THE FATE OF TEMPLES IN LATE ANTIQUE ANATOLIA

Peter Talloen and Lies Vercauteren

Abstract

When Christianity rose to prominence during the 4th c. temples were no longer the vibrant centres of ritual activity they had once been. A precise chronology for the last phases of temples in Asia Minor cannot be established with the limited evidence we possess. Yet, the examples presented here do allow an approximate pattern to be laid down. Furthermore, they demonstrate that the fate of temples in Late Antiquity comprised more than just destruction or conversion to churches. That said, the preservation of the sacred landscape through in situ conversion of temples did play a crucial role in the Christianisation of late antique Asia Minor.

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the 4th c. A.D., Asia Minor was still a largely pagan region, with relatively small centres of Christianity, which had yet to leave a significant mark on the religious landscape.¹ This situation was to change dramatically by the beginning of the 5th c., as the result of the rise of Christianity after the conversion of Constantine and the imperial legislation that followed, which ordered the abolition of sacrifice, the closure of sanctuaries and the confiscation of their properties,² and the building boom of monumental Christian places of worship. Unfortunately, the fate of pagan temples in this crucial age of religious transformation is little known.

The functioning of pagan temples in the 3rd c. is well-attested in Asia Minor through ongoing constructions and repairs, as well as cultic

---
¹ On the state of paganism and Christianity in general in the 3rd and 4th centuries see Lane Fox (1986), Trombley (1993–94) and Fowden (1998); for Asia Minor in particular see Mitchell (1993), Trombley (1993–94) 2. 52–133 and recently Pont (2004).
² This legislation was compiled in the Codex Theodosianus.
activities taking place there. A first example is the Artemision of Ephesus. After the destruction of this temple by the earthquake of A.D. 262 and the subsequent pillage of the city by the Goths, the cella was repaired with spolia from other derelict buildings, indicating the continuing importance of this sanctuary. In Miletos, there were still some constructions being added to the Temple of Dionysus in the 3rd c. A.D., while in the territory of the city, building activities are attested at the large sanctuary of Apollo at Didyma. Furthermore, numerous inscriptions attest to the continuation of cultic activity, for example the celebration of religious festivals and the organisation of games, which clearly continued to be popular in this period. As these festivities focused on the sanctuaries, they are indirect proof of the continuing role of temples as centres of public worship in 3rd c. A.D. Asia Minor. Finally, locally minted bronze coinage with its profusion of types featuring religious symbols, cult statues, temples and festivals offers additional testimony to the extent and depth of pagan civic worship during the 3rd c.

While such evidence is found throughout the whole of Anatolia for the 3rd c., this is no longer the case for the 4th c. We have hardly any sources for this last phase in the history of temples as the core of public cult in Asia Minor. The evidence for the end of the temples is scarce and difficult to interpret. Except for a small number of recently excavated sites such as Aphrodisias and Sagalassos, the archaeological record has not been consistently preserved, and with the traditional elements of pagan cult now being outlawed (cf infra) the problem of

3 Bammer and Muss (1996) 60–61; Muss (2007) 244–45. The small Temple of Hadrian and Artemis on the Curetes Street was also damaged by the earthquake and repaired ca. A.D. 300, receiving statues of the members of the Tetrarchy (Thür (2003) 260 and n.12, 264).


5 Wiegand (1941) 42; Tuchelt (1973) 110–13.


8 Some cities still provide indications for the continuation of temple cult in the 4th c., such as the festival of Zeus Panamareus in the territory of Carian Stratonikeia (Şahin (1981–82) 21, 310) and the public dedications to Aphrodite at nearby Aphrodisias, persisting into the 5th c. (Roueché (1989) 90–91, 153–54). Yet, the statement by K. Harl that many cities of Roman Anatolia still presented a pagan image in their architecture and public worship as late as the mid-5th c. (Harl (2001) 306) has no archaeological basis.

9 In earlier excavations the focus was placed on unravelling the art and architecture of the temple as it survived within the church, as exemplified by the Temple of
recognizing pagan cult on the ground is self-evident. Consequently, no positive archaeological evidence\textsuperscript{10} can be presented that indicates a continuation of temple cult in Late Antiquity anywhere in Anatolia.\textsuperscript{11}

It is possible, however, to outline the general fate of temples once they fell out of use, through literary sources and in particular the archaeological analysis of a number of well-studied sites in the region.\textsuperscript{12} The different fates that could befall a temple in Late Antiquity provide us with some idea of how they were perceived in Asia Minor, both before and after their closure.\textsuperscript{13}

**The Decline of the Temples: Decay and Violence?**

Several elements influenced the fate of the temples in Late Antiquity. A lack of financial backing must have played a significant role in the state of the sanctuaries even before they became a potential target for Christians and Christian emperors. The construction and maintenance of such buildings was usually funded by wealthy individuals, or in some cases by imperial officials. Given the religious persuasion of the 4th c.

---

\textsuperscript{10} Literary sources, though, provide some indications for continuing ritual at temple sites in the 4th c. Existing temples in Lydia, for instance, were apparently restored by Chrysanthius, the high priest of Lydia appointed by the emperor Julian as part of his effort to revitalise paganism (Eunap. "S. 501; see also Foss (1976) 28).

\textsuperscript{11} The end of temple cult in Late Antiquity did not, however, create a religious void which was filled by Christianity as claimed by some (see for instance Bagnall (1988) on late antique Egypt). Traditional religious practices continued well into the late antique period, mostly away from the temple in such private contexts as the domestic sphere (MacMullen (1997) 61–63, 106–107), or at sacred locations in the countryside (Caseau (2004) 114–17, 134–36). On the presence of a polytheist community at Aphrodisias in the 5th c. see Roueché (1989) 85–96, 153–55. For the situation in late antique Corinth and Greece see Rothaus (2000).

\textsuperscript{12} The afterlife of temples differed regionally, depending on such factors as the strength and longevity of non-Christian cults—generally thought to have persisted longer in Greece (Gregory (1986); Rothaus (2000); Sanders (2005)), the rate of Christianization of the governing classes—who remained explicitly pagan in Rome well into the 5th c. (Brown (1961); Fowden (1998) 551–52), and the fanaticism or tolerance of bishops and abbots—who were reportedly very militant in Syro-Palestine as exemplified by bishop Porphyry at Gaza (\textit{V. Porph.}) and bishop Marcellus at Apamea (Trombley (1993–94) 1. 122–29 and 2. 283–89).

\textsuperscript{13} This paper is indebted to the work of Richard Bayliss whose monograph on the archaeology of temple conversion is a reference for all studies on temple conversion, in Asia Minor and the rest of the Roman empire (Bayliss 2004).
emperors, it is doubtful that imperial funds would have been used for the upkeep of an edifice for which the purpose was to house a pagan cult. Responsibility for the maintenance and repair of the temples would thus have fallen almost completely on affluent citizens. However, the 4th c. saw a decline of the curial order and of elite euergetism, and the expenditure that did occur was increasingly directed away from the urban temples. The growth of villas, for example, represented a new focus of financial interest and expenditure, and a new mode of consumption and display. Furthermore, the increasing public profile of Christianity and the conversion of the elite made the Church a more attractive focus for benefactors. As a result of this lack of elite support many of the sanctuaries will already have been in a rather bad state in the 4th c. A.D.

The legal status of the temples also deteriorated sharply during the 4th c. Temples and other religious buildings attested to the vitality of the pagan community and its right to practise its religion and publicise its cult. This is why they were targeted by the Christian imperial authorities who wished to control the religious affiliation of the population they ruled. From the reign of Constantine onwards, laws were enacted which ordered the abolition of pagan practices, and while the degree to which such laws were enforced remains highly uncertain they did have some impact. All temples were instructed to be closed for the first time in 356, which apparently prompted Christians in

---

14 Due to the reorganization of the empire by Diocletian and the resulting centralization, in which the institutions of civic self-government in the 4th c. came to be seen as nothing more than pieces of administrative machinery used in the collection of taxes (Liebeschuetz (1992) 12–13; Ward-Perkins (1998) 373–82), it became less attractive for the provincial elite to become involved in local affairs and to assume local offices like the civic priesthoods that covered much of the religious expenditure.

15 Roueché (2000) 581. See, for example, the large urban mansion at Pisidian Sagalassos (Waelkens et al. (2006) 219 and 221).


17 Moreover, rather than imagining a homogenous pagan world before Christianization, Caseau rightly points out that we should picture flourishing cultic centres beside a number of deserted shrines left to decay. While some cults were popular at the end of the 3rd c., others had already lost their appeal and declined (Caseau (1999) 25). The Artemision of Sardis, for example, was apparently abandoned in the troubles of the 3rd c., to be covered with alluvium from the neighbouring streams by the middle of the 4th c., though much of the evidence is not very clear (Foss (1976) 28, 37–38).

18 For an overview of imperial legislation against pagan cult practices see Bayliss (2004) 8–31, who underlines that the imperial laws themselves did not directly determine the demise of the temples (Bayliss (2004) 73).

many places to attack temples. This may be reflected in the claims of Julian and Libanius that temples were destroyed under Constantius II, although both writers are far from unbiased. During his brief reign Julian commanded the restoration of all damaged temples at the expense of the destroyers, which again points at some violence towards pagan monuments. The death of Julian initially saw a period of imperial toleration under Valentinianus and Valens. But in 391, after already having decreed the confiscation of all income-producing property from temples, Theodosius sealed their fate by forbidding the sacrifice of animals, the worship of statues and the visiting of shrines for these purposes, leaving city temples to decay or linger on as public ‘ornaments’.

The temples and shrines, which had once sacralised the landscape, were now considered to be polluting the earth. However, the relationship between the legal status of paganism and the evidence for Christian violence against pagan installations is complex. Although frowned upon by the authorities because it rubbed against the grain of social order and discipline, that some violence did occur is beyond dispute. As Libanius complains, attacks on temples could easily take place without legal sanction if imperial officials were prepared to turn a blind eye, or, in some cases, even sponsored them.

Nevertheless, tracing temple destruction has proved difficult in our surviving evidence. While damage to masonry beyond what would be expected to have resulted from a collapse is generally attributed to Christians, a number of scholars, like Spieser and Bayliss, have argued that Christians in general rarely attacked pagan temples while they were still in use, but rather occupied them after they were

---

22 Julian *Ep.*, 41.
23 *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.11 and 16.10.20. Even if the laws themselves may not have been very efficient, as seems to be confirmed by the fact that they had to be repeated throughout the 5th c. (Harl (1990) 7), they did effectively put an end to any funding of the temples, and terminated their role as centres of public worship, which stripped them of an important reason for their existence.
24 *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.15 and 16.10.18 (in A.D. 399). The order to the prefect of the East in 435 to destroy the temples (*Cod. Theod.* 16.10.25) was subject to the consent of local magistrates, and so did not involve all temples (Frantz (1965) 200; Meier (1996) 368). Additionally, urban temples were protected so long as they did not form the focus of ritual activity (Bayliss (2004) 19).
abandoned.\textsuperscript{26} Certainly, there is little real evidence in Asia Minor for the actual destruction of pagan sanctuaries, unlike in Syria, Palestine and Egypt, where we have the well-documented examples of the temples of Zeus at Apamea, Marnas at Gaza and the Sarapeion at Alexandria respectively.\textsuperscript{27}

The cases of temples that allegedly suffered religiously motivated violence are difficult to prove. In Pergamon, the ‘Red Hall’, the sanctuary for Egyptian gods, was partly destroyed by fire in the late 4th or early 5th c. Unfortunately, it is unknown whether this destruction was intentional or not.\textsuperscript{28}

The sanctuary of Men Askenos near Pisidian Antioch does appear to have suffered a violent demise. The votive steles inside the temenos were smashed, while the temple itself was completely dismantled. According to the scholars working at the site, this all happened at the end of the 4th c.,\textsuperscript{29} but this date is not confirmed and so the context and motivation for the destruction cannot be established. One alternative explanation is that the temple was dismantled and its remains used within some new construction within the city; any riotous activity (if this took place) would then have been limited to the mutilation of statuary and the destruction of votive steles.\textsuperscript{30}

At Sagalassos, the poorly known sanctuary of Demeter and Kore may have undergone a similar fate. So far only a 2nd c. A.D. dedicatory inscription of the sanctuary has been retrieved (fig. 1), found on the city’s upper agora where it was reused as cover stone of a sewer.\textsuperscript{31} The Christian acclamation εἱς Θεός (‘One God’) was carved on the mutilated dedicatory relief, something that is associated with desacralisation and was common in the late 4th or early 5th c.\textsuperscript{32} Both the mutilated relief and the inscription show a vigorous Christian reaction to

\textsuperscript{26} Spieser (1976) 311–12; Bayliss (2004) 18.
\textsuperscript{27} The written sources relating to these destructions are discussed by Trombley (1993–94) 1.110, 114–16, and 123.
\textsuperscript{28} Nohlen (1998) 99.
\textsuperscript{29} Ramsay (1912) 226 and (1913) 290; Mitchell and Waelkens (1998) 85–86.
\textsuperscript{30} Moreover, since the excavators observed the blocking of the cella door, it is most probable that the temple had been closed for some time before its dismantlement and is therefore less likely to have attracted a violent fanatical mob than a still-functioning temple (Bayliss (2004) 24 and n.184, 56).
\textsuperscript{31} Waelkens et al. (1997) 147 and 149, fig. 67.
\textsuperscript{32} Trombley (1993–94) 1.120–21 and 2. 252. The phrase was a liturgical feature of temple conversion during the 4th to 6th centuries (Trombley (2004) 72).
Fig. 1 A limestone votive column with a dedicatory inscription from the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore at Sagalassos (inv. n° SA94UA/1557 and 1559) reused as a cover stone for a sewer on the Upper Agora. The relief was mutilated and the Christian acclamation εἷς Θεός (‘One God’) was inscribed below. (Sagalassos archive)
the sanctuary, and might even indicate the violent destruction of the temple, but such a hypothesis as yet still remains unproven.

Other archaeological evidence may also point to Christian aggression towards pagan monuments as a Church enriched by imperial patronage and swollen with recent converts began to achieve a greater urban profile and to refute publicly the pagan mores of their cities. In the second half of the 4th c. the emblema of the mosaic floor decorating the Neon library at Sagalassos, and featuring the departure of Achilles for the Trojan war, was destroyed while the rest of the floor remained intact, after which the building was set on fire. This deliberate action has been interpreted as an ideologically motivated destruction, possibly carried out by a Christian mob untouched by paideia.33

Overall, however, such instances of destruction appear to have been the exception rather than the rule in Asia Minor, as in other regions of the empire.34 Therefore, when we imagine the destruction of a temple, we should think more in terms of demolition or dismantlement. A famous example is the as yet undiscovered Temple of Asklepios at Aigai in Cilicia. Although Eusebius states that: ‘the shrine was utterly destroyed, so that no trace remained there of the former madness’—something that had been ordered by the emperor Constantine because it had been a place of anti-Christian propaganda—the sanctuary continued to receive pilgrims in search of a cure in the 4th and 5th centuries.35 This, together with the fact that Julian ordered the local bishop to give back the columns he had taken from the temple to build his church,36 implies that the sanctuary may have only been partly demolished through the removal of its colonnades, but was certainly not totally destroyed. Besides, the destruction of a well-built temple was

33 Waelkens et al. (2000); Waelkens and Talloen (in press). In the same period, those other institutions of learning, the gymnasia, were abandoned in many cities and systematically dismantled (Yegül (1992) 313; Rouché (2000) 580–81). See for instance the ‘east-gymnasium’ of Ephesus, the site of a 5th c. basilica (Foss (1979) 83; Scherrer (1995) 23–24) and the gymnasia at Aizanoi (Rheidt (2003) 243). This could again be interpreted as anti-pagan for it was in these buildings that urban youths were educated in pagan culture and became acquainted with the Greek myths, gods and heroes (Yegül (1992) 24). According to some scholars, however, the gymnasia fell into disuse not because of Christianity but because of a changing mentality, becoming ‘socially irrelevant monuments’ (Brands (2003) 17).


35 This statement by Eusebius was repeated by Sozomen (Hist. eccl. 117.2.5.5); Caseau (2004) 121–22.

difficult to achieve, as it was no easy task to dismantle well-bonded masonry, requiring specialised workers rather than an angry mob.\(^3\)

Furthermore, while some temples may have been razed to the ground as part of the Christian desacralisation, most were simply deconsecrated through the removal of the cult statues and other pagan imagery.\(^3\) Since sacrifice animated the god resident within the cult statue, its removal eliminated all meaning from future sacrifices because the symbolic and real presence of the god was gone.\(^3\) To expel the demonic spirits, crosses could be carved onto the building material.\(^4\) Such crosses are attested, for instance, in the Temple of Apollo Klarios at Sagalassos, in the **Artemision** at Sardis, and in the **Letoon** near Xanthos.\(^4\) Other temples were closed by blocking their doorways, as illustrated by temple N4 at Termessos.\(^4\)

Those temples were apparently allowed to linger on until a better use for them was found, either as sources of material for new constructions or as the foundations for new secular or Christian buildings.

**Temples as Quarries**

After their closure, an almost immediate process of stone-robbing began at a number of temple sites, allowing the practical reuse of their architectural elements. The sanctuary of the deified Hadrian and Antoninus Pius at Sagalassos began to be dismantled by the early 5th c. This city is still mentioned as a **neokoros**—temple-warden of the imperial cult—during the reign of Constantine, which may well imply that its imperial shrines were still in use at this time, but the test excavations of 2003 and 2004 demonstrated that this sanctuary went out of use in the late 4th c. A.D. Although the emperor remained a sacred person in Christianity as the representative of God on earth, no building could

---

\(^3\) For a definition of Christian deconsecration see Trombley (1993–94) 1. 245.
\(^3\) Harl (1990) 21.
\(^4\) Lanckoronski (1892) 43–44, 90–91. In the history of a temple, the blocking of its doorway signalled a temporary phase before it moved to another state, either through dismantlement or conversion. Archaeologically it is therefore rarely detectable (Bayliss (2004) 9).
be dedicated to his exclusive cult by the reign of Theodosius I. Once cult activity ceased, the Corinthian *peripteros* and the surrounding Ionic portico of the sanctuary were dismantled for reuse in the unidentified encroaching structures within the *temenos* (fig. 2), as well as in the Late Roman fortifications and the Christian basilica E1 (cf infra).43

At Ephesus, the Flavian temple overlooking the state agora and dedicated to the cult of the emperors, suffered the same fate some time after A.D. 380. After an earthquake devastated the city in the later 4th c., a great restoration program was initiated, yet no funds were available anymore to repair the city’s great temples and some, like the Temple of the *Sebastoi*, found new roles providing material for the much needed restorations. Parts of the sanctuary’s northern façade were reused as support for the southern hall of the *Tetragonos agora*.44 Likewise, the city’s *Olympieion*, a giant peripteral temple built in honour of Hadrian—which was most probably destroyed as a result of the same disaster—became a quarry and saw all building material removed up to the level of the foundations, before it was gradually covered by sediments.45 The southern portico of its *temenos* became the location of the Mary-church (cf infra). At Aizanoi in Phrygia, the Temple of Artemis was systematically dismantled and used for the construction of a colonnaded street between 395 and 408.46 A final example, the *Artemision* at Sardis, which had a small church built within its precinct (cf infra) also became a quarry after the temple was closed; building material was

43 Talloen and Waelkens (2004) 177–80; Talloen and Poblome (2005); Talloen et al. (2006). A somewhat similar fate appears to have befallen the *Sebasteion* at Aphrodisias. While the temple at the east end of the complex had been completely dismantled in Late Antiquity, the two long three-storied porticoes to the north and south that frame the processional space leading to the temple were converted to public use, with their lower levels turned into shops (Smith (1987) 95; Harl (2001) 312).


46 Rheidt (2003) 241–42 who points out, on the basis of the close sequence of the two events, that the dismantlement of the temple and its reuse in the construction of the colonnaded street may have occurred as a direct result of the Theodosian legislation. Moreover, the Temple of Artemis would have been singled out for spoliation by the Christians because the goddess was assimilated with Kybele, the main goddess of the region who had to be removed from the religious landscape (Rheidt (2003) 242, 244).
Fig. 2 Plan of the sanctuary of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius at Sagalassos, with the encroaching structures built from *spolia* of the temple exposed in the trenches in the northwest part of the *temenos.*
(Sagalassos archive)
removed and limestone was burned on the spot. This work may have begun in the 4th c. and continued until the early 7th c.\textsuperscript{47}

This dilapidation of the temples was not so much a matter of violent Christianisation as argued by some,\textsuperscript{48} but rather a simple matter of economics. The availability of cut stone for new building projects at these abandoned sites promoted construction work and urban renewal, as we see from a law of 397 which permitted the reuse of the material from destroyed temples for the restorations of roads, bridges and aqueducts.\textsuperscript{49} At the moment it is impossible to tell whether the dismantling of temples for such reuse was the result of gradual decay or decisive action. The plundering of monuments is often a long process that never reaches a clear end. At the Temple of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius at Sagalassos the demolition of the temple was never completed, and the building was seemingly pillaged \textit{ad hoc} as the need arose.\textsuperscript{50}

\textsc{Temple Conversion: Secular and Religious}

Not all pagan sanctuaries were left to a fate of decay and stone robbery. Some temples continued to remain part of the cityscape but in new forms and performing new roles, both secular and religious.

\textsuperscript{47} Foss (1976) 48–50; Hanfmann and Buchwald (1983) 193. Other lesser known pagan shrines in the city were also being demolished during the 4th c. which has led the excavators to endorse the statement of Eunapius that only traces remained of pagan temples by ca. A.D. 375 (Eunap. VS. 503; Hanfmann and Buchwald (1983) 194).

\textsuperscript{48} According to Kinney, the antagonism between pagans and Christians exacerbated a general tendency to pillage disused buildings for \textit{spolia}, and churches all over the empire soon began to be constructed with pieces of destroyed temples (Kinney (1999) 718). The wide variety of building work using temple \textit{spolia} mentioned in this paper (fortifications and encroaching structures at Sagalassos; a colonnaded street at Aizanoi; an agora at Ephesus) already suggests that this spoliation was less a matter of ideology than of simple economics. Moreover, the reuse of the old for the new was certainly not a concept that originated in Late Antiquity (see Rheidt (2003) 241; Bayliss (2004) 32).

\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Cod. Theod.} 15.1.36.

\textsuperscript{50} The building blocks placed around the temple were not, though, laid out in an orderly fashion in preparation for use elsewhere, as had been claimed before (Waelkens \textit{et al.} (1990) 190), but reused in unidentified structures encroaching upon the former \textit{temenos} (Talloen and Poblome (2005)).
In several cities, smaller temples were simply left standing and tolerated as monuments to the past. Again there are several examples from Pisidia. At the small city of Adada, the Temple of Zeus Sarapis, that of Trajan and the sanctuary of the divine emperors (fig. 3), comprising three of the four architecturally known pagan shrines, continued to dominate the city. At Termessos, the same can be said of the three naoi in the city centre, namely N2, N3 and N4. Likewise several smaller pagan cult buildings remained standing in cities throughout Asia Minor, such as the Corinthian prostyle temple at Patara in Lycia and the semicircular podium-temple of the lunar god Men at the end of the colonnaded street at Side. These instances suggest that the attempts to preserve temples as civic ornaments through imperial legislation appears to have been partly successful. The same emperors who ordered the closure of sanctuaries and the abolition of sacrifices in fact encouraged respect for pagan temples as monuments of artistic and historical value, and advocated their reuse to embellish the urban landscape. Already Constantius II, although sometimes seen as a militant Christian emperor, proclaimed protective measures for pagan cultic buildings. Through this policy of architectural conservation the

51 It cannot be ruled out, of course, that they may have accommodated some function that is barely or not detectable in the archaeological record.
53 Patara temple: Işik (2000) 117–21. Side temple: Mansel (1978) 135–42. Since its remains were found in relatively good condition by the excavators, Foss justifiably concludes that the temple was still standing in Late Antiquity (Foss (1996) 39). These examples clearly refute the statement by Bayliss that few small temples survived in southern Asia Minor (Bayliss (2004) 104).
54 From the laws one can infer an appreciation of the temples’ cultural value, expressed at first in attempts to keep them open for non sacrificial purposes (Cod. Theod. 16.10.3, 7, 8, 10–12) and subsequently in decrees protecting their buildings and ornaments (Cod. Theod. 16.10.15, 18). The same is not true for temples in the countryside, which were ordered to be destroyed (Cod. Theod. 16.10.16). Since they did not fall under public building preservation decrees aimed at preventing the denudation of the urban fabric, extra-mural and rural temples are much more likely to have ended up as spolia (see Bayliss (2004) 21). On the fate of rural temples see Caseau (2004).
55 Cod. Theod. 16.10.3.
Fig. 3  2nd c. Temple of the Divine Emperors at Adada (picture taken by P. Talloen).
imperial authorities hoped to maintain not only the monuments of the past, but also the civic spirit that helped to produce them.\textsuperscript{56} 

Temples, which were among the inalienable components of the city’s image, had to be preserved. But preservation often required adaptation to new public purposes and contexts, in short reuse. A number of temples and shrines acquired a new, secular function. Here we can cite two examples from Sagalassos. Excavations in and around the Late Hellenistic Doric distylos in antis temple—probably the sanctuary of the city’s chief deity, Zeus—indicated that the naos was converted into a watchtower and incorporated into the late fortifications at the very beginning of the 5th c. (fig. 4).\textsuperscript{57} The quality of the work does not show excessive haste in construction, which makes it unlikely that the temple had been deliberately destroyed under some sudden threat. It is easier to assume that the materials were available because the building in question was already closed and given up for spoliation.\textsuperscript{58} 

A second example is the Early Imperial tychaion on the upper agora of Sagalassos, which consisted of a square curved canopy roof supported by four columns on top of pedestals. This construction was converted into a dynastic monument to the rulers of the Late Roman empire, Valentinian II, Gratian and a female member of the dynasty, possibly Constantia, the wife of the latter emperor, but was eventually dedicated to Flavia Eudoxia, the wife of emperor Arcadius and a militant supporter of Christianity. The empress (A.D. 400–404) would thus replace the goddess Tyche as the protectress of the city.\textsuperscript{59} 

A similar dynastic destiny was in store for the small Temple of Artemis and Hadrian on the Curetes Street of Ephesus. After its restoration in the later 4th c. the shrine appears to have adopted a new role as a monument in celebration of the Christian emperors and city founders. An image of the emperor Theodosius’ father replaced one of the statues of the Tetrarchy, and a frieze allegedly depicting the

\textsuperscript{56} Alchermes (1994) 168.

\textsuperscript{57} During this transformation, part of the original entablature and roof were removed and the interior of the building was drastically changed. Along the long sides eight supports for pillars were built which probably carried the wooden gallery of the tower (Waelkens (1993) 9–12).

\textsuperscript{58} Loots \textit{et al.} (2000) 616; Waelkens and Talloen (in press).

\textsuperscript{59} Talloen and Waelkens (2004) 188–91. Given the fact that it was also the empress Eudoxia who obtained imperial permission for Porphyry to destroy the Temple of Marnas at Gaza (\textit{V. Porph.}, 35–50, 63–65, 69–70), the honours at Sagalassos may perhaps also hint at Christianization with imperial support.
Fig. 4 Late Hellenistic Doric temple as part of the early 5th c. urban defences (Sagalassos archive).
emperor as well as a reused frieze depicting a foundation legend, were incorporated into the building, seemingly promoting Theodosius as the new founder of Ephesus.\(^{60}\)

**Religious**

The second type of sanctuary that continued to be occupied under a new guise has received greater attention from modern scholars, often within the framework of pagan-Christian conflict, namely the temples that were converted into Christian churches. Although ideological considerations will certainly have played some role in the conversion process, in the vast majority of cases the transformation occurred as a matter of expediency, based on the availability of land and materials, and the potential for the exploitation of an existing urban-religious framework.

According to the criteria of Richard Bayliss, who developed a new methodology for the study of temple conversion,\(^{61}\) two different categories of converted temples can be distinguished: those converted directly and those indirectly.

1) **Indirect Conversion**

In the case of indirect conversion, no standing material from the temple in question was reused, but a church was constructed within the *temenos* of the sanctuary or by reusing parts of the temple as *spolia*.

Churches constructed within the *temenos* or sacred precinct are called *temenos*-churches.\(^{62}\) Some examples from Asia Minor include the temples of the two main deities at Side, Apollo and Athena. Inside their shared sacred precinct, at the end of the colonnaded street on the southernmost point of the peninsula overlooking the sea, a basilica was built in the (early) 5th c., slightly to the east of the temples which

---

\(^{60}\) Scherrer (1995) 21; Thür (2003) 264–65. This example seems to have been part of a whole conservation project of honorific and other monuments along the Curetes Street in late antique Ephesus (see Thür (2003) 270–73). See also Pont (2004) 558–59 who argues for the identification of the building as a *tychaion*, something that allegedly would have contributed to its survival.

\(^{61}\) Bayliss (2004) 7. Helen Saradi-Mendelovici already pointed to the need to distinguish between the use of building material for churches and the establishment of Christian ecclesiastical structures on the sites of pagan sanctuaries (Saradi-Mendelovici (1990) 52), yet she did not differentiate between churches erected within the sacred precinct and *in situ* conversion.

were preserved within the atrium or courtyard of this church.\textsuperscript{63} Both the size and positioning of the atrium appears to be dictated by the temple remains (fig. 5). While the north temple is enclosed completely by the courtyard, the south temple lies across it and is respected by the south wall of the atrium. According to Bayliss this probably indicates that part or all of the peripteros was reused as a monumental propylaion to the basilica.\textsuperscript{64}

The small church M on the site of the Artemision of Sardis was attached to the south-east corner of the temple podium, and can therefore also be regarded as an example of this category rather than an instance of direct conversion. It too reused part of the peristasis, namely the south pteron of the temple, as a kind of courtyard. The church was a simple apsidal hall, probably intended to sanctify the Artemis precinct and to provide a funerary chapel for the cemetery established within the former temenos. The construction has been attributed to the 4th c., an exceptionally early date.\textsuperscript{65}

The Olympieion at Ephesus is a further example of a temenos-church. The church of Mary was originally thought to have been erected within the southern tripartite portico of the imperial sanctuary in the second half of the 4th c. This transformation has recently been redated to the period between A.D. 426 and 431, that is the years immediately prior to the Council of Ephesus, and therefore most probably in preparation for this council. At that time, the former imperial sanctuary is believed to have been in ruins (cf supra).\textsuperscript{66} Re-examination of the site and its stratigraphy has revealed that the original church was only a modest and possibly even temporary building, which in the late 5th c. was replaced by the more monumental ‘column church’.\textsuperscript{67}

A fourth example is the Letoon complex near Xanthos, seat of the worship of Leto and federal sanctuary of the Lycian league into which the cities of the region had been organised. From the 4th c. onwards,

\textsuperscript{63} Mansel (1978) 121–35, 257–66. Although Mansel only gives a broad 5th c. date, Krautheimer (Krautheimer (1986) 106) proposed a date as early as A.D. 400. Recent analysis of the capitals of the church suggests that it may have been built as late as the 6th c., though the building may well have had more than one period of construction (see Foss (1996) 39 and n.179).

\textsuperscript{64} Bayliss (2004) 40.

\textsuperscript{65} Foss (1976) 48–49; Hanfmann and Buchwald (1983) 193–95. The excavation technique that led to the discovery of the numismatic evidence for this date has been questioned (Bayliss (2004) 54 n.36).


\textsuperscript{67} Karwiese (1999) 82.
Fig. 5  Plan of the temples of Apollo and Athena within the courtyard of the Christian basilica at Side (Mansel (1978) 258, fig. 284).
there was a gradual dismantlement of the buildings inside the sanctuary, which contained three temples dedicated to Leto, Artemis and Apollo respectively. Much of the building material of the two latter shrines was removed for use elsewhere, including the church constructed inside the former sanctuary, to the south of the three temples. The date of the construction of this basilica has been attributed to the 6th c. The Temple of Leto, however, was not demolished. Traces of a corridor connecting the temple to the narthex of the ecclesiastical building have been uncovered, suggesting that the standing shrine was used as an auxiliary structure of the church until its destruction in the 7th c., most probably as the result of an earthquake.

In contrast to a *temenos*-church, a temple-*spolia* church likewise reused parts of a former shrine but the building was constructed from the remains of a temple that had first been destroyed or dismantled and its building material transported to a new location. There was thus no direct continuity between the pagan and Christian occupation of temple and church. An example of such a temple-*spolia* church is the so-called Basilica E1 at Sagalassos, an extra-mural tripartite transept-basilica situated in the former stadion of the city and dated to the second half of the 5th c. or early 6th c. The church was erected using *spolia* which came from at least three different buildings, as could be deduced from the ornaments on the decorated blocks. These include the Temple of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius (cf supra) and another small Antonine (probably Hadrianic) Corinthian *distylos in antis* with a Syrian gable, that was identified as a temple for Dionysus. The latter shrine was dismantled and its material was completely reused as the northern part of the transept, including the figural friezes depicting masks of maenads and silens on the outside and dancing satyrs on the inside (fig. 6), which remained intact in the new building. To allow

---

70 Bayliss (2004) 35, 43–44. The literarily attested 4th c. church reusing elements from the sanctuary of Asklepios at Aigai belongs to this category (cf supra).
71 For the late 5th c. date of the basilica with a similar plan in the former sanctuary of Apollo Klarios at Sagalassos, see below.
72 Lanckoronski (1892) 141, 151–52; Vandeput (1997) 83–88, 207–209; Waelkens and Talloen (in press). Concerning the Dionysiac friezes, Cyril Mango has argued that the use of ancient stones in highly conspicuous places in churches indicated that they were given a Christian reinterpretation, or that apotropaic power was attributed to them (Mango (1963) 63–64).
Fig. 6  Northern part of the transept and apse of Basilica E1 at Sagalassos with the figural friezes from the former Dionysus temple (picture taken by P. Talloen).
the builders to dismantle the temple and to reassemble the blocks in their correct relative locations a special numbering system was used.

Finally, the large three-aisled basilica (A) with double narthex in the western necropolis of Lycian Kyaneai was constructed out of the remains of the 1st c. A.D. Doric—probably distyslos in antis—temple of the city’s chief goddess Eleuthera Archegetis. The basilica also utilised the remains of other buildings and its construction has been assigned to the period around 500 on the basis of its plan.\(^\text{73}\)

2) **Direct Conversion**

In the case of direct conversion, the standing material from a temple was physically reshaped into a church, so that the church preserved *in situ* some remains of the pre-existing temple.\(^\text{74}\) A famous example of a pagan shrine converted on the spot for Christian use is the *Aphroditeion* at Aphrodisias, an early 1st c. A.D. peripteral temple built in the Ionic order, which was the most important and, until its conversion, still untouched pagan sanctuary of this city. The columns of the long sides of the *peristasis* stayed in their original places to form the partition between the central nave and the two aisles. The walls of the *cella* on the other hand were dismantled and the material was used for the construction of the outer walls of the church on the exterior of the peristyle, with the addition of a tripartite sanctuary in the east and a narthex and atrium in the west, thus creating a new structure that was substantially larger than its pagan predecessor. This conversion took place in the late 5th or early 6th c. A.D.\(^\text{75}\)

A similar process of ‘inverted transformation’ occurred at the site of the Temple of Apollo Klarios at Sagalassos.\(^\text{76}\) This Ionic peripteral temple, originally dating to the reign of Augustus, was converted into a tripartite transept-basilica in the second half of the 5th c., as indicated by recent test soundings.\(^\text{77}\) As with the *Aphroditeion* mentioned above,

---


\(^\text{76}\) Waelkens et al. (1990) 185–90.

\(^\text{77}\) Talloen (2007).
the fate of temples in late antique Anatolia

369

the walls of the cella were removed to form the exterior of the peristasis, and the columns of the latter were moved further into the interior of the church. A small transept, only slightly wider than the nave, was inserted near the eastern end of the basilica which was formed by a polygonal apse (fig. 7).

Other direct temple conversions were less spectacular, retaining the outer structure of the building, as in the case of the so-called Red Hall, the alleged sanctuary of the Egyptian gods at Pergamon. This temple, the largest in the city, allegedly underwent its conversion in the second half of the 5th c., retaining its brick walls but receiving an apse at its eastern end and a nave with flanking aisles inside. 78

The great Temple of Artemis Ephesia was also converted into a basilica in the later 5th c. A.D., using the sekos walls for the construction of the basilica within which pillars were built to support the roof of the church, and incorporating the pronaos of the former temple as the narthex. 79 A church was likewise built inside the sekos of the Temple of Apollo at Didyma in the late 5th or the early 6th c. (fig. 8). The latter was of such a scale that the ecclesiastical building did not have any physical relationship to the temple walls, except for the naïskos that was incorporated into its west end. 80 Also at Aizanoi the Temple of Zeus was transformed into a church with only minimal architectural changes, namely the addition of an apse to the east-facing pronaos. 81 The date of the conversion of the temple is unknown. 82

At Cilician Diocaesarea the peristasis of the Temple of Zeus Olbios was incorporated within the exterior wall of the basilica, while the

80 Wiegand and Knackfuss (1941) 29–37; Peschlow (1975) 211.
81 A similar structural modification was used for the conversion of the Temple of Augustus and Rome at Ankara where an apse was attached to the east-facing apistodo- mos. For this transformation no archaeologically verifiable date is available, other than a 5th c. one based on the style of the apse (Foss (1977) 65). The 7th c. date recently suggested by Serin, on the basis of the contemporary Persian and Arab raids, is very speculative (Serin (2006)).
82 Little is known about this temple conversion, as at the beginning of the excavations in the 1920s only the onset of the apse was still preserved (Rheidt (2003) 242). Yet, Rheidt argues, based on the fact that the Zeus-temple became the destination for the newly constructed colonnaded street, that its transformation into a church must have been finished before the completion of this artery, i.e. around 400 (Rheidt (2003) 244). However, judging by the city map, the agora may also have been the goal of the new main boulevard, with the former temple retaining its aesthetic role as an urban vista; this would make such an early date for the conversion unfounded.
Fig. 7 Plan of the temple-church within the former sanctuary of Apollo Klarios at Sagalassos (Sagalassos archive).
Fig. 8 Plan of the church constructed within the 
sekos of the sanctuary of Apollo at Didyma 
(Bayliss (2004) 162, fig. 43).
cella was probably dismantled and reused in the blocking of the intercolumnations. A date in the second half of the 5th c. has been argued for the conversion on the basis of the arrangement of the choir and narthex. Of the Zeus temple at Selge in Pisidia only the eastern facade of the peripteros, facing the city centre, was retained in the conversion of the church, while the rest of the pagan building was systematically dismantled and its blocks modified for reuse sometime in the late 5th to early 6th c. This unusual modification may have been chosen for aesthetic reasons.

Perhaps the most dramatic fate of pagan temples was their transformation into a Christian church, but in spite of the importance attached by Deichmann to the phenomenon, Vaes’ survey of reutilisation in Early Christian architecture has clearly demonstrated that Christian reuse of secular buildings was more common for the erection of churches in Late Antiquity. Moreover, also from the perspective of the temple, the temple-church will undoubtedly not have been the regular fate it has often made out to be. It is impossible to quantify the proportion of temples that were not transformed into churches since those that were not converted rarely survive. Nevertheless, when viewed against the mere twenty cases of direct temple conversion recorded by Bayliss for Asia Minor, the numerous ruins of temples still present in the Anatolian landscape today already demonstrate the exceptional character of such a process.

---

85 A similar concern for aesthetics, may also be at the root of the extraordinary example of the basilica erected near the podium-temple at the northern end of the colonnaded street at Selge. This ancient temple devoted to the imperial cult was left standing and incorporated into the narthex of the ecclesiastical building, where it served as a kind of chapel. This church can also be dated to the late 5th or 6th c., as seems to be confirmed by the presence of a mosaic in bec-de-merle (Machatschek and Schwarz (1981) 105; 113–14).
86 Deichmann (1939).
87 Vaes (1984–86); see also Caillet (1996) 201–202. This has recently been confirmed by Bayliss’ study of the churches in Cilica. Of the fifteen ecclesiastical buildings formerly thought to have been built from reused temples only seven are now believed to have been (of which only three are direct conversions), leading to the conclusion that temples were apparently not as significant for the construction of churches in the region as had been presumed (Bayliss (2004) 102).
3) Temple Conversion and Christian Perception

As is clear from the numerous examples, the indirect conversion of temples and their material remains into churches took place throughout Late Antiquity, from the 4th to the 7th c.89 Direct conversions, on the other hand, appear to have occurred only from the middle of the 5th c. onwards,90 half a century after the indirect conversions began.91 Unfortunately, there are very few well-dated examples of Christian temple conversions in Asia Minor and it is rare to have the precise stratigraphical dating, which is possible in the cases of Aphrodisias and Sagalassos where temple conversions have been reliably placed in the later 5th c. Nevertheless, it seems clear that a period of time elapsed between the closure and the abandonment of each temple and its conversion into a church, a characteristic that is found throughout the eastern Mediterranean.92 We will now turn to some of the explanations for this ‘delay’ and also elucidate the possible motivations.

According to Hanson, the practice of transforming pagan temples was probably initiated by the law of the year A.D. 435.93 In that year a law of Theodosius II officially ordained the prohibition of all pagan cults and encouraged the destruction and transformation of temples and shrines by the Christians, their walls being purified by the sign of the cross.94 Yet, this piece of legislation cannot have had the far-reaching effect attributed to it by many modern scholars. As already argued by Frantz, the law was misinterpreted as an authorisation of the conversion of temples into places of Christian worship, as an alternative to destruction. The text, however, presents no alternative and suggests not conversion, but rather exorcism of the pagan spirits which might

---

90 There is no archaeological evidence from Asia Minor that supports the early use of pagan sanctuaries for the creation of Christian ecclesiastical structures. The single exception may be the reference to a converted temple by Gregory of Nazianzus (PG 38, col. 99), but the exact nature of this transformation is not specified. The examples cited in the article of Pont (Pont (2004) 563) either have uncertain (the Sarapeion at Ephesus post dating the reign of Theodosius) or revised dates (the Apollo temple at Didyma dated to the late 5th or early 6th c. [Peschlow (1975) 211]), or are not an example of direct conversion (the Artemision at Sardis).
91 The temenos of a sanctuary appears not to have been regarded with the same mistrust as the temple itself (Bayliss (2004) 45).
93 Hanson (1978) 263.
94 Cod. Theod. 16.10.25.
have survived the destruction of the building. There was no provision for conversion because the order for destruction was regarded as final.\textsuperscript{95} Rather, this measure should be seen as an attempt to speed up the transition from paganism to Christianity. Moreover, the evidence does not show a sudden spate of direct conversion activity after A.D. 435. The chronological variance between conversions in different regions identifies it as a symptom of local circumstances rather than a centrally motivated process.\textsuperscript{96} Therefore, reasons for the interval between abandonment and conversion must be looked for elsewhere.

One explanation for this hiatus could be that pagan sites were generally considered to be the homes of demons.\textsuperscript{97} Fear of temple sites and their evil spirits may in some places have led to a period of isolation before they were put to Christian use.\textsuperscript{98} Codes of avoidance, largely centred on the pagan rituals and sacrifices, are known to have existed among Christians.\textsuperscript{99} Yet, those demons were believed to be relatively powerless against God, so if someone wanted to purify the site of a temple, the procedure would have been relatively easy. Christian crosses could be carved on the remains of former pagan constructions, as we have already seen, and the sign of the cross born by a powerful priest could have accomplished an exorcism.\textsuperscript{100} This is confirmed by the early secular conversions of temples, as exemplified at Sagalassos. Indeed, the construction of a church would be the ultimate means of spiritual cleansing.

Another theory is that temple sites could have remained in use for a period of time for mercantile, fiscal and social activities, roles that pagan sanctuaries had always played, with only the cult activities set aside.\textsuperscript{101} Many abandoned temples would then have taken on transient functions, and were perhaps even used as places of Christian worship, according to Bayliss,\textsuperscript{102} in the 4th and early 5th centuries prior to their official conversion. Unfortunately, while this is not impossible, there

\textsuperscript{95} Frantz (1965) 187–88.
\textsuperscript{96} Bayliss (2004) 57.
\textsuperscript{97} This is attested by numerous examples in the hagiography. For Anatolia see for instance the life of Saint Theodore of Sykeon, as discussed by Mitchell (1982) and that of Saint Nikolos of Sion, as discussed by Foss (1991). See also Saradi-Mendelovici (1990) 54–58 and Hahn (2001).
\textsuperscript{98} Mango (1980) 61; Bayliss (2004) 60.
is no archaeological evidence to support this theory. Furthermore, although this could explain their survival into the period of conversion, it does not account for the hiatus.

A third explanation emphasizes the need felt by Christians to distinguish themselves from the older pagan places of worship. In the first place, it would be ideologically difficult to justify the reuse of ground considered polluted by pagan sacrifice.\(^{103}\) This finds corroboration in the story of the conversion of the Temple of Rhea at Cyzicus into a church of Maria Theotokos during the reign of Leo I (A.D. 457–74) or Zeno (A.D. 474–91), told in a late 5th c. syncretistic text known as the Tübingen Theosophy. The account says that, at the time of the conversion, a miraculous discovery was made of an inscription recording an ancient oracular pronouncement by Apollo that predicted the future dedication of the building to Mary. Whether this story is based on a true event or not is not an issue here, but it clearly illustrates the mental gymnastics and the need for an ideological justification in the eyes of the local community before taking the unusual step of converting a temple into a church.\(^{104}\)

Furthermore, for the newly established Christian power structure, which was attempting to differentiate itself from existing types of ritual activity, the building type of the former pagan sanctuaries, the temple, was not necessarily suitable. The earliest churches were converted from private dwellings.\(^ {105}\) When monumental churches began to emerge from Constantine onwards they took the form of existing secular buildings, notably the basilica, and were located on long-standing Christian sites, often physically removed from existing pagan urban centres such as the martyr churches built beyond the walls of Rome and other cities. The adoption of secular building forms differentiated the 4th c. churches from the pagan temples and also reflected the claim of the churches to now hold the power and symbolic significance of the buildings whose forms they shared, particularly bouleuteria and basilicae. The reuse of such existing secular buildings for the purpose of religious worship was the usual practice in the Early Christian period.\(^ {106}\) These types of buildings were falling out of use in the 4th and the 5th centuries with the declining importance of the decuriones and were structures

\(^ {103}\) Ward-Perkins (2003) 286.
\(^ {104}\) Ward-Perkins (1999) 238.
\(^ {105}\) See White (1990).
that were easily adaptable to Christian use.\footnote{Liebeschuetz (2001) 110, 121.} In the ancient region of Pisidia alone there were churches built in the former \textit{bouleuteria} at Sagalassos, Selge and Pednelissos, and in the Roman civil \textit{basilica} at Kremna, all of which can be dated to the early 5th c.\footnote{Sagalassos: Waelkens \textit{et al.} (2006) 220, Waelkens and Talloen (in press); Selge: Machatschek and Schwarz (1981) 107–108; Pednelissos: Karas and Ristow (2003) 139–41; Kremna: Mitchell (1995) 220–22.}

When the initial mistrust of temples amongst the Christian communities had eventually dissipated, the direct conversion of urban temples into churches began in the second half of the 5th c. It is significant, however, that by no means all temples were chosen for reuse in this way. This is exemplified by the different treatment of temples within the city of Sagalassos. While the sanctuary of Apollo was selected for religious conversion, the temples of Zeus (tower), of Dionysus (\textit{spolia}) and of the divine emperors (\textit{spolia}) suffered different fates. Furthermore, the main criterion was apparently not whether the temple in question had survived the period of transition and was still in a reasonable state of preservation, but how well that temple might be suited to its new Christian function, and for that size and location were crucial.

The pagan temple as \textit{domus dei} or house of god—a building for the cult-effigy of the deity—was replaced by the church as \textit{domus ecclesiae} or house of the community—a structure primarily intended to host a congregation of worshippers that came together in the name of an omnipresent God who could be worshipped in any location. The increasing numbers of Christian worshippers required larger church buildings in urban centres traditionally dominated by pagan temples, whose closed interiors now had to be opened for Christian use.\footnote{On the importance of the size of the original building see Bayliss (2004) 104; he concludes that in Cilicia, at least, small temples were not considered appropriate for conversion. The small churches arranged in the Temple of Sarapis at Ephesus and in the unidentified temple at Elauissa-Sebaste (Gough (1954); Bayliss (2004) 76–79) are exceptional, both in size and in plan—perpendicular to the axis of their predecessor. According to Gough, who argues for a population decline in Elauissa-Sebaste in Late Antiquity, a larger church built around the \textit{peripteros} of the latter temple would have been impractical for the requirements of the diminished congregation (Gough (1954) 57–58). Bayliss, on the other hand, has suggested on the basis of the architectural complexities of the structure, the possibility that it represents a second stage in the conversion of the building, whereby the chapel replaced an earlier (and larger) basilica similar to the one at nearby Diocaesarea (Bayliss (2004) 78–79).} In many cities it was the temple of the patron deity that was most prominently converted into a church: Aphrodite at Aphrodisias, Apollo at
Sagalassos, and Zeus at Selge, Diocaesarea and Aizanoi, to mention the examples that have been addressed here.\textsuperscript{110} The Red Hall will obviously have been selected because it was the largest temple in Pergamon, whose centre now moved to the lower city.\textsuperscript{111}

Aesthetic considerations may also have played some role in the conversion of temples. As already noted, the aesthetic quality of the pagan structures was not underestimated and apparently preserved as long as possible, regardless of its new function. In many instances of direct conversion the temple peristyle was preserved in the new church building, either inside, forming the interior colonnades (as in Aphrodisias and Sagalassos), or in the outer fabric (as at Aizanoi and, to some extent, at Selge). The scale, essential form, surrounding architectural context and strong verticality imposed by the \textit{peristasis} were maintained in the church. Temples converted in this way therefore still retained many of their pre-existing visual qualities.\textsuperscript{112} In a number of other temple conversions, when the church was built entirely within the peristyle, \textit{cella} or \textit{sekos}, the transformation may not even have been possible to detect from a distance. Examples of this are the Zeus temple at Aizanoi, the Red Hall at Pergamon, the Apollo Temple of Didyma, and the \textit{Artemision} of Ephesus. Bayliss even suggested the emergence at this time of an architectural vocabulary which favoured this particular kind of reuse for temples that were still in a reasonable state of preservation, as the explanation for the hiatus between the abandonment and conversion of temples.\textsuperscript{113}

Also on the level of the cityscape, the aesthetics of pagan architecture continued to dominate the late antique city. Greek and Roman cities were always very proud of their beautiful public buildings and wanted to impress each other, the provincial governor and the emperor. The abandoned temples of patron gods were generally located at prominent places in the city, the topography of which was often arranged around the shrines. But once these prestigious monuments to the past were in

\textsuperscript{110} As they were situated outside the city walls the temples of Apollo at Didyma and of Artemis at Ephesus, although being the sanctuaries of the patron deities, cannot be included here since they will not have been congregational churches. Their conversion will have been due to the important sacred character of the location. The same is true for numerous temple-churches in the countryside, such as the ecclesiastical structures at the Corcyrian Cave in Cilicia (see Bayliss (2004) 79–86).

\textsuperscript{111} The upper city had become abandoned during the 4th c. (Rheidt (1998) 397).

\textsuperscript{112} Bayliss (1999) 64.

\textsuperscript{113} Bayliss (2004) 108.
decay, and the commanding positions they occupied within the urban religious landscape became available, they were eagerly replaced by grand basilicas. Because these places attracted the attention of citizens and visitors, they had to retain their monumental splendour, and replacing the decaying pagan monumental foci with new Christian buildings was a way of maintaining the monumentality of a city.\footnote{Saradi-Mendelovici (1990) 52, 61; Alchermes (1994) 167–68; Ward-Perkins (2003) 289.}

Finally, the conversion of these great temples was also necessary in order to Christianise the urban sacred landscape, since they occupied the most prominent locations. The conversion of the temples has often been approached in terms of Christian triumph.\footnote{On the conversion of temples as the symbol of the \textit{ecclesia triumphans} see Deichmann (1939) 109 and 114; recently Brandt and Kolb (2005) 123.} Converted temples are seen as indicative of the demise of paganism and an assertion of Christian domination, a symbol of Christian victory. Yet the hiatus between the decline of these pagan shrines and their transformation into churches, that we have already traced, would indicate that the construction of the church on the same site was not simply a symbol of victory of one religion over the other.\footnote{See Spieser (1976) 320; Bayliss (2004) 58.}

The privileged topographical position of these sanctuaries within their cities, together with their large size, made them natural gathering places for any religious congregation, including a Christian one.\footnote{According to Spieser, the main explanation would be the lack of available land in the cities resulting from their reduced size (Spieser (1976) 311).} The reuse of these abandoned buildings was also logical for practical and economic reasons, and was promoted by the Church, one of the few flourishing institutions of the late antique city.\footnote{Saradi-Mendelovici (1990) 52–53.} Ideologically, the sanctuaries perhaps embodied an element of continuity and familiarity for new converts (and those yet to be converted), which eased the transition to the new religion. Some would surely have recognised the ancient sanctity of such sites and so respected the church they now attended. For the generations who had witnessed or participated in urban rituals before the closure or destruction of their cities’ temples, there would be a certain familiarity in the urban manifestation and context of Christianity, which presented itself as the natural and inevitable successor to the worship of the old gods.\footnote{Trombley (1993–94) 1. 147–68; Bayliss (1999) 68.}
Temple-churches constitute only one category of the reused temples, and their *spolia*, that continued to dominate the late antique city in Asia Minor, but more than any other category they offer an ongoing point of contact with the pagan sacred landscape.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the evidence from Asia Minor, presented here in a brief overview, supports the prevailing interpretation of temple structures in the late antique period through a paradigm of abandonment and decline. Although hardly any temples have been the object of recent excavations, the few archaeologically examined examples in Asia Minor do not show any signs of ongoing cult activity from the 4th c. onwards. The Christians who rose to prominence in the 4th c. did not find the temples to be the vibrant centres of ritual activity that they had once been. There was no longer any strong desire from the emperors or the local elite to devote funds to the temples and their rituals, and as the centres of public worship the temples were also the target of anti-pagan legislation and action. The legal closure of the temples in the late 4th and early 5th c. made any official pagan cultic activity impossible. Whether this signified the end of cult ritual at temple sites altogether is impossible to conclude from the incomplete archaeological record, but pagans and paganism continued to appear in literary sources and material culture well into the 6th c. A.D.\(^{120}\)

It should be clear from this short survey that the fate of temples in Late Antiquity comprised more than just destruction or conversion to churches, the two scenarios closely linked to the dominant theory of religious conflict and the ensuing violence, expounded in many of the earlier studies. The sometimes confrontational character of the religious transition did not necessarily entail a complete rejection of the pagan past and temples were often reused for a variety of non-ideological and more practical purposes as secular buildings or for retrieving building material. Perhaps the most dramatic destiny of pagan temples was their transformation into Christian churches, but we hope to have demonstrated here that this was only one of the available options and certainly not the most common one. This illustrates the increasingly

\(^{120}\) See our contribution on material culture in this volume.
complex view of the fate of temples since Deichmann’s survey, who seemingly characterised the conversion of temples into churches as inevitable.

A precise chronology for the history of temple use and reuse in Asia Minor cannot be established with the limited stratified evidence we possess. Yet, the presented examples do allow an approximate pattern to be laid down. The early evidence for temple demolition, whether deliberate or not, emerges significantly in the late 4th and early 5th c., as we see at Ephesus and Sagalassos for instance. It has proved hard to find examples of temple destruction in the archaeological record, from which we may conclude that actual destruction was apparently rare and deconsecration was definitely the rule in the treatment of temples. Many instances of violence might therefore be better defined as aggressive deconsecrations rather than actual destructions, while dismantlement of the buildings is generally mistaken for destruction in most of the studies on the topic.

The reuse of material from temples that had already fallen into disrepair also begins in the same period, and becomes more common through the 5th c. The ruins of many abandoned temples were a wealthy resource for the increasingly opportunistic builders and lime-burners of Late Antiquity. The conversion of temples into secular or monumental use, often as part of an attempt to preserve cultural heritage, is visible in the late 4th and early 5th c., for example at Sagalassos and Ephesus. The indirect conversion of temple remains into churches likewise dates from the first half of the 5th c. onwards (or perhaps even earlier), with the Artemision at Sardis, the Olympieion at Ephesus and possibly the temples of Athena and Apollo at Side as well. The direct conversion of temple structures into churches appears to come slightly later than the examples of indirect use, with the two stratigraphically dated examples, the Temple of Aphrodite at Aphrodisias and the Temple of Apollo at Sagalassos, both converted in the late 5th c. The temenos- and spolia-churches may then be seen as a feature originating in a time before direct conversions and therefore reflecting a code of avoidance that still existed in this period.

In situ temple conversion played a minor role in the context of church construction during the 5th and 6th centuries, but the importance of the phenomenon lies in its highly symbolic character. According to many scholars, it should be seen as a powerful manifestation of the triumph of one religion over the other, which had a significant impact
on the minds of contemporaries. Yet, the observed hiatus between the
temple’s abandonment and its conversion for Christian use rules out
such a triumphalist policy of deliberate appropriation. The conversion
of urban sanctuaries took place only after Christianity made signi-
ficant inroads in the city and had become the dominant socio-political
force. The privileged topographical position of these sanctuaries within
urban centres, together with their large size, afforded important gath-
ering places for the Christian congregation, and probably drove their
transformation into churches. The effect of these conversion scenarios
was that urban vistas were perpetuated and sacred localities preserved
under a Christian guise. This transformation and preservation of the
sacred landscape played a crucial role in the continuity of traditional
urban life in the increasingly Christian world of late antique Asia
Minor.

Finally, what should perhaps be stressed more when examining the
fate of temples is the fact that it varied widely from city to city. Of
the six known monumental temples of Ephesus, for example, only two
were converted into churches while the other four were completely
dismantled—although the Olympieion received a church in its temenos.
At the small Pisidian city of Adada, on the other hand, three of the
four known temples were simply left standing as monuments to the
past. The pagan centres of Sagalassos, in turn, covered the whole
range of possibilities as to their treatment.

In this situation it is difficult to come to any firm conclusions as to
why a particular pagan shrine was taken over, and another not. The
reuse of ancient monuments has always been subject to a range of
motivations. At one extreme these were strictly utilitarian (economic),
whilst at the other they were symbolic, and concerned the reintegra-
tion of carriers of meaning (cultic or historic) into urban landscapes.\textsuperscript{121}
Temples were no exception to this. One could say that the multi-
faceted behaviour of late antique people towards temples reflects the
religious complexity of society in this period.

\textsuperscript{121} See Ward-Perkins (1999).


bul 2003).


—— (1979) *Ephesus after Antiquity: a Late Antique, Byzantine and Turkish City* (Cambridge 1979).


Lanckoronski K. Graf von (1892) Städte Pamphyliens und Pisidiens, II. Pisidien (Vienna 1892).


**LIST OF FIGURES**

Fig. 1. A limestone votive column with a dedicatory inscription from the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore at Sagalassos (inv. n° SA94UA/1557 and 1559) reused as a cover stone for a sewer on the Upper Agora. The relief was mutilated and the Christian acclamation εἱς Θεός (‘One God’) was inscribed below (Sagalassos archive).

Fig. 2. Plan of the sanctuary of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius at Sagalassos, with the encroaching structures built from *spolia* of the temple exposed in the trenches in the northwest part of the *temenos* (Sagalassos archive).

Fig. 3. 2nd c. Temple of the Divine Emperors at Adada (picture taken by P. Talloen).

Fig. 4. Late Hellenistic Doric temple at Sagalassos as part of the early 5th c. urban defences (Sagalassos archive).

Fig. 5. Plan of the temples of Apollo and Athena within the courtyard of the Christian basilica at Side (Mansel (1978) 258, fig. 284).

Fig. 6. Northern part of the transept and apse of Basilica E1 at Sagalassos with the figural friezes from the former Dionysus temple (picture taken by P. Talloen).

Fig. 7. Plan of the temple-church within the former sanctuary of Apollo Klarios at Sagalassos (Sagalassos archive).

Fig. 8. Plan of the church constructed within the *sekos* of the sanctuary of Apollo at Didyma (Bayliss (2004) 162, fig. 43).