discrete building, the *adventus* does seem to have had a strong relationship to the gates, colonnaded streets and other monuments of a city. For the imperial *adventus*, and probably that of governors, the route was defined in advance and specially decorated.⁴⁷ Events unfolded at different stages according to where the procession was. Usually, it seems that at least some of the city councillors, the clergy and some crowds might greet dignitaries outside the city, perhaps from a fixed point, such as the boundary of the urban territory. His passage at the gate would be highly charged, as it was a crossing of the city's *pomoerium*. Crowds either came out to meet the governor or greeted him just inside the city, from roadsides and rooftops.⁴⁸ They would here shout acclamations, in a set order, that had a formal constitu-

⁴⁵ A.D. 787: *Mansi* 12.1013.

⁴⁶ *Adventus* in general: S. MacCormack (1972); Delmaire (1996) 42-45, which lists other relevant bibliography.

⁴⁷ Imperial *adventus* route planned and decorated: Proclus *Or.* 9.1

⁴⁸ Acclamations for a governor just after passing the gates: Lib. *Or.* 56.15, 20.17,

tional status and could be minuted.⁴⁹ Indeed, late antique inscribed acclamations have been recorded on a gate at Hierapolis, in Phrygia, and on the Golden Gate at Constantinople.⁵⁰ At some stage in the ritual, governors were expected to descend from their ceremonial carriages to greet members of the city council; at Antioch this happened in front of the bouleterion, where members of the city council were drawn up to meet him.⁵¹ Within cities where imperial family members were present, officials were also expected to call at the palace as part of their *adventus*, and if their cortège passed without doing so, this was interpreted by the public as a major snub.⁵²

Clearly the *adventus* had a non-arbitrary relationship with a variety of key points outside and within a city; this opens up the possibility that aspects of the monumentality of late antique cities can in fact be related to these important processions and other aspects of public ceremonial. Charlotte Roueché has recently pointed to a range of epigraphic evidence for late antique public ceremonies at Ephesus and Aphrodisias; the acclamatory inscriptions she has studied seem to occur in very definite locations, in coherent groups; they may well represent the positions in which different kinds of acclamation actually took place.⁵³

I would argue that the monumentality of the Embolos of Ephesus, with its exceptional concentration of governor's statues and late antique decrees could also be interpreted ceremonially, in relation to the *adventus* of the proconsul, the most important secular ceremonial event in the life of this city. A 5th c. proconsul would on his first visit probably arrive via the harbour (fig. 1 of Ida Leggio's paper, no. 9), and head from here towards the bouleterion (no. 26), the most critical stop before ending up at his praetorium.⁵⁴ He would first process down

25.19. People on rooves: Wallis (1915) 586 and also on the *adventus* on the "Trier Ivory": Vollbach (1996) no. 143, 95-96. Tafel 76.

⁴⁹ Standardised acclamations: Seeck (1906) 84-101. Acclamations minuted: *Cod. Theod.* 1.16.6 (A.D. 331) = *Cod. Iust.* 1.140.3; *Coll. Avellana* 14 (A.D. 418); *ACO* 1.4 201 n.274 (c. A.D. 433).

⁵⁰ Inscribed on gates: Roueché (1999a) 131-36.

⁵¹ Governors dismounting to greet council of Antioch at council chamber: Libanius *Or.* 46.40.

⁵² Ammianus 14.7.10; 14.11.14.

⁵³ Roueché (1999b).

⁵⁴ According to a fragment of Ulpian preserved by Justinian's jurists, Ephesus had the right from Caracalla to receive the proconsul before all other cities on

the wide Arcadiane (no. 10), in his official carriage. This would have been ideal processional space, where welcoming crowds could assemble to catch a glimpse of the proconsul and greet his arrival. I think it is no accident that this great monumental street, at least in part late antique, connects the city centre to the harbour, rather than to one of the gates; it seems to have been built to permit a processional entry from this direction. Acclamations may have been given and inscribed on this great avenue, or in the theatre (no. 11), to which it led.⁵⁵ From the theatre square the governor would then pass down the street on the east side of the Lower Agora. Here Roueché has identified a series of spatially structured imperial acclamatory inscriptions of early 7th c. date; she suggest one possible explanation is that they might have been associated with the reception of imperial portraits. It may well be that, even back in the 5th c., the *imagines*, given by the emperor to the governor and carried by him into the province, were formally received here.⁵⁶ Near this point a 5th c. governor would have had to abandon his coach and walk up the pedestrianised Embolos (no. 21) on foot, to reach the bouleterion. In climbing up the Embolos he would have come face to face with a series of monumentalised imperial decrees conferring favours on the city (at no. 16). After this he would have been forced to confront a remarkable display of statue after statue of late antique governors (at no. 21), so far unparalleled in the Mediterranean, reminders of his predecessors, who had behaved well enough to be honoured; one can imagine his companions since the harbour, the leading *honorati* of the city, giving a running commentary. These men could make or break a governor's tenure in office; they would have been happy to remind him of their power, as he approached his meeting with the city fathers at the bouleterion itself (no. 26), on the Upper Agora.⁵⁷

The reconstruction of the *adventus* offered here is undoubtedly

arrival; this privilege may have been jealously guarded at the time the *Digest* was compiled. Ulpian *de officio proconsulis* book 1 in *Digest* 1.16.7. The harbour would have probably been the natural entry if coming from Constantinople or from far afield.

⁵⁵ Roueché (1999a); for a recent study of the Arcadiane see Schneider (1999).

⁵⁶ Roueché: (1999b) 163. *Imagines* given by the emperor: Severian *de Mundi creatione Or.* 6.5 (PG 56 489)

⁵⁷ The Embolos: for the archaeology of this area see: Bauer (1996) 284-89. Arch blocking Embolos, undated: *IvE* 2.587: epigraphic and stylistic arguments have been advanced for a date in A.D. 459., but it could be earlier; Bammer (1976-77) statues are certainly more frequent towards the arch, suggesting that they were sited here for pedestrian appreciation.

tentative, even suggestive. However, other secular street processions took place in late antique cities, such as those by aristocrats in coaches followed by clients, or of governors with their *officiales* going from their praetorium to the law courts.⁵⁸ The location of such rituals in an urban context might help to explain much of the functioning of late antique streets in the future; they might provide an understanding of the context of street monuments and graffiti, which are as yet poorly understood, but as Charlotte Roueché has demonstrated, far from arbitrary in their location. Equally, it might one day be possible to understand the eventual encroachment of monumental streets in terms of the alteration or ending of ancient processional patterns.

CONCLUSION

The political “activity spaces” presented in this article have not of course been explored exhaustively. Plenty other everyday activities and rituals could be cited, such as those relating to public entertainments. The sketches provided here have been given to illustrate the potential that concepts of human space have for changing the way we think about the late antique city. My conclusions are both methodological and historical.

In terms of methodology, it is clear that much of our knowledge of late antique urban topography has depended simply on crude patterns in the survival of archaeological evidence; to improve on this we must concentrate on writing actively about topography, not just through the collection of evidence, but through argument, critically evaluating different kinds of sources to create a human spatial narrative for Late Antiquity. The use of texts as well as archaeology in pursuing this can allow important aspects of urban life to be recovered from neglect or obscurity: such as the law courts or the social functions of churches; without these we cannot have a balanced appreciation of the late antique city. By consciously weighing different types of evidence we can further alter our understanding of apparently well-known questions, such as the decline of the forum/ agora. The combination of texts and archaeology also permits a vivid

⁵⁸ Aristocratic processions in carriages with clients: *Alexandria* A.D. 415: Damascius fr. 104; *Rome*, 4th c.: Ammianus 14.6.16-17; *Antioch*, Libanius *Or.* 3.13—implying that it is disgraceful to have only 20 people following.

evocation of human experience in the 4th to 6th c. Potentially, the disciplined organisation of anecdotal textual references might one day allow both the high-places and the hovels of late antique cities to be filled not only with activities, people and objects, but with sounds and smells as well.⁵⁹

On a general historical level a study of spatial function, through texts and evidence for the use of buildings, reveals more continuity with the Roman past; this is an important counterbalance to studies of Christianisation; traditional political activities, carried out in old architectural frames must not be neglected; neither must those transferred to new architectural settings as secondary functions be ignored. An explicitly historical method also helps to establish a clear periodisation in the urban organisation of the late antique city. Although Mediterranean cities emerge from the 3rd c. at a new more modest level, they retain a very stable Roman civic monumentality from the time of Diocletian up to the early 5th c; this time sees the increasing Christianisation of the city. Then, from the mid-5th c., the traditional civic political buildings are first neglected and then redeveloped; however, secular public buildings of a non-political nature, such as baths and street monuments, remained important in the late antique city up to the 7th c. The end of bouleuteria and agorai can be seen as equivalent to the earlier decline of stadia and gymnasia. Both mark very specific changes in the priorities of people who lived in already old urban environments, but who wished to reshape them for their own use.⁶⁰

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⁵⁹ Locating dumps of animal carcasses is a start: for extra mural dumps at Gaza: Sozom. *HE* 5.9, for dumps inside the city see Mango (1976) 30-35.

⁶⁰ Here I must again stress that I am talking about the Mediterranean, especially central and eastern regions.

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ABBREVIATIONS

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- CSEL = *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*
- CIL = *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*
- IRT = J. M. Reynolds and J. B. Ward-Perkins (1952), *Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania* (Rome 1952)
- IoE = *Die Inschriften von Ephesos* (Bonn 1979-1981)
- Mansi = J. D. Mansi (1797) ed. *Sacrorum Concilium Nova et Amplissima Collectio* vol.12 (Paris 1901; Graz 1960) (2nd ed.; original ed. 1797).
- PG = *Patriologia Graeca*
- PL = *Patriologia Latina*
- PO = *Patriologia Orientalis*

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- Coll. Avelana* = *Collectio Avellana - Epistulae imperatorum pontificum aliorum... Avellana quae dicitur Collectio* (CSEL 35)
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PART FIVE
SPOLIA

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ATTITUDES TO *SPOLIA* IN SOME LATE ANTIQUE TEXTS

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ABSTRACT

Current art historical and archaeological studies of *spolia* tend to assign willed, conceptual motives to the re-use of architectural and sculptural material in late antique building. But such ‘motives’—usually said to be of the propagandistic, ‘auto-legitimation’ type—do not differ from those of past patrons, who built only with new-made materials; they can therefore in no way explain why builders started to use *spolia* as opposed to new materials. This paper highlights textual evidence (John of Ephesus, al-Tabari, Minucius Felix, Socrates Scholasticus, Cassiodorus) that suggests conceptual motives for using *spolia* which could not have been expressed with new material. Such motives include triumphalism, religious appropriation, and aesthetic conservatism. But the texts also display as multifarious a range of viewpoints regarding the *spolia* phenomenon as do the varying currents of modern scholarship.

INTRODUCTION

The consensus established in recent years that sees the recycling of ancient materials in late antique architecture chiefly in conceptual terms is coming under increasing attack. Archaeological study is now revealing that many so-called prestigious spoils in Rome, from the capitals of S. Sabina and S. Stefano Rotondo to the Dacians on the attic of the Arch of Constantine, are more likely to have come from warehouses than from standing buildings. If such pieces were readily available in 4th and 5th c. store-rooms, and not dismantled from notable public monuments, it becomes increasingly difficult to attach much ideological significance to their re-use.¹ From a broader,

¹ Capitals at S. Sabina, S. Stefano Rotondo and S. Maria Maggiore bear the same *graffito*-abbreviation; it seems that rather than having been dismantled, they

text-based field of reference, P. Liverani has called into question whether the “deliberate political references” (if such they were) of *spolia* assemblages like the Arch of Constantine would really have been successfully understood by 4th c. viewers. Would the individual identities of Trajan, Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius have been recognised on the Arch? And is it at all likely that anyone could have seen that their features had been lightly re-cut so as to resemble Constantine himself?² On a more conciliatory note, B. Ward-Perkins has stressed the sheer impossibility of a satisfactory modern interpretation of *spolia*-use, and has to some extent tried to resolve the ‘ideology or pragmatism’ argument by suggesting that there need not be a conflict: in re-using 2nd c. reliefs, the builders of the Arch of Constantine could have wished to cut corners with the work, but that need not by any means rule out the likelihood that they might at the same time have been making deliberate links with the past.³ In this paper I hope to escape from the largely anachronistic art historical dialectic on the *spolia* phenomenon and investigate how late antique observers themselves betray contemporary attitudes to the practice. Unsurprisingly, their writings show that there was as catholic a collection of views as there now exists amongst modern scholars.

Before we leave the field of modern art historical criticism, however, I should first like to discount two worn-out concepts commonly used to account for the ancient use of *spolia*. The first is that which automatically assumes that the simple motive of propaganda lies

had instead been stored in warehouses during the interval between their importation (from Thasos) and their adoption in the 5th c. churches (related by H. Brandenburg in a lecture to the *Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia* in November 1998, scheduled for publication in the *RendPontAcc*). On such warehouses, which include the store of column-shafts at Ostia’s *Fabri Navales*, see Pensabene (2000). The statues of the Dacian prisoners on the Arch of Constantine, previously believed to have been removed from the Forum of Trajan, may in fact have been recovered from a marble deposit, such as those recorded in 19th c. excavations in the Campus Martius, comprising similar, intact statues (Meischberger (1997) 119-21); this theory was aired by R. Meneghini and R. Santangeli Valenzani at the Norwegian Archaeological Institute’s *Rome A.D. 300-800* conference in November 2001; for an earlier expression of a similar idea, concerning also the so-called Trajanic Frieze, see Claridge (1998) 274).

² Liverani (forthcoming). He goes on to argue that any willed meaning in *spolia*-use would have passed largely unnoticed for much of the 4th and 5th c., with the practice only taking on a clear ideological dimension at the time of Theoderic.

³ Ward-Perkins (1999) esp. 232.

behind the decision to incorporate and recycle older sculptural marbles in late antique monuments. The re-use of 2nd c. reliefs and statuary in the Arch of Constantine, for example, is said to stem from motives of auto-legitimation, dynastic pretension, and identification with the great men of the past.⁴ Before Constantine, however, precisely the same messages had been made in similar monuments using entirely new materials—it is enough to cite the Great Altar of Pergamum or the Ara Pacis. The sculptors of these monuments could perfectly easily imitate or echo older styles for ideological purposes in new sculpture—so why, under Constantine, should sculptors re-use pieces to do this? In other words, even if we accept that the re-use of materials in the Arch of Constantine had conceptual significance, we must admit that such ‘*spolia* motives’ do not vary in the slightest from ‘new-material motives’. Said conceptual motives can therefore in no way explain precisely why re-used as opposed to new-made materials were chosen.

The same problem blights attempts to interpret *spolia* according to the aesthetic concept of *varietas*, “that central concept of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages”.⁵ Admittedly, an architecture of *spolia* would have facilitated the breakdown of the old architectural orders. And it is true that multi-coloured *spolia* assemblages are a common feature in late antique architecture, whether in pavements, colonnades or wall-revetment. The chromatic variation of the re-used marbles selected for the Lateran Baptistery, for example, where simple, muted tones at the periphery give way to the use of porphyry at the centre, provides an architectural counterpoint to the liturgy.⁶ But we should ask ourselves why specifically *re-used* coloured marbles are needed to do this, when by now it is universally recognised that Roman imperial architecture from its origins had always strived for such polychrome effects—almost always using *new* materials. We are no closer to understanding how conceptual motives, whether political or aesthetic, could have led to an architecture of *spolia* in Late Antiquity, since two of the primary ‘explanations’ of such an architecture’s meaning add nothing to the supposed meaning of ancient

⁴ Most recently, for example, in Pensabene and Panella (1993-94) 112 and 126ff.. For a summary of the extensive bibliography on the monument and its interpreters, see Capodiferro (1993).

⁵ Brenk (1987) 105.

⁶ Romano (1991) 34.

architecture in the pre-*spolia* period. We must either change tack, and ask why the mere *medium* of expressing age-old propaganda and aesthetic messages changed, or else seek fresh conceptual motives behind the use of *spolia* that depart radically from those of non-*spolia* architecture—motives that could not have been so successfully expressed using new materials. It is this second approach that I intend to take here.

SPOILS OF WAR

The first conceptual motive we may consider for *spolia* architecture, which could certainly not have been expressed or satisfied by the medium of new materials, is—appropriately enough, considering the original meaning of the word ‘*spolia*’—that of triumphalism. The example chosen here is a multi-viewpoint account of an episode from the endemic conflict over Rome’s eastern border. In A.D. 540 the Sasanid king, Khusraw, invaded the Roman empire and sacked the city of Antioch. Procopius tells us that he looted the city and carried the citizens away into captivity. In addition, ‘he took down the marbles and ordered them to be deposited outside, to be conveyed to the land of Persia’. We also hear that the citizens were re-settled in a new city which Khusraw had specially built for them near his capital Ctesiphon, called ‘Antioch of Khusraw’, and that this city was furnished with such pre-requisites of Byzantine urban life as a bath and a hippodrome.⁷

The story becomes more complicated, and considerably richer, when we consider a number of oriental versions of the same episode, written in Syriac and Arabic. The so-called ‘*Chronicle of Zuqnin*’, or Pseudo-Dionysius, compiled in 8th c. Syria, preserves a description of Khusraw’s sack from the contemporary (6th c.) church historian, John of Ephesus:

‘The Persians burned Antioch with fire and destroyed it. They stripped it and removed even the marble slabs with which the walls of the buildings were overlaid, and took them away to their country, since

⁷ Procopius, *Pers.* 2.9.14-17 and 2.14.1-2 (*History of the Wars* ed. and transl. Dewing (1914) 1. 341 and 381)

they also were building in their country a city like this one, and they named it Antioch too'.⁸

Here, then, the *spolia* aspect becomes more interesting. Procopius' reference that Khusraw despatched 'the marbles' to Persia is in itself noteworthy, but not very specific: without John of Ephesus, we might assume Khusraw was taking away prominent statues or ornate columns as a sign of his victory, as was common practise in Antiquity. But, in the case of Antioch, we have a very different situation: Khusraw was actually taking the most minute building materials—even to the extent of the 'crustae' revetment-slabs from the houses—and apparently re-using them to build his new Antioch.

When we consider accounts preserved in later, Arabic sources, we obtain even more unusual information. The texts are many, but the fullest and most reliable is that of al-Tabarī, who wrote in the early 10th c. Al-Tabarī (Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari) wrote his *History of the Prophets and Kings*, covering all of history from the creation until his own time, in fifteen volumes. Although this was an abridgment of the work as originally planned, his students still complained of its length, and Tabari consented to shorten it further, remarking sadly that 'enthusiasm for learning is dead'. His policy appears to have been to reproduce as many conflicting accounts of the same event as possible, gathered from traditions whose authority goes back to eye-witnesses. His account of Khusraw's sack of Antioch is fascinating, and worth quoting in full:

'Khusraw marched against Antioch, where were stationed leading commanders of Qaysar's army, and conquered it. He then gave orders that a plan should be made for him of the city of Antioch exactly to scale, with the number of its houses, streets, and everything contained in it, and orders that a [new city] should be built for him exactly like Antioch but situated at the side of al-Mada'in [=Ctesiphon]. The city known as al-Rumiyyah was built exactly on the plan of Antioch. He thereupon had the inhabitants of Antioch transported and settled in the new city; when they entered the city's gate, the denizens of each house went to the new house so exactly resembling their former one in Antioch that it was as if they had never left the city'.⁹

This story, with its diverse viewpoints preserved through the three

⁸ Witakowski (1996) 64, and xxvi-xxx for the chronicler's use of John of Ephesus' 'lost' part 2.

⁹ *History of al-Tabari* 898 (transl. Bosworth (1999) 157-58). On al-Tabari, see also Dudley and Lang (1969) 311.

textual traditions, perfectly encapsulates what has in recent times amongst art historians become the ‘*spolia* debate’. The mixture of ambiguity, richness, and wealth of potential meaning (potential, since Procopius in particular provides no clue to its interpretation) together produces an ideal correspondence to our own scholarly discussions. Just as a single re-used capital in a church colonnade will excite numerous art-historical and archaeological interpretations, so Khusraw’s removal of marbles from Antioch seems, even in Antiquity, to have produced a rich variety of significance for observers and narrators.

The question as to whether the story of Khusraw’s spoliation of Antioch is ‘true’ or not is unimportant beside the salient fact that contemporaries or near-contemporaries felt moved to write it. But it does seem entirely likely that the specific, bald statements of Procopius and John of Ephesus that marbles were removed—even down to the *crustae* of the houses—should have an ‘ulterior motive’: that is, the wholesale *spolia*-construction of a new city. We do, in fact, hear this reiterated in later oriental texts such as Mirkhond and Bar Hebraeus.¹⁰ The reliability of the story is further backed up by a comment in Theophylact, writing about 100 years after the event: ‘It is said that Justinian once provided Khusraw with Greek marble, building-experts, and craftsmen skilled in ceilings in order to construct for Khusraw a palace close to Ctesiphon with Roman expertise’. This seems a kind of ‘apologia’ by the later Byzantines for such a shocking event as that described in all the other (generally non-Byzantine) texts: if there really did exist a Persian complex of buildings near Ctesiphon built in the Byzantine style with wonderful Greek marble, it could only have done so if the Byzantine emperor himself had allowed it. In short, we can, I think, accept that the new city was built using an unusual concentration of *spolia*.¹¹

The city’s new name of al-Rumiyyah, too, has a wealth of implications. It is variously-translated by commentators in German and English as ‘the city of the Greeks’, ‘the city of the Romans’, ‘the Roman city’, and even simply as ‘Rome’.¹² It may have been an oriental folk-

¹⁰ Rawlinson (1876) 395 for Mirkhond. Fiey (1967) 25-27 cites many additional Arabic sources, as well as Bar Hebraeus’ *Chronography*.

¹¹ The translation of Theophylact is by Whitby (1986) 140, who also links this passage to Khusraw’s capture of the marbles of Antioch. The site of the new Persian Antioch is located in Fiey (1967) 26ff., but no archaeological evidence remains.

¹² Bosworth (1999) 158 n.398; Nöldeke (1879) 165 n.4; Rawlinson (1876) 395 n.2.

name for the city (which seems to have been officially known as ‘Antioch-of-Khusraw’); again, it may really have formed part of the Persian king’s ‘*spolia*-scheme’; but even if it is a complete invention by al-Tabari or his sources, it represents a perfect encapsulation of what *spolia* construction could, in certain circumstances, represent for contemporaries. Khusraw has become master of his enemy, the Roman-Byzantine state, through the possession of its citizens and its marbles, its animate as well as its inanimate attributes. ‘Rum’ is thus the perfect name for such a symbol. All of this, rather than suggesting motives of dynastic pretension or self-legitimation for *spolia*, instead recalls Beat Brenk’s analogy of cannibalism. “When someone removes the hide of a building or tears out its innards” he writes, “he resembles a cannibal. A cannibal does not devour his enemies because he is hungry, but because he hopes that in so doing he will acquire his destroyed enemy’s strength—therefore, for ideological reasons.”¹³ Brenk here was, of course, using this image merely as an analogy. But in the case of Khusraw’s *spolia* Rum it could quite soundly serve as a precise description of the Persian king’s motivation.

Furthermore, it resolves an additional paradox concerning *spolia* reflected in Ward-Perkins’ recent statement: “it is comparatively simple to interpret the re-use of figured carving as ideologically motivated; and, with slightly less conviction, the same argument can be extended downwards to the re-use of carved architectural elements; but the re-use of block-work is surely purely pragmatic.”¹⁴ This is a feeling most writers on the subject appear to have: in the search for conceptual interpretations of *spolia* use, the overwhelming majority of *spolia*, which consists of simple blocks, bricks, tiles, and so on, is ignored, whilst attention is instead lavished on the supposedly significant cases of relief-sculpture and architectural decoration. Now, in the case of al-Tabari, Khusraw and Rum, we have a perfect example of how all *spolia* can have ideological connotations. The significant factor would seem to be more the despoilers’ (and the audience’s) knowledge or belief regarding the precise source of the re-used materials, rather than such materials’ intrinsic worth or form.

Obviously, this seems all the more appropriate in the case of spoils

¹³ Brenk (1987) 103.

¹⁴ Ward-Perkins (1999) 230.

of war. And the story of Khusraw and Antioch represents a perfect crossover of the two meanings of *spolia*—the supposed original, ancient meaning, of ‘spoils-of-war’, and the modern use of the term, for re-used building materials. In Khusraw’s new city, ‘*spolia*’ is an especially appropriate word for the marbles, since here they have become a metaphor for the Roman-Byzantine empire itself, now taken as a spoil-of-war. Other similar cases where spoils-of-war comprised statuary or architectural marbles would include Justinian’s destruction of the pagan sanctuaries at Philae and the immediate despatch of their sculpture to Constantinople (Procop., *Pers.* 1.19.34–37) and the much later Muslim sack of the Holy Sepulchre, recounted by a letter of Robert, patriarch of Jerusalem, preserved in Matthew Paris. This tells us that the sacred edicule around the tomb of Christ was dismantled, and its columns despatched to Mecca to adorn the tomb of Mohammed ‘*in signum victoriae*’—as a sign of victory.¹⁵ However, Khusraw goes further still: past and future conquerors might remove individual pieces of value as their victory spoils—but none of them would take an entire city, from the smallest detail of interior décor to whole streets, and take in addition all of its inhabitants.

Of course, this clearly ‘conceptual’ case of *spolia*-use is not a safe model by which we can judge all, or even most, other cases in Late Antiquity, since the bulk of these consists of the re-use of material whose original context was not in an enemy or vanquished state, but usually in the same city as the building to which it was being transferred—usually in peacetime. This is not to say that spoils of war might not have clouded the issue of ‘peaceful’ re-use; it is perfectly possible that all re-use bore with it the negative implications of spoils-of-war. For example, a *praefectus urbis* using marbles from a dilapidated or abandoned building, no matter how hard he tried to present the legality or civic goodness of his case, could not escape the negative implications that he was behaving like an enemy conqueror with the town’s patrimony. This might help explain some of the negative views of *spolia*-use that are so apparent in much of the literature regarding the subject in its early phase during the 4th c., and which will be discussed shortly. It is worth adding at this point, too, the fact that the only times the word ‘*spolia*’ seems to be used

¹⁵ Luard (1877) 340.

in ancient texts to refer to the re-use of building materials is when it appears as a participle, as '*spoliare*', that is, 'despoiled' or 'stripped'.¹⁶

RELIGIOUS TRIUMPHALISM

The crossover between 'spoils-of-war' *spolia* and 'non war-booty' re-use can also be seen in very clear terms in actual practise. The two well-known capitals re-used in the late-6th c. church of S. Lorenzo fuori le Mura in Rome are a case-in-point (fig. 1, see plates). G. Tedeschi Grisanti has produced a very convincing argument, backed by textual evidence, which explains the willed, conceptual motives behind the re-use of Roman trophy capitals next to the church's main altar, which also marked the site of St. Lawrence the martyr's tomb. Nothing could be clearer in classical iconography to symbolise 'spoils-of-war' than the *trophaea*, that is, the insignia of a vanquished army, represented on the two capitals in S. Lorenzo by a suit of enemy armour, supported by winged Victories. Tedeschi Grisanti points out that such a symbol was very quickly appropriated by Christian writers to symbolise Christ's—and then the martyrs'—own victories. Minucius Felix observed the formal similarity between the trophy and the cross in a passage from Octavius' speech to Caecilius: 'what are your standards and banners and ensigns but gilded and decorated crosses? Your victory-trophies imitate not only the figure of a simple cross, but also of a crucified man' (*Octavius* 29). Tertullian, too, makes the parallel between the cross-trophy and the victory of Christ, and the comparison appears frequently thereafter, in the writings of St. Augustine, Prudentius and Venantius Fortunatus. With such clear textual precedents, it seems almost impossible to deny the strong ideological significance of two such unequivocal elements of *spolia*, placed precisely next to the tomb-altar of the martyr Lawrence.¹⁷

If we were to seek other examples of overtly pagan sculptural elements being used to signify the Christian triumph, we could point to textual, as well as archaeological examples: the most celebrated of the former would be Mark the Deacon's explanation of Bishop Porphyry's re-use of stones from the Marneion of Gaza to pave the

¹⁶ Examples from the law codes ('stripped' cities and 'stripped' buildings) are given in Alchermes (1994) 167; similarly negative images appear in 4th c. inscriptions cited by Liverani (see n.1, above).

¹⁷ All ancient citations are from Tedeschi Grisanti (1992) 398.

forecourt of the new church built just after A.D. 402: in this way, we are told, the pagan material would be trampled 'by the feet of not only men, but of women, dogs, pigs and other animals.'¹⁸ When Christians were, so to speak, on the other end of such symbolic insults, we can be sure that these, too, were harshly felt: the letter of the patriarch regarding the spoliation of the Holy Sepulchre, cited above, adds quite clearly that the Muslims' actions were 'to the disgrace of the Christians.' Mark the Deacon's interpretation has recurred frequently in art historical explanations of markedly pagan *spolia* from the Renaissance onwards, with old St. Peter's proving a particularly fertile exemplar.¹⁹ The analytically-minded may note that two slightly different trends of Christian triumphalism are at work here. In the first case, of the victory capitals at S. Lorenzo, there is an appropriation of the object, and a reworking of its meaning: the trophies and victories become a metaphor. The church-paving, on the other hand, is for Mark the Deacon a *damnatio* of the original object: the pagan block retains its 'aura', and through it paganism is debased by being trampled underfoot. The trampling, of course, is a symbolic act, and so this, too, finishes in the realm of metaphor.

DESPOILING THE DEAD

Two examples of conceptual motivation for *spolia* use have now been considered: spoils-of-war and religious triumphalism. Each is clearly attested by contemporary writers. But both represent an unusual or at least a partial glimpse of the overall *spolia* phenomenon. This is because the bulk of archaeologically-attested cases of re-use fits into neither category. As noted earlier, most *spolia*-use did not occur as a result of wartime-looting. And the widespread re-use of building materials in the period prior to the Peace of the Church—by Diocletian in Rome for example—could not have been coloured by religious or Christian motivation. By the same token, in later periods (from the 5th c. onwards) Christian buildings start to re-use material from

¹⁸ *Life of Porphyry of Gaza*, cited in Ward-Perkins (1999) 233-34.

¹⁹ See, for example, Canon Ubaldini's explanation for the presence of pagan remains discovered beneath St. Peter's in 1626 (Armellini (1891) 716); the same idea recurs in a recent study of a pagan frieze re-used as a threshold in the old basilica (Zander) 1990.

older Christian monuments, notably epitaphs from the catacombs for paving. So the ‘religious triumphalism’ motive must fail here too.²⁰ Although it may not necessarily evoke Christian conceptual motives, however, the re-use of funerary material for building certainly seems to have been tinged with some form of underlying meaning. Obviously, the removal of epitaphs from tombs entailed their desecration, an act that had always been legislated against in the ancient world. With the arrival of widespread *spolia*-construction, the crime of tomb-violation came to entail not only the robbing of grave-goods, but more often the tomb’s actual building materials. As early as A.D. 356, a law of Constantius issued at Milan forbade the violation of tombs to produce building materials, on the grounds that such pillage not only insults the dead, but also that the re-use of the materials ‘contaminates the living’ (*Cod. Theod.* 9.17.4). A century later, when Valentinian III came to repeat the law, it is framed directly at the clergy, who seem by now to be the principal offenders (title 23). The guilt of church-builders in this respect is further highlighted by no lesser person than the Church Father Gregory of Nazianzus, who wrote a full 80 epigrams on the subject of the violation of tombs, entitling one in particular ‘to those who build churches out of stones taken from tombs’ (*Anth Graeca* 8.173).

In the re-use of tomb materials, then, and especially of epitaph-slabs, we have a case of re-use that was extremely widespread (unlike spoils-of-war, or triumphalist Christian adaptations of markedly-pagan sculpture), and which, importantly for this argument, can be seen from contemporary texts to have been associated with some kind of supernatural, or superstitious—at any rate ‘ideological’—overtone (that is, the contamination of the living). However, if we are to judge from actual results, we would have to conclude that such conceptual overtones had very little influence on actual practice, since there are so many surviving examples of re-used tomb-materials in late antique and Early Medieval buildings throughout the Mediterranean.²¹ It seems clear that all the laws and warnings against the ‘contamination of the living by the dead’ made very little impression on people at the time.

²⁰ Examples of pagan-pagan re-use (under Diocletian) as well as Christian-Christian re-use in Coates-Stephens (2002).

²¹ Coates-Stephens (2002).

All of this serves to reinforce the suggestion, evident in the examples considered up to now, that in the ancient world there was just as much ambiguity regarding the question of *spolia* as there is today amongst art historians and archaeologists. Titles of articles on the subject stressing precisely this—“Aesthetics versus ideology“, “Re-use without ideology“, “Re-using the architectural ideology of the past, *entre idéologie et pragmatisme*”—seem to be paralleled by the conflict over the subject that can be observed from contemporary texts: at the most pragmatic end of the scale, we have the dichotomy between legal rulings and actual practice on the re-use of tomb-slabs; from a more rarified, abstract realm, we can point to the confused literary records of Khusraw’s *spolia* city. Unequivocally Christian attitudes towards significantly pagan *spolia* vary even amongst themselves: should they be trampled underfoot, as Porphyry and Mark the Deacon, or re-appropriated as a metaphor, as Tertullian, Minucius Felix, and the builders of S. Lorenzo fuori le Mura? If we credit the ancients with the qualities of uncertainty, ambiguity and dialectic—above all, with the ability to hold a multiplicity of views—the debate over *spolia* becomes at the same time richer but rather pointless, in that we will never arrive at a conclusive, clear answer to the question ‘What did the practice actually mean to the ancients?’ It did, of course, mean a multitude of things, and must have stretched to meaning, for some people at least, nothing at all.

AESTHETIC CONSERVATISM

Lastly, we might turn to the question of aesthetics, or to put it more simply, the effects of *spolia*-construction on the appearance not only of new buildings but of the cities in which it was taking place. As before, I will try to look specifically at what the texts reveal about the various views of contemporaries regarding this. The most widespread attitude seems to be caution, unease, even antagonism towards an architecture of *spolia*. This is clearest from the numerous and extremely well-known laws of the Theodosian Code regarding the practice. We should not see these as lofty restrictions on a burgeoning, popular habit, imposed by an out-of-touch government: it is clear from other contemporary accounts that the practice of spoliation on the part of officials was not only unpopular with the mass

of citizens, but that it could even lead to civic unrest, as in the riots in Rome against the late 4th c. urban prefect Lampadius' robbing of building materials, related by Ammianus Marcellinus (27.3.8-10). In 456 the emperor Avitus' decision to dismantle public monuments in order to use the bronze to pay his troops led to a full scale public revolt, 'since the Romans were robbed of the adornments of their city' (John of Antioch, *fragments* 202). Seen in this light, the legal proscriptions on spoliation may have been prompted as much by fear of such popular unrest as by what we today might interpret as 'heritage concerns'—and indeed, Blockley has made precisely this connection between the revolt against Avitus and the law of Majorian on the preservation of ancient monuments, passed shortly after (Maj. *Nov.* 4).²² The same impression that the civic good was to be maintained by the use of new-made materials and not by resorting to *spolia* is found in the by-now well-known inscription cited by Ward-Perkins, where one Barbarius Pompeianus declares (in A.D. 333) that he has beautified his city of Abella, in Campania, by paving its streets with stone 'cut from the mountains, and not removed from ruined monuments'.²³ Whilst it is true that over the course of the next two centuries the official viewpoint on *spolia*-use gradually comes to recognise its preponderance, and tries to work with the trend by permitting a regulated, carefully-controlled reliance on re-used building materials, we should remember, as Ward-Perkins again has pointed out, that in the real centres of imperial patronage, Ravenna and Constantinople, new materials were always selected for the very highest range of public and imperial building.²⁴

This conservative attitude must surely have spread over into the field of aesthetics, into how the buildings were seen and appreciated. Pensabene and others have noted the tendency in *spolia*-built churches in Rome during the later 4th and the 5th c. to match homogeneous *spolia* pieces (for example, next to the altar or across aisles), or even, in examples of very high patronage, to adopt homogeneous shafts and/or capitals for *spolia* colonnades (as at S. Sabina and S. Pietro in Vincoli).²⁵ This surely suggests that *spolia* was, in

²² Blockley (1983) 335 and 394, n.141. The fragment is assigned here to the 'lost' history of Priscus.

²³ *CIL* X 1199, cited in Ward-Perkins (1999) 231.

²⁴ Ward-Perkins (1984) 214-17.

²⁵ Pensabene (1989).

such cases, being made to resemble new material. An unequivocal case of a contemporary observer bemoaning the aesthetics of *spolia*-construction when seen in close conjunction with ancient work comes from an aside in the History of Socrates Scholasticus. Writing in the mid-5th c., he describes how the walls of Chalcedon were repaired with disparate material following Valens' theft of their materials to build a bath in Constantinople in A.D. 375. He complains that the rebuilt sections stood out to his day due to their unsightly contrast with the beautiful cyclopean work of the original structure: the word he uses for the rebuilt section is εὐτελής—or 'cheap', 'tawdry' (4.8).

We get closer to a reaction to the effects of *spolia*-construction on contemporary aesthetics in Cassiodorus. His letters, written in Ravenna on behalf of the Ostrogothic administration over a 30-year period (roughly between 507 and 540), have been analysed for their references to *spolia* most profitably by Brenk, and more recently Liverani.²⁶ In the numerous instances of requests for ancient material to be re-used to restore the cities of Italy, Cassiodorus uses a rich, florid and ambiguous language that seems to reveal a determined policy to preserve the realm's ancient buildings, and at the same time reinforce his master Theoderic's legitimacy as ruler of Italy and heir to the western emperors. Liverani has emphasised that for the first time in the texts, the *Variae* present the use of *spolia* in a clearly positive light, prefacing all demands for the re-use of ancient marbles with a wealth of phraseology claiming, for example, that 'we are striving to bring back all things to their former state'; or 'in our time, Antiquity appears to be decently renewed'. However, only in his palace, according to Brenk, was Theoderic himself eager to re-use materials, and—significantly—such materials included marbles transported specifically from Rome. In the context of the present paper, we might observe in such an action striking similarities with the conceptual spoliation of Khusraw at Antioch, at a similar period. As noted above, however, in the majority of his own new buildings at Ravenna—such as the palace church, now Sant' Apollinare Nuovo—Theoderic always seems to have gone to great efforts to obtain new-made materials, imported from Constantinople (fig. 2). In fact,

²⁶ Brenk (1987), 107 (for the extracts from Cassiodorus cited below); Liverani (forthcoming).

bearing in mind the new-made monogrammed capital of fig. 2 (see plates), and the Byzantine source of the new marbles, it would seem that, in Theoderic's case, any 'auto-legitimation' was being signalled as much by the use of new materials as by *spolia*.

But here it is chiefly the aesthetic question that concerns us: not so much what Cassiodorus and Theoderic intended the use of *spolia* to mean or represent (the question dealt with by Brenk), but how their texts suggest it was seen from an artistic, or aesthetic point-of-view. Cassiodorus' *Variae* 7.5 is the *Formula Curae Palatii*, or appointment-formula for the post of 'curator of the palace', who is clearly an architect. Most interestingly, the new appointee is told '*ut et antiqua in nitorem pristinum contineas et nova simili antiquitate producas.*' A literal translation would be: 'we wish you both to maintain the ancient [buildings] in their antique splendour and to produce new ones of similar antiquity'.²⁷ Liverani has already suggested that another letter makes a specific reference to building with *spolia*, and the wording of our own example also permits such an interpretation.²⁸ Equally interesting is the astonishing degree of conservatism which the statement embodies: to produce 'ready-made ancient buildings' would seem a depressing prospect for an architect today. The text goes on: '*quia, sicut decorum corpus uno convenit colore vestiri, ita nitor palatii similis debet per universa membra diffundi*'. In other words: 'since, just as it suits a decorous body to be dressed in only one colour, so the splendour of the palace must be spread throughout all of its parts in the same way.' In short, the general spirit of the passage seem to go back to the first principles of ancient architecture, as presented by Vitruvius (1.2): that the art fundamentally consists of the graceful arrangement of details and parts in order to produce a symmetrical, harmonious whole. Individual elements should not catch the eye or jar. The whole building must have a balanced, but homogeneous, appearance. How all of this goes together with such a thing as the Arch of Constantine—or, to provide a structure closer to Cassiodorus' own time, S. Stefano Rotondo—is an intriguing question. Most modern commentators

²⁷ Cass. *Var.* 7.5.3. Hodgkin (1886) 323 gives the paraphrase 'see that your new work harmonises well with the old'. *Simili antiquitate* should perhaps be translated as 'with similar antiquity'; the phrase might also be interpreted as 'new buildings that seem ancient'.

²⁸ Cass. *Var.* 7.15: '*ut et facta veterum exclusis defectibus innovemus, et nova vetustatis gloria vestiamus*' (Liverani, forthcoming).

would hardly see these as homogeneous structures, ‘decorously dressed in one colour’. This raises the possibility, of course, that Cassiodorus is ‘in denial’: that he would prefer to ignore the blatantly-obvious fact that the buildings of Theoderic’s realm are in reality eye-catching *mélanges* of heterogeneous *spolia* elements, tacked on in jarring fashion to the crumbling ruins of Antiquity. But it could also be that we are failing to see how contemporary spectators were viewing these buildings. An admixture of *spolia* elements could well be said to ‘spread splendour over all the building’s parts in the same way.’ They would ensure that the new buildings were being produced with ‘similar antiquity’ to the old. The *spolia* panels of the Arch of Constantine are, in a certain way, ‘evenly spread throughout all the structure’s parts.’

CONCLUSION

To modern archaeologists and architectural historians, *spolia* assemblages will always remain mute. Even if such study eventually succeeds in proving categorically that the re-used pieces of the Arch of Constantine came not from the Forum of Trajan, but from a run-of-the-mill architectural store, what will this demonstrate regarding the intentions of ancient patrons and the opinions of their audience? Texts, as we have now seen, do reveal something about what contemporaries thought. Admittedly, they may occasionally say more than was ever intended. The justification for the use of *spolia* given in a text might be a *post eventum* explanation, never in the builder’s mind. The Arch of Constantine, however, has its own contemporary text inserted into the fabric in the form of its dedicatory inscription. In the last line, it is said that the arch is ‘*triumphis insignem*’—conspicuous for its triumphs. Presumably, the ‘triumphs’ in question are the decorative panels, both old and new. Here, then, we have a contemporary text that makes no distinction between re-used and new-made material, describing both alike as ‘triumphs’ (or ‘scenes of triumphs’).²⁹ Even in this apparently explicit, contemporary reference to what we would call *spolia*, however, a clear modern inter-

²⁹ Grossi Gondi (1913) 9-10, followed by Giuliano (1955) 1. Gordon believes only the scenes representing Constantine’s triumphs are meant (1983) 169.

pretation of ancient motivation remains impossible. Does the use of the word 'triumphis' suggest that older pieces were particularly prized? Or does it merely imply that a positive accent was being stressed over what was merely a means of saving on the cost and labour of providing new sculpture? Or, finally, does it perhaps show that in the early 4th c. no distinction was made nor difference noted between what we today see as old or re-used on the one hand and new and contemporary on the other?

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VALENZA DEL REIMPIEGO: IL CASO DI EFESO

IDA LEGGIO

ABSTRACT

Il reimpiego del materiale di spoglio ha caratterizzato l'attività edilizia a partire dall'età tardoantica. Al fenomeno si è riconosciuto finora un significato prettamente ideologico, per noi limitativo, perché basato non di rado sulla esclusiva osservazione di contesti monumentali cristiani. In questo contributo ci siamo proposti di verificare, attraverso le testimonianze archeologiche di complessi monumentali 'laici', nel caso particolare di Efeso ed altri siti dell'Asia Minore, se sia corretto riconoscere alla base del reimpiego di *spolia* motivazioni di natura unicamente ideologica, ad esempio leggendo nell'uso di *spolia* una rivalutazione del passato pagano, eventualmente con reinterpretazione in chiave cristiana, o, al contrario, non vi siano stati motivi più concreti. Nel contesto di tale indagine la scelta di Efeso non è stata casuale. La ricca documentazione che il sito presenta consente, infatti, di poter analizzare il reimpiego sotto le sue molteplici sfaccettature. Infatti, le differenti modalità con le quali gli *spolia* furono reimpiegate, nel corso dell'intensa attività edilizia che caratterizzò la città per ben due secoli, dal IV al VI, hanno permesso di riconoscere non solo quanto limitativa sia la sola interpretazione ideologica del fenomeno, ma, soprattutto, di evidenziare, almeno per questa prima fase, un significato più funzionale, se vogliamo utilitaristico.

INTRODUZIONE

L'uso del materiale di spoglio è forse uno degli aspetti più significativi, che caratterizza l'attività edilizia a partire dall'età tardoantica in poi. È questo un fenomeno, che, benché tuttora al centro dell'attenzione di molti studiosi,¹ manca ancora di una corretta esegesi. Infatti, gli

¹ Deichmann (1940) 114-30 e (1975) 3-101; Brandenburg (1996) 11-39; Pensabene (1993-94) 111-238. Sull'argomento si vedano inoltre: Geyger (1993) 63-77; Brenk (1987) 103-109 e (1996) 49 ff.; Alchermes (1994) 167-78; De Lachenal (1995) 11-29; Kinney (1995) 58 ff.

studi basati principalmente sulla sola osservazione di monumenti cristiani, hanno portato a riconoscerli esclusivamente un significato ideologico inteso sia come garanzia di continuità col passato, sia come possibilità tecnico-estetica di conferire *decus* e *dignitas* al presente. Tale interpretazione, però, appare limitativa dal momento che non è mai stata rivolta l'attenzione anche ad edifici e monumenti 'laici' dei quali, in verità, esistono frequenti, anche se frammentarie, notizie nei resoconti di scavo. Manca inoltre, ancora oggi, una concreta collocazione del fenomeno, dall'aspetto quasi economicamente utilitaristico, nel contesto della trasformazione urbanistica della città tardoantica, nella sua globalità e nelle sue strette correlazioni con l'instabilità politica del momento, le nuove riforme amministrative, nonché con le mutate esigenze ideologiche e religiose.

Proprio per la sua complessità e le infinite sfumature, il fenomeno del reimpiego di *spolia* richiede, a nostro avviso, una rilettura più ampia. Questo articolo, pur nella consapevolezza di non poter riuscire a metterne a fuoco tutti gli aspetti, si pone come unico obiettivo quello di tentare, per quanto possibile, di comprendere se e quale fu il reale significato del fenomeno nel contesto della cultura tardoantica e, in particolare, se la sua vasta diffusione fu dovuta a motivi di pura funzionalità o, al contrario rappresenti un sintomo di un eventuale nuova concezione estetica. Va sottolineato, comunque preliminarmente, che esiste una oggettiva difficoltà interpretativa correlata soprattutto alle differenti modalità con le quali i materiali architettonici e/o decorativi furono riutilizzati.

Per raggiungere il nostro obiettivo sono state prese in considerazione le testimonianze archeologiche, scegliendo come sito di notevole interesse la città di Efeso, perché la sua documentazione è particolarmente ricca e variegata, non solo per l'ampiezza stessa del sito, ma anche per la sua monumentalità. Una monumentalità questa, che riflette l'importanza riconosciuta in qualità di metropoli d'Asia.

Ma proprio per la complessità e la ricchezza del materiale offerto, si è dovuta rivolgere al momento l'attenzione soltanto ai complessi monumentali pubblici e tralasciare, pertanto, quelli relativi all'edilizia privata.

EFESO IN ETÀ TARDOANTICA

Efeso continuò a svolgere in età tardoantica il ruolo, già acquisito, di metropoli d'Asia (fig.1).² Questo ruolo si riflette specularmente nei programmi di rinnovamento edilizio, che, tra il IV ed il VI secolo, coinvolsero la città nel contesto di un processo di trasformazione urbana, attestato anche per altri centri dell'impero. Una rilettura dei dati di scavo, relativi alla città, ha evidenziato come la maggior parte degli interventi edilizi, mirati alla conservazione del suo patrimonio architettonico, si resero necessari per porre rimedio ai danni causati non solo da eventi traumatici, ma anche per l'incuria del tempo. Quest'ultima, in particolare, fu dovuta sia a difficoltà economiche oggettive, si ricorda in proposito le nuove modalità e finalità di sovvenzionamento delle rendite civiche già a partire dall'età di Costantino, sia all'instabilità politica, nonché alle riforme amministrative ed alle mutate esigenze ideologiche e religiose.³ Queste ultime, in particolare, segneranno la sorte di alcuni edifici a tal punto da determinarne il progressivo abbandono.⁴

Ad ogni modo, se ipotizzare le motivazioni degli interventi è possibile, riesce arduo definirne l'esatta cronologia. Si deve purtroppo riconoscere come, incompleti e generici, i dati di scavo dell'inizio del secolo scorso, più di una volta, riportano come 'tardoantichi' interventi di restauro, che, però, per mancanza di indizi complementari di riferimento, non sono facilmente databili. Per queste ragioni molti degli interventi, considerati in correlazione con l'evento traumatico dell'attacco gotico (262 d.C.), tra l'altro menzionato dalle fonti solo in relazione all'Artemision, potrebbero essere di epoca successiva.⁵ Questa ipotesi è chiaramente tutta da verificare attraverso ulteriori indagini, mirate a stabilire l'esatta entità dei danni, ritenuti non di rado estesi all'intera città e, in particolare, al quartiere portuale.

² Sull'importanza di Efeso tardoantica: Foss (1979) 46-99; Bauer (1996) 269-99.

³ Sulle vicende storiche relative a questo periodo, si veda Jones (1940); per le nuove modalità di gestione del denaro pubblico: Lewin (2001) 27-37.

⁴ Uno studio dei dati di scavo, relativi a più centri dell'Asia Minore, ha confermato il progressivo abbandono soprattutto di agorà politiche (edifici destinati allo svolgimento delle attività politiche compresi) oltre che per ginnasi e templi.

⁵ Foss (1979) 3, nota 3. Sugli interventi presumibilmente dopo questa data si vedano: Karwiese (1994) 21-24 f. e (1995 b) 168, per lo stadio; Miltner (1956-58) 28-36, per quelli del prytaneion.

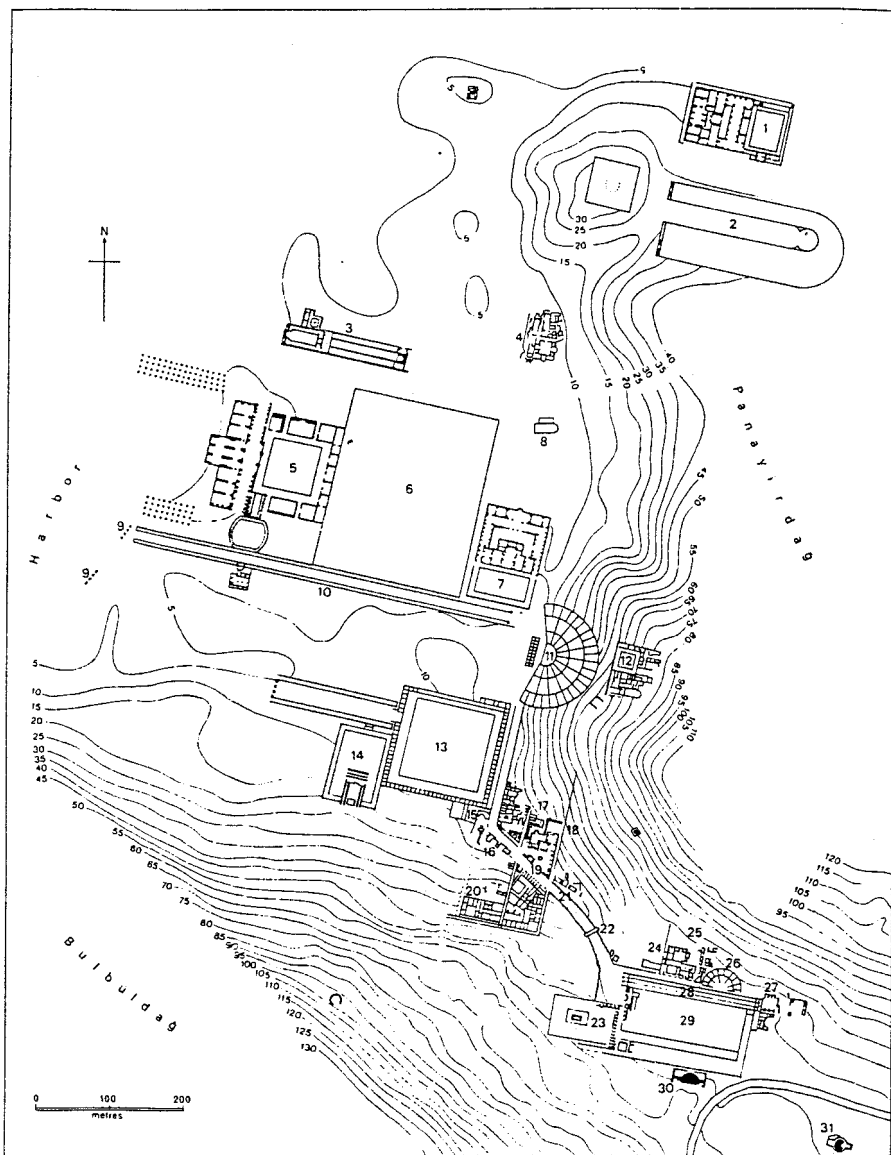


Fig. 1. Efeso. Pianta della città (Foss 1979).

1. Ginnasio di Vedio 2. Stadio 3. Chiesa di S. Maria 4. cd Palazzo del governatore
 5. Terme di Costanzo 6. Palestra 7. Terme del ginnasio 8. Sinagoga (?) 9. Porta del porto
 10. Arcadiane 11. Teatro 12. Villa sulla terrazza del teatro 13. Agorà inferiore
 14. Tempio di Serapide 15. Biblioteca di Celso 16. Monumenti sull'Embolos (via dei Kureti)
 17. Case private 18. Terme di Scholastikia 19. Tempio di Adriano
 20. Hanghäuser 21. Embolos (via dei Kureti) 22. Porta di Eracle 23. Tempio di Domiziano
 24. Prytaneion 25. Case 26. Bouleuterion 27. Bagni di Vario 28. Basilica
 29. Agorà superiore 30. Ninfeo 31. cd. Tomba di S. Luca. For figs 2-6 see plates.

Tuttavia, possiamo affermare con maggior sicurezza, grazie al supporto di testimonianze epigrafiche, che a partire dalla seconda metà del IV secolo si verificò un incremento dell'attività edilizia così come non si può negare che tale attività, anche se non correlabile con i catastrofici eventi dell'epoca (terremoti del 356, 365 e 368 d.C.),⁶ presenti segni di un progressivo mutamento rispetto al secolo precedente non solo nelle direttive progettuali degli interventi, ma anche nella loro modalità di esecuzione. Infatti, le testimonianze archeologiche suggeriscono in tema di progettualità un calo di interesse alla conservazione dell'intero patrimonio architettonico, ponendosi gli interventi come obiettivo solo il rinnovamento di alcuni settori della città e concentrandosi, addirittura, su determinate tipologie di edifici a testimonianza delle nuove priorità emergenti, correlate con i mutamenti politico-amministrativi e le nuove esigenze ideologiche e religiose.

Pochi risultano, infatti, gli interventi attuati nella città alta, dei quali ricordiamo il restauro dell'agorà al tempo di Teodosio II⁷ e quello del ginnasio orientale, peraltro limitatamente alla parte destinata ai bagni.⁸ Notevole è stato, invece, l'interessamento rivolto al quartiere inferiore e, in particolare, all'area circostante la sacra via dei Kureti, strada che collegava i due quartieri della città.

Relativamente alla via dei Kureti, valorizzata, tra la metà del IV e quella del secolo successivo, prima con la costruzione di nuovi ninfei⁹ e poi con la sua trasformazione in percorso pedonale,¹⁰ ritengo che il progetto di maggiore rilevanza sia quello attuato presso il tempio di Adriano e le terme di Scholastikia.¹¹ È, infatti, un esempio singolare di un progetto probabilmente unico, ma realizzato grazie a una doppia

⁶ Foss (1979) 188-91.

⁷ Karwiese (1995 a) 129 e Bauer (1996) 290 f., in particolare, per il tipo di lavori. Tali interventi di restauro potrebbero essere datati all'età di Teodosio II sulla base di un'iscrizione. Tale epigrafe, oltre a fare esplicitamente menzione di un *Phoros Theodosianos*, presenta le lettere X M Γ che qualora corrispondessero all'abbreviazione della frase X(ριστός) ὁ ἐκ Μ(αριάς) Γ(εννεθείς) farebbero riferimento alla divina maternità della Vergine, quale essa fu riconosciuta ufficialmente durante il concilio di Efeso (431 d.C.).

⁸ Foss (1979) 83.

⁹ E' da ricordare qui in particolare il ninfeo di Traiano, situato nei pressi delle terme di Scolasticia per il quale si veda: Miltner (1959) 326 ff.

¹⁰ Bammer (1976-77) 93-126, in particolare 105.

¹¹ Per gli interventi edilizi relativi al tempio di Adriano, si veda: Outschar (1995) 120; per quelli del complesso termale: Miltner (1956-58) 21-25.

committenza: istituzionale da una parte, lo stesso imperatore Teodosio I, tramite intermediazione del proconsole *Nummius Aemilianus*, privata dall'altra con la beneficenza della nobildonna cristiana Scholastikia, col risultato di un'integrazione dei due complessi mediante trasformazione dell'edificio di culto in ingresso monumentale dei bagni.

Ma senza dubbio maggior significato continuò ad essere riconosciuto, anche in quest'epoca, al quartiere portuale, come conferma indirettamente l'interessamento del potere centrale alla promozione di interventi di restauro, quali quello delle terme del porto, per volontà di Costanzo II e suo fratello prima del 350 d.C.,¹² o la monumentalizzazione della strada, che collegava il porto col teatro, voluta da Arcadio e perciò denominata Arkadiane.¹³ L'interesse a valorizzare quest'area è indirettamente confermato anche dalla erezione, lungo la strada appena ricordata, in età giustiniana, di un monumento tetrastilo.¹⁴ Una valorizzazione, che era comunque iniziata con la ridefinizione architettonica della piazza antistante la biblioteca di Celso, al tempo di Teodosio I.¹⁵ Né va trascurato a riguardo, a nostro avviso, la presenza nella stessa area dei più importanti complessi residenziali della città, quali quello del funzionario imperiale in età tardoantica, sulla collina alle spalle del teatro, e il cd. palazzo del governatore bizantino, nei pressi dello stadio.¹⁶

È evidente che tali interventi sottolineano il significato commerciale della Efeso tardoantica, quale indirettamente confermato anche dai negozi retrostanti i portici, che costeggiavano le più importanti vie della città (Arkadiane, via di Marmo),¹⁷ dai continui restauri attuati

¹² Keil (1964) 76; Scherrer (1996) 16. Si veda inoltre Foss (1979) nota 16, relativamente alla datazione di tale restauro prima del 350.

¹³ Bauer (1996) 266.

¹⁴ Bauer (1996) 272 f.; si veda inoltre Heberdey (1902) 58 sulla posteriorità del monumento onorario rispetto alla strada.

¹⁵ Per la ridefinizione architettonica della piazza: Jobst, (1983) 149-242.

¹⁶ Sulle due residenze, si vedano rispettivamente: Alzinger (1970) 1640 e Foss (1979) 61, sulla casa alle spalle del teatro; Foss (1979) 48-51, per il cd. palazzo del governatore bizantino e Lavan (1999) 148-49.

¹⁷ Bauer (1996) rispettivamente, 266 e 278 f. Per quel che riguarda i negozi retrostanti i portici della via di Marmo, testimonianze epigrafiche attestano un loro restauro ancora nel terzo quarto del V secolo. Non è da escludere che tali interventi edilizi, realizzati per volontà del proconsole Eutropio, rientrassero in un progetto edilizio più ampio che si proponeva di operare trasformazioni sull'intero percorso stradale.

per garantire la piena funzionalità dell'agorà commerciale (l'ultimo si data all'età di Maurizio: 585 d.C.),¹⁸ nonché dall'uso, ancora fino alla metà dell'VIII secolo, dei magazzini ricavati, in età tardoantica nelle sostruzioni della terrazza del tempio di Domiziano.¹⁹

La stessa città, che si presentava come centro commerciale di rilievo, era altrettanto nota perché custodiva, secondo la tradizione, la venerata tomba dell'apostolo Giovanni, meta di pellegrinaggio già dal II-III secolo.²⁰ Nonostante questo particolare, rilevante nel mondo della cristianità dell'epoca, si deve aspettare, però, l'età giustiniana per veder definito il volto cristiano della città.²¹

SPOLIA A EFESO

È quella, finora descritta, una complessa trasformazione urbanistico-topografica dalla quale non si può e non si deve prescindere per poter affrontare nel modo più corretto il tema del reimpiego. Si è sottolineato, in precedenza, che differenti furono gli interessi, che motivarono i progetti di restauro di metà/fine III e buona parte del IV, rispetto a quelli dei due secoli successivi. Tale differenza consente, a mio parere, di individuare nel contesto dell'evoluzione urbanistica della città due momenti consequenziali, ma distinti. Infatti, se si tiene conto del tipo di interventi realizzati, è possibile riconoscere una prima fase, che potrebbe essere definita di ricostruzione, ed una successiva di trasformazione. Tale trasformazione, come più volte messo in evidenza, non riguardò solo l'aspetto architettonico, ma interessò anche la stessa topografia del sito. Infatti, a partire dal V secolo, si assiste ad una progressiva contrazione della superficie urbana. Una riduzione, questa, che si riflette, ma è anche ambiguamente giustificata

¹⁸ Il primo restauro sembra essere stato effettuato già dopo gli eventi traumatici della metà del III secolo, si veda a tal proposito: Keil (1964) 94. L'ultimo, invece, con molta probabilità è dell'età di Maurizio (fine VI secolo). Per questo restauro si veda in particolare: Wilberg (1923) 90.

¹⁹ Vettors (1972-75) 311-30. L'uso ancora a metà dell'VIII secolo è confermata dal rinvenimento di alcune monete di Costantino V (741-75 d.C.), in un canale di uno degli ambienti identificato come latrina pubblica.

²⁰ Sulla tomba dell'apostolo: Pillinger (1996) 51.

²¹ Se è vero che la cristianizzazione comincia già all'epoca di Teodosio I, è anche vero che in questa prima fase assistiamo ad una mimetizzazione delle chiese nel paesaggio urbano, inserendosi queste in edifici pagani andati in disuso. A proposito della Efeso cristiana, si veda: Pillinger (1996) 39-53.

dall'abbandono di buona parte degli edifici, che erano ubicati nel quartiere alto della città, quartiere ritenuto una volta il cuore della stessa, ma divenuto ora marginale.

L'individuazione di due fasi, che, vorrei sottolineare, sono del tutto convenzionali, è importante perché, proprio nell'ambito delle stesse, forse è possibile riconoscere una differente modalità pratica con la quale il reimpiego di *spolia* si attua. Di particolare interesse, a riguardo, potrebbe essere il restauro dello stadio, che se realmente realizzato all'indomani degli eventi traumatici della metà del III secolo, confermerebbe la tendenza a riutilizzare, in questa prima fase, materiali provenienti dagli stessi contesti architettonici che dovevano essere restaurati.²² Purtroppo non possiamo estendere tali supposizioni a tutti gli interventi di restauro, che i dati di scavo ricordano come 'tetrarchici' (restauro dell'agorà inferiore, del ginnasio di Augusto, del prytaneion, del tempio di Adriano), dati che ricordo necessitano di ulteriore verifica.²³

È chiaro, in ogni caso, che, a partire dalla fine/metà del IV secolo, e con sempre maggiore chiarezza nei due secoli seguenti, la situazione cambia. Infatti, la sempre maggiore disponibilità di materiale di risulta, favorita senza dubbio dall'abbandono di buona parte degli edifici, ne consente un uso come vero e proprio materiale da costruzione. Rocchi di colonne, frammenti architettonici (cornici, architravi) o capitelli vengono riutilizzati indiscriminatamente a secondo delle necessità, con modalità rintracciabili anche in altre città dell'Asia Minore (figs.2-4, 6).

Purtroppo nella maggior parte dei casi la provenienza di *spolia* è ignota. In caso contrario, questa è di estrema importanza in quanto consente di leggere proprio quelle trasformazioni urbanistico-topografiche, che interessarono la città. Un esempio potrebbe essere offerto dai due più importanti complessi monumentali cristiani della città: la basilica di S. Maria ed il santuario di S. Giovanni (fig. 5). Per entrambi dobbiamo supporre che la maggior parte di *spolia* furono sottratte ai due edifici pagani ai quali essi si sostituirono. In particolare, per la costruzione della basilica il materiale reimpiegato proveniva dall'Olympieion, per l'esattezza dal Mouseion (fig. 4).²⁴ Per il S.

²² Cfr. nota 5.

²³ Per questi interventi edilizi si vedano rispettivamente: *Inchriften von Ephesos* no. 621; Keil (1964) 94; Miltner (1959) 264; Miltner (1956-58) 28-30.

²⁴ La chiesa fu costruita in uno dei portici dell'Olympieion, per l'esattezza quello dove aveva sede il Mouseion. Sul reimpiego di materiale proveniente da

Giovanni, invece, la principale ‘cava’ fu rappresentata dall’Artemision (fig. 7). Tra gli *spolia* più significative senza dubbio è da ricordare la lastra con iscrizione di dedica alla dea, riutilizzata come piattaforma dell’ambone.²⁵ In realtà lo sfruttamento dell’Artemision come cava sembra non essere limitata al solo S. Giovanni. Infatti, i suoi materiali furono reimpiegati anche nel corso di altri progetti edilizi, in particolare, durante i restauri delle terme del porto e del teatro, realizzati rispettivamente prima del 350 e tra il 371-372 d.C.²⁶

È evidente che la progressiva, ma costante e capillare spoliazione non si deve essere limitata al solo edificio di culto, ma deve aver interessato l’intero santuario con tutte le strutture, che ne facevano parte. Con molta probabilità l’inizio di questo ‘saccheggio’ deve essere riconosciuto nell’evento traumatico dell’invasione gotica. Da questo momento in poi dobbiamo supporre che questa vasta zona della città fu progressivamente abbandonata al suo destino, consentendone così una graduale spoliazione per la costruzione di edifici ex novo o per il restauro di vecchi a partire dal IV fino al VI secolo, come potrebbe confermare la S. Giovanni giustiniana.²⁷

Il graduale abbandono dell’Artemision potrebbe essere letto, dunque, come il primo sintomo di quel processo di trasformazione urbana, che di lì a poco avrebbe interessato anche il quartiere alto della città. Ancora una volta è proprio la provenienza del materiale di spoglio a poter esserne considerata una spia. I dati di scavo attestano, infatti, l’uso del materiale proveniente dal prytaneion, per esempio, durante il restauro delle terme di *Scholastikia* (figs.2-3).²⁸ In particolare si tratta delle colonne reimpiegate, con le rispettive basi, nel portico,

quest’ultimo: Knoll (1932) in particolare 25-42 per la trasformazione dell’edificio in chiesa.

²⁵ De Bernardi Ferrero (1983) 112.

²⁶ Per il restauro delle terme del porto: Keil (1964) 76; Scherrer (1996) 16; Foss (1996) nota 16, per la datazione dei lavori prima del 350. Per il teatro, del cui restauro furono responsabili i proconsoli Ambrosius di Mylasa e Messalino (*Inscriptionen von Ephesos* nos. 2044 s. e 2043), si veda Foss (1979) 61.

²⁷ Per quel che riguarda il reimpiego in questa chiesa, si deve tenere presente, in ogni caso, che essa fu oggetto di due fasi di monumentalizzazione, la prima in età teodosiana e la seconda all’epoca di Giustiniano, e che, pertanto, è difficile stabilire con esattezza quando le *spolia* furono reimpiegate. Non è da escludere la possibilità di un doppio reimpiego.

²⁸ Per la provenienza del materiale dal prytaneion: Miltner (1956-58) 21. Le testimonianze offerte da tutti gli edifici finora citati sono importanti in quanto consentono di riconoscere, nell’ambito della pratica del reimpiego, l’esistenza più

che si affacciava lungo la via dei Kureti. La loro provenienza è confermata dalla presenza delle liste dei Kureti, antico collegio che nel prytaneion aveva la sua sede, incise sui fusti. È evidente come il progressivo abbandono giustifichi e si rifletta nella diffusione sempre maggiore della pratica del reimpiego. Se, tuttavia, ci si allontana dal campo delle evidenze e si tenta di analizzare le probabili cause, che ne determinarono la sua diffusione come pratica edilizia abituale, ogni chiarezza viene meno.

INTERPRETAZIONE DEGLI *SPOLIA*

La maggior parte degli studiosi è sempre stata propensa a vedere un significato ideologico nel riuso di *spolia*, intese come frammenti dell'antico in grado di conferire *decus e dignitas* al presente. Personalmente ritengo che una tale interpretazione, sicuramente influenzata dalla stessa legislazione tardoantica in materia edilizia, sia piuttosto limitativa specie se, ampliando il campo di indagine, si prendono in considerazione contesti edilizi finora trascurati. La varietà e la molteplicità, registrate ad Efeso sulle modalità di attuazione del reimpiego, escludono chiaramente la possibilità di far rientrare, nell'unica categoria del reimpiego ideologico, tutti gli innumerevoli esempi. Ritengo, invece, sulla base delle evidenze archeologiche, che finalità utilitaristiche abbiano, almeno all'inizio, influenzato la sua diffusione.

È possibile, infatti, che nel contesto della crisi urbana del III secolo, il reimpiego di *spolia* possa aver rappresentato, come di recente ha sottolineato Carile, una garanzia di continuità a livelli economici più bassi.²⁹ Per quanto siano oggetto ancora di controversie la situazione finanziaria delle città, le nuove modalità di gestione del denaro pubblico, la reale disponibilità economica ed i rapporti amministrativi-finanziari con il potere centrale, non possiamo ignorare, comunque, l'esistenza di difficoltà economiche, che traspare nella lettera del proconsole Eutropio, peraltro proconsole d'Asia, all'imperatore Valente, con la quale si sollevavano problematiche di natura finanziaria.³⁰

volte sottolineata, di un criterio di 'mobilità' secondo modalità consentite dalle leggi. Queste, infatti, garantivano spostamenti solo all'interno di una stessa città; a tal proposito si veda: Alchermes (1996) 176.

²⁹ Carile (1999) 133.

³⁰ Per il dibattito sulla situazione finanziaria delle città: cfr nota 3. Sul documento:

Queste testimonianze di una comprensibile ristrettezza economica ci consentono in parte di giustificare l'impressionante rapidità di affermazione e diffusione della pratica del reimpiego. Non va dimenticato, però, che il riutilizzo fu favorito in buona parte anche dalla stessa presenza di 'cave' di materiali nelle rovine vicine. Queste consentivano, infatti, un prelievo facile ed economico, che, col tempo, grazie anche alla sempre più frequente disponibilità di tali 'magazzini' a cielo aperto, finì per diventare usuale. Una testimonianza dell'elevata ricorrenza a tale pratica, non limitata alla sola edilizia pubblica, ma estesa anche a quella privata, è data dai numerosi provvedimenti, in molti casi più volte reiterati, raccolti nel corpus di Teodosio e in quello di Giustiniano, adottati proprio per limitare le spoliazioni. A riguardo si deve ricordare che tale divieto era stato concepito in armonia con la prescritta necessità-obbligo di restaurare gli edifici antichi, considerati come *ornamentum urbium*, non solo in quanto patrimonio edilizio, ma anche storico, artistico e culturale di ogni singola città e, pertanto, inalienabile.³¹

Si deve riconoscere, però, che le stesse leggi presentano alcune deroghe. Elemento chiave, a mio avviso, è una legge emanata da Costantino nel 321 d.C.³² Tale provvedimento, pur vietando il trasferimento di pezzi ornati (colonne, marmi ecc.) dalla città alla campagna, ne consentiva lo spostamento all'interno della stessa, purché il materiale provenisse da edifici cadenti e pericolanti e, pertanto,

Jones (1940) 149. Con questa missiva, databile all'anno 371, il funzionario imperiale si faceva portavoce delle lamentele delle città stanche di ricevere in ritardo e solo dopo insistenti richieste la quota delle rendite municipali loro dovuta. Il rescritto imperiale, in risposta a tale lettera, riconosceva alle città il diritto di ricevere parte delle rendite municipali per poter assolvere ai loro bisogni, nei quali erano anche incluse quelle attività edilizie, che dovevano essere necessariamente intraprese per evitare che gli edifici cadessero in rovina. Provvedimento che, in ogni caso deve essersi rivelato insufficiente se, ancora nel 374, lo stesso imperatore si vedeva costretto a fissare la quota, questa volta per legge, a un terzo delle rendite municipali: Liebeschuetz (1992) 7; *Cod. Theod.* 15.13.7. Sappiamo che ugualmente a un terzo fu ridotta, con una legge emanata da Onorio, anche la quota proveniente dalle tasse municipali (*Cod. Theod.* 15.1.32), dopo che erano state confiscate da Costantino e restituite da Giuliano (Lepelley 1970) 70. Tutti questi provvedimenti si rivelarono però inadeguati se, ancora nel 431, Valentiniano III doveva confermare l'entità del tributo da versare alle città in caso di necessità (*Cod. Iust.* 6.61.13).

³¹ Sul concetto di *ornamentum urbium*: Geyger (1993) 69, su quello di inalienabilità: Geyger (1993) 69-72 e Meier (1996) 364-66.

³² Meier (1996) 365; *Cod. Iust.* 8.10.6.

pericolosi per l'incolumità pubblica. Una postilla, che, in qualche modo, legalizzava la pratica del reimpiego.

È evidente che nel caso di Efeso, ma non solo, gli eventi traumatici e i mutamenti in atto, che si verificarono a partire dalla metà del III secolo, devono aver agevolato il reimpiego di *spolia*. Dunque, una reale disponibilità di materiale nei magazzini, sicuramente abbondante, ma in molti casi forse non sufficiente per coprire la richiesta prevista da ogni singolo progetto edilizio, se il più delle volte si decise di utilizzare, nello stesso contesto monumentale, pezzi non solo di diversa provenienza, ma anche cronologia. Ad Efeso gli esempi migliori sono quelli offerti dai portici, che fiancheggiavano le principali vie della città, quali l'Arkadiane o la via di Marmo.³³

Varietas

Più volte si è voluto riconoscere in questi esempi la prova tangibile della nascita di un nuovo principio estetico, basato non più sul concetto di *uniformitas*, ma su quello della *varietas*, secondo un modello offerto macroscopicamente per la prima volta dalle due grandi basiliche costantiniane: la lateranense e la vaticana.³⁴ Personalmente non condivido questa ipotesi. Io credo che, proprio tenendo presente quello che è il contesto storico in cui il reimpiego si attua, motivi ben più concreti debbano aver influito sulla nascita e diffusione di tale pratica edilizia. Una pratica, che, solo con il tempo, potrebbe essere diventata espressione consapevole di un nuovo principio estetico.

Mi riesce difficile, infatti, riconoscere la *varietas* come principio estetico ordinatore in taluni esempi costruttivi esteticamente 'stridenti'.³⁵ Citiamo i portici N e S dell'agorà di Afrodizia nei quali sono state usate rispettivamente colonne di stile e dimensioni differenti, o, sempre nella stessa città, il portico orientale del tetrastoon-, nel quale le colonne, tra l'altro tutte di diversa provenienza, sono rette da basi, anziché da piedistalli come avviene negli altri portici. Ma ancor più non credo che possa trattarsi di *varietas* 'consapevole' nel caso della grande via colonnata di Sardis. Qui non solo spicca l'impiego

³³ Per le due vie, si vedano rispettivamente: Bauer (1996) 266 e 278 f.

³⁴ Sulla basilica di S. Giovanni: Pensabene, Panella (1993-94) 166-70 e Brenk (1987) 55; per S. Pietro: Pensabene, Panella (1993-94) 170-74 e Brenk (1987) 55.

³⁵ Per gli esempi qui citati si vedano rispettivamente: Erim (1986) 179, per Afrodizia; Hanfmann (1983) 163, per Sardis, da segnalare, a proposito di tali portici, è il reimpiego di capitelli ionici, corinzi e pergameni.

di basi attiche capovolte per integrare i capitelli di spoglio mancanti, ma sorprende, in modo particolare, il singolare trattamento tecnico riservato alle colonne: le più lunghe sono state accorciate, mentre quelle più corte sono sostenute da piedistalli anziché da basi.

A sfavore di una *varietas* consapevole sembra parlare anche la mancanza di un possibile criterio logico nella distribuzione degli elementi di spoglio, secondo principi quali sono quelli che si riscontreranno negli edifici cristiani. Al contrario, gli esempi ricordati ed il contesto storico nel quale il reimpiego si colloca, mi spingono a ritenere che motivi più concreti debbano aver influito sulla nascita e diffusione di tale pratica edilizia, che potrebbe essere diventata espressione consapevole di un nuovo principio estetico solo col tempo, favorita anche dalla maggiore disponibilità di *spolia* e, quindi, di una maggiore possibilità di scelta.

Reinterpretazione del Passato Pagano

I motivi concreti sono proprio quelli rappresentati dal contesto della trasformazione urbanistica, una trasformazione che coinvolge la città tardoantica nella sua globalità e che, per questo, potrebbe avere un peso maggiore di qualsiasi ideologia, principio estetico o capacità critica. In particolare l'eventuale capacità critico-artistica della società tardoantica, prima, e bizantina, poi, è stata spesso invocata nel tentativo di comprendere o, se vogliamo, giustificare il reimpiego di pezzi, sculture o fregi, dal punto di vista tematico espressamente pagane, per i quali solo l'apprezzamento della qualità e del valore artistico ne avrebbe garantito la conservazione.

Devo riconoscere che, nella legislazione tardoantica, vi sono provvedimenti che indirizzano in questa direzione. È da ricordare, a tal proposito, in modo particolare una legge del 382 d.C., emanata da Teodosio e indirizzata al *dux* di Osroene, a protezione del principale tempio della città (Emesa), poiché stimato al pari di un museo.³⁶ È

³⁶ *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.4. Il desiderio di salvare i templi, quali testimonianza del passato storico, artistico e culturale di ogni città, è espresso ancora una volta in una legge emanata, nel 386 dallo stesso imperatore. A tal proposito, si veda: Meier (1996) 367 e *Cod. Theod.* 12.1.112. Con tale editto Teodosio affidava la soprintendenza ai templi ed alle feste, fermo restando il divieto di compiere sacrifici, non a cristiani, ma a pagani. Con tale soluzione l'imperatore voleva evitare non solo un conflitto di coscienza per i cristiani nominati eventualmente a ricoprire questo incarico,

chiaro, dunque, che la legge estendeva indirettamente la protezione alle statue in esso custodite.

La protezione dei simulacri come opere d'arte è chiaramente indice della nuova prospettiva laica secondo la quale dovevano essere considerate tali sculture. È questa una prospettiva, che accomunava gli ambienti culturali pagani e cristiani dell'epoca. Si ricorda che lo stesso poeta Prudentius, pur sostenendo la causa cristiana contro gli aristocratici pagani di Roma, riconosceva la necessità di proteggere le statue di culto pagane, chiaramente dopo averle purificate.³⁷ In molti casi per purificazione si intendeva l'incisione di una croce sulle stesse. Esempi di tale esorcizzazione del 'male' sono documentati anche a Efeso. Si pensi alle sculture, databili al III secolo, reimpiegate per decorare il ninfeo di Traiano durante il restauro della metà del IV secolo o ancora le statue di Augusto e Livia lasciate stare nel *chalcidicum* della basilica civile fino alla distruzione di quest'ultima (prima metà del VI sec.).³⁸ Tale rivalutazione della cultura pagana potrebbe essere, dunque, una delle possibili chiavi di lettura per spiegare, in particolar modo, l'impiego di sculture tematicamente pagane durante i restauri di alcuni monumenti efesini.

Senza dubbio, l'esempio più significativo di tale reimpiego è rappresentato dai rilievi riadoperati nel vestibolo del tempio di Adriano, in occasione del restauro curato dal proconsole Nummius Aemilianus e commissionato dallo stesso Teodosio.³⁹ Questi raffiguravano una paratassi di divinità, scene di sacrificio alla presenza delle stesse, fuga delle Amazzoni davanti a Dioniso e, infine, fondazione della città da parte di Androklos. Inoltre, lastre con fregio a ghirlande e bucrani, che decoravano originariamente lo zoccolo del monumento dei Parti, furono utilizzate per le balaustre dei bacini di alcune fontane della città. Si ricordano, a riguardo, i due bacini ai lati dell'ingresso delle terme *Constantinianarum*, costruiti prima del 350 d.C., o, ancora, quello della biblioteca di Celso, realizzato, quest'ultimo, al momento

ma, soprattutto, intendeva assicurare agli edifici quella protezione che meritavano e che il troppo zelo religioso avrebbe potuto loro negare.

³⁷ Alchermes (1994) 170 f.; Prud. *Contra Symmachum*, 1. 499-505.

³⁸ Sul ninfeo di Traiano: Miltner (1959) 326 ff.; sulle statue imperiali: Langmann (1985) 65-69.

³⁹ Sul restauro del tempio, si veda: Karwiese (1995 b) 125; per le notizie relative ai rilievi: Fleicher (1967) 24-77, in particolare 24-51 per la descrizione e l'interpretazione degli stessi.

della sua trasformazione in ninfeo (età teodosiana).⁴⁰ Altre lastre, pertinenti allo stesso monumento, furono riutilizzate anche per i due bacini, costruiti ai lati della porta di Eracle durante il restauro del V secolo.⁴¹ In questo caso il reimpiego di fregi ‘pagani’ non si limitava alla sola balaustra dei bacini. La porta, infatti, era decorata, nei pennacchi dell’arco, con rilievi raffiguranti una Nike, con corona di alloro, nella sinistra, e ramo di palma, nella destra. A proposito di quest’ultima va rilevato che più che nel significato, il paganesimo è da riconoscere nel soggetto. Sempre rimanendo a Efeso, è da ricordare, infine, il gruppo scultoreo che rappresentava l’accecamento di Polifemo, riutilizzato per decorare il ninfeo di Pollione durante il restauro effettuato dopo uno dei terremoti della metà del IV secolo.⁴²

Gli esempi documentati in questa città non sono isolati nel panorama dell’Asia Minore. Le stesse testimonianze sono attestate per altre città e, tra l’altro, riguardano sempre dei ninfei. Innanzitutto a Laodicea al Lykos e ad Afrodizia, dove per le monumentali fontane, realizzate rispettivamente alla metà del IV, presso il podio del tempio di Apollo, e all’inizio del secolo seguente, presso la porta dell’agorà, si riutilizzarono fregi decorati con motivi mitologici.⁴³ Nel primo caso i rilievi rappresentano la mitica lotta tra Teseo e il Minotauro, ad Afrodizia, nel secondo, invece, il ratto di Ganimede, la Centauiromachia, la Gigantomachia e l’Amazzonomachia. I dati di scavo registrano, inoltre, l’impiego di lastre decorate con Amazzonomachia anche per il bacino del ninfeo di Hierapolis in Frigia.⁴⁴

È difficile dire sulla base di questi esempi fino a che punto si possa trattare di una rivalutazione della cultura pagana. Una cosa è certa, questi rilievi, tra l’altro di buona qualità, erano a disposizione e la soluzione più semplice, forse ‘banale’, ma logica, era quella di riuti-

⁴⁰ Per queste fontane, si vedano rispettivamente: Keil (1964) 76 e Scherrer (1996) 16, per i bacini delle terme, e Jobst (1983) 149-242, per la trasformazione della piazza.

⁴¹ Per questa porta, che prende il nome, tra l’altro, dalle figure di Eracle, che decoravano i pilastri dell’arco, si veda: Bammer (1976-77) 93-126, in particolare 105 per le trasformazioni più tarde e 117 per l’identificazione di *Fl. Costantinus*, il committente dei lavori.

⁴² Keil (1964) 122.

⁴³ Per i due ninfei, si vedano: Ginouvès (1969) 116 s e Erim (1981) 181. In particolare si deve ricordare che il ninfeo di Afrodizia fu realizzato mediante la trasformazione della stessa porta dell’agorà in fontana monumentale: Erim (1986) 179.

⁴⁴ De Bernardi Ferrero (1993) 143-45.

lizzarli e non distruggerli. Ciò potrebbe essere avvenuto, per esempio, ad Afrodisia dove, nella casa a nord del temenos, si conservarono ancora nel V secolo, nonostante i diversi interventi di restauro, i capitelli di pilastro figurati, decorati con immagini di Apollo, Afrodite, ed Eros.⁴⁵

Reinterpretatio Cristiana

Questa motivazione potrebbe giustificare, senza ricorrere a complesse e, forse, moderne reinterpretazioni cristiane, anche il reimpiego di 'frammenti pagani' in contesti squisitamente cristiani come le chiese.

Da questo punto di vista, purtroppo, Efeso non offre alcuna testimonianza. L'unico esempio, infatti, potrebbe essere rappresentato dalla cd. tomba di S. Luca, nella quale è stato reimpiegato, per inquadrare uno dei lati dell'ingresso alla cripta (lato E), un pilastro decorato con il motivo del toro, al di sopra del quale sarebbe stata scolpita una croce.⁴⁶ Personalmente ritengo, ai fini di questo discorso, di non prendere in considerazione tale testimonianza per due motivi. Innanzitutto per la neutralità, rispetto ad altri temi, del soggetto, cioè il toro. In secondo luogo anche per la dubbia destinazione dell'edificio. Infatti, è probabile che proprio la presenza di tali pilastri abbia favorito la nascita della tradizione, che voleva il luogo come tomba dell'apostolo.

Vorrei citare, però, le testimonianze attestate in alcune chiese di altri centri dell'Asia Minore.⁴⁷ Innanzi tutto la chiesa realizzata a Pergamo, nel Pyrgos (V/VI sec.),⁴⁸ per la quale i dati di scavo riportano il reimpiego di un fregio a ghirlande e bucrani nello zoccolo dell'abside. Sono da ricordare, poi, anche i blocchi con protomi leonine riutilizzati nella sima della chiesa dei SS. Apostoli di Anazarbo (età giustiniana).⁴⁹ Tuttavia, la testimonianza più significativa è quella offerta dalla basilica E1 di Sagalassos (V/VI sec.) con il reimpiego, nella parte superiore

⁴⁵ Per la casa a N del temenos si veda: Dillon (1997) 731-44. È da segnalare che, come gentilmente mi è stato suggerito dal prof. Smith, che ringrazio, in questa stessa città una sorte diversa sembra essere stata riservata ai rilievi del Sebasteion, i quali furono probabilmente sfigurati.

⁴⁶ Sulla tomba, si veda: Keil (1964) 136 f.

⁴⁷ Per il momento non prendo in considerazione le quattro colonne decorate con le immagini di Apollo, Artemide Pergaia, Tyche e Calchas della chiesa A di Perge, la cui appartenenza all'atrio andrebbe ulteriormente provata.

⁴⁸ Rheidt (1991) 134.

⁴⁹ Deichmann (1975) 35.

delle pareti del transetto, di un fregio con maschere teatrali.⁵⁰

Se il reimpiego di fregi con immagini dei fondatori, si pensi alla lastra decorata con il tema della fondazione di Efeso da parte di Androklos,⁵¹ potrebbe ben essere giustificato dall'attualità ancora nel V-VI secolo dei miti di fondazione, quali espressione dell'orgoglio civico e del senso patriottico di ogni città,⁵² non è facile trovare una motivazione per spiegare il perché del reimpiego di *spolia* così 'pagane', soprattutto, in contesti così particolari come le chiese. Si è spesso parlato di *reinterpretatio* in chiave cristiana dei temi. Personalmente non mi sento ancora una volta di attribuire al reimpiego un significato così 'modernamente' complesso. Infatti, ciò che mi lascia perplessa è, soprattutto, il riuso di *spolia*, in molti casi, senza il minimo di rilavorazione. Per quel che riguarda Efeso, almeno da quanto emerge dai dati di scavo, il primo esempio di rilavorazione è attestato in S. Giovanni (Fig.6), ma in questo caso di antico è rimasto ben poco.⁵³ La maggior parte dei pezzi reimpiegati, infatti, è inserita nelle murature e, pertanto, non era visibile.

Uso Pratico

Al contrario, da quanto detto finora, emerge un significato prevalentemente utilitaristico del reimpiego. Questo uso pratico trova conferma anche fuori della stessa metropoli d'Asia. In particolare, le testimonianze più macroscopiche sono quelle offerte dalle poderose cinte murarie, che vengono erette o solo restaurate già a partire dalla metà del III secolo. Ricorderei in primo luogo il cd. muro dei Goti di Mileto, realizzato in larga parte con il materiale proveniente da edifici funerari, in particolare epigrafi.⁵⁴ Da tombe, oltre che da altri edifici, fu prelevato anche il materiale costruttivo necessario per la

⁵⁰ Vandeput (1993) 95.

⁵¹ Foss (1979) 70 e *puì* nota 39.

⁵² Liebeschuetz (1995) 200.

⁵³ Russo (1999) 26-53. La maggior parte delle spoglie fu utilizzata per realizzare i pilastri, che dovevano sorreggere le cupole; si veda: Foss (1979) 87-89.

⁵⁴ Per gli esempi di reimpiego qui citati si vedano: v. Gerkan (1935) 81, per Mileto; Roueché (1989) 44, per Afrodisia. A proposito della stele reimpiegata, ricordo che il rilievo rappresentava un giovane con berretto frigio, fiancheggiato da un motivo floreale del tipo rosetta ed un ragazzo, che afferra un uccellino; Vandeput (1993) 141. Prendendo spunto dal reimpiego di epigrafi come materiale edilizio, vorrei ricordare qui che nel corso della mia indagine ho avuto modo di constatare il loro reimpiego anche come rivestimenti pavimentali e parietali, nonché l'insolito uso ricordato a Efeso (v. supra).

realizzazione delle mura di Afrodisia. Solo per citare un esempio, basta ricordare la stele del gladiatore. Inoltre, vorrei segnalare il blocco di timpano, con decorazione a palmette e la raffigurazione di un uomo, visto di tre quarti, incluso a Sagalassos nella muratura del tempio dorico, al momento della sua trasformazione in torre del nuovo sistema difensivo. Generalmente per la costruzione dei sistemi difensivi si sfruttò soprattutto materiale architettonico (tamburi di colonna, stipiti di porta, architravi ecc.) come, per esempio, per il cd. muro di Attius Philippus a Side (metà del IV sec.), per quelle giustiniane di Mileto, nonché per la fortificazione bizantina di Magnesia al Meandro.⁵⁵

Un uso utilitaristico del materiale architettonico è attestato anche in altri contesti architettonici. Solo per citare un esempio si può ricordare l'edificio pubblico (basilica?), dove frammenti architettonici, databili alla seconda metà del II secolo e decorati con palmette, ovoli e freccette, furono riutilizzati nella preparazione di malta per il pavimento musivo.⁵⁶ La documentazione archeologica offerta da questa città è di notevole interesse in quanto presenta testimonianze particolarmente esplicite di un riutilizzo pratico degli *spolia*. Si è precedentemente ricordato il fregio reimpiegato nelle mura, per esattezza in una delle torri, altri blocchi decorati li troviamo riutilizzati, però, anche durante la trasformazione del ninfeo ellenistico in cisterna (VI secolo). Non è da escludere che tali fregi, decorati con un suonatore e danzatrici, utilizzati ora per tamponare i buchi che si erano fatti nella muratura in occasione dell'inserimento delle tubature in terracotta, facessero parte della decorazione della più antica fontana.⁵⁷

Sempre in tema di scultura, vorrei ricordare, infine, la colossale testa di marmo, forse pertinente ad una statua corazzata, che i resoconti di scavo ricordano riutilizzata, insieme con altro materiale

⁵⁵ Su queste fortificazioni: Mansel (1963) 11; v. Gerkan (1935) 114-17; da segnalare, a proposito di queste ultime mura, che l'epigrafe, che ricordava la loro costruzione, fu incisa su un blocco originariamente avente funzione di stipite, ma utilizzato ora come architrave. Inoltre è da segnalare la mancanza della benché minima cura, dal momento che l'iscrizione risulta incisa su una superficie lasciata grezza, un'irregolarità dovuta al fatto che durante la messa in opera il blocco fu ruotato, in modo tale da lasciare a vista la faccia, che in passato era stata rivolta all'interno; Humann (1904) 33.

⁵⁶ Waelkens, Harmankaya and Viaene (1991) 203f.

⁵⁷ Waelkens (1993 b) 53.

architettonico, nel ginnasio superiore di Pergamo durante la chiusura del passaggio della sala mediana.⁵⁸

CONCLUSIONI

L'analisi delle testimonianze archeologiche di Efeso, mentre evidenzia ampiamente l'affermarsi, tra il IV ed il VI secolo, della pratica del reimpiego non consente una 'classificazione' o interpretazione predeterminata del fenomeno, dal momento che, come si è visto, la varietà e le molteplicità metodologiche, rilevate nella realizzazione tecnica del reimpiego, non sempre permettono di inserire la nuova pratica edilizia nella categoria del 'reimpiego ideologico', come vogliono alcuni studiosi. A sfavore di una tale interpretazione, o meglio di un'interpretazione univoca, parlano, come si è sottolineato nelle pagine precedenti, l'impiego di *spolia* come materiale da costruzione o il loro riuso senza la minima rilavorazione. Al contrario, data la vasta portata del fenomeno, ritengo necessario, sul piano metodologico, un ampliamento del campo di indagine, senza rivolgere l'attenzione ad una sola tipologia di monumenti, né ad una sola area geografica, né tantomeno ad una sola città e, tra queste, non alle sole 'capitali'. Dai confronti potrebbero risultare dati molto interessanti, che a mio giudizio, metteranno soprattutto in risalto l'indissolubilità fra nascita, diffusione, modalità di attuazione del reimpiego ed il contesto storico in cui si svolge, con le sue innovazioni amministrative, i suoi cambiamenti socio-economici e le mutate esigenze ideologiche e religiose.

Non si deve sottovalutare, inoltre, che motivazioni ben più contingenti, quali la reale disponibilità di fondi, la possibilità di approvvigionamento dei materiali, l'eventuale scadimento delle capacità tecniche delle maestranze artigiane, quest'ultimo peraltro tutto da dimostrare, e, soprattutto, la più che estensiva disponibilità legalizzata di materiali, motivazioni tutte ben evidenti e valutabili di volta in volta, possano aver influito sul fenomeno più di qualsiasi ideologia. Io credo che anche alcuni casi di reimpiego di rilievi 'imperiali' in contesti altrettanto ufficiali, non debbano essere motivati sempre ideologicamente, ma semplicemente potrebbero essere indizio

⁵⁸ Rheidt (1991) 149.

di una scelta operativa di elezione in un momento in cui l'uso di *spolia* era severamente controllato. Ad Efeso forse è da interpretare così il reimpiego delle lastre, decorate con ghirlande e bucrani, sottratte al monumento dei Parti, dunque un monumento che celebrava l'imperatore, e riutilizzate sia per i bacini delle terme *Constantinianarum*, che per quello della biblioteca-ninfeo di Celso, entrambi, ricordo, progetti di committenza imperiale, sicuro, il primo, e probabile, il secondo.

Al contrario ritengo che di ideologia e, dunque, di consapevolezza del reimpiego si potrà parlare molto più tardi, quando un solco profondo dividerà il presente dal glorioso passato. Interessante notare come in questa fase più tarda il reimpiego è stato adottato soprattutto nelle porte urbiche, un esempio è la stessa porta della Persecuzione ad Efeso (fig. 8), dove gli *spolia* avranno un significato liberatorio e apotropaico.

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PART SIX
DECLINE AND FALL? STUDYING LONG-TERM CHANGE

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STUDYING LONG-TERM CHANGE IN THE WEST, A.D. 400-800

CHRIS WICKHAM

ABSTRACT

Since the 1930s, three principal models (continuity, 5th c. catastrophe and the Pirenne thesis) have been used to interpret socio-economic change in the Late Roman and Early Medieval West. With minor modifications, these models have survived with little sustained attempt to replace them. Using the examples of Tunisia, Italy and northern Gaul, this paper argues that four basic parameters of change can be identified for the period AD 400-800. These are the occurrence of war, the level of survival of state economic infrastructures, the extent of large-scale land-ownership, and the level of structural integration into the Roman world system. Since the extent to which these four factors affect a given region varies, it is concluded that long-term economic change is dependent on structures that operate at a regional and sub-regional level.

INTRODUCTION: PARADIGMS OF CHANGE*

The paradigms for interpreting socio-economic change in the transition from Late Rome to the Early Middle Ages have not changed very much since the 1930s. Then, one could choose between three main models: the classic picture, of a 5th c. catastrophe, with barbarian invasion and political dissolution; a more continuist position, associated above all with Alfons Dopsch, with relatively little change in the Merovingian period, and then Carolingian revival; and the thesis of Henri Pirenne, for whom the major break came in the 7th c., with the Arabs. One would have expected the huge quanti-

* This text represents my spoken text from the conference on Late Antique Archaeology at Oxford, March 2001, with essential footnoting added. I shall back up the propositions contained in it at greater length elsewhere.

ties of archaeological data that have emerged since—especially since 1970 or so – to have relegated these debates to footnotes, with new ones appearing, unrecognisable to the theorists of the past. No such renewal has taken place, however. The continuist position has only changed in terms of its imagery. Documentary historians, increasingly conscious as they are of the stability of intellectual and political culture across the Late Roman-Early Medieval divide, have come to stress cultural rather than socio-economic continuities, and indeed they emphasise the former even more than Dopsch emphasised the latter: for he never doubted the importance of the Germanic invasions and conquests, whereas some strands of contemporary political/cultural historians have a tendency to elide them altogether. Catastrophists have changed less, and still hold to the positions of three generations ago, although by now they are different sorts of people: the main upholders of a Pirennean position today, for example, are archaeologists, who are aware, as documentary historians sometimes are not, of the huge simplifications in material culture that occurred nearly everywhere in the former Roman empire, at different moments during the centuries after 400.

The survival of a single model might simply be a tribute to its success as an interpretative paradigm, as with Einstein's model of the universe, which dates roughly to the same period. The survival of two or three antithetical ones, however, implies a certain lack of boldness on the part of subsequent generations, and something of a closure to productive debate. In particular, there are two main problems in the historiographic situation we face today. First, historians and archaeologists tend not to read each other's work enough, or, when they do, tend not to come to grips with the implications of the models the other is using—sometimes, at least subconsciously, they do not even recognise the legitimacy of the approach of the other. Second, neither historians nor archaeologists draw sufficient comparisons between countries or regions across Europe and the Mediterranean, thereby generating hypotheses about the Late Roman to Early Medieval transition in one region that might be testable in another. This could change, and quickly, for the data are now often available, and indeed in many cases the networks of collaboration and friendship necessary to overcome these divides already exist. Perhaps we are on the cusp of the generation of a new set of paradigms. If this is the case, however, we have to make the problems in

the old paradigms more explicit than they have usually been hitherto.

Let us begin by looking at the question of long-term change in the West from an archaeological perspective, so as to set out one basic point as clearly as possible. By the standards of the Late Roman period, in terms of the material culture of the towns and the countryside alike, it is unquestionable that the archaeological remains of the Early Medieval period are harder to find, and materially much simpler when one finds them. In contrast to much of the eastern Mediterranean, in the West there is less evidence of nearly everything that archaeologists look for, often (as in Britain after 450, or Africa after 650) dramatically less. However, we have to ask what this reduction really means. Does it mean less in terms of people, concentrations of wealth, exchange or technology? Or does it not mean *less* of anything but simply *changes* (or, as one often says nowadays, a Transformation), in taste or concepts of public display? Changes that would allow the same sort of people to create the same sort of effect, but much more cheaply, such as a villa rebuilt in wood, a church reconstructed on a smaller scale with reused stone, externally painted, and so on? These are questions with wide-ranging potential, covering the general interpretation of the whole of material culture. Too often, however, at least in our period, they tend to be dealt with piecemeal. Instead, we need to construct models for change, which are explicit enough and rigorous enough to be tested. These seem to me best created through comparison, between analogous developments in different regions, which are studied on the basis of both archaeological and documentary evidence. These models can subsequently be tested against other regions.

In this paper, I shall set out some brief comparative examples from three regions of the West between 400 and 800: Tunisia, mainland Italy, and northern Gaul. I shall sketch out their separate socio-economic histories to show up some general trends, and then I shall suggest some common parameters which allow one to analyse each of them, and, in part, to explain their different developments. I shall be fairly schematic, as is inevitable given the space at my disposal, and some of the empirical data set out here could certainly be contested (or, at least, the balances of interpretation struck here could be disputed); the reader must be aware of this. But the overall patterns seem worth analysing, nonetheless, as one proposal for a wider synthesis.

TUNISIA

In 400, Tunisia—roughly the Roman provinces of Proconsularis and Byzacena, the core of Roman Africa—was a major export region. Tunisian grain, oil and ceramics, and probably cloth as well, were widely available throughout the Mediterranean basin, whether as a result of the payment of land tax or rents, or as a result of commercial exchange. African cities were also prosperous in 400, and rural settlement seems to have been stable.¹ The Vandal conquest of the Tunisian provinces in 439 did not lead to immediate changes, although the fiscal link between Carthage and Rome, and in general between Africa and the empire, was broken at once. It is also likely that the internal fiscal coherence of Vandal Africa weakened steadily across the next century; certainly, in the years immediately after 534, the conquering Byzantine army and its administrators had trouble re-establishing the parameters of taxation within the region.² However, field surveys show a clear rural stability in the Vandal period until past 500 and often until past 550. In general, a decline in the number of identifiable rural sites only begins in the Byzantine period, after which it tends to continue until African Red Slip (ARS) productions ceased at the end of the 7th c.

This rural decline could be interpreted either as a sign of demographic retreat or as a sign of a decrease in ARS usage (or availability). Archaeologists in Tunisia tend to assume the former, on the grounds that ARS was in general easy to obtain in the region where it was made. This seems to me to underestimate the micro-regionality of rural ARS distributions in Tunisia. Separate production centres, each with their different histories, were separately focussed on the great coastal cities; rural areas were therefore reliant on quite local products. Indeed, the best-published Tunisian survey, that of the Segermes region, begins to show a 'population decrease' at just the moment when the local ARS production centre at Sidi Khalifa failed. But at least the steady retreat in ARS production itself, a major marker of African economic complexity, is not in dispute after 550 or so, although Byzantine reconquest led to some increase in exports to

¹ See, in general, Panella (1993); Lepelley (1979); Mattingly and Hitchner (1995).

² Procopius, *Wars*, 4.8.25; for Vandal taxation, Courtois (1955) 258-59; Gil Egea (1998) 303-307.

the East, into the early 7th c. at least. Intensive oil production, which can be tracked through amphorae, probably followed the same trajectory, although it never ceased altogether.³ Urban society had had a bumpier history already in the Vandal period, during which many *fora* went out of use, marking a tendency to less monumental public building and a spatial fragmentation of urban activity, although there was plenty of church construction in the period. Here, the Byzantine reconquest brought some monumental rebuilding, especially but not only in Carthage, although this once again was only a blip in a steady trend towards simplification, which was quite far advanced by 700.⁴

The Arab conquest of Tunisia, which took place across the period 647-98, thus hit a region that was already in economic trouble, and which was by the completion of the conquest facing serious crisis. Carthage was losing much of its population and urban coherence, and the major exports of the region—at least those that can be tracked archaeologically, ARS and olive oil—were drying up. The Arabs did not cause this crisis, but the hesitancy of their political moves there, and the resultant fifty years of the conquest period, cannot have helped. The 8th c. is virtually invisible in Tunisia as a result. Overall, however, a total catastrophe in the region would be out of place in our interpretations. 9th and 10th c. glazed pottery (the next ceramic type that can be dated at present) is found, although in much smaller quantities, on many 6th c. sites, both urban and rural, indicating some consistency of demographic occupation. The 10th c. could be argued, at least on literary grounds, to be a period of renewed prosperity in what was, after all, a naturally rich agrarian region. It was probably only after this latter period that settled agriculture began to retreat, to ‘abate’ in LaBianca’s terminology, in the core areas of Tunisia.⁵ However, it could not reasonably be denied that the 7th c. crisis in the region was systemic, and very deep. Recovery required

³ See, in general, Hitchner *et al.* (1990); Dietz *et al.* (eds.) (1995), especially vol. 1, 773-99, and vol. 2, 451-52, 467-72 (J. Lund on the pottery of Segermes)—compare Mackensen (1993) 458, and Lund (1997) 572-74, for Segermes and Sidi Khalifa; Peacock *et al.* (1990) 59-84.

⁴ Thébert (1983) is still the most convincing overview.

⁵ Islamic pottery on Roman sites: e.g. L. Neuru in Hitchner (1990) 259; Lund in Dietz (1995) vol. 2, 471. For 10th c. prosperity see Vanacker (1973). For ‘abatement’, see LaBianca (1990), especially 16-20, an interesting formulation, notwithstanding some empirical and conceptual problems.

well over a century, and even then the region did not reach the levels of economic complexity found in 400 and even perhaps in 500.

Africa, with Tunisia at its centre, was the major export region of the western Mediterranean in the later Roman empire, and it was tightly linked to the exchange networks of the empire as a whole. The Vandals severed its fiscal links to the rest of the Mediterranean, although the commercial export of Tunisian goods certainly continued. Byzantine reconquest re-established those fiscal links and orientated its commerce towards the East for a time, although probably at a rather reduced level. Overall, however, between 450 and 650, Tunisia steadily lost its role as an export producer, and African goods were steadily less and less available on sites elsewhere in the Mediterranean, or else were available on fewer and fewer sites. The resultant adjustment to internal, rather than external, levels of demand, that is to say to a provincial rather than Mediterranean-wide focus for the local economy, must have been unusually difficult in this region. One sign of this was the collapse of Carthage, which was abandoned by the conquering Arabs in favour of Tunis, and which was by far the largest city to fail anywhere in the former Roman empire. Other signs will emerge from the comparisons that follow.

ITALY

Italy was another region that was structurally linked to the Mediterranean in 400, but as an importer rather than an exporter. African grain and olive oil fed Rome, largely through the tax system, and the Italy-based senatorial stratum also derived a substantial proportion of its wealth from African land. In archaeological terms, Italy was a network of smaller regions with largely independent productive systems (indicated for example by the ceramic contrast between the local glazed wares of the Po plain and the red-painted pottery of the Centre-South); African imports were the main elements that held the peninsula together economically. The first moment of change, which was initially more marked than in Africa itself, came in the later 5th c., when the Carthage-Rome tax spine ended. Except on the coast, post-450 African oil amphorae and table-wares are much harder to find archaeologically, and imitations of ARS begin to occur

in several parts of the peninsula. By the early 6th c. we see some signs of trouble at the level of aristocratic housing, and thus wealth: rural villas began to be abandoned and élite town housing began to be subdivided. Italy was certainly less prosperous by 530, and its economic structures were by now more localised, although the Ostrogothic kingdom could still maintain an effective imperial-style infrastructure. This was a slow involution, but not crisis.

Crisis came through the Gothic War of 536-54 and the piecemeal Lombard conquest from 568-69 onwards. By 605, when a measure of peace was re-established, Italy was politically fragmented into around ten separate sections, and its economy was rather simpler than before. Villas had vanished by 600 and cities were transformed. Monumental construction and urban planning was almost at an end, there was a shift to building in wood, and substantial areas were often abandoned. Archaeological evidence of imports in this period is restricted to a few privileged centres such as Rome and Naples, and to military sites such as S. Antonino di Perti in Liguria. Production of ceramics continued in Italy, but distribution was much more localised and, in the North, production and distribution simplified further after 650.⁶ By 700, this localisation was sufficiently complete for the different sections of Italy to have entirely different economic histories. The 8th c. saw a more complex economy in the South than in the North, with Campania and Calabria (and also Sicily) continuing to export wine and oil to elsewhere in the peninsula, and a network of red-painted ceramic producers between Naples and Otranto. Rome, still by far the largest city in the West, took half a century to adjust to the final end of African imports around 700, but then began to produce its own high-quality pottery, in a glazed tradition probably borrowed from Constantinople.⁷ Its other local artisanal traditions, in metalwork or in architectural decoration, reached a low point in the early 8th c. but also picked up after 750, and by 800, Rome showed a distinct increase in economic activity. In the North, there are some signs of the revival of high-status building after 750, particularly of churches, although any evidence of extra-local exchange is as yet hardly visible—Venice as a new *entrepôt* probably only got going after *c.* 780.

⁶ For bibliography, see Wickham (1999); for ceramics see, above all, Sagui (1998).

⁷ For exchange, see, among many, Arthur (1993); Sagui (1997); Ardizzone (2000).

There is argument about when Italy began to revive economically. I would put the date closer to 800, while others would prefer 750, or even 700. It partly depends on what indicators one uses, as monumental building recommences earlier than does renewed exchange complexity. It also depends on which part of the peninsula one looks at. Overall, the Lombard areas of Italy had both a deeper and a longer period of economic localisation and simplification than did the Byzantine areas, although this may turn out to be, once again, above all a difference between North and South—there are a few signs that the (Lombard) duchy of Benevento, in the South, had a larger-scale economy, with closer links to (Byzantine) coastal centres such as Naples. However, by 800 there was renewed economic movement in Italy, even if differing from area to area.

I have already suggested that even Tunisia did not have a fully integrated economy in 400, and this was certainly the case for Italy. Both regions, however, were closely linked to the western Mediterranean exchange network underpinned by the state structures of the Roman empire, and both suffered when political and fiscal unity fractured. Parallels can be made with the Aegean, and the Syrian and Palestinian coastlands, the parts of the eastern Mediterranean which suffered most when political unity ended there after the 610s. Nonetheless, Tunisia and Italy followed quite different trajectories from each other. Economic crisis in Italy came with war, and the peninsula slowly stabilised when relative peace returned in the 7th c. The 6th c. crisis confirmed the micro-regionalisation of Italy; the small polities of the peninsula henceforth followed their own histories. In most of these polities, state structures remained weak, and aristocracies remained relatively restricted in wealth.⁸ This inhibited a rapid return to economic complexity—even if it remains true that some areas, such as Lazio (Rome's hinterland), never lost a minimum level of internal economic integration, and the city-dwelling habits of Italian élites ensured that the city-country relationship persisted in most places. But Italy also did not face a productive crisis as serious as that which seems to be identifiable in Tunisia. African archaeology is not, outside Carthage at least, as fully developed as Italian archaeology, but even recent excavations there for the most part confirm the notable material weakness of the late 7th and 8th

⁸ Wickham (1998).

c. The 7th c. crisis in Tunisia, even without the Arabs, was apparently more serious than the 6th c. Italian crisis. There is no easy political explanation for this; throughout our period (except from 647 to 698), Tunisia had stable government, with a single tax-raising state, in strong contrast to Italy. The break-up of the Mediterranean must have affected each in different ways, with Italy more protected from its effects than Tunisia. Indeed, this contrast is a further argument for the proposition that the African economy was unusually dependent on the Mediterranean exchange network. Italy, on the other hand, was already a network of local economies which remained in place, if somewhat battered, when Mediterranean-wide exchange ceased.

NORTHERN GAUL

Northern Gaul faced its crisis in the 5th c., earlier than Tunisia and Italy. Between the Seine and the Rhine, villas were abandoned between 350 and 450. This may simply mark a change of taste and a shift to military values, in a region heavily influenced by frontier culture. Villas persisted in the more civilian southern areas, which extended as far north as Chartres. Where the former occupants of the northern villas moved to is as yet hard to detect, and levels of élite prosperity in the century after 450 are hard to track. However, they certainly did not move into cities. The 5th c. in the North is also a period of sharp urban decline, with only a few cities (notably Paris and Cologne) standing out as reasonably plausible candidates for continued economic urbanism in the 6th c.⁹ The 5th c., after 406, was also a time of political instability and external attack. By 450 the Rhine frontier barely existed and, by the 470s, individual cities (such as the Paris of the *Vita S. Genovevae*) were effectively in charge of their own destinies. It was only from the 480s that Clovis re-established central power in the North. From then on, however, the Merovingian kings were firmly based in the northern cities, from Paris and Orléans to Metz and Cologne, or else in palaces in their immediate hinterlands. As a result, for the first time in its history,

⁹ Van Ossel (1992); (1997); for militarisation, Whittaker (1994); for Paris, e.g. *L'Île de France* (1993) 125-48; for Cologne, e.g. Gechter and Schütte (1998). The northernmost late (7th c.) villa known to me is Mienne-Marboué near Châteaudun; see Blanchard-Lemée (1991) 30-31.

northern Gaul became a stable political centre. In the 7th c. private documents begin, and attest to a notably rich aristocracy, indeed the richest that is known for the whole of the former Roman empire by that time, characterised by extensive landholdings scattered over wide areas. I am inclined to think that this aristocratic wealth was not new, as there is at least anecdotal evidence for continuities of land-ownership across the invasion period, for example in Champagne (Remigius of Reims; probably the family of Lupus of Champagne). Whether or not this argument is sustainable, by 550 at the latest Frankish political organisation and private land-ownership at least paralleled that of the Roman period.¹⁰ Aristocratic and political culture had changed substantially, but levels of wealth and economic infrastructure arguably survived the 5th c. crisis fairly well.

This proposition is supported by the history of exchange in northern Gaul. This was a region that by 400 was almost entirely separate from the Mediterranean exchange network; its focus instead was army-supply, for the Rhine frontier. But when the Roman army disappeared in the North, in the mid to late 5th c., exchange systems continued. The main local *terra sigillata* type, Argonne ware, persisted throughout the 6th c., as did the main industrial coarse-ware productions, notably those of Mayen, which indeed would continue for hundreds of years to come. Their distribution networks decreased in geographical scale when army-supply ceased to fuel them (the Merovingians did not have a paid army), but still covered substantial areas of northern Gaul. In the late 5th c., a new (relatively) fine ceramic type developed, the carinated wares (*céramiques biconiques*) that are characteristic of every Merovingian cemetery, and are now also increasingly widely known from settlement contexts. These had relatively restricted distributions (typically a radius of around 100 km), although by the standards of the Mediterranean in the period this is not particularly small. In the 6th c., the geographical scale of production and exchange in northern Gaul already surpassed that of any other bulk artisanal product in the former western Roman empire except ARS itself, and this scale did not decline. After 700, when

¹⁰ *Vita S. Genovevae* and *Testamentum Remigii*, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH SRM* 3, 21-38, 336-47. For Lupus, see Martindale (1992), s.v. Lupus 1. Two good examples of wills of rich landowners in the 7th c. can be found in Weidemann (1986) and Atsma and Vezin (eds.) (1981), n. 571.

ARS ended, northern Gaulish exchange was only surpassed by that of Egypt. Thereafter the distribution networks of Gaul would expand further, too, with new ceramic types from the Cologne area and the Seine valley, with the expansion of old and new urban centres such as Cologne and Maastricht, and with the start of a substantial traffic across the North Sea, from export centres such as Dorestad.¹¹

The broad continuity in the exchange patterns discussed here presupposes a basic continuity in economic demand, which was more significant than either 5th c. contraction or 8th c. expansion, and which survived the end of the fiscal-military exchange of the Roman period. This suggests that private demand, and thus private wealth, were maintained without serious diminution, both before and after Clovis. (By contrast in Britain, which was a similar region in the 4th c., and where the end of the fiscal system resulted in rapid economic meltdown in the second quarter of the 5th, one must suppose that the aristocracy survived much less well than in Gaul.¹²) Northern Gaul is not always regarded as a candidate for unusual economic continuity in the period of Late Roman-Early Medieval transition, but its exchange structures allow one to argue for it. It also helps to explain the unusual force and coherence of Merovingian political power, which was only matched in the West after the mid 6th c. by the much more obviously Romanising Visigothic kingdom of Toledo, and it is far from certain how far the effectiveness of the latter really extended.

THE PARAMETERS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

These three regions thus show very different trajectories. They are not of course the only regions in the West—Mauretania, Spain, southern Gaul, the Danube valley, and Britain would demonstrate different trajectories again. However, even if we restrict ourselves to these three examples, we find crisis in the 5th, the 6th, or the 7th centuries. These crises could be found, respectively, in conjunction with substantial continuities, with sharp contraction, and with a serious

¹¹ For surveys, see Gross (1996); Piton (ed.) (1993); Legoux (1992); Verhulst (2000).

¹² Esmonde-Cleary (1989).

systemic breakdown in exchange and also, respectively, in conjunction with substantial deurbanisation, and two kinds of reduced urban continuity. The point about these three histories is not only that are they all different, but that they are put together in different kinds of ways. Any of the three rival models of the 1930s finds support here somewhere, if one chooses one's region, and the type of question one asks, carefully enough. However, it should also be clear that no single model fits even just these three regions, never mind all the others in the West.¹³ The only generalisation that fits all of them is the simple observation, with which I started, that the material culture of the Early Middle Ages was less complex and ambitious than that of Late Rome. Indeed, this observation is true of every region of the former empire, East and West alike, except probably Egypt. But we can now see that it tells us nothing on its own, because the *way* that Early Medieval material culture (and the Early Medieval economy) was less complex than that of Late Rome was different in every region.

Our task in the future will be to establish a set of explanatory models that can cope with such a wide variation in experience. This is a considerable challenge; here, I shall be more schematic. I shall propose that long-term socio-economic change depended on four main parameters, each of which had a different incidence in different parts of the empire.

1. *War*

Most of the provinces of the empire experienced war in the form of one or more invasions and the disruptive effect of the immigration of a new ruling élite, whether Germanic or Arab—the standard image of the ‘fall of the Roman empire’. We have seen that the most disruptive immediate economic crisis coincided with invasion in each of our three regions, so this parameter should not be understated: war is always a significant catalyst of prior difficulties if there are any. However, I would not wish to overstate its significance either; Arab invasion in Tunisia only exacerbated a previous situation of economic involution, and Vandal invasion had much less material

¹³ As also with those ever-popular *dei ex machina*, plague and climatic disaster (and, most recently, an asteroid), which are often focussed on the 540s and consequently not much use to explain Britain or Gaul.

effect. Only in Italy (and, outside our three regions, in the Balkans and in parts of Anatolia) does war seem to have acted as a direct cause of large-scale economic change.

2. *State Economic Infrastructures*

The second parameter is the level of survival of state economic infrastructures, especially tax-raising, and thus the movement of goods, and, often, a steady demand of products from public bodies. A strong state can easily engage in large-scale movements of goods over long distances, entirely outside the structures of strictly commercial exchange, as did the Roman empire and the 'Abbāsīd caliphate. The state can also be an important buyer of commercial goods.

As with war, Italy was the region that experienced the most serious difficulties in this context. After the late 6th c., it was heavily politically divided, and its separate polities probably in many cases had fairly simple internal structures, apart from Ravenna, Calabria and Sicily, which were most tightly controlled by the Byzantines. Tunisia, by contrast, was a single political unit apart from in the late 7th c., and its rulers continued to tax throughout, probably even in the late Vandal period. Northern Gaul had more of a structural break, with the end of the Rhine army, which was the main fiscal focus of the northern edge of the Roman empire. The commitment of the Merovingians to any form of land tax north of the Seine is uncertain.¹⁴ However, at least one can say that the presence of strong and wealthy kings, no matter how and from where they got their wealth (whether from land, from tolls, or from southern Gaul), created, or recreated, centres of demand in the North, which easily surpassed any of the polities in Italy.

3. *Landownership and Private Wealth*

The third parameter is the level of survival of great landowning, the major source of private wealth throughout our period, and thus of large-scale demand independent of the state. Economic infrastructures based on private wealth are different to those maintained by the state. They had largely separate histories in different regions, and they had separate effects on economic systems. Private wealth

¹⁴ The best overview is Goffart (1982). Most of the evidence for the land tax after 500 relates to the Loire valley and northern Aquitaine.

does sometimes involve non-commercial movements of rents from estate-centre to estate-centre (as with Roman senatorial estates in Africa, or, on a smaller scale, the more southerly vineyards of 9th c. monasteries in what is now Belgium), but it is above all important as a source of commercial demand. If any given region has neither a rich state nor rich landowners, then, by and large, its peasantry will be more prosperous. However, its economic infrastructures will be weaker, its buying-power will be heavily decentralised, and its material culture will be simpler. (I defend this affirmation at greater length elsewhere, but it is not gratuitous, and underpins, for example, the startling differences between the material culture of Britain and northern Gaul in 600).¹⁵

The history of landownership in our three regions is incomplete, for we can say very little about Tunisian landowners after the Vandal period (and not that much after 439). In northern Gaul, however, from 600 onwards we have good evidence for rich private landownership in every area we have documentation for. In Italy, by contrast, all our evidence points the other way, towards a restricted wealth for local aristocracies after 600, few of whom seem to have held land in more than one city territory. Some political centres, such as Rome and Benevento, may have had aristocrats with greater and more widely-spread landholdings, but we do not anywhere have evidence of aristocratic wealth which matches that of Gaul. This contrasts very sharply with the situation in 400, when Italy was the home of the great senatorial families, the richest group of private landowners in all history that I am aware of, at least up to the Industrial Revolution.¹⁶ Even in Roman Italy, this wealthy élite did not extend over the whole peninsula; overall, nevertheless, the scale of Italian aristocratic wealth dropped very considerably across our period, whereas in northern Gaul it held up, or even increased. In Tunisia, as noted, we are restricted to hypothesis, but local private landownership may have increased in the Vandal period, as the lands of the Rome-based senatorial élite were confiscated, and the Vandal élite itself was settled. The continuation of high-quality urban church-building there for at least another century probably reflects substantial levels of at least local wealth. However, it would be hard to argue that this contin-

¹⁵ Wickham (1994) 216-25, represents a first attempt at this model.

¹⁶ Good introductions are provided by Arnheim (1972) and Roda (1994).

ued beyond 600 or so. Whatever the local construction of the 7th c. crisis in Africa, it was not alleviated by any visible foci of local private demand.

4. Structural Integration into the Roman World-system

The fourth parameter is the degree of structural integration that any given region had with the Roman economic world-system, which was focussed on the Mediterranean (or: the two halves of the Mediterranean); the more integrated a region was, the more it would suffer as the coherence of that world-system vanished. This needs less detailed discussion here. As we have already seen, Tunisia was certainly the most seriously affected in this fashion. In Italy its effect was of slightly less importance, while in northern Gaul it had no significance at all.

REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL STABILITY

If these four parameters could be simply added together, then one would predict that northern Gaul would show the least socio-economic change across the period 400-800, and Italy the most. Italy was, after all, most seriously affected by three of the four parameters, while northern Gaul was less affected than the others by at least two, if not three, of them. This prediction fits the relative continuities found in Gaul. It does not, however, fit the relative seriousness of the crises that hit Tunisia and Italy, because Tunisia seems to have been the worse hit of the two. This, for me, is a further demonstration of how far Late Roman Tunisia really had depended on Mediterranean-wide exchange for its prosperity. It may also be that Italy was protected from an even more serious involution by the solidity of its local, micro-regional, economic structures: its cities retained their centrality, at least in relation to their hinterlands, and both local political organisation and local aristocracies continued to base themselves in urban centres. Italian cities did not look very materially impressive, but they did at least retain that socio-political role.¹⁷

The fact that these four parameters, as soon as they are introduced, have to be adjusted slightly in order to fit the data, indicates

¹⁷ For Italian urban society see Harrison (1993) and Brogiolo and Gelichi (1998).

that it is not yet easy to generate a multi-stranded model that can explain all the elements of regional socio-economic variation in the post-Roman world. The combination of the four could best be seen as an ideal type, a guide for what sort of change to look for, rather than a descriptive guide to the changes that actually took place. At the very least, one would have to accept that each of the four had a different sort of incidence in any given local reality, although one would have to discuss the way they interrelated in rather more detail than I can achieve here, and one would begin to run into serious lacunae in the evidence during the process. But I think it is useful to set them out, at least schematically, as a guide to how the complexity of regional difference could, in principle, be coped with. There are *no* single motors for socio-economic change; they are always multiple. The task is both to isolate them and, then, to figure out how they worked together.

If, however, there is one single presumption about the nature of the socio-economic systems of our period that needs to be made explicit, it is this: the real structures of any regional economy before the Industrial Revolution are internal, and not those based on long-distance exchange. In other words, stable wealth is regional and sub-regional. Theories of pre-capitalist economic development, such as those of Pirenne, which presuppose that its main indicator is long-distance exchange, are mistaken. It was certainly the very real achievement of the Roman empire to create an inter-regional economic structure so articulated that Tunisia could export to the whole Mediterranean at the beginning of our period. However, the underlying reason for this was the strength of the fiscal motor, and in the end this sort of dominance could not be sustained. Tunisia was and is potentially prosperous, of course, but not at that level; it would have to find its feet again as a region with its own internal demand before it could return to a stable economy, and, notwithstanding its 10th c. prosperity, this arguably did not occur for another millennium. The prosperity of northern Gaul at the end of our period, by contrast, was firmly regionally based, and was, as a result, more lasting: indeed, the prosperity of the Seine-Rhine region never entirely disappeared subsequently. Italy's economy, meanwhile, would expand quickly in the next centuries. In part, this was on the basis of a new role as an inter-regional entrepôt, which was unstable and was not sustained. However, the core city-country relationship in the penin-

sula also allowed for a more lasting urban prosperity, which survived the Renaissance-period downturn of Italy's merchant capital.

These are really long-term cycles, which go rather beyond my remit. To return to the 5th to 8th centuries, however, if there is a century in which the regional nature of economic systems is particularly clear, it seems to me to be the 8th. The 8th c. was the first in which there was no bulk Mediterranean exchange network to confuse observers (at least, the observers of today), and the economic histories of individual regions were for the first time clearly separate. Many are less clearly visible as a result, for their internal archaeological sequences are less well-known than is the dating of ARS, but when they can be analysed, one discovers more about local economies than ARS distributions can ever achieve on their own. Even at the time, the enforced lack of economic ambitions of the 8th c. perhaps allowed contemporaries to concentrate on the relationship between local supply and demand that was the real basis of internal economic complexity.¹⁸ In northern Gaul, they had already got the idea, and by the 8th c. that region was doing pretty well; others would follow soon. In this sort of regional world, the immediate future for some centuries lay with my third parameter, aristocratic wealth and demand. A renewed importance for the second parameter, the state, apart from in the eastern Mediterranean, would have to await the 13th c. and beyond.

¹⁸ The innovative new survey of McCormick (2001), although written from a different position to this article, confirms the 8th c. as a period of relative inactivity in the Mediterranean, up to the 770s at least.

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DECLINE AND FALL? STUDYING LONG-TERM CHANGE IN THE EAST

MARK WHITTOW

ABSTRACT

With ‘decline and fall’ no longer a satisfactory model for long-term change in the Late Antique Near East (400-800 A.D.), attention has shifted to alternatives, here dubbed the ‘Fiscal’ model and the ‘Intensification and Abatement’ model. In the light of new evidence which makes the fiscal model less persuasive, that of intensification and abatement is attracting growing attention. However, its practical application will require the sort of long-term multi-period, and multi-disciplinary regional projects that have become very hard to organise under current UK funding arrangements.

INTRODUCTION

With treasure hunting out of academic fashion, one of the main tasks of archaeology is studying long-term change. It is not the only task that archaeology can fulfil, but in view of the way archaeology has developed over the last thirty years (above all the shift from excavation to survey as a primary research method) the data archaeologists produce naturally leads to questions about long-term change.

That suits archaeologists of Late Antiquity very well. What has driven the rise of late antique archaeology has been its role as the wrecking ball in the break up of a previous model of change, that is the ‘decline and fall’ thesis. But with the ‘decline and fall’ model effectively dead, we need to move on—indeed we already have moved on—and in this paper I want to look briefly at the two main models that have taken the place of ‘decline and fall’: what I shall call the ‘fiscal’ model and the ‘intensification and abatement’ model. Further, I want to think about where these ideas are leading us, and what sort of new questions we might be asking about long-term change.¹

¹ I am very grateful to Pamela Armstrong, Douglas Baird, John Bintliff, Bill

Thirty years ago a clear narrative told how the empire had reached its peak in the 2nd c., and then faced crisis in the 3rd. That crisis was surmounted but at a cost. The new empire of Diocletian and his heirs was a highly militarised world, dependent in consequence upon an excessive bureaucracy and over-taxation. The East was richer than the West so more able to bear the burden. While the Western empire collapsed in the 5th c., the empire in the East staggered on to the 7th, when most of it fell to the Arabs. What was left in Anatolia and the Balkans survived the storm only by radical reforms which created a new 'Byzantine' world, a world based on resourceful independent peasants, who rebuilt the economy and filled the ranks of the theme armies. When Byzantium began to look more like late Rome, with large landowners taking over peasant land and turning their former owners into serfs, with too many bureaucrats and too high taxation, then the delayed disaster struck, and Anatolia fell to the Turks.²

Late antique archaeology (as opposed to Christian archaeology) emerged as it became clear that the archaeological evidence was hard to square with the picture given above. The process arguably began with the publication of Tchalenko's work on the limestone massif.³ Its impact was due in part to the fact that the evidence of these deserted villages was so striking, but it was also because it clearly contradicted Libanios, whose 'end of the world as we know it' writings were being composed in Antioch just as the building boom in the nearby limestone massif was beginning.⁴ If Libanios' message could be shown by archaeology to be misleading, then archaeology plainly had the potential to overturn the whole decline and fall edifice. And so it has proved.

The wealth and prosperity of the late antique East has now become one of the fixed points in the subject.⁵ Indeed it has become so fixed that it has forced archaeologists working in the West to wonder whether the situation there was so very different. This is the theme of Tamara Lewit's still useful review of evidence for agricul-

Finlayson, Michael Given, Jeremy Johns, Graham Philip, and Luke Treadwell for their kindness in answering various bibliographical queries. None of them, of course, is responsible for the views expressed here.

² Jones (1966) 362-70; Ostrogorsky (1968) 27-86, 320-50.

³ Tchalenko (1953-8).

⁴ Liebeschuetz (1972); Petit (1955); Brown (1971).

⁵ See for example, Ward-Perkins (2000) and the papers in Kingsley and Decker (2001).

tural production in the Roman west which appeared in 1991, or more recently the work of Paul van Ossel and Pierre Ouzelias.⁶

The evidence has now become so familiar that there is no need to spell it out. The city sites, places like Athens and Corinth in Greece, Ephesos, Sardis, Miletos and Aphrodisias in Turkey, Apamea in Syria, Jerash and Pella in Jordan, Scythopolis and Caesarea in Palestine (the list could go on and on) have all produced public and private buildings that testify to a continuing urban vitality. The evidence of coinage and silver ware tells the same story,⁷ while that of fine wares (African Red Slip and its various imitators) and amphorae tell us not only about the wealth of the late antique economy, but also act as trace elements for its patterns of interregional exchange. Few pages of a book on pottery can have been so influential as the distribution maps in John Hayes' *Late Roman Pottery*.⁸

And of course there is the evidence of field surveys. Late antique archaeology and the survey project have come of age together. The pattern of work is uneven. Some areas have been easier for archaeologists than others, which explains the prominence of projects in Greece and Jordan, but important published data is also available for Bulgaria, Cyprus, Turkey, Syria, Israel, Palestine, and Iraq, and more is on its way. The quality of these projects, both in terms of data and of interpretation, is also uneven, but overall the results support what has become a familiar picture. Far from being an age of decline and fall, the data collected by surveys underlines the period 400 to 600 as an age of expansion. In Jordan the message is particularly clear. Late antique Jordan saw levels of settlement reach a density not subsequently matched until the 20th c.⁹

⁶ Lewit (1991); van Ossel (1992); van Ossel and Ouzoulias (2000).

⁷ Whittow (1990); Liebeschuetz (2001) gives a full survey.

⁸ Hayes (1972) 453-64.

⁹ Greece: Bintliff (1996a) 2-3; Cavanagh, Crouwel, Catling, and Shipley (1996) 122-3; Davis, Alcock, Bennet, Lolos, Shelmerdine, and Zangger (1996-2001); Gregory and Pullen (1998-2001); Jameson, Runnels, and van Andel (1994) 400-404; Mee and Forbes (1997) 84-91; Nixon, Moody, Price, and Rackham (2000); Raab (2001) 161-2; Jordan: MacDonald (1992) 97-112; MacAdam (1994); Miller (1991) 314-316; Watson (1996); see also Johns (1998) 93 fig. 8; Cyprus: Given and Knapp (1999); Given and Knapp (2002); Given, Kassianidou, Knapp, and Noller (2001); Bulgaria: Poulter (2000); Turkey: Algaze, Brauningner, Lightfoot, and Rosenberg (1991) 184, 188, 198-99, 207; Baird (2000); Wilkinson (1990) 131-3; Syria: Tate (1992); Philip *et al.* (2002); Israel and Palestine: Dauphin (1998); Finkelstein, Lederman, and Bunimovitz (1997); Iraq: Adams (1981); Adams (1965); Wilkinson and Tucker (1995) 69-72.

Archaeological evidence has not just given us a new 4th, 5th and 6th c., it has also transformed our picture of what happened next. In place of the 'Byzantine recovery' as the 7th c. empire threw off its imperial burdens, Clive Foss' seminal publications of the later 1970s introduced us to a 'Byzantine economic collapse': a world where coinage almost disappears from the Byzantine countryside, where Roman pottery traditions come to an end, where outside Constantinople urban life falls to a very low level.¹⁰ Byzantine peasants may or may not have become more free from the 7th c., as some have suggested, but economic growth doesn't appear until the 9th, or more clearly the 10th and 11th century, and when it does come, it is accompanied by the growth of great estates.¹¹ Ironically it has emerged that it was actually in the Islamic world, not in Byzantium, that late antique prosperity continued. The evidence is still patchy, and there are discordant notes, but Islamic Syria and Palestine seem to prosper certainly through to the 9th c., and one has to remember that after 750 these were areas on the periphery of Caliphal power. Iraq has obviously not been a good place for archaeology in recent years, but what evidence we do have gives tantalizing hints of just how prosperous this imperial core had become by 800.¹²

Going back for a moment to the period before the Islamic conquests, I am not arguing for a Panglossian 'best of all possible worlds', nor for a state of static prosperity. There has been for example a recent and continuing argument about economic trends in the later 6th c. I would tend to argue for late antique prosperity lasting through to the early 7th. It seems to me that the evidence of coinage, ceramics, and new building projects will support this view, and that when one looks in detail at specific sites then the case for a significant crisis before the 7th c. melts away.¹³ At the same time however, I am quite happy to concede the serious effects of insecurity in the Balkans and Syria. Andrew Poulter's work on Nicopolis ad Istrum and its hinterland, the recent reassessments of the Syrian evidence by Clive Foss and Frank Trombley, and Tony Wilkinson's survey of the Jazira all seem to show military insecurity having a deleterious effect on the

¹⁰ Foss (1975); Foss (1977a); Foss (1977b); Foss (1979a).

¹¹ Kaplan (1992) 575-81.

¹² Walmsley (2000); MacAdam (1994); Morony (1994); Haiman (1995).

¹³ Whittow (1990); Whittow (2001); MacAdam (1994); cf. Dauphin (1998) 519-25; Gatier (1994); Liebeschuetz (2001) 295-303.

prosperity of the countryside.¹⁴ I am also quite happy to consider the impact of the mid-6th c. plague, and to see that as a possible factor triggering a widespread late 6th c. recession.¹⁵ I think at the moment we don't know, but my point is that whether or not there was a downturn at the end of the 6th c., such a downturn occurred within the context of an essentially prosperous society, as evidenced by archaeology for the whole late antique period. The reassessment of the late antique world over the last thirty years is not a denial of change. It is the reverse. Change is visible on every side, the distinctive approach implicit in the concept of Late Antiquity is to try to see change on its own terms, rather than through a prism of decline and fall.

MODELS OF CHANGE

The 'Fiscal' Model

There are currently two main models to interpret long-term change in Late Antiquity, which one may dub the 'Fiscal' model and the 'Intensification and Abatement' model. The fiscal model in a sense goes back to Hayes' distribution maps of Late Roman pottery, which appear to show that a great deal of African Red Slip followed the state-sponsored provision of grain from North Africa to Rome and to the armies on the Rhine frontier. In the East the same point can be made for Egyptian grain and Syrian oil going to Constantinople and to the armies on the Danube, or more significantly to those facing the Persians in Mesopotamia. The late antique economy in this model was channelled by the state, and taxation in kind was a key factor in promoting exchange.¹⁶ On a broader level, even if the late antique empire was neither over taxed nor over burdened with soldiers and bureaucrats, it was nonetheless more tightly focussed on Constantinople and on imperial service than had been its 1st to 3rd

¹⁴ Poulter (2000); Foss (1997); Trombley (1997); Wilkinson and Tucker (1995) 69-71.

¹⁵ Whittow (2001) 149-53.

¹⁶ Durliat (1998) 89-117; McCormick (2001) 87-119; Ward-Perkins (2000) 369-81; Wickham (1989) 144 : "Carandini wants to argue for a Roman mercantile capitalism; fine. I want to stress...the other side of the equation: that this exchange, however great, nonetheless depended on the structure and functioning of the state"; Wickham (1988) 183-93; Wickham (1998) 284-85.

c. predecessor. At the same time a Roman world of autonomous provincial cities in control of their own finances had been replaced in the 4th c. by a world where city revenues had been appropriated by the state and the maintenance of the urban fabric depended heavily upon state subventions, or the activities of the church.¹⁷ Emblematic of the change is John Lydos, from Philadelphia in western Asia Minor. The sort of man whose forebears would have headed provincial society and invested in public monuments in their home city, John made his way to Constantinople where an uncle got him a job in the Praetorian Prefecture, a salary and a wife. His writings reveal a man whose whole world was defined by imperial service, and the culture of that bureaucratic elite.¹⁸

One version of this model would then go on to say that in the 7th c. crisis struck the state, and inevitably therefore the wider economy and society too. This is the essence of Jean Durliat's approach.¹⁹ One might want to call it 'fall and decline', and it has the corollary that where you do not have 'fall' you do not have 'decline' either, so that the prosperity of Early Islamic Syria and Palestine can be explained by the Ummayyad Caliphate having taken on the economic role of the Roman empire. However, in any but a muted form, this model has been overtaken by the evidence, particularly the growing complexity of the ceramic evidence. In the 1980s it was still just about possible to draw relatively simple diagrams of the movement of fine wares and amphorae which fitted the idea of state directed exchange, but over the last ten years we have come to recognise a whole swathe of new amphora types, and new centres for fine ware production.²⁰ This is not to deny that the state did have a role in the movement of goods around the Mediterranean, but the complexity of the data renders this model too simple as it stands. It seems increasingly likely that most economic activity was driven by commercial factors, the normal laws of supply and demand, and my vision of the late antique economy would therefore be something much closer to that revealed in the texts of the Cairo Genizah of the 11th and 12th c.: a world of rampant commercial exchange, of traders shipping and moving goods around the Mediterranean and the adjacent lands,

¹⁷ Liebeschuetz (2001) 170-75.

¹⁸ Maas (1992) 28-37.

¹⁹ Durliat (1990) 585-605.

²⁰ Arthur (1998) 157-83; Dark (2001) 32-42, 54-58; Magness (1993) 153-83; Kingsley and Decker (2001) 15-16; Kingsley (2001) 49-55.

always in pursuit of profit.²¹ Taxation was important, but rather than commerce being carried on the back of taxation, I think we see taxation being carried on the back of commerce.

The fiscal model appears to work much better after 650, when one has to explain how it was that the Byzantine empire, that small and harassed state hanging on in Anatolia and the fringes of the Balkans managed to survive. Two things seem to be clear about the Byzantine empire in the 7th and 8th c. The first is that the empire's economy was at a low ebb. If one goes back to the list given above of archaeological evidence for late antique prosperity—public and private buildings, coinage and silver ware, fine wares and amphorae—then all these indices point to a very different world. In Constantinople itself one can point to some continued building work, a continuing monetary economy, and the production of glazed white wares, but elsewhere the evidence is very minimal: hence Foss's picture of economic collapse.²² The second is that Byzantium seems to be characterised by the maintenance of its late Roman institutional inheritance. Constantinople survived, and therefore so too did the imperial court and bureaucracy. This was a society where the only public marks of status were one's place in the imperial hierarchy. The army, rather than being totally reformed on new lines as was once argued, now seems much more persuasively interpreted as a case of continuity. This was the late Roman army, organised much as it had been, but now redeployed in Asia Minor, and significantly still paid for through taxation.²³

All of this would seem to fit the fiscal model very well. Indeed it would seem to be a classic case that actually shows that the model is not just an idea but has a real world existence. The Roman state has survived, and seemingly taken over all aspects of this society. The commercial economy has withered away, and now everything depends on the central role of the state and its fiscal system, drawing resources from the provinces and redistributing them through the workings of the imperial court and the army.²⁴ I think however there are several reasons for caution.

²¹ Goitein (1967-93) i, 42-8, 148-272.

²² Magdalino (1996) 17-50; Harrison (1986) 279; Hayes (1992) 13-18.

²³ Whittow (1996) 96-133.

²⁴ Haldon (2000) 225-64.

The Evidence of Coins

The Byzantine state system of the early middle ages was based on taxation. John Haldon has argued for the importance of taxation in kind, but nonetheless at the heart of the system outlined above were payments in gold coin to officials and soldiers, and there are 8th c. references to taxation in coin.²⁵ Such a system cannot be simply self-contained. There has to be a link between the tax payer and a monetarised market economy to put the money in the tax payer's purse so that the tax can be paid. Perhaps it was only happening around Constantinople, perhaps it was on a small scale, but at some level somewhere there has to be commercial exchange to keep taxation in coin going.

It is usually argued that the key evidence for demonetization is the disappearance of copper coins from the Byzantine provinces. Gold coins are far too valuable to be used in market exchange. Copper coins on the other hand are an index of real monetary activity, and their disappearance from use, other than in Constantinople, is therefore treated as unequivocal evidence for widespread demonetisation.²⁶ I have come to have problems with this.

First of all, I have the strong impression that there are more 7th and 8th c. copper coins around than the site lists of places like Sardis and Ephesos show. It is a common experience in Turkish villages being shown coins. Most are Roman, many are late antique, many are 10th to 12th c., or Ottoman, but I have ceased to be surprised by being shown 7th and 8th c. copper coins. They are not common, but I have the impression that they are not as rare as we have been led to believe. Our problem may be that we have been looking in the wrong places. There is certainly very little evidence of much going on in most Byzantine provincial cities during the 7th and 8th centuries, but at the same period all over the surrounding countryside new castles were going up. None has been excavated, but these are surely places we would be most likely to find 7th and 8th c. coins.²⁷ It is worth noting that there is evidence from Ottoman Anatolia to show a great deal of market activity taking place not in towns, but

²⁵ Whittow (1996) 118-19.

²⁶ Haldon (1990) 117-20; Hendy (1985) 640-44; Mango (1980) 72-73.

²⁷ Foss (1985) 86-125; Foss and Winfield (1986) 17-23, 131-45; Barnes and Whittow (1994); Barnes and Whittow (1998).

at periodic rural markets.²⁸ The same could be true here. *Panegyreis*, seasonal fairs associated with a saint's feast day, are well-attested in the Byzantine world. That at Ephesos is famously mentioned by Theophanes as producing a customs revenue of 100 lbs of gold in 795.²⁹ But perhaps we should also think of other periodic markets taking place not at a church but outside the many castles which dotted the new Byzantine landscape.

A second concern about the monetary evidence is that it is often missed that from the early 9th c. onwards most of the Islamic world did without copper coins too. By the 9th c. the quality of Abbasid copper had reached such a low that it ceased to be minted. In its place they used silver and gold, but since coins struck in these metals would have been too valuable to make ordinary everyday purchases, and since no one is suggesting that from the early 9th c. the Islamic world gave up monetary exchange, it follows that in practice, as in rural Turkey today, most exchanges must have been carried out on credit, with occasional large payments when coin became available.³⁰ The same could also have worked for Byzantium.

The Evidence of Pottery

Apart from the coinage, the key evidence for economic collapse has come from the ceramics. Quite clearly late antique pottery types disappeared during the 7th c.: the Late Roman fine wares first, and then the Late Roman amphorae types. Whereas African Red Slip and its imitators was widespread during the 5th and 6th centuries, the only major type of Byzantine fine ware is Constantinopolitan White Ware, and its distribution pattern is very limited. It barely registers in the records of field survey projects.³¹ On the other hand the view once expressed by the excavators of Sardis that during the 7th and 8th c. Anatolia became an 'aceramic' society is quite wrong.³²

²⁸ Faroqhi (1979) 32-80.

²⁹ Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. de Boor, i, 469-70.

³⁰ Udovitch (1965) 769; Album, Bates, and Floor (1993) 20; Treadwell (2001) 144-45; Shamma (1998) 29. The same point can be made for the Ottoman empire in the 17th c.: Pamuk (2000) 68, 145-47; and see Paton (1900) 58: "At the village of Dalaman [Aydn, Turkey] close by a weekly bazaar is held; in fact, until the recent establishment of a cotton factory here, there was no village, but simply the booths for the bazaar."

³¹ Dark (2001) 53-65; Brubaker and Haldon (2001) 149-56; Cavanagh, Crowwel, Catling, and Shipley (1996) 129.

³² Scott and Kamilli (1981) 680-81.

Sites that we know were occupied during the period are full of pottery, and the excavations at Amorion and Hierapolis have done something to pin down what belongs when.³³ Clearly there was not the sort of mass produced widely-distributed types that are characteristic of late antique assemblages, but on the other hand neither is it true that everything is the most primitive hand-made ware. Jeremy Johns has drawn attention to the significance of the widespread replacement of wheel-made pottery by hand-made wares in late medieval Bilād al-Shām, and he argues convincingly that this points to a fundamental reordering of economic life.³⁴ Such a process does not occur in Anatolia, and I think in consequence we should be careful about postulating such a reordering of economic life after the 7th c.

I can bring in rather more positive evidence at this point in the form of a type of red micaceous water jars, decorated with pinched banding (see fig. 1, see plates). I once got very excited about this type of pottery. Hugh Barnes, Catherine Holmes and I came across them while surveying Çardak Kalesi, a Byzantine castle overlooking the Acı Tüz Gölü in western Turkey.³⁵ The fragments clearly did not belong to the Roman pottery tradition, but the absence of any later Byzantine glazed wares, common on castle sites in the region, pointed to a date before the 11th c. The same ware was visible on the surface at the sites of other Byzantine castles in the region, such as Tripolis, Harpasa, and Yöre.³⁶ When Paul Arthur, who had been working there as part of the Italian team, told me that the same ware had been found at nearby Hierapolis in contexts datable to the 8th to 11th centuries, I began to think that this ware, whose sherds would be very distinctive in the field, was going to prove to be the much-desired diagnostic for 8th-11th c. occupation in western Anatolia. I then discovered that unfortunately very similar jars were being made in the region up until about fifty years ago (see fig. 2, see plates), and it became clear that the cut-off date at Hierapolis simply reflected the history of that particular site. So, at least as we understand the ware at the moment, it cannot be treated as a period-specific

³³ Lightfoot (1998) 332-33; Lightfoot and Ivison (2001) 379-80, 398; Lightfoot (2001) 9-10; Arthur (1997); Cottica (1998) 81-83.

³⁴ Johns (1998).

³⁵ Barnes and Whittow (1995) 23.

³⁶ Foss (1979b) 299-302; Marchese (1994) 235-36, pl.7; Varinlioğlu (1995) 124-25; Barnes and Whittow (1996).

diagnostic. However, the fact remains that jars of this type were being made in the 8th c. They are large well-made vessels, which seem to have stood about 1 m high. Talking to retired potters at Karacasu (Aydın) who had made such water jars in their youth, I was told that they were complicated things to produce, that required a high degree of skill, and could go wrong in manufacture.³⁷ They were consequently expensive. However, since every house needed a water jar, these effectively lifetime purchases were an important part of a potter's business. The existence of this ware is therefore important evidence for a significant artisanal tradition in early medieval western Anatolia.

I think there is much in the fiscal model as applied to Byzantium that works well, but I also suspect that at the moment our picture of Byzantium during the 7th and 8th c. is too simple, and therefore that encourages us to form too simple a model of how the Byzantine state and society worked. Just as the fiscal model when applied to the 4th to 6th c. had to be modified when faced with the flow of data that came available in the 1990s showing that late antique trade was too complex and too universal to be explained by state initiative, so I suspect the same will occur when we finally start work on Byzantine archaeology. When one remembers that there is still no major survey project running in Anatolia with a strong medieval component it is no wonder we don't know much about Byzantium.

THE 'INTENSIFICATION AND ABATEMENT' MODEL

Let me move on to the other current model that attempts to explain long-term change, which I have termed the 'Intensification and Abatement' model. I came across this from the work of Øystein LaBianca and the Hesban survey in Jordan, but it has recently been taken up by Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell in their book on the Mediterranean, *The Corrupting Sea*, and these ideas are set to gain a greater currency.³⁸

Essentially LaBianca and others had noted that the current settlement pattern of Jordan is not the result of a continuous progress to

³⁷ The traditional Cypriote pottery industry does not appear to have produced an equivalent vessel, but the manufacture of wine jars seems to have presented a similar technical challenge: see Ionas (2000) 50-51, 167-68, 213-15.

³⁸ Horden and Purcell (2000); LaBianca and Lacelle (1986) 145-46; LaBianca (1990).

the present densely occupied landscape, but has been subject to a cyclical process of sedentarization and nomadization, or as LaBianca termed it “intensification” and “abatement”. In phases of intensification he can point to the evidence for a wide range of cereal crops, vegetables and fruit trees; numerous draft animals like oxen and donkeys, and large numbers of animals like pigs (up to the 8th c. at least) and chickens, grazing on the edges of fields. In periods of intensification the landscape supports a large population living in villages and a hierarchy of towns. The pattern of coins, pottery and small-finds reflects a prosperous standard of living.

In phases of abatement LaBianca can point to a shift to mobile pastoralism characterised by camel herding and flocks of sheep and goats. A small quantity of grain is produced in temporary plots that shift from year to year; villages are only occupied on a seasonal basis (if at all); and the coins, pottery and small-finds show a poorer, simpler world— and above all there are fewer people. Such a system simply will not support the numbers of a phase of intensification.³⁹ For the individual—and this is perhaps the key to the model—it is worth remembering that the shift towards pastoralism involved in a phase of abatement is taken as a decision of perceived advantage. Indeed for the individual it is not clear that sitting on the grass in spring tending your goats and watching your family make *leban* (a sort of sour milk akin to yogurt) is not more pleasant than the hard work of ploughing before returning to your house surrounded by stinking middens and fractious neighbours. But for the state, of course, this process is a disaster. Not only is it increasingly difficult to keep a track on the population to tax them, but they have fewer things to tax, and most critically such a shift inevitably means that there are many fewer tax-payers. On the plateau in central Jordan the potential revenue fell so far that it was no longer worth bothering to collect, and the area fell out of the Ottoman empire and was left for much of the 18th and 19th centuries to its own devices.⁴⁰

LaBianca’s chronology as published for the phases of intensification and abatement has to be ignored. There is no need to go into the details here: suffice it to say that most archaeologists working in Jordan would identify a phase of intensification in the Iron Age leading up to a peak in about 600 B.C., followed by a phase of abatement

³⁹ LaBianca (1990) 9-21, 233-44.

⁴⁰ Rogan (1999) 21, 42-43.

that lasted until about the 1st c. B.C. From then on there was a phase of intensification which lasted, with a significant down-turn after the 12th c., through to the early Ottoman period. The 17th and 18th c. were a period of abatement which lasted until about 1880.⁴¹ Leaving the chronology aside however, LaBianca's concept of phases of intensification and abatement is convincing and the general pattern quite clear.

The idea is obviously I think not limited to Jordan, nor to those societies that can alternate between sedentary and nomadic options. The Boeotia Survey in central Greece has been going on since 1978, and now stands out as a model survey project in many ways. The results very neatly shows a similar fluctuating exploitation of a landscape over a similar time scale to that studied by the Hesban survey. John Bintliff does not I think use the terminology, but in effect his model for change is the same. The valleys he is surveying represent assets for their populations. If circumstances are favourable they are worth exploiting, but there may become a moment when, put bluntly, there are better things to do. How many people exploit the valley, doing what, is an equation with a series of factors that vary over the long and the short term.⁴²

What is attractive about this model is that instead of having to see everything as the consequence of natural or human disaster, or to try to make the pre-modern state the all powerful engine of economic and social change, we can instead visualise individuals and societies as being faced with a variety of pressures that they can react to in various ways. Change will operate over time, and vary between areas. Even a general factor like the mid 6th-c. plague will work through its consequences in particular and individual circumstances. Whether the high death rate is a disaster or an opportunity will vary from area to area, community to community, household to household.⁴³

Put in these terms 'intensification and abatement' may seem less a model to help explain change, and more like a pious invocation of the virtues of the thicker description. But I think the implications are more interesting than this. What we are looking for is a way of

⁴¹ Rollefson, Sauer, Herr, Parker, Lenzen, and King (1997) 226-43; Johns (1994) 4-9, 13-14, 18-31.

⁴² Bintliff (1996b) 193-224; Bintliff (2000) 37-63.

⁴³ Bintliff (1997) 80-86.

studying the late antique world that acknowledges the fact that our only significant source of information for a lot of topics is archaeology, that much archaeology is most effective when dealing with long-term large-scale issues, and yet that the real causes and mechanisms of change are often only comprehensible in terms of the small-scale, the individual and the particular. The model of ‘intensification and abatement’ would appear to offer ways of linking these different levels in a coherent way.

The key I suggest lies in the role of local elites, and perhaps I should say that in this the fiscal model and the model of intensification and abatement are not incompatible. All late antique states at some level operated through local elites, and it is the relationship between state, local elites, and primary producers, that for our purposes is the key variable in the equations that determine change—neither too general (such as the plague or climate change), nor too localised (such as the circumstances of a single valley), and one that allows us to link archaeology to other sources. Whereas the primary producer is likely to be historically mute, and the state disinterested, local elites have left us literary sources. Little enough in many areas, but when one thinks of Greek hagiography and epigraphy, Syriac history writing, and Islamic local traditionists, quite enough for a dialogue.

To go back to the Boeotia survey, I would hold this up as a project that links these different levels and different types of sources very effectively. It works as archaeology, it works as history, and together it makes for a very effective study of long-term change. In the present context, its drawback is only that Boeotia has little in the way of textual sources for Late Antiquity. We clearly need more such projects, but if studying long-term change in the late antique East is the goal, they do need to be in areas with rather more written material for these centuries. Several possibilities come to mind, including the Syria of the limestone massif, but thinking of the work of T. J. Wilkinson and D. J. Tucker on its settlement archaeology, and that of Chase Robinson on the historical sources for the 7th and 8th c., perhaps one may dream of such a project in the Jazira.⁴⁴

I would like to end, however, on a slightly downbeat note. A Jazira Survey with a significant British input is a dream, less because of

⁴⁴ Wilkinson and Tucker (1995); Robinson (2000).

the current state of Iraqi politics than because of the current state of UK funding policies. The Boeotia survey began in 1978, and has been going on ever since, getting progressively more interesting and sophisticated as time has passed. It is very difficult now to imagine such a project being set up on this scale, or being allowed to go on for so long. I started this paper saying that I wanted to think about where the models for studying long-term change that have replaced 'decline and fall' might be leading us. Intellectually I think they lead us towards detailed long-term multi-period projects that integrate different disciplines. I think they lead us above all towards studying change in terms of local elites, and of their role as intermediaries between primary producers and the state. Financially however, we are being led in the other direction, towards short-term projects, with quick results, and that I am convinced is not a good way to be studying anything, least of all long-term change.

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