PUBLIC SPACE AND MEMORY IN LATE ANTIQUE BYZANTIUM

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Public Space and Memory in Late Antique Byzantium

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

Public Space and Memory in Late Antique Byzantium

This thesis examines the transformation of the public space in late antique Byzantium from the perspective of identity and memory studies. The process of destruction, removal, and/or Christianization of historically important urban spaces, which gave the ancient and late antique cities their identities and collective memories, should be studied in their civic as well as religious contexts. Several questions may be asked in this regard: Why were certain specific places chosen for the transformation? How was the transformation perceived by different parties, especially the spatial aspect of it? How did authors make use of the past in order to construct their narratives and justify their discourses? How were different identities and 'others' constructed over these 'meaningful' spaces? This thesis examines three cases in the context of these questions. After the introduction (Chapter One), Chapter Two studies the destruction of the famous Serapeum complex in Alexandria, Chapter Three analyzes the removal of the Altar of Victory in Rome, and Chapter Four discusses the conversion of the Temple of Aphrodite in Aphrodisias.

ÖZET

Geç Antik Çağ Bizans'ında Kamu Alanları ve Toplumsal Bellek

Bu tez, geç antik çağ Bizans İmparatorluğunda sıkça görülen bir olgu olan sembolik kamu alanların dönüştürülmesini kimlik ve hafıza çalışmaları çerçevesinden incelemektedir. Özellikle yüzyıllar boyunca şehirler için büyük önem arz etmiş, şehirlere kimlik kazandırmış ve insanların hafızalarında önemli yer edinen alanların (ortadan) kaldırılması ve/veya Hristiyanlaştırılması hem dini hem de din dışı boyutta incelenmelidir. Bu bağlamda şöyle sorular sorulabilir: Değişim için neden bu alanlar seçilmişti? Bu dönüşümler - özellikle dönüşümün uzamsal yanı - farklı gruplar arasında nasıl algılanmıştı? Konu hakkında yazanlar, anlatılarını kurmak ve söylemlerini desteklemek için geçmişe ait bilgiyi nasıl kullanıyorlardı?
Bu 'anlam yüklü yerler' üzerinden insanlar nasıl farklı kimlikler ve 'ötekiler' inşa etmişlerdi? Bu sorular çerçevesinde, halihazırdaki tez üç ayrı vaka çalışması üzerine yoğunlaşmaktadır. Giriş bölümünden sonra, ikinci bölümde İskenderiye'de yıkılan meşhur Serapis tapınak kompleksi, üçüncü bölümde Roma'da kaldırılan Zafer Sunağı ve üçüncü bölümde ise Afrodisias kentinde kiliseye çevrilen Afrodit Tapınağı incelenmektedir.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aim of the thesis

As the title of the thesis suggests, there is a strong correlation between public space (with its monuments and objects as well as its surrounding environment) and memory. "Cultural monuments are the forms of collective memory"[1] and they convey strong messages in the locations they were erected, i. e. public spaces. Furthermore, the concepts of public space and memory are intimately related to the concepts of identity and power relations. Collective memory of the past is shaped by present day identities - notions of 'we' and 'they' -.[2] Actually, the relation between historical monuments and memory politics is not an unfamiliar phenomenon to us. Explaining the recent conversion of Hagia Sophia from a museum to a mosque by focusing only on the religious policies of the Turkish state would be a simplistic approach. Being an 'ever-shifting' site that experienced transformations in various times, Hagia Sophia has always been a significant and meaningful monument politically and religiously. Originally, Hagia Sophia, the seat of the patriarch of Constantinople, provided an occasion for the display of state power. After 1453 it became not only the symbol of Islam's triumph against Christianity, but also a marker of the Ottoman sovereignty over the territories formerly ruled by the Byzantines. In the early years of the newborn Turkish Republic, it was converted into a secular place – museum – to reflect the new secular ideology the state. Finally, it became a mosque in 2020, experiencing another transformation after 86 years. One may ask whether the conversions of Hagia Sophia was only a result of religious

[1] Kulišić and Tuđman, "Monument as a Form of Collective Memory and Public Knowledge", 126.
[2] See Said, "Invention, Memory and Place", 177.

policies of the political powers in question. Should not one also take into consideration the process of the construction of new identities (or better reconstructing the old ones) and the process of establishing a new historical consciousness and reshaping the collective memory in converting a symbolic monument/public space?

The same question might be asked for monuments/public spaces in the late antique period. This specific period of transformation created many contested places. The contestation over meaningful and symbolic spaces by diverse groups can be seen as 'identity wars' as well as 'memory wars'. Examining the struggle over specific places by different groups along with their struggle's representation in literary sources may provide us a good picture of places' role in constructing identity and memory. The aim of the thesis is to examine the trilogy of transformation, place, and memory in the example of three case studies. Each chapter will cover different geographies of the Byzantine Empire, examine different kinds of sources, and focus on different social groups. Perspectives from memory studies have not found a warm reception in Byzantine studies, especially in late antique studies. Therefore, application of perspectives from memory studies with an emphasis on spatiality into Byzantine studies may provide new perspective to Byzantinists for future studies.

1.2 Key terms, concepts and methodology

Although they are often used interchangeably, the terms 'space' and 'place' are two different concepts in humanistic geography. If we take out the human interaction component, space refers to an abstract, undefined, and empty area. On the other hand, the term place addresses a specific and defined space. However, these theoretical and orthodox definitions are not satisfactory for social sciences, because

space, especially public space, has not only physical but also social and psychological dimensions with a significant overlap among them. Being one of the prominent scholars in the field of humanistic geography, Tuan stresses the social aspects of human interaction with space and place in his *Space and Place: the Perspective of Experince*.[3] He argues that place is a meaningful space, while the space is a location, which is not given any value.[4] As it is seen, despite being different concepts, the definition of each requires another.[5] Rodman too emphasizes the social aspect of the place and he claims that "places are socially constructed."[6] How does a society shape the space and make it a meaningful territory? Building monuments and decorating the space may shape the space itself. In addition, a society can form a variety of social interactions and activities such as ceremonies, which give social dimension to the space. However, none of them makes the space a meaningful territory fully; but the time does! Carman explains this succinctly by stating that "the place has meaning because it has a history, and that history is manifested in the material evidence of its past."[7] In other words, when someone erects a monument in some place or sets up a social activity in one location, it may make the space useful or public, but it does not give it the meaning that it needs. The only way to do that is to repeat the activities for a long time or to wait until the space and/or its material components is/are given meaning by the society. It is a different way of saying that place must create a memory that is actively *re-membered* by people. In this respect, we see a reciprocal relationship between society and public space/monument, established in time. While people construct monuments, shape

[3] Tuan, *Space and Place: the Perspective of Experience*.
[4] Ibid, 6.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Rodman, "Empowering Place: Multilocality and Multivocality", 641.
[7] Carman & Carman, "Walking the Line between Past and Present: Doing Phenomenology on Historical Battlefields", *105*.

spaces, and give meaning to them, the space/monument begins to create a memory and shape the society in return.[8] In other words, place cannot be thought as an independent entity outside history; place is a historical phenomenon. The values and meanings that were given to specific places by the society "must be created, reproduced and defended"[9] in time. And since these values and meanings are given to space by a certain group, the place constructs and reflects social identities.[10]

Moreover, any space can be meaningful for any individual. However, this does not make the space a place for the society. Memory affects social groups and individuals while it is affected by them at the same time. In the domain of social/collective memory, the first scholar who comes to mind is Maurice Halbwachs. He established the concept of collective memory. In his famous book, *The Collective Memory*, he states that there is not only individual memory; there is also a group memory that is created under the circumstances of the time at which the group lives. Furthermore, collective memory shapes the individual's memory and his perception of present.[11] Therefore, our main concern in this thesis are spaces that are seen by the public, spaces that interacted with different social groups.

As Young states, monuments are themselves amnesiac, actual remembrance is done by the humans rather than the monument itself.[12] Therefore, the meaning of the monument depends on the ones who come into contact with it. The choices of

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[8] May and Steinard state this phenomenon at the very beginning of their work: "The relation between (urban) space and society works in two directions, as a kind of dialectic process: Urban space reflects or expresses social relations and can influence people's behavior, but on the other hand, urban space is formed and changed by social agents, and the social meanings and conceptions of the environment are generated through people's social interactions and practices in it." See May & Steinert, "Introduction: Urban Topography as a Reflection of Society?", 1.

[9] Cresswell, *In Place/Out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression*, 9. Also see Arias, "Rethinking Space: An Outsider's View of the Spatial Turn," 31.

[10] Day, Hakola, Kahlos, and Tervahauta, "Introduction: Spaces in Late Antiquity", 1-2. For more on space and place, see Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*; Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction;* Sack, *Conceptions of Space in Social Thought: A Geographic Perspective.*

[11] Halbwachs *The Collective Memory*, 53. For more on the subject, see Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*.

[12] Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*, xiii.

people about what kind of memory to produce determines the meaning of the monument. At the same time, the interaction of monument with the space in which it is erected gains importance, because it is the place that decides the audience. Therefore, the monument cannot be thought alone without the environment which surrounds it and without the space, which determines the context. With the 'spatial turn' beginning in the 1990s, the concept of space has gained importance in social sciences and humanities, and space has been seen as "a social construction relevant to the understanding of the different histories of human subjects and to the production of cultural phenomena."[13] Historians realized that events cannot be fully explained without thinking about the physical landscape where they happened.[14]

The other significant concept that will be frequently used in this thesis is memory. Memory is constructed for present(ist) purposes and needs; "a remembrance is in very large measure a reconstruction of the past with data borrowed from the present, a reconstruction prepared, furthermore, by reconstructions of earlier periods wherein past images had already been altered."[15] Thus, memory does not always refer to the past, on the contrary, it is organically engaged in contemporary circumstances. This allows modern historians to establish contexts in which memories are constructed.[16] A few more points about memory should be noticed here; memory is a storing of information that includes the processes of summarizing, condensing and rewriting past events.[17] This process leads

[13] Warf and Arias, "Introduction: The Reinsertion of Space into the Social Sciences and Humanities", 1. Also see Torre, "A 'Spatial Turn' in History? Landscapes, Visions, Resources", 1127-1144; Day, Hakola, Kahlos, and Tervahauta, "Introduction: Spaces in Late Antiquity – Cultural, Theological and Archeological Perspectives", 1-9; Withers, "Place and 'Spatial Turn' in Geography and in History", 637-658.
[14] Day, Hakola, Kahlos, and Tervahauta, "Introduction: Spaces in Late Antiquity – Cultural, Theological and Archeological Perspectives", 1.
[15] Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 69.
[16] Price, "Memory and Ancient Greece", 16.
[17] Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering*, 9.

to the rise of competing memories, not allowing one single memory to dominate. Furthermore, since memory building involves continuous change and reconstruction, it is not a static storage system but an active and ongoing process, as Galinsky points out.[18] Due to fact that it is an active process of rewriting, memory also does not stay in the past, but is affected by contemporary dynamics. All these suggest that memory lies in the reciprocal interaction between the past and the present.

When memory is about the powerful individuals and/or groups, the relationship between memory and power comes into the stage. The heart of the social memory becomes a matter of what to remember, and to celebrate, and what to forget.[19] Those who exercise power over public want to give specific messages, to direct thoughts of people in a certain direction, or to shape society for particular purposes. Creation of commemorative places and activities as well as reconstruction of the past in texts cannot be separated from power relations. Memory politics will be employed frequently in this thesis, because memory politics "is an instrument of control of the past as well as the present."[20]

According to Price, there are four important concepts through which memories are constructed: objects, places, ritual behavior and textual narratives.[21] Throughout the present thesis, I will examine 'place' primarily in textual narratives, especially in the second and third chapters, and in material culture in the fourth chapter. Therefore, multiplicity and complexity of memories in the text should be underlined. Places have their own identity and memory, which comes from their interaction with society.[22] However, each collective body - different religious and

[18] Galinsky, *Memory in Ancient Rome and Early Christianity*, 8.
[19] Alcock, "The Reconfiguration of Memory in the Eastern Roman Empire", 323.
[20] Pabjan, "The Power over Collective Memory", 19.
[21] Price, "Memory and Ancient Greece", 17.
[22] Lewicka, "Place Attachment, Place Identity, and Place Memory: Restoring the Forgotten City Past", 213.

ethnic groups – has its own memory over the same place, which is reconstructed again and again; and this memory does not have to be the same with the historical identity (which is formed by its initial function) of the place. As Nora states, place of memory, *lieu de memoire*, is symbolic by definition and the place derives its symbolic dimension from the relationship between memory and history.[23] According to him, there are two types of symbols: imposed and constructed. While imposed ones are intended to reflect their original intention of existence, constructed symbols gain their meaning by the time and through interaction with the humans.[24] Nora states that these two types of symbols are tied to issue of identity.[25] Therefore, the identity of the place - whether it is historical or (re)constructed - "constitutes place's symbolic dimension."[26]

The memory of a place in textual narratives may reflect the memory of the author. In this case, the writer does not have to be in physical contact with the place; s/he may have never visited the place. His/her memory over the place is formed by the oral traditions, and/or by the written sources s/he reads. The author has the right to choose what to remember and to forget in his/her work. In other words, s/he may be selective and biased or act as an advocate of one religious or political group or another. In this case, the narrative becomes the story of what the author wants his/her audience to remember. The new manipulated memory may become the actual memory of the future generations. Hence, the memory of a place in literary texts consists of continuous manipulations, deconstructions, and reconstructions.

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[23] Nora, *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French* Past, Vol III, x. Nora defines *lieux de memoire* as a site in which "a residual sense of continuity remains." More on the relationship between memory and history, see Nora, Realms of Memory: *The Construction of the French Past, Vol I,* 1-20.
[24] Nora, *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French* Past, Vol III, x.
[25] Idib.
[26] Nora, *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French* Past, Vol III, x.

The politics of memory becomes more intensive in periods of transformations. In this context, Late Antiquity, also called the period of the emergence of Great Church,[27] steps forward as one of the most appropriate periods to apply memory studies. Although the history of Christianity in the Mediterranean may be dated back to earlier centuries, especially late-fourth and fifth century witnessed the massive transformations in the topography of cities via conversions, destructions, and reconstructions. Our period is crucial mainly for two reasons. First, the new religion began to be tolerated not before the Edict of Milan in 313 and it started to be formally supported when Constantine I seized the power and became the solemn emperor of the empire. Successors of Constantine I supported the new religion over the old and Christianity enjoyed privileges since it was a sponsored religion except for the short reign of Julian in the middle of the fourth century. Meanwhile, Christianity was canonized and institutionalized by the ecumenical councils. The significance of the Council of Niceae in 325 for the formation of Christianity cannot be denied. Secondly, the financial aspect of the maintenance and formation of the public spaces of the cities may be another reason of urban transformation in the fourth and fifth centuries. With the decline of the *cruial* order in the fourth century and the intrusiveness of the central power over public spaces of the cities, places of old cults struggled to survive, whereas Christian buildings got the bigger portion of the expenditure and enjoyed attention by the political center.[28] This gradual transformation of cities' landscape became more apparent when transformation of the symbolic and meaningful places' turn came roughly in late fourth century.[29] The

[27] Salzman, "Christianity and Paganism, III: Italy", 210.
[28] Talloen and Vercauteren, "The Fate of Temples in Late Antique Anatolia", 349-350.
[29] The phenomenon of transformation of sacred spaces in late antiquity was also discussed by Caseau with the source criticism. See Caseau, "La desacralisation des espaces et des objects religieux paiens durant l'antiquite tardive", 61-123.

institutions and individual agents with power in this period conveyed their messages to others, also through the politics of memory. They affected or changed the opinions, behaviors and reactions of groups and individuals through manipulating what to be remembered and forgotten. Hence, some scholars have begun to study late antiquity from memory studies, especially in the context of early Christianity. However, their works are mostly based on the Classical and Roman Imperial periods. For instance, Galinsky suggests that memory was pervasive in Roman culture and played a fundamental role in the early Jesus tradition too.[30] However, the Byzantine Empire has not received its due share in memory studies. Focusing on public space and memory in the early Byzantine Empire enables historians to make inferences about the *weltanschauung* of the Byzantine people as well as their understanding of past.

1.3 Chapter plan and primary sources

This thesis consists of five chapters, three of which provide case studies. After the present chapter that serves as an introduction, Chapter Two examines the destruction of the famous Serapeum complex in Alexandria in 391/392 CE. First, I present the cultural and religious centrality of Egypt as well as the cultural make-up of Alexandria. I also discuss briefly two different religious confrontations in late antique Alexandria, namely the expulsion of the Jews by Cyril the bishop and the murder of Hypatia. I move on to the spatial analysis of Serapeum's destruction. I contextualize the Serapeum in the larger topography of Alexandria, providing a larger framework for Serapeum's significance and symbolic value. Using different literary sources, the chapter draws attention to the importance of spatiality in authors'

[30] Galinsky, *Memory in Ancient Rome and Early Christianity*, 6.

narrative construction of the destruction of the Serapeum. The chapter examines the use of specific topographical and architectural features of the place and the relation of these features to the issue of identity/memory in the narratives. At the same time, I focus on the memory politics as constructed by the authors. I analyze these authors' use of ancient past in a comparative method. The chapter examines five different narratives, although two of them receive the lion's share: *The Church Histories* of Rufinus of Aquileia and *Lives of the Philosophers and Sophists* by Eunapius, because both are contemporary sources and they represent two opposite poles - Christian and pagan -.[31]

Rufinus of Aquileia was born around 345 CE into a wealthy family, considering his education.[32] He was a Christian and traveled Egypt in 372/373 because of his enthusiasm about monasticism. He spent good amount of time in Egypt and in Alexandria until 380.[33] Although he was not in Alexandria during the destruction of the Serapeum, he certainly knew the dynamics of the region and he must have been aware of significance of the Serapeum for the city and the pagan party.[34] He may also have had some contacts with people who were present in Alexandria during the destruction. Being contemporary and having close relationship with the city, he presents the most detailed and the longest narrative about the destruction of the Serapeum.

Eunapius, on the other hand, is our sole non-Christian source, and one of the two contemporary sources that presents a detailed narrative of the destruction. We

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[31] I use the term 'pagan' as an umbrella term for the 'polytheistic' traditions the Mediterranean, as discussed in page 15; it does not refer any specific religion or cult.
[32] Amidon, "Introduction", in *The Fathers of the Church*, Vol 133, 3. For more on Rufinus, see Chin, "Rufinus of Aquileia and Alexandrian Afterlives: Translation as Origenism", 617-647; Ferguson, "Rufinus of Aquileia and the beginnings of Nicene Historiography", 81-123.
[33] Ibid, 3-4.
[34] Throughout this thesis, I use the term 'party' to define Christian and pagan populations for simplicity. The term does not imply the existence of homogenous and organized body which is composed around common purpose.

have limited information about his life. He was probably born in 348/9 and was educated by a Neoplatonist philosopher.[35] He had powerful friends, as his connections with the court during the reign of Julian shows.[36] In his work, *Lives of the Philosophers and Sophists,* he is quite hostile towards Christianity and his narrative reflects the pagan point of view. Since we know that he lived at least until 414,[37] he was still alive during the destruction of the Serapeum.

The other three church histories that described the destruction were written by Socrates Scholasticus, Sozomen, and Theodoret of Cyrus. All of three reflect the Christian point of view, and were written almost fifty years after the destruction. In other words, they are not contemporary narratives. Socrates was born c. 380 in Constantinople and he mostly stayed there until his death.[38] He was a Christian and a Platonist.[39] Though a layman, he wrote the *Ecclesiastical History* between 438-443. His work is tolerant to non-Christians in general terms.[40] Sozomen, on the other hand, was a contemporary of Socrates and he was also layman.[41] He was born in a town named Bethelia, close to Gaza, and he possibly visited Alexandria during his travels in the eastern part of the empire, before he moved to Constantinople (not

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[35] Sacks, "The Meaning of Eunapius' History", 52. Also see Goulet, "Sur la Chronologie de la vie et des oeuvres d'Eunape de Sardes," 60-72. For more on Eunapius, see Pack, "A Romantic Narrative in Eunapius", 198-204; Buck, "Eunapius of Sardis and Theodosius the Great", 36-53; Buck, "Eunapius 'Lives of the Sophists': A Literary Study", 141-157; Watts, "Orality and Communal Identity in Eunapius 'Lives of the Sophists and Philosophers'", 334, 361.
[36] Ibid, 53-54.
[37] Ibid, 53.
[38] Chesnut, "The First Christian Histories: Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret and Evagrius", 168. For more on Socrates, see Urbainczyk, *Socrates of Constantinople: Historian of Church and State*; Gardiner, *'The truth is bitter': Socrates Scholasticus and the writing of a history of the Christian Roman empire*; Livneh, "Inner Discord and its Discontents in the Fifth-Century *Church Histories* of Socrates Scholasticus and Sozomen", 97-114.
[39] Chesnut, 173.
[40] Ibid 167-169.
[41] Chesnut, "The First Christian Histories", 192. For more on Sozomen, see Urbainczyk, "Observations on the Differences between the Church Histories of Socrates and Sozomen", 355–373; Stevenson, "Sozomen, Barbarians, and Early Byzantine Historiography", 51-75; Buck, "Did Sozomen use Eunapius' *Histories*?", 15-25.

before 425).[42] Finally, Theodoret was born in 393 and he was a devoted Christian who became the bishop of Cyrrhus later. His *Ecclesiastical History* must have been finished before 450.[43] His narrative of the destruction is the shortest one among others.

Chapter Three analyzes the removal of the Altar of Victory in the Senate House of Rome in 382 CE. Shifting our focus from Alexandria to the western capital, the chapter emphasizes the city's strong traditional ties to its ancient civic/public practices. First, I present the spatiality of the civic activities in Rome and their visibility in the public eye. Later, I place the Altar in the larger topography of Rome. Secondly, I investigate the famous debate over the removal/restoration of the altar between two powerful individuals of the time: Ambrose, the bishop of Milan, and Symmachus, the prefect of Rome. I dwell on the issue of constructing a self-identity and an identity for the Other by using the memory of the Altar of Victory. Thirdly, I examine how the events in the past are reconstructed by using memory politics and how the present identity is constructed by using the (manipulated) memory of the past.

Born in 340 and died in 402, Symmachus was one of the most well-known representatives of the pagan senatorial class in late fourth century Rome. He was the prefect of the city in 384 and perceived as a champion for the pagan interest.[44] He is famous for his letter/report *Relatio 3,* that was sent to the emperor requesting the restoration of the Altar of Victory after he was chosen representative of the senatorial

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[42] Rohrbacher, *The Historians of Late Antiquity*, 117-118. Chesnut, "The First Christian Histories", 192.

[43]Rohrbacher, *The Historians of Late Antiquity*, 126-127, 131. For more on Theodoret, see Pasztori-Kupan, *Theodoret of Cyrus;* Urbainczyk, *Theodoret of Cyrrhus: The Bishop and the Holy Man;* Schor, *Theodoret's People: Social Networks and Religious Conflict in Late Roman Syria.*

[44] Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome*, 37-39. For more on Symmachus, see Sogno, *Q. Aurelius Symmachus: A Political Biography*; Ebbeler, "Religious Identity and the Politics of Patronage: Symmachus and Augustine", 230-242; Salzman, "Symmachus and his Father: Patriarchy and Patrimony in the late Roman Senatorial Elite", 357-375.

pagan party. No lesser reputation was given to Ambrose, the bishop of Milan,[45] as the representative of the opposite party. His *letters 17* and *18* were composed of answers of Ambrose against the arguments of Symmachus over the restoration of the Altar. Two further points should be underlined concerning the letters: Ambrose's letter 17 was written immediately after Symmachus directed his *relatio 3* to the emperor Valentinian II in 384. Once Ambrose received the complete work of Symmachus, he presented more detailed answers to the arguments of Symmachus in his *letter 18*. Ambrose placed *relatio 3* of Symmachus between his *letters 17* and *18* in his own collection and published in this way. This "disadvantageously sandwiched" position of Symmachus arguments should not be forgotten.[46] Secondly, all of the letters were addressed to the emperor in order to obtain imperial favor about the future of the Altar.

Since chapter two and three will be mostly based on written literature, biases of the sources and the socio-political and religious backgrounds of the authors become significant factors which shape the way the story told and the narratives shaped. Thus, these diverse and multiple narratives give us a chance to apply discourse-based analysis of the written literature with no regard to the consistency and authenticity of both the authors and the events. The context in which the narratives were constructed should not be forgotten. On the other hand, diverse audience of the works should be taken into consideration. While the Church histories – examined in the second chapter - were the part of a tradition which was started by Eusebius and main target audience of this genre was the future generations of

[45] For more on Ambrose of Milan, see Evenepoel, "Ambrose vs Symmachus: Christians and Pagans in AD 384", 283-306; McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital*; Power, "Ambrose of Milan: Keeper of the Boundaries", 15-34.
[46] Chenault, "Beyond Pagans and Christians: Politics and Intra-Christian Conflict in the Controversy over the Altar of Victory", 46.

Christians, the primarily audience of the official letters – examined in the third chapter -were the emperor and imperial court. Hence, these differences in both narratives and their audience together with the selective nature of memory constitute the cornerstone of memory studies.

Chapter Four is devoted to the conversion of the Temple of Aphrodite in Aphrodisias in western Asia Minor between the late fifth and early sixth centuries. The chapter first focuses on the heterogeneity of the city's population. Secondly, it examines the topography of the city with an emphasis on the northern section of the city-center, where the Temple was situated. I place the conversion of the Temple into the context of the total transformation of the city in late antiquity. The chapter discusses the phenomenon of conversion from the perspective of city's memory and identity. More precisely, the chapter considers conversion of the Temple as a crucial step in the city's evolution from Aphrodite's sacred city (Aphrodisias) to the city of the Cross (Stavropolis). Differently from the other chapters, it examines material culture, mainly inscriptions rather than written literature, because there is no written source on the conversion of the Temple of Aphrodite, or on the transformation of late antique Aphrodisias. The chapter mainly benefits from two sources. Joyce Reynolds' *Aphrodisias and Rome,* which includes documents from the excavation of the theatre and Charlotte Roueche's *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity,* which includes a collection of late Roman and Byzantine inscriptions. The thesis ends with the concluding chapter (Chapter Five) providing a brief summary of the thesis and suggesting possible venues for future research.

CHAPTER 2

THE APPLE OF EGYPT'S EYE: THE SERAPEUM IN ALEXANDRIA

"[The Serapeum is] … Next to the Capitolium, which is the symbol of the eternity of immemorial Rome, the whole world beholds nothing more magnificent."[47]

2.1 Alexandria: A theatre for religious confrontation

Along with its thousands-year of history and culture, Egypt, as a region, played a crucial role in Mediterranean civilizations because of its strategic geographical position and agricultural fertility. The Roman Empire was not an exception in that respect. In other words, Egypt had always been one of the most indispensable regions for the Romans. Not only its essential position to secure the empire's hegemony in the Eastern Mediterranean, but also being 'bread basket' for the Empire made it special among others. However, stressing Egypt's cultural and social significance rather than economic and geostrategic importance would be more beneficial for justifying the choice of this region as one of the study cases.

Egypt in late antiquity was a multi-cultural, -religious, and -ethnic region. First, Egyptian population had been affected by the pagan Greco-Roman culture, religious system, and imperial ideology under the dominance of Greek and Roman political actors. On some occasions, these Greco-Roman political, cultural and religious phenomena mingled with the local Egyptian beliefs, and new cults and creeds emerged; on other occasions, newcomers accompanied the ancient ones and they co-existed though separately. Therefore, this complex and colorful picture of

[47] Ammianus Marcellinus: "post Capitolium, quo se veneralibis Roma in aeternum attolit, nihil orbis terrarum ambitiosius cernat" 22. 16. 12. Translation by Haas. Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity*, 148.

‘dichotomies’ (Such as Hellenized Egyptians vs local Egyptians, Greco-Roman gods/goddesses and Egyptian ones, Greek speaking population vs Coptic and Syriac speaking people) makes it necessary to find an inclusive term that refers to all the different beliefs and religious traditions to distinguish them from Abrahamic religions. Therefore, I prefer using the terms pagan and paganism as an ‘umbrella term’ without referring to any specific polytheistic religion, and without its pejorative connotations.

Secondly, smooth and gradual transformations make late antiquity so special for our analysis, because in such times of transformations powerful institutions and individuals wanted to exercise their power for giving messages to others and implementing their policies.[48] In this period, important political and religious transformations affected Egypt in various ways.[49] Salzman calls this period as ‘the emergence of the Great Church’,[50] and the definition emphasizes not only the Christianization of the empire, but also rise of new institutions and powerful actors on the stage such as the Church as an institution and clergy as actors. Although it is hard to give specific numbers due to lack of evidence, Bagnall indicates that majority of the population was Christian already by the death of Constantine the Great in 337 CE, and Christians constituted nearly 80% of the population in Egypt by the early fifth century.[51] However, we cannot assume that the Christian community of Egypt was a homogenous entity in late antiquity. The Arian controversy in the fourth century as well as disputes between pro-Chalcedonians and Monophysites later

[48] Hereafter, for the sake of abbreviation, I will use the term ‘the powerful’ to refer to both secular and religious institutions and individuals that have power to exercise their policy.
[49] Papaconstantinou, “Egypt”, 287. She claims that after Constantine’s efforts to dominate religious sphere with imperial ideology, political and religious history of the empire intertwined, and that it is visible in the events of religious tensions. She adds: “Because of its economic importance and the cultural dominance of Alexandria in the eastern Mediterranean, Egypt pioneered those developments.”
[50] Salzman, “Christianity and Paganism, III: Italy”, 210.
[51] Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 281.

represent the two clearest examples to justify the heterogeneous nature of the Christian population of the region, as well as the existence of religious tensions within the Christian community in Egypt.[52]

Thirdly we can talk about the existence of Jewish communities in some regions of Egypt. Especially in the first century, Alexandria had a very big Jewish community, although the proportion of the Jewish community to population diminished in time. As Cohen concludes, there was a "strong and dynamic Jewish life in Egypt from Hellenistic times up to the Jewish Revolt in 115–117[53] and, after that, a reduced and volatile continuing existence, marked with sporadic attacks, mainly in Alexandria."[54] However, the existence of Jewish community in Egypt continued throughout late antiquity. They were more visible in urban centers like Alexandria, which made them a subject of written sources. For instance, expulsion of the Jews from Alexandria in 414-415 CE was narrated by Socrates Scholasticus in detail.[55] According to Socrates, the dispute between the Jews and Christians that began with the disturbances during the theatrical shows,[56] and transformed into more severe disorders and resulted in the expulsion of the Jews by Cyril the bishop. The

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[52] For the controversies, see Haas, "The Arians of Alexandria"; Williams, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition*; Barnard, "Athanasius and the Meletian Schism in Egypt", 181-189; Gołgowski, "Beginnings of the Monophysite Church in Egypt", 167-180.

[53] For more information on religious confrontations in which the Jews were involved, including the well-known Jewish Revolt in 115-117 CE, see Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews amidst Greeks and Romans*, 54-83; Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora. From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE – 117 CE)*, 48-71. For the Jewish community in Alexandria, see Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity*, 91-128.

[54] Cohen, *The Jews in Late Antiquity*, 54.

[55] Socrates Scholasticus, *The Ecclesiastical History*, 7.13.

[56] Socrates describes it as follows: "It happened on the present occasion that a disturbance arose among the populace, not from a cause of any serious importance, but out of an evil that has become very popular in almost all cities, viz. a fondness for dancing exhibitions. In consequence of the Jews being disengaged from business on the Sabbath, and spending their time, not in hearing the Law, but in theatrical amusements, dancers usually collect great crowds on that day, and disorder is almost invariably produced. And although this was in some degree controlled by the governor of Alexandria, nevertheless the Jews continued opposing these measures. And although they are always hostile toward the Christians they were roused to still greater opposition against them on account of the dancers." Socrates Scholasticus, *The Ecclesiastical History*, 7.13, 291. Translation by Walford.

final phase of the events was related in the Ecclesiastical History of Socrates as follows:

> "Having agreed that each one of them should wear a ring on his finger made of the bark of a palm branch, for the sake of mutual recognition, they determined to make a nightly attack on the Christians. They therefore sent persons into the streets to raise an outcry that the church named after Alexander was on fire. Thus many Christians on hearing this ran out, some from one direction and some from another, in great anxiety to save their church. The Jews immediately fell upon and slew them; readily distinguishing each other by their rings. At daybreak the authors of this atrocity could not be concealed: and Cyril, accompanied by an immense crowd of people, going to their synagogues—for so they call their house of prayer—took them away from them, and drove the Jews out of the city, permitting the multitude to plunder their goods. Thus the Jews who had inhabited the city from the time of Alexander the Macedonian were expelled from it, stripped of all they possessed, and dispersed some in one direction and some in another."[57]

The account of Socrates clearly shows that the Christianization of public space of Alexandria was not totally completed in the early fifth century; the so called 'non-Christian' spaces and activities, like theaters and dancers, were still active, and the Jews preferred to attend such activities. On the other hand, the Christian religious authorities of Alexandria were still making an effort to dominate city's civic topography, even after destruction of the Serapeum. The possessions of Jews seem to be the next target of Christians after they seized the pagan ones on a large scale. Not only the Christian-Jewish confrontation, but also the tension between power-holding individuals such as Orestes the prefect and Cyril the bishop is visible in Socrates' account. More importantly, we see that the Jewish community in Alexandria in early fifth century was not a passive one. On the contrary, the Jews still played an important role in the civic and religious life of the city. As Haas argues, the Jewish population did not totally disappear after these events, although it diminished by the conversion of large numbers of Jews to Christianity.[58]

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[57] Ibid, 291-292.

[58] Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity*, 127. For more on Christian and Jewish communities in late antique Egypt, see Clarysse, "Identifying Jews and Christians: The Evidence of the Papyri", 81-100;

Year 415 CE also witnessed another confrontation, this time between pagan and Christian parties. Being one of the well-known tragic events in late antiquity, the death or the murder of Hypatia also provides us an insight about the tension in the multi-cultural/religious Egypt, more specifically in Alexandria. Luckly we have three important sources that tell the story of the death of Hypatia: *Life of Isidore* of Damascius, *The Ecclesiastical History* of Socrates Scholasticus and *The Chronicle* of John of Nikiu.[59] These three sources are significant because they provide us with a relatively detailed narrative while each of them presents us a different perspective. I will not give a detailed comparative analysis of the sources nor will I discuss their accuracy and reliability; my aim is rather to show the very existence of conflicts between different parties in Alexandria. These confrontations were closely observed by ancient authors. Moreover, it is possible to see this dispute occurring in the narratives of the authors in question too.

Hypatia (355-415 CE) was a female philosopher and mathematician. She was a follower of the ancient religion, and she probably held a public teaching position in Alexandria.[60] Although she belonged to the intelligentsia of Alexandria, and she was identified with her studies in liberal arts rather than her religious identity, she was attacked and murdered by a Christian mob in early 415. In spite of the fact that Socrates was a Christian writer who wrote a church history, he does not give a positive picture of her murder; he does not approve the act of killing itself. He claims that "she fell a victim to the political jealousy which at that time prevailed."[61]

Irshai, "Christian Historiographers' Reflections on Jewish-Christian Violence in Fifth-Century Alexandria", 137-153.

[59] For historical accounts on Hypatia, see Socrates Scholasticus, *The Ecclesiastical History*, 7.15; John of Nikiu, *Chronicle*, 84.87-103; Damascius, *Life of Isidore*, fr. 43E Athanassiadi. There are also other accounts that mention the murder of Hypatia, but they are relatively short narratives. See John Malalas, *Chronicle* 14.12; Philostorgius, *The Ecclesiastical History*, 8.9.

[60] *The Oxford Dictionary of Late Antiquity*, s.v. "Hypatia", 754.

[61] Socrates Scholasticus, *The Ecclesiastical History*, 7.15, 293. Translation by Walford.

Socrates emphasizes her "frequent interviews"[62] with Orestes and refers the power struggle between Orestes and Cyril. Watts, agreeing with Socrates, argues that "her death was one of the final acts in a power struggle that pitted Cyril, the bishop of Alexandria, against Orestes, the prefect of Egypt."[63] Therefore, we can see this tragic event as a continuation of the dispute between two powerful individuals in the course of aforementioned confrontations between Jews and Christians in 414-415 CE. Moreover, Socrates, while giving an account of her death, presents some information on the Alexandrian topography:

> "Some of them [Christians] therefore, hurried away by a fierce and bigoted zeal, whose ringleader was a reader named Peter, waylaid her returning home, and dragging her from her carriage, they took her to the church called *Cæsareum*, where they completely stripped her, and then murdered her with tiles. After tearing her body in pieces, they took her mangled limbs to a place called Cinaron, and there burnt them."[64]

As the quotation above shows, she was not simply killed, but her body was displayed in streets and was taken to the Cæsareum, which was converted to a church, and finally was burnt outside the city! On the other hand, Damascius (462-538 CE), who stayed in Alexandria for fifteen years and was the head of Neoplatonic school of Athens during its closure by Justinian I,[65] pictures Hypatia as a pagan saint. According to him "she was prudent and civil in her deeds. The whole city rightly loved her and worshipped her in a remarkable way, but the rulers of the city from the first envied her, something that often happened at Athens too."[66] Like Socrates, he points to the envy of the rulers as the reason of her death. After Cyril saw the great crowd in front of her house, he was struck with envy and began to plot against her. It

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[62] Ibid.
[63] Watts, "The Murder of Hypatia: Acceptable or Unacceptable Violence?", 333.
[64] Socrates Scholasticus, *The Ecclesiastical History*, 7.15, 293. Translation by Walford.
[65] Ahbel-Rappe, "Damascius the Platonic Successor: Socratic Activity and Philosophy in the 6th Century CE", 515.
[66] "The Life of Hypatia from the Suda". Translation by Jeremiah Reedy.

is possible that Cyril was afraid of the fact that she may have stolen his role considering her relationship with the prefect. She was attacked by a Christian mob, led by Cyril, disgracefully and mercilessly. Damascius sees Cyril responsible for her death and considers the attack as "Christian anti-intellectual violence."[67] Finally, in contrast to the other two sources, John of Nikiu sees the murders as a "heroic Christian triumph against paganism."[68] He pictures Hypatia as "a female philosopher, a pagan named Hypatia, and she was devoted at all times to magic, astrolabes and instruments of music, and she beguiled many people through (her) Satanic wiles."[69] The author's anti-pagan and anti-Jewish tone is apparent throughout the narrative. He, like Socrates, presents place names in detail and emphasizes the public exhibition:

> "And thereafter a multitude of believers in God arose under the guidance of Peter the magistrate - now this Peter was a perfect believer in all respects in Jesus Christ - and they proceeded to seek for the pagan woman who had beguiled the people of the city and the prefect through her enchantments. And when they learnt the place where she was, they proceeded to her and found her seated on a (lofty) chair; and having made her descend they dragged her along till they brought her to the great church, named Caesarion. Now this was in the days of the fast. And they tore off her clothing and dragged her [till they brought her] through the streets of the city till she died. And they carried her to a place named Cinaron, and they burned her body with fire. And all the people surrounded the patriarch Cyril and named him "the new Theophilus"; for he had destroyed the last remains of idolatry in the city."[70]

More interestingly, by calling Cyril as new Theophilus, John reminds his reader of Theophilus, who was the former bishop of Alexandria and who held that seat during the destruction of the famous Serapeum. Hence, John sees the deeds of Theophilus including the destruction of Serapeum as the victory against paganism. In other words, he sees Hypatia's death as a continuation of the destruction of the Serapeum.

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[67] Watts, "The Murder of Hypatia", 333.
[68] Ibid, 334.
[69] John of Nikiu, *Chronicle*, 84.87, 100. Translation by R. H. Charles.
[70] Ibid, 84.100-103, 102. Translation by R. H. Charles.

Moreover, he constructs the memory of Cyril over Theophilus as the one who completed what Theophilus left undone. However, the process of constructing the memory of Hypatia and the incident of her murder by John of Nikiu presents only fragmented picture. Because, he was probably born around the Islamic invasion of Egypt in seventh century. He was the Coptic bishop of Nikiu in the late seventh century and later he became administrator general of the Monasteries in 696 CE.[71] In short, he was devoted Christian who lived nearly three hundreds of years after Hypatia. Moreover, we can barely speak about any existence of pagan with whom John could interact in the period in which he lived. Hence, his image of pagan was already constructed by what he read rather than he witnessed.[72] His narrative of Hypatia can be examined in this context. In other words, narrative of John also demonstrates how the pagan identity and memory were constructed throughout years around the Christian circles.

These two cases show how multi-cultural, multi-religious, and multi-ethnic nature of the Egyptian society would naturally lead to confrontations, struggles and conflicts over the sacred and civic topography of Egyptian cities; and this fact would create contested places through which actors in the city engaged in power struggle (real or symbolic). These places would be employed as a means to establish memories in texts too.

Fourthly and finally, late antique Egypt provides a large amount of written and material sources to historians who want to study late antique religious culture of rgw region. As Bagnall clearly refers, "This century [fourth century] has always been

[71] Idib, iii.
[72] Elagina claims that John used a number of sources especially fort he first part of his *Chronicle.* She lists some potential sources as: *The Chronicle of John Malalas, Copto-Arabic Synaxarium, Chronicle of John of Antioch, Cambyses Romance*, and Church historians Rufinus, Theodoret, Sozomen. See Elagina, *The Textual Tradition of the Chronicle of John of Nikiu: Towards the Critical Edition of the Ethiopic Version,* xxx-xxxvi.

the center of much interest among both Roman historians and students of early Christianity."[73] This interest is largely due to the importance of Egypt for early monasticism as well as Alexandria's role in religious debate. Furthermore, Bagnall adds that "Egypt provides a unique opportunity to look with some depth at a particular time and place in late antiquity."[74] Since our case study will be based on literary sources of the time rather than material culture, aforementioned features of the region, narrated in four major points above, provides a ground for the production of different narratives seeing events from different vistas. Multi-vocal nature of the sources that we will examine gives us a chance to compare literary narratives (which provide different stories for the same event) as well as their authors. This multivocality is crucial for memory studies.[75]

Alexandria is a perfect case for the points we raise above. The tumultuous nature of the public space in Alexandria is made clear by Socrates in the following statement: "The Alexandrian public is more delighted with tumult than any other people: and if at any time it should find a pretext, breaks forth into the most intolerable excesses; for it never ceases from its turbulence without bloodshed."[76] When one considers the previous two cases - the expulsion of the Jews and the

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[73] Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 3.
[74] Ibid, 4.
[75] Especially after 1980s, theories of literary criticism have begun to include the existence of the reader as one of the main components of the meaning creation process. Thefore, a trio of author, text and audience was created. A basic assumption of the theory which we call post-structuralism is that the text may have different meanings as well as hidden ones; the same passage may be given different meanings by different readers. Even the misreading has a kind of meaning; misunderstanding is still an understanding. With the interpretation of the text with multiple meanings and the increasing importance of the role of the audience, it is not coincidence that memory studies have become more popular among scholars after 1950s. Examining only the text does not mean anything when it severs all ties with its author, time, audience, power relations, and environment. So, the historical sources, as a part of the literature of its period, cannot be seen as a pool from where the historians can take facts just by examining the text itself. For further reading on literary theory, see Barry, *Beginning Theory*; Tyson, *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide*; Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*.
[76] Socrates Scholasticus, *The Ecclesiastical History*, 7.13, 291. Translation by Walford.

murder of Hypatia- in the light of what Socrates says about the Alexandrian public, he/she would have an idea about what happened in the Serapeum.

We need to provide some context before embarking on an examination of the Serapeum incident. Alexandria was founded by Alexander the Great in 331 BCE after his victory over the Persians. By the Roman period, Alexandria had become one of the most populous cities of the Roman Empire as well as a great cultural center. Its importance never declined until its loss. Even after the center of the Empire moved from Rome to Constantinople in 330 CE, Alexandria continued to provide grain needs of the new capital.[77] It is not coincidence that the writer of the fourth century geographical treatise *The Exposito Totius Mundi et Gentium* starts his description of Alexandria with the commercial centrality of the city: "Alexandria is a very large city, outstanding in its disposition, abounding in all sorts of goods and rich in foodstuffs."[78] Alexandria was important not only economically and culturally, but also religiously. Especially with the ecumenical council of Nicaea in 325 CE, the bishop of Alexandria was given a power of religious control over a large region. The sixth canon of the Nicene Council states:

> "Let the ancient customs in Egypt, Libya and Pentapolis prevail, that the Bishop of Alexandria have jurisdiction in all these, since the like is customary

[77] The important role of Alexandria as a provider of grain to the larger Mediterranean world is visible even in the mythical foundation story of the city. The legend emphasizes the fertility of its lands and its potential to be 'bread basket' of the Mediterranean civilizations. According to Haas "the legend played an important role in shaping the civic consciousness of Alexandrians". Although I do not disagree, I would like to keep the other option open. Namely, the situation may be reverse, and the civic identity of the city may have shaped the foundation story. See Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity*, 22. Strabo relates the story as follows: "But when Alexander visited the place and saw the advantages of the site, he resolved to fortify the city on the harbour. Writers record, as a sign of the good fortune that has since attended the city, an incident which occurred at the time of tracing the lines of the foundation: When the architects were marking the lines of the enclosure with chalk, the supply of chalk gave out ; and when the king arrived, his stewards furnished a part of the barley-meal which had been prepared for the workmen, and by means of this the streets also, to a larger number than before, were laid out. This occurrence, then, they are said to have interpreted as a good omen." Strabo, *The Geography*, 17.1.6, 29. Translation by Jones.

[78] *The Exposito Totius Mundi et Gentium: Its Geography and Its Language*, 8, 33. Translation by Woodman. The same text also stresses the cultural centrality of Egypt and Alexandria: "Egypt abounds in more learned men than any other nation; indeed, in its chief city, Alexandria, you will find all the learning of the philosophers of every nation." Ibid.

> for the Bishop of Rome also. Likewise in Antioch and the other provinces, let the Churches retain their privileges. And this is to be universally understood, that if any one be made bishop without the consent of the Metropolitan, the great Synod has declared that such a man ought not to be a bishop. If, however, two or three bishops shall from natural love of contradiction, oppose the common suffrage of the rest, it being reasonable and in accordance with the ecclesiastical law, then let the choice of the majority prevail."[79]

The Canon clearly emphasizes the "ancient customs," so that it was not the first time that the bishop of Alexandria had an authority over "Egypt, Libya and Pentapolis."[80] Moreover, the Canon clearly draws attention to the significance of Alexandria and names it together with other two other important cities/centers for Christianity - Rome and Antioch -. Considering the religious position of the imperial seat - except the short reign of Julian -, and the rise of the Christian population and new powerful actors in the city, it would be fair to say that this transformation of the identity of Alexandria from a Hellenic/pagan center to a Christian center affected the dynamics of the city during late antiquity undoubtedly.[81]

As stated previously, Alexandria's great significance for both the Eastern Mediterranean and the Roman Empire made it quite special and determined its topography and urban development.[82] Firstly, Alexandria was a planned city.[83] Haas compares Alexandria with other major cities such as Rome and Athens, and argues that Alexandria was built rather in a short period of time after its foundation while

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[79] Percival, *The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church: Vol XIV of Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, 15.

[80] For further discussion and commentaries, see ibid, 15; Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity: From Its Origins to 451 CE*, 131-133.

[81] Haas summarizes the point resplendently: "The 'most glorious city of the Alexandrians' had become the 'most glorious Christ-loving City of the Alexandrians.'" See Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity*, 174.

[82] Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity*, 21.

[83] Ibid, 24.

the others evolved in a long period of time.[84] Because the foundation of the city was planned and sponsored by the imperial power in the first place, we cannot assume that the monuments and buildings, sponsored by the powerful, were constructed randomly in spatial terms. The monuments and public buildings in question had specific meanings and messages with their locations, architecture, inscriptions, and functions. Furthermore, the developments in Alexandria under the Roman rule did not change this early formation, but only its context and meaning. These features of the city attracted both individuals and institutions, whether imperial or religious, to build monuments and constructions. These individuals and institutions, or the powerful, decorated the city lavishly. In Alexandria, the powerful could reach wider audience and affect masses, as well as display their power and create memories. In other words, Alexandria was a unique example where display of power and identity were embedded in the topography and the created image of the city had an impact over the audience. Alexandria was one of the largest and richest cities in late antique world, so display of power here was more meaningful. In his work *Leukippe and Kleitophon*, Achilles Tatius of Alexandria, who lived in second century CE, provides an *ekphrasis* of the city.[85] His description of Alexandria is so poetic and vivid that any reader would feel the atmosphere and beauty of the city. Even the author himself says "Ah my eyes, we are beaten"[86] just before finishing his description. This narrative shows us how memorable the image of the city was.

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[84] Ibid, 24. Accorfing to Haas, although there were some important additions to the original plans such as the Serapeum, the Caesareum, and the extramural *necropoleis*, these did not break the originality of the city's design; on the contrary, they strengthened it.

[85] Achilles Tatius, *Leukippe and Kleitophon*, 5.1.1-5.

[86] Ibid, 5.1.5-6. Translation by S. Gaselee. Original: "ὀφθαλμοί, νενικήμεθα." Myers translates it as follows: "my eyes, we have been overcome." See Myers, *Self-Reflexivity and Metafiction in Achilles Tatius' Leukippe and Kleitophon,* 178.

In her prominent book, McKenzie provides the history of monumental architecture of Alexandria (and Egypt), and she gives a vivid picture of the city's topography based on both written sources and archeological evidence from its foundation to roughly the Islamic conquest.[87] Figure 1 shows the main monuments and public buildings that were already constructed by 300 CE. The city had two harbors that enabled large trade capacity and functioned as a passage to the outside world. The Serapeum was located on the southwestern corner of the city. It stood next to the lageion where the horse races and athletic games were held.[88] However, the reconstruction by McKenzie demonstrates clearly that the main civic public buildings were concentrated in the center around the main street of the city. Alongside urban villas, houses, forum and workshops, the Caesareum and the area of Kom el-Dikka are worth mentioning at this point. The area of Kom el-Dikka housed both secular and religious public buildings such as baths, lecture rooms, a small theater and temples/churches (Figure 2). McKenzie argues that although there were expensive private houses in the first and second centuries CE, the area was filled with public buildings in the first half of the fourth century CE.[89] She also adds, "during the fourth century there is an overlap of the construction of churches, with the conversion of temples into churches and the continued use of some pagan buildings."[90] The Caesareum (or the Sebasteion), on the other hand, begun to be built by Cleopatra VII and it "was subsequently rededicated" to Augustus.[91] Therefore, the

[87] McKenzie, *The Architecture of Alexandria and Egypt* c.*300 BC – AD 700.*
[88] McKenzie claims that the Roman phase of the Serapeum had been rebuilt between 181 and 215/16 CE. See Mckenzie, *The Architecture of Alexandria,* 195. Also, according to Mckenzie the lageion was built in the early Ptolomaic period to serve as a hippodrome and stadium as well. However, in the Roman period it was "converted to a circus for chariot race." Ibid, 204.
[89] Ibid, 209-210.
[90] Ibid, 209.
[91] Pfeiffer, "The Imperial Cult in Egypt", 86.

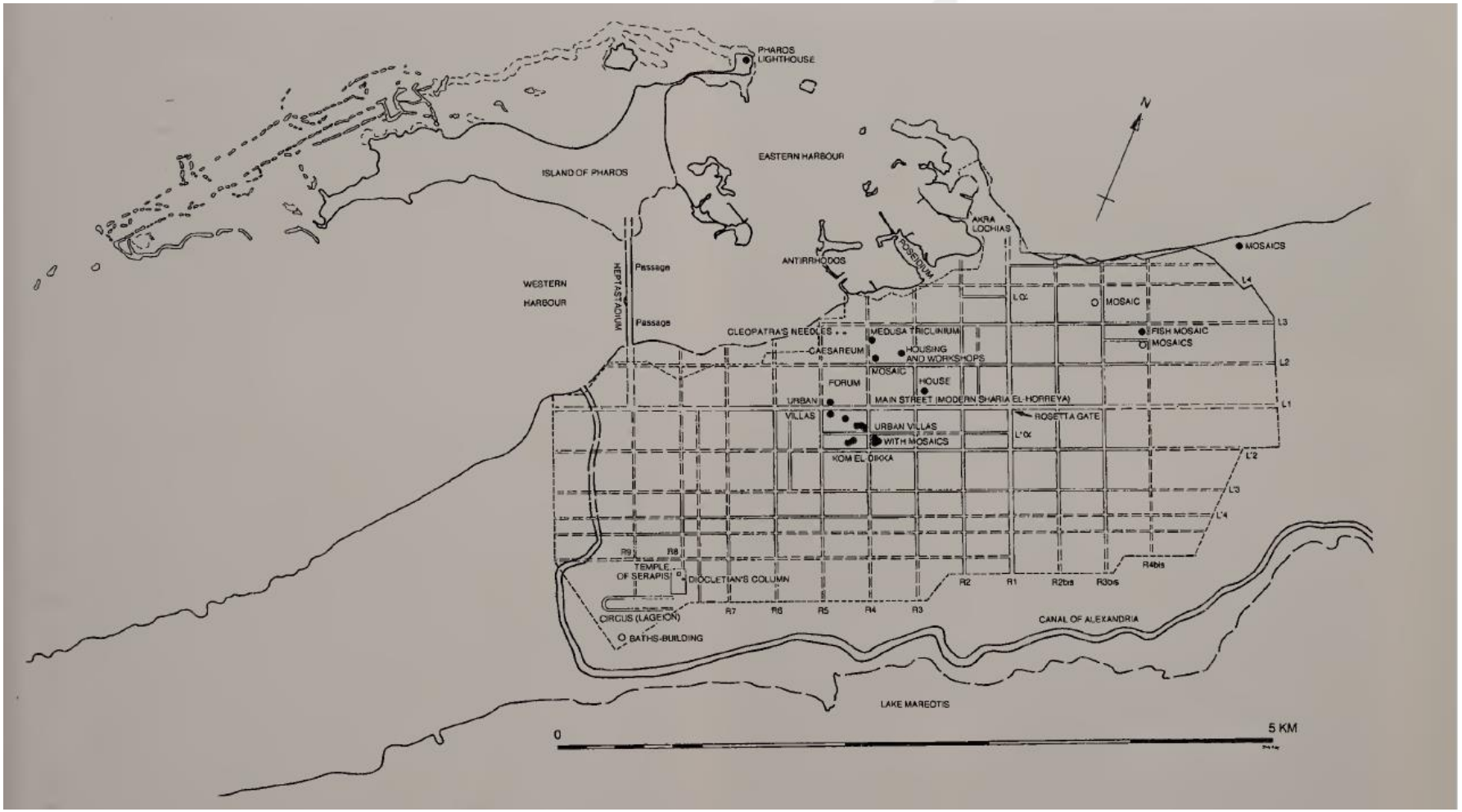

Figure 1. Alexandria, plan of the city c. CE 300. Source: McKenzie, *The Architecture of Alexandria and Egypt c.300 BC – AD 700*, 175.

Caesareum was the imperial cult center in Roman Alexandria, and it was the biggest Sebasteion in Egypt.[92] In his *Legatio Ad Gaium*, Philo of Alexandria describes it as:

> "There is no other precinct like our so-called "Augusteum"[93], the temple of Caesar, the protector of sailors. It is situated high up, opposite the sheltered harbours, and is very large and conspicuous; it is filled with dedications on a unique scale, and is surrounded on all sides by paintings, statues, and objects of gold and silver. The extensive precinct is furnished with colonnades, libraries, banqueting-halls, groves, gateways, open spaces, unroofed enclosures, and everything that makes for lavish decoration."[94]

First, Philo emphasizes its topographical position and association of the place with the harbors of the city. Considering the intensive use of the harbors for the interregional trade, besides local people, visitations of non-Alexandrians to the temple may have been expected as well. In other words, the Caesareum had an interregional audience in this respect. Further, as Philo stresses, the temple was located on a high position so that it was visible space. Secondly, the description provides us a complex image of the sacred place. The temple is not seen as independent from its surrounding environment and elements within the temple as well. This cult 'complex', therefore, includes public areas where the people may meet and interact such as library, halls and open areas. Also, the existence of the library attracted more audience and invited the intelligentsia of the city to the place. Hence, the Caesareum can be seen as an imperial cult complex that was located on a highly visible and central space and attracted many people. It was the place that established a bond between the imperial power and the city. Furthermore, it propagated and reflected the old and 'pagan' identity of the empire. However, this significant sacred space, which reminded people of the pagan roots of the empire, was appropriated by the Christians. It was converted into a church in the middle of

[92] Ibid.
[93] "οἷον τὸ λεγόμενον Σεβαστεῖον"
[94] Philo, *Legatio Ad Gaium*, 151, 82. Translation by Smallwood.

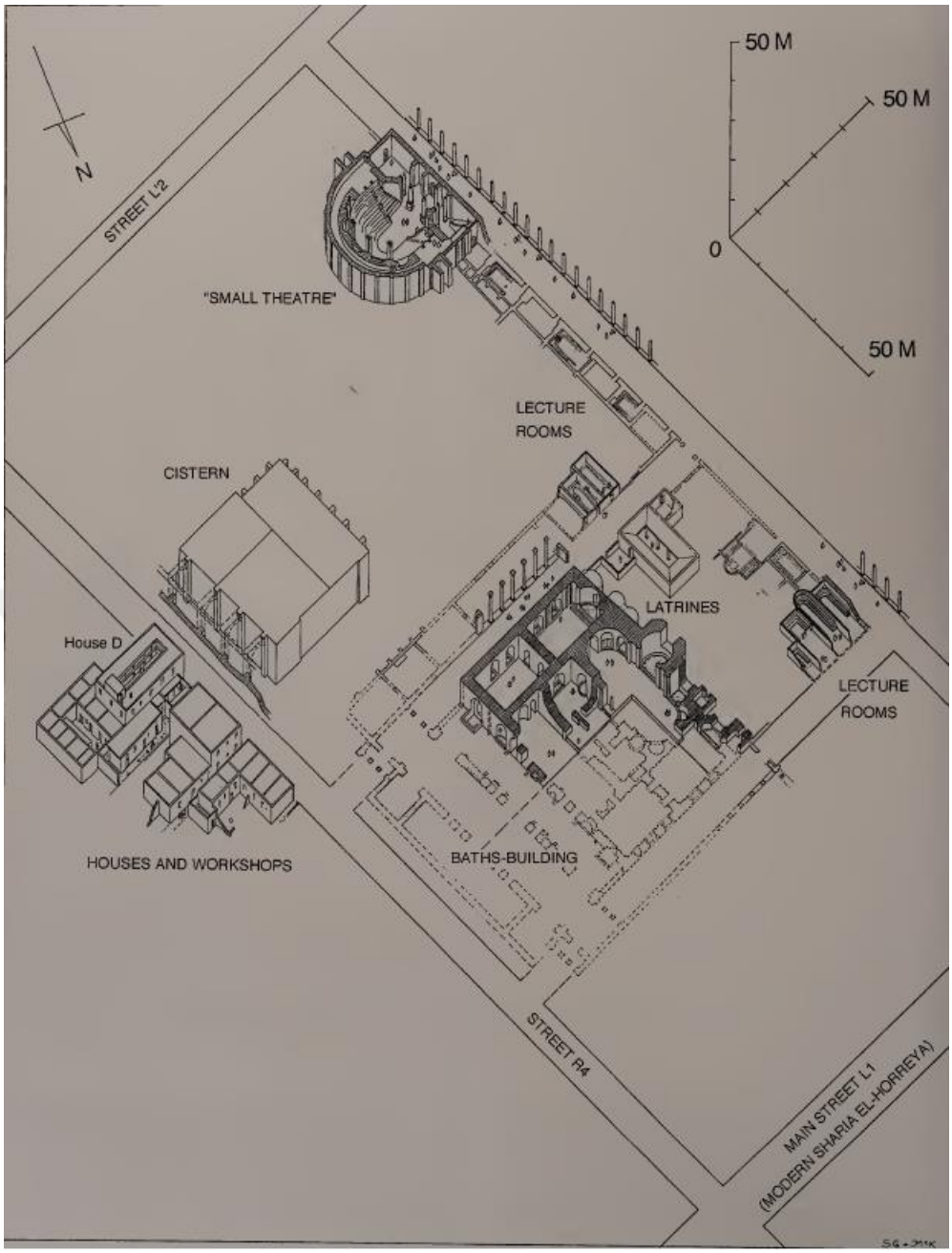

Figure 2. Reconstruction of Kom el-Dikka by McKenzie. Source: McKenzie, *The Architecture of Alexandria*, 208.

the fourth century, and it served as a cathedral for Christians.[95] It became the place where the Christian religious authority performed its power as it was seen in the case of the murder of Hypatia in the early fifth century. Thus, its conversion can be

[95] Mckenzie, *The Architecture of Alexandria*, 242.

considered in the context of religious change and Christianization of public spaces in Alexandria.[96]

Even though broader contours of the topography of the city remained the same in late antiquity, increasing number of churches, especially during the fourth century, demonstrates the Christian dominance over Alexandria's topography. Construction of many churches took place between 328 and 372, when Athanasius was the patriarch of Alexandria.[97] We know at least twelve of them, including the Caesareum, from written sources.[98] These occupations and conversions continued during the patriarchy of Timothy I (378-384) and the conversions of the remaining significant temples (including the destruction of the Serapeum in 391) were completed during the patriarchy of Theophilus (385-412).[99] Figure 3 identifies some of the churches that can be placed by the written and archeological evidence. One can trace of the Christianization of the city's public spaces as well as the transformation of its civic identity in the increasing number of churches in the city's landscape.

Although Bagnall puts emphasis on the decline of the Isis cult in third century and concludes that "the temples of Egypt, along with their traditional scripts, personnel, influence, festivals, and wealth declined markedly in the third century,"[100] the pagan roots of the city was so deep that there were 308 temples in Quarter A, 110 in Beta, 855 in Gama, 800 in Delta and 405 in Epsilon among other important monumental buildings, according to the Syriac chronicle, *Notitia Urbis Alexandrinae,* which is dated not later than the end of the fourth century.[101] The text

[96] For more on the Caesareum, see Fishwick, "The Caesareum at Alexandria Again", 62-72.
[97] Mckenzie, *The Architecture of Alexandria*, 231.
[98] Ibid. Mckenzie lists the names of the churches too.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 267.
[101] Fraser, "A Syriac 'Notitia Urbis Alexandrinae'", 107.

Figure 3. Late antique Alexandria (After the fourth century CE). Source: McKenzie, *The Architecture of Alexandria* 236.

adds "Thus the total number of temples is 2,393…"[102] These numbers indicate that even in the fourth century, temples occupied a significant space in Alexandria and giving us an insight about the religious topography of the city. However, as Hahn correctly points out, today we know only a few of these almost 2,500 'temples' by name. Supporting our points, Ammianus Marcellinus in his *Res Gestae* claims that the pagan religious identity of the city was still visible in the late fourth century: **"**There are besides in the city temples pompous with lofty roofs, conspicuous among them the Serapeum … " [103] However, as Hahn points out, "it is a bitter irony of historical transmission that one learns about Alexandria's temples of the fourth century only when it is a matter of their destruction."[104]

As stated earlier, late antique Alexandria lied at the heart of a transformation. Especially the pagan temples and public spaces that reminded the Alexandrians of their own pagan past and showed city's pagan identity to the visitors were the main targets of the Christians. Both pagans and Christians tried to dominate these symbolic places so to declare their victory over the other as seen in the case of the Caesareum. Pagans were trying to protect symbolically important places that had a memory coming from the past and that gave an identity to their city, while the Christian party was trying to erase and/or change the non-Christian memory/identity of the city by occupying these visibly symbolic spaces. This resulted in the destruction and on some occasions the conversion of pagan sacred spaces in the city.

[102] Ibid, 104. Translation by Fraser. In fact, total number is 2,478. The text also states that some provinces were not included in calculation. So, we can assume that the total number of temples in Alexandria exceeds 2,478. However, Fraser claims that the given numbers are not realistic. It is only possible if the author counts private shrines and sanctuaries within the temples. See, Ibid, 107.
[103] Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, 22.16.12, 303. Translation by Rolfe.
[104] Hahn, "The Conversion of Cult Statues: The Destruction of the Serapeum 392 AD and the Transformation of Alexandria into 'Christ-Loving City'", 337.

Since these temples were symbolically significant, ancient authors did not remain silent in their narratives.

2.2 Spatial analysis of Serapeum's destruction

Unsurprisingly, the most 'symbolic' temple in late fourth-century Alexandria that was destructed and later converted is the famous Serapeum.[105] It was the most important sanctuary in Alexandria, and one of the major sanctuaries of the ancient world.[106]

As mentioned above, the Serapeum was located on one of the hills in the south-west section of the city. Although it had different phases of (re)construction and expansion throughout its history, the outline of the sanctuary did not change dramatically over time. Since the aim of this chapter is to provide neither an archeological survey nor a discussion of the structure, my focus will be on the complexity of the space in which the Serapeum rested and its interaction with the surrounding environment. The sanctuary of Serapeum consisted of the Temple of Serapis, Library, South Building, T-shaped Building, Nilometer, and the Colonnaded court[107] (Figure 4). This complex nature of the sanctuary was emphasized along with its topographical position in the sources. Aphthonius, who was a Greek teacher of

[105] Rufinus asks "after the death of Serapis, who had never been alive, which temples of any other demon could remain standing?" See. Rufinus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 11.28, 475. Translation by Amidon. Theodoret interprets the destruction of the Serapeum as the death of Serapis and clearly puts the Serapeum on the highest place among other pagan temples. Aside from stressing its importance, Theodoret sees the destruction of the Serapeum as an initial and vital step of extinction of pagan buildings. Hence, the question itself would be enough to understand its symbolic value.

[106] McKenzie, Gibson, and Reyes, "Reconstructing the Serapeum in Alexandria from the Archeological Evidence", 73. On the Serapeum, see Hahn, "'Vetustus error extinctus est': Wann wurde das Sarapeion von Alexandria zerstört?", 368-383; Kenawi and Marchiori, "Excavations of the Serapeum", 95-124; Kessler and Hölbl, "Das hellenistische Serapeum in Alexandria und Ägypten in ägyptologischer Sicht", 163-230.

[107] For the buildings and archeological evidence, see McKenzie, Gibson, and Reyes, "Reconstructing the Serapeum in Alexandria from the Archeological Evidence".

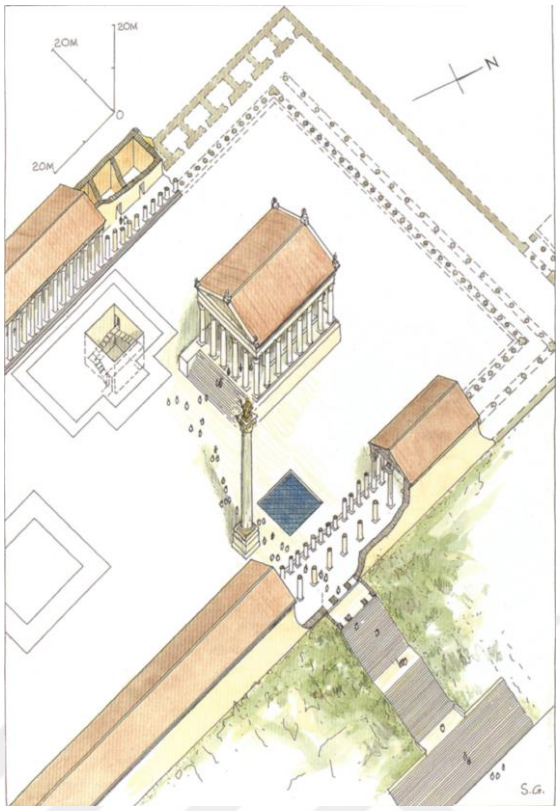

Figure 4. Axonometric reconstruction of Roman phase of the Serapeum after the column of Diocletion was erected in 298 CE. (S. Gibson). Source: McKenzie, Gibson, and Reyes, "Reconstructing the Serapeum in Alexandria from the Archeological Evidence", Plate 1.

rhetoric and a student of Libanius,[108] provides a relatively long description of the temple complex in his *Progymnasmata.* After comparing Athenian and Alexandrian *akropoleis*, he begins to describe the latter:

> "An *akra* projects up from the land, going up to a considerable height, and is called an "acropolis" for two reasons: because it is raised to a height and because it has been set on the high point of a city. Roads leading to this acropolis are not alike; for here there is an incline (*anodos*) and there an entrance way (*eisodos*). The roads change their names, being called by their function: here it is possible to go on foot and the way is public and a road for those going by carriage; on another side, flights of steps have been constructed where it is not possible for carriages to go. Flight of steps follows flight of step, always increasing from the lesser and leading upward, not ceasing until there have been a hundred steps; for the limit of a number is the end that reaches perfect measure.
> At the top of the stairs is a Propylaeon, enclosed by latticed gates of moderate height, and four very large columns rise up, providing several openings into one entrance passage. Above the columns stands the Oecus, fronted by many smaller columns which are not all of the same color, and when compared they

[108] Mckenzie, *The Architecture of Alexandria*, 199; see The *Oxford Dictionary of Late Antiquity*, s.v. "Aphthonius", 94.

add ornament to the design. The roof of the building rises in a dome, and around the dome is fixed a great memorial of things that are.
On going into the acropolis itself, one enters a single open space, bounded by four equal sides, and its figure is rather like that of a war machine (i.e., a hollow rectangle). In the middle is a courtyard, surrounded by a colonnade. Stoas continue the courtyard and the stoas are divided by equal columns, and as for their measure, it is the largest possible. Each stoa ends in another crosswise colonnade and a double column divides it from another stoa, one ending and the other beginning again. Small covered structures are built inside the stoas; some are reading rooms for books, offering an opportunity for the studious to pursue knowledge and arousing the whole city to the possibility of wisdom; others were built as shrines to the ancient gods. Gold adorns the roof of the stoas and the capitals of the columns are made of bronze, overlaid with gold. The decoration of the courtyard is not all the same; different parts were done differently. One part has a representation of the contests of Perseus. A column higher than the others stands in the middle, making the place conspicuous. A visitor, up to this point, does not known where he is going unless he uses this column as a sign of the ways. It makes the acropolis visible by both land and sea. The beginning of things are carved around the top of the column.
Before one comes to the middle of the courtyard there is a structure divided into two parts that serve for gates, which are named for the ancient gods. Two stone obelisks rise up and there is a fountain considered better than that of the Pisistratids. This marvel came into being as the work of an unbelievable number of designers; for as though one was not sufficient for the work, a total of twelve architects were seen. Coming down from the acropolis on one side one comes to a level place resembling a stadium, which has become the name of the place. On another side there is a place similarly divided but not of equal length. The beauty (of the acropolis) is greater than I can say, and if anything has been left out, this has been incidental to our wonder. It has been omitted because it was impossible to describe."[109]

The description of Aphthonius seems quite straightforward. His account does not include rhetorical expressions or complicated details.[110] However, the account is significant for us for many reasons. First, the description emphasizes the complex nature of the physical place. In other words, it provides information about the various buildings, structures and physical elements other than the temple itself, as shown by the sections that I made bold in the text above. Aphthonius demonstrates that the

[109] Aphthonius, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric*, 118-120. Translation by G.A. Kennedy.
[110] He also does not give any description of the temple himself. Kennedy comments that the last sentence of the narrative may "be taken as an excuse for failing to describe the temple and cult statue of the god Serapis." See ibid, 120, f.95. On the other hand, because Aphthonius sees the place almost from the eyes of the tourist, I find this descriptive nature of the text useful due to fact that it gives us an insight about how the space may have been perceived by a stranger.

physical dimension of the sacred space included stairs, columns, frescos, courtyard, stoas, shrines, reading rooms, obelisks and other buildings. Secondly, he underlines the visibility of the space by focusing on its topographic position. He writes that the Serapeum was built on a high point in the city and the acropolis was "visible by both land and sea". Third, the centrality and public nature of the space is apparent in his narrative. The author tells that the way to the sanctuary is public so that it enables people to interact with each other during visitations and ceremonial processions. Furthermore, he declares that the Serapeum was neighboring the Stadium, which was a place for huge crowds to come together. Finally, the author underlines the commemorative aspect of the space. The existence of commemorative elements along with decorative representations of Perseus clearly indicates that the space played a certain role in memory politics.

Another descriptive narrative of the Serapeum comes from *the Church History* of Rufinus of Aquileia. While he is presenting the story of the destruction, he leaves some space for the description of the Sanctuary:

> "I suppose that everyone has heard of the temple of Serapis in Alexandria, and that many are also familiar with it. The site was elevated, not naturally but artificially, to a height of a hundred or more steps, its enormous rectangular premises extending in every direction. All of [the rooms], mounting to the ceilings on the highest level, were vaulted, and with the lamps fitted up above and the concealed sanctuaries divided each from the other, showed how they were used for various services and secret functions. On the upper level, furthermore, the outermost structures in the whole circumference provided space for halls and shrines and for lofty apartments which normally housed either the temple staff or those called *hagneuontes*, meaning those who purify themselves. Behind these in turn were porticoes divided off from each other in rows to form a quadrangle which ran around the whole circumference on the inside. In the middle of the entire area was the sanctuary, outstanding for its precious columns, the exterior fashioned of marble, spacious and magnificent to behold. In it there was a statue of Serapis so large that its right hand touched one wall and its left the other; this monster is said to have been composed of every kind of metal and wood. The interior walls of the shrine were believed to have been covered with plates of gold

> overlaid with silver and then bronze, the last as a protection for the more precious metals."[111]

Like Aphthonius, Rufinus gives relatively detailed description of the Serapeum complex, i.e its topography, space, and elements. There is a great emphasis on the topographic position of the sanctuary. Rufinus repeats the elevated position of the space a few times. He underlines the complexity of the space by listing different spatial elements and buildings such as the sanctuary, steps, halls, shrines, rooms, columns and porticoes. More importantly, Rufinus paints a detailed picture of the esthetic and visual aspects of the Temple. In addition to Aphthonius, he talks about the main temple and the statue of Serapis. Ostentatious representation of the latter cannot go unnoticed. Furthermore,

> "There was a tiny window so orientated toward the direction of sunrise that on the day appointed for the statue of the sun to be carried in to greet Serapis, careful observation of the seasons had ensured that as the statue was entering, a ray of sunlight coming through this window would light up the mouth and lips of Serapis, so that to the people looking on, it would seem as though the sun were greeting Serapis with a kiss."[112]

Then he continues his narrative, "The image of the sun had been made by its artisan from the very thinnest iron with this in view: that a magnet, which, as we said, naturally attracts iron, and which was set in the ceiling panels, might by natural force draw the iron to itself when the statue was carefully placed directly beneath it, the statue appearing to the people to rise and hang in the air."[113] Although he represents these visual aspects of the architecture as cunning tricks in a negative way, it is natural to expect that these features would have affected the interaction between the space and the viewer, giving extra meaning and identity/memory to the space.[114]

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[111] Rufinus, *History of the Church*, 11.22, 466-467. Translation by Amidon.
[112] Ibid, 467.
[113] Ibid, 468.
[114] Audience is described in *The Exposito Totius Mundi et Gentium: Its Geography and Its Language*, 6, 35 as follows: "Temple keepers, priests and their assistance, diviners, devout worshippers, and highly religious people." Translation by Woodman. Although the text mentions limited audience, i.e

Hence, the Serapeum was not just a temple where people worshiped their deity and made sacrifices on the altar. On the contrary, the complex was a place where festivals were held, pagan intelligentsia assembled, secular monuments were erected, and people came and interacted with each other. Thanks to its library,[115] the complex became the intellectual center of the city by the end of the fourth century.[116] In other words, the sanctuary was a perfect public space that the powerful wanted to dominate. Before examining the literary accounts on the Serapeum, I want to justify my choice of this specific case.

As discussed earlier, public space is a meaningful territory, and people give meaning to it for its role in the social integration.[117] Places in memory should not be perceived as a literal place but a location within its wider environment and associations.[118] The Sanctuary of Serapeum was not only important religious center for the local Alexandrian, Egyptians, and worshipers across the Empire, but it was also the center of a cult that spread across the Mediterranean in Hellenistic and Roman periods.[119] It was a public place that attracted huge crowds to itself from different cultures, ethnicities, and languages to itself in antiquity. Therefore, with its long history, the complex of Serapeum was a valuable public space for both different power functions and individuals who wanted to build monuments, to commemorate their victories and achievements and to be remembered (or not to be forgotten).

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believers, the visibility of the complex from all sides of the city and cult-related activities such as processions and ceremonies that took place in public made it possible to reach wider audience. Thus, both interreligious and interregional audience is expected. For instance, detailed and vivid description of Rufinus demonstrates that the complex was not known to only local pagans of Alexandria.

[115] Ammianus Marcellinus mentions the existence of a library in the Serapeum. See *Res Gestae 22.13, 303: "*In this (the Serapeum) were invaluable libraries, and the unanimous testimony of ancient records declares that 700,000 books." I added the parenthesis. There is a reference to the library in *The Exposito Totius Mundi et Gentium: Its Geography and Its Language*, 6, 34.

[116] See Watts, *City and School in Late Antique Athens and Alexandria*, 145, 149-150.

[117] Rodman, "Empowering Place: Multilocality and Multivocality", 641.

[118] Price, "Memory and Ancient Greece", 17.

[119] McKenzie, Gibson, and Reyes, "Reconstructing the Serapeum", 73.

Hence, each party - Christian and pagan parties in our case - desired to give the complex an extra meaning that was meant to show the party's power and put there its eternal memory. The topography of the sanctuary shows that it already satisfied the given conditions in the light of the two sources mentioned above.

Furthermore, to show the importance of the Sanctuary of Serapeum as a public place, I can give an example from the secular sphere. Diocletian's column, or the so-called Column of Pompey, was erected in honor of Diocletian in 298 CE within the complex of the Serapeum after his victory over the Egyptian rebels.[120] On the base of the column, there is an inscription which states the names: "Publius, governor of Egypt, [set this up to] the most revered emperor, the guardian-god of Alexandria, Diocletion the invincible (?...)."[121]

Although the victory of Diocletian cannot be thought in the context of the cult of Serapis, the sanctuary was selected as a place where the victory and commemoration column/monument was to be erected (Figure 5). This example itself gives us a clear idea about the significance of the complex as a public place. The column could have been erected at the very center of the city. However, the Serapeum, located on the south-western section of the city, was selected by the political power as a place for commemoration. Furthermore, the Serapeum would be a perfect choice if you want to be remembered with your victory, to reach as many

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[120] Ibid, 99. For the date, see Vandersleyen, "Le préfet d'Égypte de la colonne de Pompée à Alexandrie", 113-134.

[121] Four survivng lines: τὸ[ν τι]μιώτατον Αὐτοκράτορα,
τὸ[ν] πολιοῦχον Ἀλεξανδρείας,
Διο[κλη]τιανὸν τὸν ἀν[ίκη]τον,
Πο̣ύ̣π[λιος] ἔπαρχος Αἰγύπτου

— — —(?)

Translation by Vandersleyen and reproduced with the suggestions by Kayser. See http://laststatues.classics.ox.ac.uk/database/discussion.php?id=1246. For the name of the prefect, see Vandersleyen, "Le préfet d'Égypte de la colonne de Pompée à Alexandrie", 113-134.

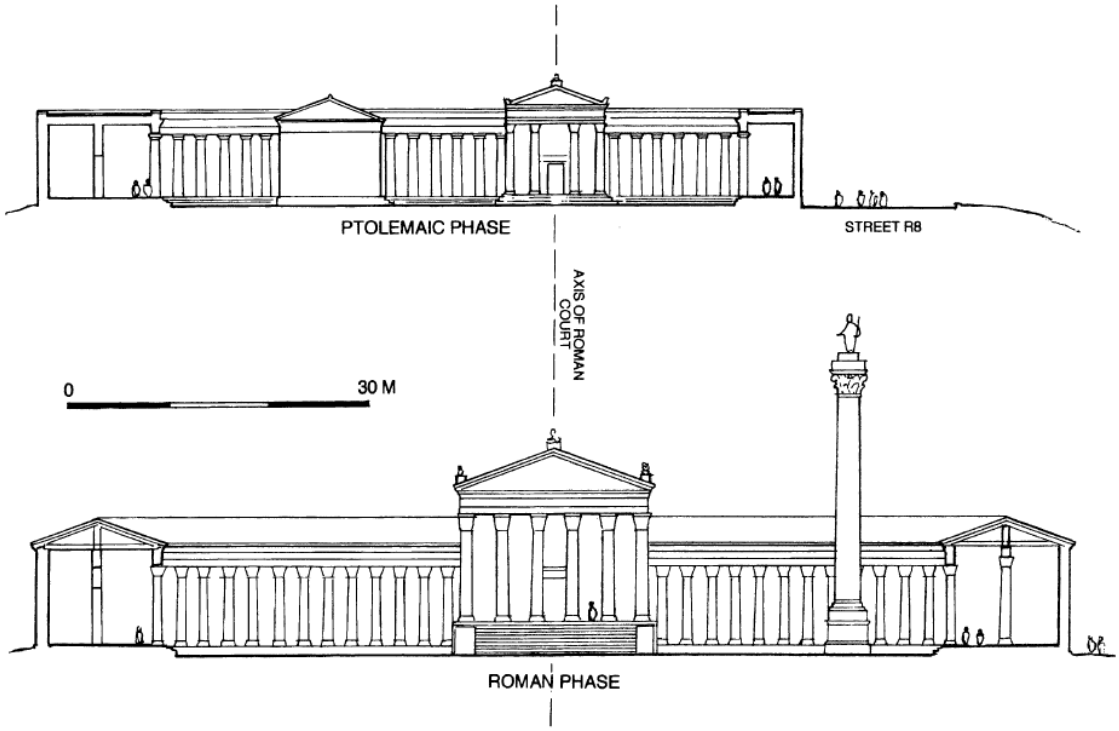

Figure 5: The Serapeum, West-East direction, facing North. (S. Gibson) Source: McKenzie, Gibson, and Reyes, "Reconstructing the Serapeum", 94.

people as possible in the region, and to be visible by the great portion of the city. Moreover, the sanctuary was neighboring the hippodrome where huge crowds gathered regularly. The sanctuary was located on the top of the hill, which could be seen from the lower parts of the city from every direction. Hence, the space provides a strategical position for the monument.[122] Lastly, the issue of naming is crucial for the memory studies. By inscribing the names on the monument, the intention of the emperor was to be remembered as a victor against the rebellious Egyptians in Alexandria. Although it is assumed that there was a statue of the emperor on the top

[122] Haas also points out this point: "the Serapeum commanded a wide view over the whole city, particularly the vicinity of the Western Harbor. It appears that Diocletian chose to erect his victory column on this elevation in order to exploit these topographical advantages," See Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity*, 28.

of the column,[123] the names of the governor and the emperor were inscribed to make sure that the monument could engage with the viewers. Even though the next generation would be possibly unfamiliar with the figure whom they saw on the top of the column, they would still read the name of the victor against the rebellious Egyptians. Therefore, as long as the column survived, both the victory and the name of the victor would not have been forgotten and the message of the political power to the local populations would have been exercised. In other words, it was an example of practicing power by using of memory politics. It is a way of declaring who the powerful is and its very presence. At this point, low rate of literacy of the period should be also noted. Although the inscriptions were read aloud, visual nature of the inscription - just as images – is the main bearer of the message and the medium of constructing memory in this case. Even though masses could read the inscription, they may have remembered the visual image and the identity of it as well as story behind the image through the oral tradition.

Until this point, we saw that late antique Alexandria witnessed conflicts between diverse groups. Since the pace of Christianization accelerated in this period, Christians seemed to play the major role in these confrontations. The cases of the murder of Hypatia and Jewish-Christian strife in early fifth century may give an opinion about the tense atmosphere in the city. Whether they were politically oriented or religiously, these confrontations can be seen as a power struggle to dominate and to exercise authority over the other. Considering the increasing power of Christianity (and naturally its religious leaders, the bishops), and the support of this new religion by the political authorities, Alexandria witnessed the transformation of its topography and civic identity. This gradual transformation can be traced in

[123] McKenzie, Gibson, and Reyes, "Reconstructing the Serapeum", 99.

written sources and archeological evidence as well. The destruction of the Serapeum was the natural result of the attempt to control the public space and the identity of Alexandria when we consider Serapeum's topographic position and symbolic value. The significance of the event was noticed by the ancient authors who did not stay silent and preferred to give an account of the destruction.

The Serapeum, the symbol of Alexandria's 'civic pride' in Dijkstra' words, held a special place in the narratives of both pagan and Christian writers.[124] The Serapeum's destruction in 391/392 CE[125] was one of the turning points in the process of Christianization of Alexandria, "an event of epoch-making character with respect both to Christianity and to paganism".[126] Since textual narrative is one of the four concepts (The other three being objects, places, and ritual behavior) through which memories are constructed,[127] our main focus will be examining the memory politics and its interaction/relationship with the space in our written sources independently from sources' reliability or historical accuracy. Indeed, the selective nature of memory allowed ancient writers to manipulate what to be remembered and forgotten according to their political positions, socio-economic conditions, religion, and their closeness to the central power.

Although there are some differences in the narratives, the major accounts on Serapeum's destruction are: *The Church Histories* of Rufinus of Aquileia, Socrates of Constantinople, Sozomen of Gaza, and Theodoret of Cyrrhus along with *Lives of*

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[124] The term is used by Dijkstra to define the Serapeum. See Dijkstra, "Crowd Behaviour and the Destruction of the Serapeum at Alexandria in 391/392 CE", 297.

[125] The exact date of the event remains unknown. Jerome says that his student, Sophronius, 'has recently written a significant book about the overthrowing of Serapis' as early as 392. However, we do not have Sophronius' work today. See Jerome, *De viris illustribus,* 134, trans. Richardson: *nuper de subversione Serapis insignem librum conposuit*. For further discussion, see "The 'Alexandrian World Chronicle': its Consularia and the date of the destruction of the Serapeum (with an appendix on the list of Prefecti Augustales)", 39–113.

[126] Hahn, "The Conversion of Cult Statues", 338.

[127] Price, "Memory and Ancient Greece", 17.

the Philosophers and Sophists by Eunapius. (For the excerpts from the late antique authors writing on the destruction of the Temple of Serapeum, see Appendix A). Eunapius, who lived in the second half of the fourth century, is the only pagan source consulted in this chapter. Therefore, we should seperate him from the other four. Moreover, he was a contemporary of the event. However, he barely describes the Serapeum and its destruction. Other four sources all come from church historians, which means that the reader will face a different picture than the one depicted by Eunapius. However, Rufinus distinguishes himself from others by being a contemporary and he is the one who gives the most detailed account on the destruction of the Serapeum. Socrates, Sozomen and Theodoret are the three church historians who wrote almost fifty years after the destruction of the Serapeum. All of them kept their Serapeum narratives relatively short in comparison to Rufinus. It must be noted that since they never saw the sanctuary before 391/2 CE, their memory was shaped by others. Therefore, they will give us a chance to examine what they were told, what they were forced to remember and forget by the people they interacted with and by the texts they read.

Making a spatial analysis of the written sources is necessary because (a) the events relating to the destruction of the Serapeum did not happen in one specific space but in many different locations and over a number of "stages", (b) there is a constant movement in the 'plot' as constructed in the written sources in question. In other words, our authors seem to apprehend the significance of spatiality in their constructed narratives.

We have seen that the ancient authors such as Rufinus and Aphthonius underline the topographically elevated position of the sanctuary. We encounter the issue of spatial level/elevation in our sources quite frequently. It appears in the form

of the dichotomy between ‘up’ and ‘down’. For instance, Theodoret says that “he [Theophilus] went up into the temple of Serapis, which has been described by some as excelling in size and beauty all the temples in the world.”[128] It is clear that Theodoret refers to its topographical position before he describes its beauty. Similarly, Eunapius writes that “those who were then pursuing their studies at Alexandria used to go down to him [Antoninus] to the seashore.”[129] So, we can deduce the elevated position of the city.

The accounts provide spatial information about the city’s landscape. For instance, Socrates thinks that the public exhibition of sacred objects which were taken from Mithreum was the reason behind the rage of the pagans that led to the events around the destruction of the Serapeum. Moreover, Socrates refers to the Forum in his account on the desacralization of the temple of the Mithraeum in the city:[130]

> “And to begin with, he caused the Mithreum to be cleaned out, and exhibited to public view the tokens of its bloody mysteries. Then he destroyed the Serapeum, and the bloody rights of the Mithreum he publicly caricatured; the Serapeum also he showed full of extravagant superstitions, and he had the phalli of Priapus carried through the midst of the forum.”[131]

As seen in the quotation above, Socrates shows us the efforts to control public space in the city.[132] The exhibition of the sacred objects in the Serapeum took place publicly; and the procession was held through the Forum, located on the urban center of the city, where huge crowds were expected to witness. This proves that not only the pagan sacred spaces but also the secular public spaces of the city were

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[128] Theodoret, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 5.22. Translation by Jackson.
[129] Eunapius, *Lives of the Philosophers and Sophists*, 419-421. Translation by Wright.
[130] Socrates Scholasticus, *The Ecclesiastical History*, 5.16, 234. Translation by Walford.
[131] Ibid.
[132] The cult of Mithras was one of the major challenges that Christianity faced in late antiquity. For more information, see Walsh, “The Cult of Mithras in Late Antiquity: Development, Decline and Demise ca. A. D. 270-430”, xii-145.

transformed into contested places. Moreover, Sozomen admits the existence of many temples in Alexandria, and he tells us the conversion of the temple of Dionysus:

> "About this period, the bishop of Alexandria, to whom the temple of Dionysus had, at his own request, been granted by the emperor, converted the edifice into a church."[133]

We can deduce that the phenomenon of conversion was not new. On the contrary, it was already visible before the destruction of the Serapeum. Aside from religious spaces, Socrates provides us an excellent example of controlling the secular public space. After sacred objects and images were captured and broken to pieces, one statue of Serapis was preserved by the bishop:

> "All the images were accordingly broken to pieces, except one statue of the god before mentioned, which Theophilus preserved and set up in a public place; 'Lest,' said he, 'at a future time the heathens should deny that they had ever worshiped such gods.'"[134]

It is possible to say that Christian party had a control over the public space and this statue of pagan god served as a victory monument. Similarly, Theodoret states that after Serapis was broken into pieces, "his head was carried through all the town in sight of his worshipers."[135] Finally, Rufinus sees the conversion of the Serapeum as a part of bigger program.

> "The dens of iniquity and age-worn burial grounds were demolished, and lofty churches, temples of the true God, were put up. For on the site of Serapis's tomb the unholy sanctuaries were leveled, and on the one side there rose a martyr's shrine, and on the other a church."[136]

Hence, one of the most symbolic public spaces of antiquity was given a new identity. While the space gained religious identity, the existence of martyr's shrine transforms the space into a meaningful territory for Christians. In other words, the word

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[133] Sozomen, The Ecclesiastical History, 7.15, 631. Translation by Hartranft.
[134] Socrates Scholasticus, *The Ecclesiastical History*, 5.16, 234. Translation by Walford.
[135] Theodoret, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 5.22. Translation by Jackson.
[136] Rufinus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 11.27, 474. Translation by Amidon, SJ.

‘martyrdom’ itself is related to memory by definition and its existence made the place memorial. It dictates the audience what to remember!

The passage of Rufinus shows us insights about the treatment of Christians towards burials and tombs of pagans. Actually, Rufinus gives us sufficient information about their faith. Christians did not only try to control everything above the ground, but also underground. After he narrates the replacement of Serapis’ tomb, he writes: “But after the death of Serapis, who had never been alive, …”[137] How can one who had never been alive have a tomb? The answer is clear: S/he cannot! So, Rufinus clearly implies that the tomb of Serapis was not real. On the other hand, he explains the journey of the relics of John the Baptist from Palestine to Alexandria. He gives an account of the bones’ purification and preservation processes.[138] It is not coincidence that he talks about the bones of the John immediately after the passage quoted above. He clearly wants to prove the very existence and reality of the relics of John the Baptist. Hence, according to Rufinus, the empty tomb was replaced by the tomb of John. In other words, there was not any tomb before, but now there was a real one. More interestingly, the passage where he tells how the bones of John were kept safe until that time shows us that Christians did not only capture the tombs of pagans but also they replaced and accommodated the pagan burial culture:

> “He [devout father Philip] in turn, thinking it beyond him to guard such a treasure by his own vigilance, sent the relics of this spotless victim to Athanasius, then supreme high priest, in the care of his deacon Julian, who later became bishop of Parentium. Athanasius received them and closed them up within a hollowed-out place in the sacristy wall in the presence of a few witnesses, preserving them in prophetic spirit for the benefit of the next generation, so that, now that the remnants of idolatry had been thrown down flat, golden roofs might rise for them on temples once unholy.”[139]

[137] Ibid, 11.28, 475.
[138] Ibid, 11.28, 474-475.
[139] Ibid.

Rufinus claims that the Christianization and conversion of spaces did not remain at the public sphere, but it even expanded to the private space:

> "Another thing was done in Alexandria: the busts of Serapis, which had been in every house in the walls, the entrances, the doorposts, and even the windows, were so cut and filed away that not even a trace or mention of him or any other demon remained anywhere. In their place everyone painted the sign of the Lord's cross on doorposts, entrances, windows, walls, and columns. It is said that when the pagans who were left saw this, they were reminded of an important matter which had been committed to them from of old. The Egyptians are said to have this our sign of the Lord's cross among the letters which they call "hieratic," or priestly, as one of the letters making up their script. They state that the meaning of this letter or noun is "the life to come." Those, then, who were coming over to the faith out of astonishment at what was happening said that it had been handed down to them from of old that the things now worshiped would remain until they saw that that sign had come in which there was life. Hence it was the former priests and ministers of the temples who came over to the faith rather than those entertained by the tricks of error and devices of deceit."[140]

The text demonstrates that Christianity began to dominate private space too. Christians tried to eradicate not only the pagan busts of Serapis along with their memory, but also to replace them by the cross. Moreover, Rufinus claims that even some of the pagan population itself converted to Christianity. Furthermore, an ancient Egyptian symbol was transformed into a Christian one.[141] According to Amidon, Rufinus refers to the *Ankh* symbol which meant life in Egyptian.[142] The Egyptian gods and goddesses were generally represented with the *Ankh.*[143] This Egyptian sacred symbol, which was often pictured in the hands of a divinity, was

[140] Ibid, 11.29, 475-476.
[141] Sozomen also mentions that there "were hieroglyphic characters in the form of a cross" on some stones. See Sozomen, The Ecclesiastical History, 7.15, 632. Translation by Hartranft. Socrates does not stay silent either. His narrative on Egyptian hieroglyphics is quite detailed and his claim over the Egyptian memory is apparent. He tells that "When the Temple of Serapis was torn down and laid bare, there were found in it, engraved on stones, certain characters which they call hieroglyphics, having the forms of crosses. Both the Christians and pagans on seeing them, appropriated and applied them to their respective religions: for the Christians who affirm that the cross is the sign of Christ's saving passion…" See Socrates Scholasticus, *The Ecclesiastical History*, 5.17, 235. Translation by Walford.
[142] Amidon, *History of the Church of Rufinus of Aquileia*, f.52, 476.
[143]Ibid.

given a new, Christian meaning. In other words, the collective memory of Egyptians was transformed.

Festivals and processions held significant place in antiquity. Whether it is religious or not, crowd activities were important due to their important role in shaping group identity and the collective memory. For instance, during religious festivals, which included processions that ended up at the altar of the temple, the group became more visible to the wider urban population. Moreover, processions can be seen as a showcase like triumphal processions to be used as a toll of displaying power. Such processions and public displays are very present in our sources. Sozomen mentions the procession of the pagan sacred objects for public display,[144] while Theodoret writes that the head of Serapis "was carried through all the town in sight of his worshippers, who mocked the weakness of him to whom they had bowed the knee."[145] The act can be evaluated in two ways. First, it can be seen as an attempt to dominate the public space. Secondly, it can be interpreted as a way to display power. In this case it symbolizes the triumph of the Christian God and the victory of the Christian party. In Rufinus' account, even the pagan ceremonies are adapted by the Christians:

> "Now it was the custom in Egypt to bring the gauge of the rising Nile River to the temple of Serapis, as being the one who caused the increase of water and the flooding; so when his statue was overthrown and burned, everyone of course unanimously declared that Serapis, mindful of this injury, would never again bestow the waters in their usual abundance. But so that God could show that it was he who ordered the waters of the river to rise in season, and not Serapis, who, after all, was much younger than the Nile, there began then such a succession of floods as never before recorded. And thus the practice began of bringing the measuring rod itself, or water gauge, which they call a *pechys,*[146] to the Lord of waters in the church. When these events were reported to the devout sovereign, he is said to have stretched out his arms to

[144]Sozomen, The Ecclesiastical History, 7.15, 631. Translation by Hartranft.
[145] Theodoret, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 5.22. Translation by Jackson.
[146] πῆχυς, unit of length

> heaven and exclaimed with great joy, "I thank you, Christ, that this age-old error has been demolished without harm to that great city!""[147]

As the passage clearly indicates, the church replaces the temple, and the Christian god replaces Serapis. The pagan ceremony was converted or rather captured by the Christians.

In short, what our sources tell us about Alexandria is that the gradual transformation of all aspects of the city was in full force in the late fourth/early fifth centuries. The power and sphere of influence of Christianity increased, the contested places multiplied. Every single part of the city, whether it was public or private, religious or secular, was contested in this period. Pagan symbols were becoming symbols for Christians. St John's tomb replaced the "empty" tomb, and the Christian processions replaced the pagan ones.

Moreover, Christian authors in question used space as a literary tool to comment on the nature of their religion and that of the pagans in their narratives. Rufinus writes as follows:

> "The pagans, therefore, when they saw the dens of their iniquity and caverns of their offenses being uncovered, could not bear to have these evils exposed, which long ages had covered and darkness had concealed, but began, all of them, as though they had drunk the serpents' cup to rave and rage openly."[148]

The emphasis on the uncovering of the chambers represents the ancient religion as a clandestine religion that needs to be revealed or exposed. This is a common theme in all *Church Histories:* For instance, Sozomen writes that

> "The statues were removed, the adyta[149] were exposed; and, in order to cast contumely on the pagan mysteries, he made a procession for the display of these objects; the phalli, and whatever other object had been concealed in the adyta which really was, or seemed to be, ridiculous, he made a public

[147] Rufinus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 11.30, 476. Translation by Amidon, SJ.
[148] Ibid. Translation by Amidon, SJ.
[149] It is an inner shrine, most sacred place, in Greek and Roman temples. It is prohibited space for the public.

> exhibition of. The pagans amazed at so unexpected an exposure, could not suffer in silence."[150]

Theodoret, on the other hand, tells how Theophilus exposed the secrets and trick behind the statues of pagan gods:

> "He exposed the tricks of the priests to the victims of their wiles. For they had constructed statues of bronze and wood hollow within, and fastened the backs of them to the temple walls, leaving in these walls certain invisible openings. Then coming up from their secret chambers they got inside the statues, and through them gave any order they liked and the hearers, tricked and cheated, obeyed. These tricks the wise Theophilus exposed to the people."[151]

Likewise, Rufinus puts emphasis on the secret nature of paganism, and mentions the existence of hidden grottoes, underground chambers and exposition of evils.

> "He [the bishop] received it and was setting about restoring it when some hidden grottoes and underground chambers were discovered on the site, which smacked more of lawlessness and crimes than of religious services. The pagans, therefore, when they saw the dens of their iniquity and caverns of their offenses being uncovered, could not bear to have these evils exposed, which long ages had covered and darkness had concealed,…"[152]

> "The wife [of Tyrannus] was locked inside in full view of everyone, and Tyrannus, once the doors were shut and the keys handed over, would depart. Then, when silence had fallen, he would make his way through hidden underground passages and creep right into the very statue of Saturn…"[153]

This passage would be given an example how the Christians pictured pagan sacred spaces: in contrast to the Christian sacred spaces, they are hidden and closed.[154] The author accepts publicity and openness as norms for Christianity, and he sets his narrative on the basis of this opposition. Hence, the Christian authors construct the pagan identity/memory in terms of spatial dichotomies between Christianity and paganism, such as closed-open, private-public, underground-rising to sky.

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[150] Sozomen, *The Ecclesiastical History*, 7.15, 631. Translation by Hartranft.
[151] Theodoret, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 5.22. Translation by Jackson.
[152] Rufinus of Aquileia, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 11.22, 463. Translation by Amidon, SJ.
[153] Ibid, 11.25, 471. Translation by Amidon, SJ.
[154] Ibid.

2.3 Serapeum and the memory politics of the authors

Until this point, we focused on the contestation over the topography of the city (the transformation of the sacred and civic public space as well as the private space) in order to understand the conversion of Alexandrian pagan identity and memory into a Christian one. So far, we have studied how space was employed in the narratives of our authors in order to construct a certain memory of the Serapeum and memory politics of the time (i.e. around 391, the date of the destruction of the Serapeum). These authors were concerned with the deeds of the actors and the role of the places involved in the events surrounding the Serapeum incidence in 391, as seen by our authors. However, there is also another memory, a memory preceding 391, the collective ancient Graeco-Roman and Judeo-Christian memory, which could be used to bolster our authors' presentation of the destruction of the Serapeum. I want to look at how Eunapius and Rufinus - as two representatives from the opposite poles – appealed to and manipulated the historical memory of their readers to present the Serapeum incidence from a specific perspective.

First, one should give an outline of central phases of the narrative of the destruction. Since all the Christian writers follow the same outline and because Rufinus' account is the longest and most detailed one among these four writers (although their accounts are different in tone, rhetoric and details), my summary will be based on Rufinus' account. According to Rufinus, the series of events began with the discovery of "some hidden grottoes and underground chambers."[155] The pagans were accused of using these recently discovered places for criminal and lawless acts rather than religious purposes. Pagans offended by these accusations, and they realized that their evil acts were exposed.[156] The tension between Pagan and

[155] Rufinus of Aquileia, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 11.22, 463.Translation by Amidon, SJ.
[156] Ibid.

Christian parties increased and the physical fight began with the attack of pagans so that "the two peoples were at open war."[157] Many Christians were wounded, some killed, and some were taken as hostages by the pagans. Then, the pagan party used the Serapeum as a kind of citadel considering that "they might defend their stronghold and maintain the usurpation."[158] They strengthened the sanctuary with barricades to increase their chance to resist. After it was understood that Christians had the support of the imperial power, Christians got the upper hand and one man set the statue of Serapis into parts, and the sacred elements of the sanctuary were dragged away piece by piece. Finally, the site was converted into a Christian space that then included a church and a martyr' shrine.

In *Lives of the Philosophers and Sophists,* Eunapius, who was an adherent of the ancient Roman religion, barely speaks about the Serapeum and its destruction. It should be underlined here that forgetting is also another face of remembering. Although they seem opposite to each other, forgetting is a kind of remembering. Furthermore, what is forgotten is as important as what is remembered, because both remembering and forgetting together constitute the memory politics. But we cannot say that Eunapius totally ignores this tragic event. He uses a different method in his narrative on the destruction of the temple. He explains the destruction of the temple of Serapis on the prophecy of a man, named Antoninus:

> "… he [Antoninus] foretold to all his followers that after his death the temple would cease to be, and even the great and holy temples of Serapis would pass into formless darkness and be transformed, and that a fabulous and unseemly gloom would hold sway over the fairest things on earth."[159]

After a few sentences, he shows how events unfolded as foretold by Antoninus:

> "For no sooner had he [Antoninus] left the world of men than the cult of the temples in Alexandria and at the shrine of Serapis was scattered to the winds, and not only the ceremonies of the cult but the buildings as well, and

[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid.
[159] Ibid, 417. Translation by Wright.

> everything happened as in the myths of the poets when the Giants gained the upper hand. The temples at Canobus also suffered the same fate in the reign of Theodosius, when Theophilus presided over the abominable ones like a sort of Eurymedon Who ruled over the proud Giants, and Evagrius was prefect of the city, and Romanus in command of the legions in Egypt."[160]

Here we notice that the destruction of the temple was pictured in the context of a divine scenario which was foretold by a devoted pagan and this man who as given prophecy by the Gods themselves. For the pagan community, the destruction happened under the initiation of the Gods rather than the Christians or the Christian God.

Furthermore, Eunapius rejects any confrontation between the pagans and the Christians contrary to what Rufinus tells.[161] In this way, he does not portray the Christian party as a victor, but a group of cowards and thieves.[162] He claims that pagans did not fight with Christians, rather Christians "fought so strenuously against the statues and votive offerings that they not only conquered but stole them as well."[163]

After Eunapius establishes this religious story (or rather memory), he lists the names of all the important people involved in the destruction from top to bottom. He gives the name of the emperor, the bishop, the prefect of the city, and even the commander. Although he neglects or chooses not to describe the phases of destruction, he is very generous when it comes to give names of the "wicked ones."[164] By doing that, he shifts the main point of the events from the agonizing destruction of the temple to the individuals who were responsible for what happened.

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[160] Ibid, 421-423. Translation by Wright.
[161] Rufinus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 11.22, 463-464.
[162] Eunapius, *Lives of the Philosophers and Sophists*, 423. Translation by Wright: "Whereby they won a victory without meeting a foe or fighting a battle. In this fashion they fought so strenuously against the statues and votive offerings that they not only conquered but stole them as well, and their only military tactics were to ensure that the thief should escape detection."
[163] Ibid, 423.
[164] It must be noted that there is not a single pagan name that engages with the affairs of destruction.

Moreover, he intentionally refers to the ancient Greek past, more specifically the past as reconstructed by Homer, when he mentions the bishop and its Christian community, although he does not refer to any character from ancient Greek mythology when he talks about the emperor, the prefect, and the commander. In his narrative, he sets a parallelism between Eurmedon[165] and Theophilus, the bishop of Alexandria. In this case, Christian community becomes the giants, namely the ones who fought against Olympian gods in *Gigantomachy*. Therefore, Eunapius constructs the memory of Theophilus and Christians quite successfully in the eyes of the educated pagans who read Homer and knew all the story.

In a similar vein but from an opposite perspective, Rufinus, a Christian and a Church historian, begins his narrative with the uncovering of the secret under-ground chambers of the pagans in the Serapeum[166] and continues with the reaction of the pagans:

> "The pagans, therefore, when they saw the dens of their iniquity and caverns of their offenses being uncovered, could not bear to have these evils exposed, which long ages had covered and darkness had concealed, but began, all of them, as though they had drunk the serpents' cup to rave and rage openly."[167]

The major point to focus on in the narrative of Rufinus is his depiction of pagans drinking from Serpent's cup "to rage openly"[168] Rufinus constructs a religious identity/memory on the pagans by referring to the New Testament. In the letter to Corinthians, St. Paul establishes a dichotomy between the Gentiles sacrificing to the devils and drinking from the cup of devils versus good

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[165] He is the king of the Giants who brought destruction to his own people as well as to himself. It is told that "Nausithous at the first was born from the earth-shaker Poseidon and Periboea, the comeliest of women, youngest daughter of great-hearted Eurymedon, who once was king over the insolent Giants. But he brought destruction on his froward people, and was himself destroyed." Odyssey 7.56-61. Translation by Murray.
[166] Rufinus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 11.22, 463.
[167] Ibid. Translation by Amidon, SJ.
[168] Rufinus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 11.22, 463. Translation by Amidon, SJ.

Christians.[169] Rufinus continuously pictures pagans as the secret group that hides in the dark and always filled with rage, anger, and eagerness to fight. They wield weapons[170] and are always eager to fight. Furthermore, they take refugees in the temple and force Christians to make sacrifices on the altars.[171] It is clear that he defines the pagans as ungodly figures engaging in the worship of devils, human sacrifice, and violence. According to Rufinus, although Christians exceeded pagans in numbers, Christians tried to be peaceful against all the aggression of the pagan party.[172] Rufinus' choice of vocabulary and narrative technique until this point does not give a vivid and accurate picture of the events, but they provide us with an insight into the process of otherization during late antiquity, when the tension between the two parties were in its peak. In other words, we witness how educated Christians established an image of pagans just a few generations after the destruction of the Serapeum. Since church histories were meant to be read by future generation of Christians, we see how the memory of the next generation was shaped by the authors in question. We also see, maybe more importantly, how Rufinus created his own identity as an individual and Christians as a group. In other words, while he was

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[169] 1 Cor. 20-21: "But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils." King James version. Amidon notices the parallelism. See Amidon, *History of the Church of Rufinus of Aquileia*, f.38, 463.

[170] Rufinus of Aquileia, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 11.22, 463.

[171] Ibid. "As a result, when many of ours had been wounded repeatedly, and some even killed, [the pagans] took refuge in a temple as a sort of stronghold… they forced to offer sacrifice on the altars which were kindled; those who refused they put to death with new and refined tortures…" Translation by Amidon, SJ.

[172] Dijkstra discusses this phenomenon and points out that Rufinus' construction of the story is problematic: "This also appears from how they fight: the 'pagans' are aggressive but the Christians, even though they have the numbers, are 'less violent by religious restraint'. Moreover, when the 'pagans' retreat to the Serapeum they commit the very crimes that their ancestors had committed in the discovered underground places with which it all began. Given that Rufinus clearly constructs his story here in 'pagan'–Christian terms, we should be careful in taking these remarks too literally." See: Dijkstra, "Crowd Behaviour and the Destruction of the Serapeum at Alexandria in 391/392 CE", 297. For this chapter, we do not interest in its historical accuracy, but the narrative itself. So, its problematic nature, i.e constructing a story, is even better for the memory studies.

defining the other, he was defining himself as a natural result of the otherization process.

If we compare Eunapius' and Rufinus' representations of the other, we can state that both of them construct religious memory while defining the other. While Eunapius draws an analogy between Theophilus and Eurmedon and between Christians and giants; Rufinus draws a parallelism between pagans and the devil. For Eunapius, Eurmedon (Theophilus) was the king who fought against the gods and lost the battle. When he was sent to Tartarus, the Giants (Christians) followed their king/leader into the battle against the gods and they were destroyed. On the other hand, for Rufinus, the Devil rebelled against the God and lost the heavenly battle. Therefore, he was banished from heaven and sent into exile to hell. The followers of the Devil (pagans) were condemned to be 'destroyed' in the afterlife. It is striking to see the analogy between these two analogies!

One important point must be noticed in the narrative of Rufinus on the Serapeum. In spite of the fact that he gives the name of the chosen leader of pagans, philosopher Olympus,[173] he avoids giving any names of the Christian party. Neither the name of the emperor,[174] nor the names of the bishop, the governor and the commander is given in his narrative. On the other hand, Theodoret, one of the three Christian writers on the Serapeum, gives the name of the bishop of the time, unlike Rufinus. Theodoret gives not only the name of Theophilus the bishop but also the names of the three Alexandrian bishops preceding Theophilus.[175] Not only Theodoret

[173] Rufinus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 11.22.

[174] He does not name the contemporary emperor but refers imperial power as 'Roman Government'. Rufinus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 11.22, 464.

[175] "The illustrious Athanasius was succeeded by the admirable Petrus, Petrus by Timotheus, and Timotheus by Theophilus, a man of sound wisdom and of a lofty courage. By him Alexandria was set free from the error of idolatry; for, not content with razing the idols' temples to the ground, he exposed the tricks of the priests to the victims of their wiles." Theodoret, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 5.22. Translation by Jackson.

celebrates the religious authority rather than imperial power as Rufinus, but also he commemorates the bishops who were not even part of the event, except Theophilus. This shows that Theodoret saw as paramount the sovereignty of the religious seat rather than the individuals. Differently from Rufinus and Theodoret, Socrates puts the imperial seat over the religious one in the hierarchy.[176] Therefore, he gives the biggest credit to the emperor for the destruction of the pagan temples so that he reminds reader that the main champion was the emperor and Theophilus did what he was ordered. Sozomen also clearly underlines that political power, namely emperor, favored the Christian party and not just the religious authority, the bishop, but also central authority played an active role in Christianization of public space of Alexandria. We cannot give any verdict as to why some of the writers who wrote on the destruction of the Temple much later chose to foreground the imperial/secular power as the main protagonist while others chose the religious figures. One should engage in the detailed examination of the *ouvre* of these writers individually and study their political allegiances and literary patronage structures in order to find an answer to this question.

Finally, both sides saw the destruction of the Temple as a crucial turning point. According to Eunapius, the destruction of the Temple was the judgement of the divine and it was foreseen by Antoninus who is pictured as a 'holy man' by Eunapius. After the death of Antoninus, "the shrine of Serapis was scattered to the winds, and not only the ceremonies of the cult but the buildings as well, and

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[176] He was born in Constantinople and lived in the same city. Since he was close to central authority, it is expected to hear the voice of the capital in his work. See P. Schaff and H. Wace, "Introduction", in *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 2, Socrates, Sozomenus: Church Histories,* xiii-ix.
"At the solicitation of Theophilus bishop of Alexandria the emperor issued an order at this time for the demolition of the heathen temples in that city; commanding also that it should be put in execution under the direction of Theophilus. Seizing this opportunity, Theophilus exerted himself to the utmost to expose the pagan mysteries to contempt." Socrates, *The Ecclesiastical History*, 5.16, 126. Translation by Zenos.

everything happened as in the myths of the poets when the Giants gained the upper hand."[177] The Christian writers see the destruction of the Serapeum as the victory of the Christians, defining the destruction as a milestone in the development of Christianity and in the building up of the memory on the Christian past. When Rufinus concludes his narrative of overthrowing of the temple, he portrays this victory as a total defeat for the pagans in Alexandria. He writes "that was the end of the vain superstition and ancient error of Serapis."[178] He adds:

> "Once the very pinnacle of idolatry had been thrown down, all of the idols, or rather monstrosities, throughout Alexandria were exposed to the same kind of destruction and similar disgrace through the efforts of its most vigilant priest. The mind shudders to speak of the snares laid by the demons for wretched mortals, the corpses and the crimes uncovered in what they call "shrines," the number of decapitated babies' heads found in gilded urns, the number of pictures of the excruciating deaths of poor wretches."[179]

His reference to the destruction of idolatry in the quotation above may be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, he may have exaggerated the consequences of the event and tried to give extra meaning to the destruction of the most important cultural center for the ancient religion in Alexandria. He evaluated the situation as the fall of the last stronghold of pagan party and he declared Christianity's final victory over paganism. On the other hand, he may have been implicitly referring to the Code of Theodosius I of 391, which forbade pagan worship.[180] However,

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[177] Eunapius, *Lives of the Philosophers and Sophists*, 421. Translation by Wright.
[178] Ibid, 11.23, 469.
[179] Rufinus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 11.24, 470-471. Translation by Amidon.
[180] *C.Th*. 16.10.11, 473: "The same Augustus to Evagrius, Augustal Prefect, and Romanus, Count of Egypt. No person shall be granted the right to perform sacrifices; no person shall go around the temples; no person shall revere the shrines. All persons shall recognize that they are excluded from profane entrance into temples by the opposition of Our law, so that if any person should attempt to do anything with reference to the gods or the sacred rites, contrary to Our prohibition, he shall learn that he will not be exempted from punishment by any special grants of imperial favor. If any judge also, during the time of his administration, should rely on the privilege of his power, and as a sacrilegious violator of the law, should enter polluted places, he shall be forced to pay into Our treasury fifteen pounds of gold, and his office staff a like sum, unless they opposed him with their combined strength. . . Given on the sixteenth day before the kalends of July at Aquilera in the year of the consulship of Tatianus and Symmachus. -June I6, 391." Translation by Pharr.

although the code banned all the visible pagan activities, it did not order the destruction of all the pagan temples. Therefore, in any case, what Rufinus does is to emphasize the critical role of the destruction of the Serapeum and to strengthen the memory of the event itself. Later he uses the motifs of babies to demonize the pagan party even more. In the same manner, as Theodoret finishes his narrative, he claims that "Thus all over the world the shrines of the idols were destroyed."[181] By making this statement, he aims at nothing but glorifying the Christian victory, and convincing the reader that the destruction of the Serapeum was a turning point in the battle between Christianity and the followers of the ancient religion.

[181] Theodoret, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 5.22. Translation by Jackson.

CHAPTER 3

POWER AND MEMORY IN THE ALTAR OF VICTORY IN ROME

3.1 Spatiality of the civic activities in Rome

We are lucky, as modern historians, to be able to look at the past from a distance and to compare material evidence and written sources from various geographies and different times. This enables us to observe broader trends and consequently to be aware of transformations. However, it does not mean that contemporary people were not aware of the changes. Indeed, historians of the late antique period who recognized ongoing transformations in many aspects of life. Nevertheless, since the majority of the late Roman authors belonged to the upper classes, which allowed them access to the historical sources. Additionally, they had close ties with political and religious circles, which involved them more in the decision-making processes, where they could perceive the long-term changes better than the masses. That is why I emphasize the transformation of the public space, because ordinary people could see the changes most clearly in public spaces. Since the structural changes were slow and gradual, one lifetime of an ordinary citizen would not been enough to observe the larger trends, unless s/he was able to read literary works, which was unlikely. Although we stated that late antiquity was a period of gradual transformations, topographical transformations happen relatively quickly. Physical changes in urban environment can attract the attention of habitants in a very short period of time. Historical or rather 'meaningful' public space has a memory and changes in that space may result in reactions from particular groups. This is what we witnessed in the example of famous Serapeum. Now, I want to leave the eastern part of the Empire and move to the West, namely Rome.

We cannot emphasize enough the political, cultural, religious and historical significance of the city of Rome for the Empire. For a long time, the city served as a capital and never lost her political, religious and cultural importance for the Mediterranean world. Until the fourth century, Rome was still the largest and wealthiest city of the empire.[182] Even though Rome was no more the capital of the empire by the fourth century, she maintained her identity and importance especially in the West.

Because Christianity was flourishing throughout the empire, especially with the support of the imperial authorities, it began to dominate the topography and consequently attempted to change the civic/pagan identity of the Roman cities. Rome was no exception to this trend. Machado rightly points out that this period played a vital role in reshaping the identity of the city.[183] In other words, "the pagan traditions lost space in the public life of the city."[184] By the 370s, not all senators were pagan.[185] This means that there was a Christian existence in the political body of Rome in the fourth century. It is natural to expect some disputes between the pagans and Christian central authority over the control of the symbolically significant public spaces. The removal of the Altar of Victory and its restoration again and again represent one of the well-known confrontations in fourth century Rome. Because the confrontation involved the pagan prefect of Rome, the bishop of Milan and the Christian emperor(s),[186] the conflict can be seen as (a.) a confrontation between

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[182] Machado, *Urban Space and Aristocratic Power in Late Antique Rome: AD 270-535*, 4.
[183] Ibid, 7.
[184] Ibid, 8. Further, for the Christianization of the city of Rome and especially the Christianization of the Roman aristocracy, see Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital: Rome in the Fourth Century*; Salzman, *The Making of a Christian Aristocracy: Social and Religious Change in the Western Roman Empire;* Cameron, A., *The Last Pagans of Rome*; Brown, "Aspects of the Conversion of the Roman Aristocracy", 1-11.
[185] Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350-55- AD*, 103.
[186] Although *Relatio 3* of Symmachus and *Letters 17* and *18* of Ambrose were addressing the emperor Valentinian II, there were also previous reveals as well.

paganism and Christianity, (b.) a debate between two intellectual and powerful individuals, (c.) a polemic between the central power and the senatorial class.[187] The multifaceted nature of the confrontation makes it a subject of a hot topic of debate among modern historians. Cameron sees this dispute as a debate between the leading pagans and the leading Christians rather than a debate between Christianity and paganism. He claims that there is not an ancient source which refutes his position. He concludes that the removal of the Altar was the concern of "pagan senatorial circles" rather than pagan population of Rome.[188] Salzman also claims that the Altar remained an issue among Roman elite circles through the end of the century.[189] According to this view, Symmachus' arguments and thoughts in his *Relatio 3* do not reflect the opinions of the pagan community in Rome; furthermore, Symmachus' main concerns were not based on religious but senatorial tradition. On the other hand, Clemente proposes a different picture. He states that religion of the aristocrats was already part of the religious tradition of Roman people they took part in.[190] Thus, this religion includes rituals, ceremonies and civic activities which were indispensable for the "Roman way of life."[191] Hence, "to consider Rome without the

[187] Actually, the modern debate in question evolves around the major question of whether there was a pagan revival or not in the fourth century. Cameron's deconstructive book *The Last Pagans of Rome* rejects the 'romantic' narrative of 'last pagan stance' in the fourth century. For more in this view, see Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome*. For the contrary view, see Clemente, "Introduction", in *The Strange Death of Pagan Rome: Reflections on a Historiographical Controversy*, ed. R. Lizzi Testa, Brepols, 2013, pp. 13-29. Introduction would be beneficial with its bibliography but the rest of the chapters of the book also discuss the same topic. P. Brown also criticizes the approach of Cameron that takes Symmachus at face value. See Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle*, 98. Also see Bloch, "A New Document of the Last Pagan Revival in the West",199-244; Momigliano, *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century*; Gwynn, "The 'End' of Roman Senatorial Paganism, 135-161.
[188] Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome*, 40.
[189] Salzman, xxxiii.
[190] Clemente, "Introduction", in *The Strange Death of Pagan Rome: Reflections on a Historiographical Controversy*,16.
[191] Ibid.

official rites, the priests, the ceremonies, was unthinkable for this people, it would have been equal to denying their identity."[192]

Additionally, Cameron underlines the economic aspect of the fourth century debate, namely withdrawal of subsidies with special reference to the *Vestals.* He bases his opinion on this public funding of pagan practices during his analysis of the two sources.[193] I do not reject or underestimate the economic aspect of the debate; however, religious context of the debate should not be ignored. As Clemente points out, civic identity of Symmachus cannot be thought without pagan traditions, in other words, they are interconnected. From a different perspective, the withdrawal of the funds for pagan priesthoods - the Vestal Virgins - can be read as a decline in pagan public activities, such as rites, ceremonies, and festivals. In this context, it can be seen as an attempt not only to weaken the power of pagan authorities in Rome, but also to dominate the public space indirectly. In other words, it reduces the visibility of pagan activities, and changes the identity of the city.

We should start our examination by making a distinction between the Altar and the Statue of Victory. Cassius Dio writes:

> "After finishing this celebration [after the victory at Actium against Cleopatra and Marcus Antonius in 31 BCE] Caesar dedicated the temple of Minerva, called also the Chalcidicum, and the Curia lulia, which had been built in honour of his father. In the latter he set up the statue of Victory which is still in existence, thus signifying probably that it was from her that he had received the empire. It had belonged to the people of Tarentum, whence it was now brought to Rome, placed in the senate-chamber, and decked with the spoils of Egypt."[194]

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[192] Ibid.

[193] See Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome*, 33-51. For instance, he says "Subsidies were the real issue", 46.

[194] Cassius Dio, 51.22, 63. Translation by Earnest Cary.

The Altar, on the other hand, was dedicated in the Senate House by Augustus on August 28, 29 BCE.[195] Some historians claims that the removal of the Altar did not necessarily mean the removal of the Statue.[196] However, there are also some who argues that the Altar and Statue were naturally associated and there is no reason to believe that they were treated differently.[197] Neither the Altar nor the Statue survived. Our sources on both are very limited. Therefore, I cannot make a judgement about whether their faith followed the same path, but I cannot deny the strong tie between the two. Both the Altar and the Statue were dedicated to the same goddess and were placed in the same place. However, they fulfilled different functions. While the Altar was more associated with religious rituals, the Statue was more related to commemoration. The statues are important markers especially in transitional periods. d'Annoville states that "statues became markers of a society in transition, and they allow us to observe their complex relationship with tradition and the past";[198] he emphasizes the validity of this claim for Rome.[199] Luckly, we have a description of the statue by Christian poet Prudentius:

> "If any of these qualities are missing in those who fight, although golden Victory unfolds her shining wings in her marble temple and rises on high, a work of great expense, she will not be with them and when their spears are turned in retreat she will seem to be offended. Why, O soldier, distrusting in your own strength, do you furnish yourself with the useless comfort of a feminine form? Never did an iron-clad legion see a winged girl who guided the weapons of panting men. Do you look for the lady who conquers? It is the right hand of each man and Almighty God, not a wild woman with her hair all combed, lifted up, with bare feet, wearing a head-band, and covering her swelling breasts with the flowing folds of her garments."[200]

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[195] Pohlsander, "Victory: The Story of a Statue", 590. An inscription, *Fasti Maffeiani*, informs us: "On this day the altar of Victory in the senate-house was dedicated." Translation by Ehrenberg and Jones.
[196] Pohlsander, "Victory: The Story of a Statue", 588-597.
[197] Mazzarino, *Il Basso Impero: Antico, Tardoantico ed Era Constantiana*, 351-357. Also see D'Annoville, "Rome and Imagery in Late Antiquity: Perception and Use of Statues", 352. Caseau argues that both the statue and the altar were removed but later the statue was restored and stayed in the Senate House. However, the statue was honored as a secular symbol without permission to any offerings. Hence, it was desacralized. See Caseau, "Sacred Landscapes", 30.
[198] D'Annoville, "Rome and Imagery in Late Antiquity", 345.
[199] Ibid.
[200] Prudentius, *Contra Symmachum*, 2. 27-38, 34. Translation by Brown.

If we believe Prudentius, the statue in question looked like the Statue of Victory in the National Archeological Museum at Naples (Figure 6) and its height is estimated at seven to eight meters.[201]

Figure 6. Statue of Victory in National Archeological Museum at Naples. Source: Pohlsander, "Victory: The Story of a Statue", 592.

On the other hand, we are more informed about the Altar. Herodian writes that each senator paid homage to the altar and offered prayers and took oaths for the welfare of the empire and the emperor:[202]

[201] Pohlsander, "Victory: The Story of a Statue", 591.
[202] See Sheridan, "The Altar of Victory: Paganism's Last Battle", 187; Pohlsander, "Victory: The Story of a Statue" 591-592.

> "Heliogabalus sent this picture to Rome to be hung in the center of the Senate House high above the statue of Victory before which each senator burns frankincense and pours a libation of wine upon entering the chamber. He directed all Roman officials who perform public sacrifices to call upon the new god Heliogabalus before all the other gods whom they invoke in their rites. By the time the emperor came to Rome presenting the appearance described above, the Romans saw nothing unusual in it, for the painting had prepared them for what to expect."[203]

The historical importance of the Altar comes from its two main functions: religious and political. The ritual aspect of the Altar makes it a 'meaningful' space. In other word, repetition of activities for a long time gives it a history, i.e. memory. Moreover, although it seems that each senator takes part in the ritual individually, the construction of collective memory among the body of senators who performed the activity also should be noted. The Altar served as a mediator between the empire and Rome, the emperor and the senators.

Riegl explains this phenomenon as follows: " A monument in its oldest and most original sense is a human creation, erected for the specific purpose of keeping single human deeds or events [...] alive in the mind of future generations."[204] Similarly, Caves advocates that the idea of the monument is closely tied to commemoration historically.[205] In our case, it is reasonable to accept the sacred bound between the Statue and the Altar.[206] The former served as a commemoration, while the latter was more reactive and transformed the commemoration of the victory over Cleopatra into a group activity. So, they can be considered as a complement to

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[203] Herodian, *History of the Roman Empire*, 5.5.7, 145. Translation by Echols.
[204] Riegl, *Der modern Denkmalkultus, seine Wesen und seine Entstehung*, 117.
[205] Caves, *Encyclopedia of the city*, 318.
[206] There is no consensus among scholar about the exact place of the statue and the altar in the Senate House. Herodian clearly states that the altar was located on the middle of the building (5.5.7). However, some scholars argue that both were placed at the entrance, while others advocate that the altar was located at the entrance but the statue was placed at the end of the hall. See d'Annoville, "Rome and Imagery in Late Antiquity", n.18, 348; Bartoli, *Curia Senatus: Lo Scavo e il Restauro, I Monumenti Romani III.* Presenting another view, Bond argues that there was probably a statue of Victory outside the Senate House and there was another statue of Victory in the Senate House. See Bond, "Curial Communiqué: Memory, Propaganda, and the Roman Senate House", 89.

each other. The commemoration was the traditional function of the monuments since the beginning. Moreover, we should always keep in mind that we cannot think the monument and the space it occupied separately. Only that way we can truly interpret the true function of the monument and the messages that are conveyed or aimed to be conveyed by the construction. For that purpose, I want to focus on the topography where the Altar[207] was placed, beginning with the Senate House.

The Senate House, *Curia Julia*, too had a commemorative meaning from the beginning. It was completed by young and victorious Augustus in 29 BCE and it played a significant role in the broader propaganda program of the new emperor, who wanted to advertise his role as a 'restorer of the republic.'[208] Therefore, the place itself created an unbreakable bond with the senatorial elites, traditional republican values and the central authority, namely emperor. Caseau's claim that the Senate House was a place "where religious piety and fate of the republic had been combined" supports this view.[209] The identity of the place and the things that it reminded must have been quite significant so that it was restored by the fascist leader Mussolini in 1939. As Bond points out, this restoration and the display of it install an association between Mussolini and the emperor Augustus and would further articulate the relationship between Mussolini and the Italian senate."[210] His usage as a site of memory even in twentieth century clearly demonstrates the significance and the strength of the place in terms of civic identity of the city of Rome. I use the word place rather than the building purposefully because it must be evaluated with its decorations, statues, and topographical position. Indeed, the strategic position of the

[207] From this point on, I will not separate the altar and the statue; thus, I will simply call them altar of Victory.
[208] Bond, "Curial Communique: Memory, Propoganda, and the Roman Senate House", 84.
[209] Caseau, "Sacred Landscapes", 29. She also states that the removal of the Altar was the symbolic desacralization of the state. Idib.
[210] Ibid.

Senate House, being at the intersection of the *Via Argiletum* and the *Via Sacra* in the Forum Romanum,[211] and its complex role as a center of both political and religious authorities gave the place extra visibility and centrality within the broader topography of power.[212]

De Architectura of Vitrivius would give us an insight about the building program and importance of public buildings as a reflection of Rome's power. In his preface, he writes:

> "But when I saw that you were giving your attention not only to the welfare of society in general and to the establishment of public order, but also to the providing of public buildings intended for utilitarian purposes, so that not only should the State have been enriched with provinces by your means, but that the greatness of its power might likewise be attended with distinguished authority in its public buildings…"[213]

From the start, Vitrivius admits that public buildings are not just physical buildings but they have a potential to convey messages of the powerful. Later, when he talks about the Senate House, he puts the emphasis on the complexity of the structure and its topographical position as well as its special position within the broader urban complex:

> "The treasury, prison, and senate house ought to adjoin the forum, but in such a way that their dimensions may be proportionate to those of the forum. Particularly, the senate house should be constructed with special regard to the importance of the town or city. If the building is square, let its height be fixed at one and one half times its breadth; but if it is to be oblong, add together its length and breadth and, having got the total, let half of it be devoted to the height up to the coffered ceiling."[214]

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[211] Kalas, "Sacred Image, Urban Space: Image, Installations, and Ritual in the Early Medieval Roman forum", 262.
[212] Bond, "Curial Communique", 85.
[213] Vitruvius, *De Architectura*, pref. 2. Translation by Morris Hicky Morgan.
[214] Ibid, 5.2.1. Translation by Morris Hicky Morgan. "*Maxime quidem curia in primis est facienda ad dignitatem municipii sive civitatis.*" Since the words dignitas and civitas are important for my analysis, I add the translation by Bond: "Particularly the senate house should be made with special concern to the dignitas of the municipium or the civitas." Bond, "Curial Communique", 89.

In a way, he sets up a connection between different public buildings to emphasize harmony among them. It is another way to underline the position of the Senate House in a broader framework. In this way he lays stress on the complexity of public space which consisted of not one but many buildings. On the other hand, he distinguishes the Senate House from the rest, and underlines its significant role by showing its connection with the *dignitas* of the *civitas*.[215] Although some of its paintings and honorific statues were destroyed later, the Senate House continued to be an important location in late antiquity.[216] Considering the absence of the emperors in Rome during the period, the Senate House played "a pivotal part in spatially mediating the ritual relationship between the senate and the emperor."[217] Ammianus Marcellinus writes that Constantius II visited the Senate House during his visit to Rome, and gave a speech there:

> "So then he entered Rome, the home of empire and of every virtue, and when he had come to the Rostra, the most renowned forum of ancient dominion, he stood amazed; and on every side on which his eyes rested he was dazzled by the array of marvellous sights. He addressed the nobles in the senate-house and the populace from the tribunal…"[218]

While emperor's visit to the Senate House shows that the centrality or rather the power of the place had not diminished by 357 CE, the vivid description of the Forum and its environment shows the centrality and visibility of the topography on which the Senate House, and naturally the Altar of Victory, stood.

At this point, we need to take a step further away from the Senate House for a clearer picture of the topographical setting. The Roman Forum was one the most central public spaces in Rome where the masses met, engaged, and interacted with each other, and attended public activities (Figure 7). Especially, the space had an

[215] Bond, "Curial Communique", 88-89.
[216] Ibid, 91-93.
[217] Ibid, 93.
[218] Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, 16.10.13. Translation by Rolfe.

Figure 7. The Roman Forum and Forum of Caesar. Source: Ulrich, *The Roman Orator and the Sacred Stage: The Roman Templum Rostratum*, 77.

extra importance for the aristocratic class, because it was the place that witnessed the celebrations. These processions were held through *Sacra Via* to the *Curia*.[219] Also it must be emphasized at this point that the Forum included several commemorative elements like the Senate House such as statues and inscriptions. Machado states that the honorific and victory dedications "were concentrated in specific areas: along the

[219] Machado, *Urban Space and Aristocratic Power*, 109.

Sacra Via (especially between the so-called Temple of Romulus and the entrance to the Forum), in front of the Curia, and near the Basilica Iulia."[220] We already discussed the complexity of the place in relationship to the Senate House. Now, this broader perspective enables us to determine the complexity of the public space as a whole. It is safe to say that the Altar of Victory cannot be seen as a religious and political place by itself; it rather was part -important one for sure- of a larger building complex that is the Senate House. Moreover, the Senate House too becomes more meaningful when viewed within its larger topographic framework. Hence, this total picture, which emphasizes the interaction and the link between the structures, provides us with a better perspective to determine political, commemorative, and religious significance of the Altar of Victory (Figure 8).

Social activities played an important role for forming the civic identity of the city of Rome. A great number of celebrations and festivals were continued to be held in fourth century Rome. The Calendar of 354 proves the argument, because it "reports 214 days of celebration, including pagan festivals and imperial anniversaries, with 177 days of circus races, gladiatorial combats, and theatrical displays."[221] At this point, it would be beneficial to touch upon the importance of such activities in terms of spaces and their relationship with the memory construction.

Individual memory becomes the collective remembrance through rituals and ceremonies. First, ritual/ceremony is performed in front of the community and it includes interactions with expected places. It enables the group to remember together, as a united body, and to remember not just the events which are told but

[220] Ibid, 110.
[221] Ibid, 124.

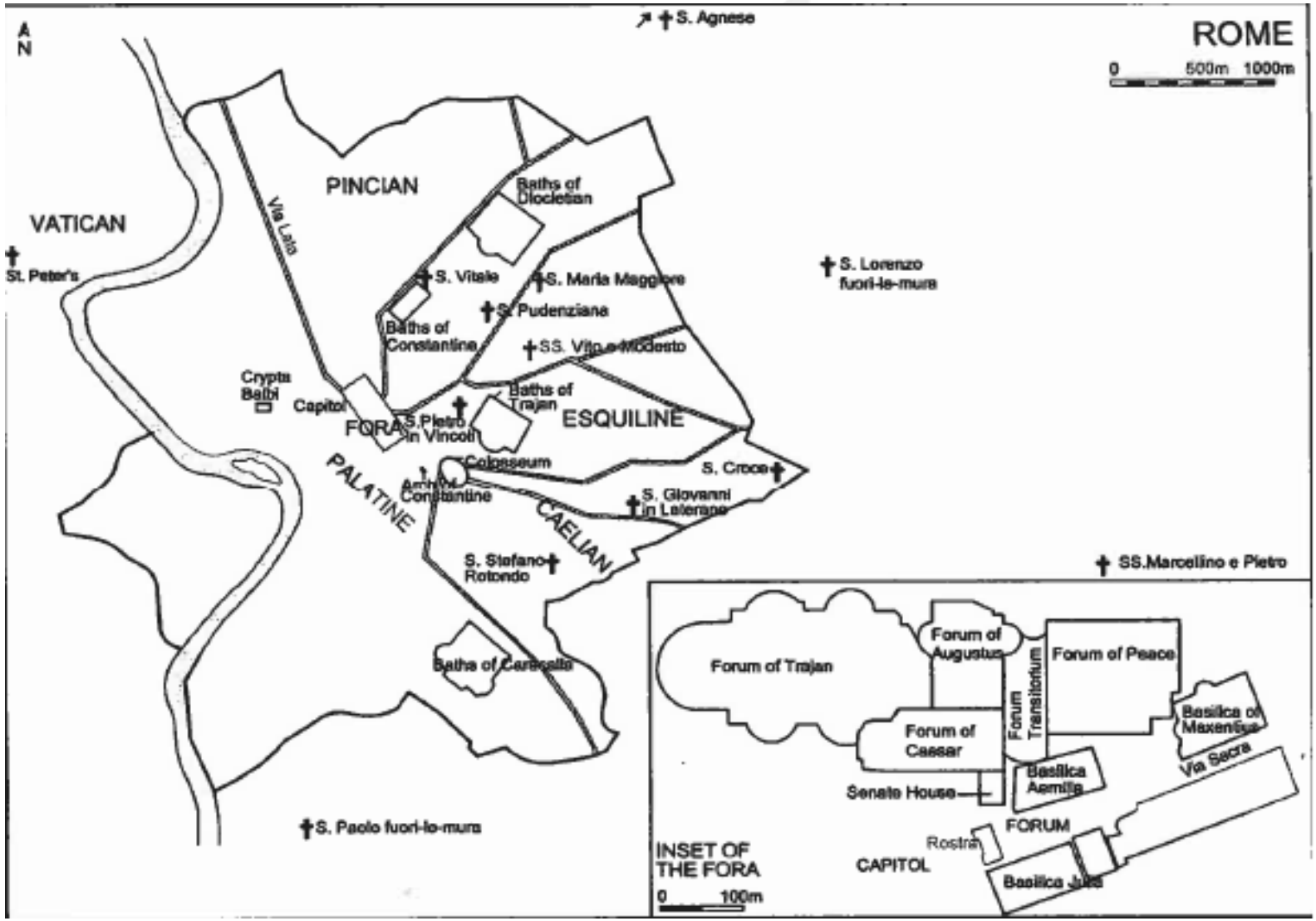

Figure 8. Map of Late Antique Rome. Source: *Two Romes: Rome and Constantinople in Late Antiquity*, ed. Grig, L., Kelly, G., iv.

also the events in which members take part.[222] Secondly, such public activities are visible to wider audience; in other words, they have potential to reach the large masses. Cameron points out the importance of publicity for the pagan rituals by stating that "the key fact about the traditional pagan rituals of Rome was that they had to be performed publicly and at public expense."[223] Lastly, these occasions can be considered as a perfect platform or agent for the display of power. Considering the existence of different religious groups and political actors in late antique Rome, it is fair to assume that such public activities were used to give messages of the powerful individual or one religious party as well as assign an identity/memory to that space. The clearest example of such a display would be the visit of Constantius II to Rome. According to the colorful narrative of Ammianus Marcellinus:

> "…but he [Constantius II] desired to display an inordinately long procession … And when he was nearing the city, as he beheld with calm countenance the dutiful attendance of the senate and the august likenesses of the patrician stock, he thought, not like Cineas, the famous envoy of Pyrrhus, that a throng of kings was assembled together, but that the sanctuary of the whole world was present before him. And when he turned from them to the populace, he was amazed to see in what crowds men of every type had flocked from all quarters to Rome. And as if he were planning to overawe the Euphrates with a show of arms, or the Rhine, while the standards preceded him on each side, he himself sat alone upon a golden car in the resplendent blaze of shimmering precious stones, whose mingled glitter seemed to form a sort of shifting light. And behind the manifold others that preceded him he was surrounded by dragons, woven out of purple thread and bound to the golden and jewelled tops of spears, with wide mouths open to the breeze and hence hissing as if roused by anger, and leaving their tails winding in the wind. And there marched on either side twin lines of infantrymen with shields and crests gleaming with glittering rays, clad in shining mail; and scattered among them were the full-armoured cavalry (whom they call *clibanarii),* all masked, furnished with protecting breastplates and girt with iron belts, so that you might have supposed them statues polished by the hand of Praxiteles, not men. Thin circles of iron plates, fitted to the curves of their bodies, completely covered their limbs; so that whichever way they had to move their members, their garment fitted, so skilfully were the joinings made. Accordingly, being saluted as Augustus with favouring shouts, while hills and

[222] Shear, J.L., 'Their Memories Will Never Grow Old': The Politics of Remembrance in the Athenian Funeral Orations, in *The Classical Quarterly*, 63, 515. Although Shear talks about the funeral orations, it is also true for the group activities such as ceremonies, processions and rituals.
[223] Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome*, 46.

> shores thundered out the roar, he never stirred, but showed himself as calm and imperturbable as he was commonly seen in his provinces. For he both stooped when passing through lofty gates (although he was very short), and as if his neck were in a vice, he kept the gaze of his eyes straight ahead, and turned his face neither to right nor to left, but (as if he were a lay figure) neither did he nod when the wheel jolted nor was he ever seen to spit, or to wipe or rub his face or nose, or move his hands about. And although this was affectation on his part, yet these and various other features of his more intimate life were tokens of no slight endurance, granted to him alone, as was given to be understood."[224]

This passage provides us with a perfect example of the display of power and the construction of collective memory by the powerful. It also shows how power and memory are interrelated. First, we should underline the great number of participants. Ammianus shows that people of all ranks from different quarters of Rome came to see and became a part of procession. Taking part in the procession by shouting and reacting, they became an element of display. Secondly, the depiction of the emperor demonstrates how the emperor wanted to construct memory of his persona in the eyes of the people: as a living statue! This image of a nearly nonhuman perfection, like the imperial images in Roman coins, was what the emperor wanted to convey to his subjects. Lastly, the interaction with the broader urban environment during the visit constitutes the other significant point. We know that the emperor visited the Rostra, the Forum and the Senate House, and he gave a speech there.[225] However, these are not the only places mentioned by Ammianus during his narration of *Adventus*. Ammianus gives a list of places which the emperor interacted visually:

> "Then, as he surveyed the sections of the city and its suburbs, lying within the summits of the seven hills, along their slopes, or on level ground, he thought that whatever first met his gaze towered above all the rest: the sanctuaries of Tarpeian Jove so far surpassing as things divine excel those of earth; the baths built up to the measure of provinces; the huge bulk of the amphitheatre, strengthened by its framework of Tiburtine stone, to whose top human eyesight barely ascends; the Pantheon like a rounded city-district, vaulted over in lofty beauty; and the exalted heights which rise with platforms to which one may mount, and bear the likenesses of former

[224] Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, 16.10.2-13, 245-247. Translation by Rolfe.
[225] Ibid, 16.10.13.

> emperors; the Temple of the City, the Forum of Peace, the Theatre of Pompey, the Oleum, the Stadium, and amongst these the other adornments of the Eternal City. But when he came to the Forum of Trajan…"[226]

According to Ammianus, the emperor surveys different public spaces in different districts. His emphasis on the urban topography is quite significant for two reasons: first, the text gives an important information about the public spaces of Rome in the fourth century. Based on this account, it would not be incorrect to say that pagan and civic buildings were still dominant in the fourth century and that these public spaces still shaped the identity of the city. Secondly, the survey of different quarters by the emperor can be associated with their visibility. In other words, since the narration is totally based on the author's selections, there must be a reason behind Ammianus' choice of monuments. One possible answer would be that these places were among the most visible, well-known and highly visited public spaces of the city.[227]

3.2 Symmachus against Ambrose: Defining the dispute over the Altar and defending a position

So far we covered the significance of the (public) spatiality of the Roman civic and pagan activities - especially of rituals and ceremonies - , and the interconnectedness of the topography and the identity of Rome. In this context, we can claim that the Altar of Victory was not only an important site of memory with its rituals and space, and but also a site of power. The powerful must have been well aware of this, because the Altar became one of the most well-known places of contestation in late antiquity. However, the subject of the dispute over the Altar is different from the case of Serapeum's destruction in two ways. First, the Altar was the main concern of a specific group of people, namely the Roman elite and aristocracy, because of the

[226] Ibid, *Res Gestae*, 16.10.14-15, 249-251.
[227] Also see Bjørnebye, "Ammianus and Constantius' Adventus – Rome from Site to Sight", 31–46.

Altar's spatial connection with the Senate House and its symbolic importance for the relationship between the city and the empire. The involvement of the ordinary people/masses in the Altar was much more minimal than in the Serapeum complex. Secondly, the confrontation over the Altar did not result in street fights between different groups. Testa points out that the "competition between diverse groups in Roman society – be they pagans with Christians, Christians with Christians, or pagans with pagans – also allowed for coexistence and reduced the likelihood of overt and violent, physical conflict."[228] Rather, the confrontation resulted in an intellectual debate between powerful individuals. Two texts, the *Relatio 3* of Symmachus and the *Letters 17* and *18* of Ambrose, give us an opportunity to analyze the reconstruction of the past and the recent events by two opposing camps. My aim is to analyze the narrative structure of these two sets of sources and to draw attention to the use of memory politics. (The *relatio 3* of Symmachus and the *letters 17* and *18* of Ambrose can be found in Appendix B)

Before the analysis, we should give a brief summary of the contestation over the Altar of Victory. The debate over the Altar of Victory of the Senate House began with its first removal during the reign of Constantius II,[229] but the story did not end there. The Altar was placed back to its original position after the death of the emperor, probably during the reign of Julian.[230] It is safe to assume that it was in its original position until its second removal by Gratian in 382. However, it does not mean that the dispute was over in this intermediate period – between its first removal

[228] Lizzi Testa, Salzman, Saghy, 'Introduction', in *Pagans and Christians in Late Antique Rome: Conflict, Competition, and Coexistence in the Fourth Century,* 3.
[229] Scholars agree that Constantius II took his decision after he visited Rome. It is likely that he saw the Altar when he went to the Senate House for his speech and realized or informed about its significance and its impact on the pagan members of the Senate.
[230] Cameron argues that there is no doubt that the Altar of Victory was installed back as a result of an appeal to Julian. See Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome,* 33.

and 382. Cameron claims that Valentinian I (262-375) must have rejected the request of the Christian party to remove the Altar.[231] Ambrose himself admits that the Altar was standing during the reign of Valentinian I. In his letter to Valentinian II, Ambrose creates a fictional speech from the mouth of Valentinian I to justify the decision of the ex-emperor, father of Valentinian II:

> "What answer will you make to your father, who with still greater grief will address you, saying: 'You have judged very wrongly of me, my son, in supposing that I could have winked at the heathen. No man ever informed me that there was an altar in the Roman Senate house;…"[232]

Gratian took a more offensive position and ordered not only the removal of the Altar, as Constantius II did, but he also withdrew the subsidies in 382. It is this second removal of the Altar that led to the famous dispute between Ambrose, bishop of Milan, and Symmachus, the prefect of Rome. The Roman aristocracy led by Symmachus reacted immediately and appealed to Gratian in 382, but their request was rejected by the emperor.[233] In 384, Symmachus was selected as a spokesman of the senate and presented his famous *Relatio 3* to the emperor Valentinian II. According to Cameron, this second appeal in 384 was due to the death of Gratian.[234] It is very possible that Symmachus and/or his elite pagan circle may have wanted to use both the political position of Symmachus a prefect of the city and the relatively weak position of the imperial authority after the coup d'etat and the accession of a new young and inexperienced emperor - Valentinian II - . Ambrose, on the other hand, immediately wrote his arguments against Symmachus'. The result of the

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[231] Ibid, 34.
[232] Ambrose, *Letter 17*. Translation by H. Walford, 93.
[233] See Ambrose, *Letter* 17.10: "For nearly two years ago on an attempt of this kind, holy Damasus the Bishop of the Roman Church, chosen by the judgment of God, sent me a document which the Christian senators in large numbers had presented, declaring that they gave no commission of the sort, that they did not agree or consent to such petitions of the heathen, and they threatened that they would not come either publicly or privately to the Senate if such a decree was made." Translation by H. Walford, 91.
[234] Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome*, 39.

appeal to the new emperor is well know: Symmachus lost the case against Ambrose. However, the story did not end there. After eight years, in 392, Eugenius – a usurper - took the control of the city and the Altar of Victory (possibly the statue too) was put in its original position once again.[235] It is very possible that it was removed again (after Eugenius was defeated by Theodosius in 394) together with other pagan religious institutions during the reign of Theodosius.[236] Pohlsander argues that the Statue of Victory was restored again by Stilicho.[237] In short, the fourth century witnessed the removal of the Altar and its restoration three times. It would be a perfect example of what a contested place would look like. The place was, in this context, an 'ever-shifting site' considering that it was not the Altar itself but its place that was the real issue.[238]

If we are to examine the use of memory politics in texts, we need to be aware of the fact that both writers were scholars and used rhetorical devices quite often to establish their respective narratives. The definition of the Other is one of the rhetorical mechanisms – by constructing dichotomies to establish meaning - in both texts. Since defining the other can also be considered as defining yourself, it would be proper to examine how both individuals construct identity/memory of the other, and what they remember when they face the opposing party. Secondly, we need to be aware of the audience of the letters. These letters were not individual writings that were meant to be read only by the emperor. On the contrary, they were meant to be read publicly. We know that the letters of Ambrose, for instance, were read in

[235] Pohlsander, "Victory: The Story of a Statue", 596.
[236] Ibid.
[237] Ibid. His emphasis on the statue (not the altar) should be emphasized.
[238] "The dispute which pitted Christians and pagans against each other was not so much about the statue and the altar of Victory themselves as about the place where they stood." See Pohlsander, Victory: The Story of a Statue", 597.

consistorium.[239] Thirdly, we should ask how these two authors defined the dispute? In other words, what did the Altar mean to them? Which aspects of the Altar did they underline? Symmachus emphasizes the civic or rather traditional significance of the Altar throughout his work. He was well aware that his arguments must have been reasonable and not so harmful for the Christian audience, namely, the emperor and his court. He saw the removal of the Altar as a threat to the traditional Roman/senatorial values more than to religion, and he often drew attention to the strong tie between the senate and emperor/state.[240] Symmachus positions himself as an advocate of ancient institutions and there is no doubt he refers to the ancient (Republican and Imperial Rome) customs and traditions.

> "For to what is it more suitable that we defend the institutions of our ancestors, and the rights and destiny of our country, than to the glory of these times, which is all the greater when you understand that you may not do anything contrary to the custom of your ancestors? We demand then the restoration of that condition of religious affairs which was so long advantageous to the state"[241]

Moreover, he demands the restoration of the altar and the payment of Vestal Virgins for the good of the state not for the gods and goddesses. In another passage, he again put the emphasis on the customs; and he pictures the altar as a part of the Senate House. He claims, the removal of the altar damages the senate as an institution, not the cult or the goddess.

> "…it would at least have been seemly to abstain from injuring the ornaments of the Senate House. Allow us, we beseech you, as old men to leave to posterity what we received as boys. The love of custom is great."[242]

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[239] Ibid, 595.
[240] For the passage that shows how the cult of Victory is embedded into Roman identity, see Symmachus, *Relatio,* 3.6, 415.
[241] Symmachus, *Relatio* 3.3. Translation in Schaff, Wace. ed., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers 10: Ambrose: Select Works and Letters*, Second Series, Hendrickson, 1994, 414. Further references to *Relatio 3* of Symmachus and *Letters 17 and 18* of Ambrose imply the same source unless otherwise specified.
[242] Ibid, 3.5, 415.

Actually, he himself proves our point by stating that "and let no one think that I am defending the cause of religion only…"[243] By doing that, he mentions the relationship between the cult of Victory and the state/emperor. He represents the altar and the cult as a friend to the state, not an enemy to the (state-sponsored) Christianity as it was perceived.

> "Who is so friendly with the barbarians as not to require an Altar of Victory? We will be careful henceforth, and avoid a show of such things. But at least let that honour be paid to the name which is refused to the goddess—your fame, which will last forever, owes much and will owe still more to victory. Let those be averse to this power, whom it has never benefited. Do you refuse to desert a patronage which is friendly to your triumphs? That power is wished for by all, let no one deny that what he acknowledges is to be desired should also be venerated."[244]

In the quotation above, Symmachus provides us with an insight about the perception of the Altar among the Roman pagans. Although the term 'barbarian' means the enemy of the state in the text, it reminds the audience of the dichotomy between the civilized and the barbarian which was mostly used by ancient Greek and Roman authors. Shortly, it is another way of saying "we are civilized" by using Roman rhetoric. Hence, one may notice how the Altar and 'civilized' Roman identity are interconnected, at least for the senatorial elite of the time. However, Symmachus is moderate when the issue is "us" versus "them". Although he does not mention Christianity and Christians as a group (because he wants to decontextualize the debate from its religious basis), there is one passage where he distinguishes between the two groups:

> "We ask, then, for peace for the gods of our fathers and of our country. It is just that all worship should be considered as one. We look on the same stars, the sky is common, the same world surrounds us. What difference does it make by what pains each seeks the truth? We cannot attain to so great a secret by one road; but this discussion is rather for persons at ease, we offer now prayers, not conflict."[245]

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[243] Ibid, 3.14, 416.
[244] Ibid, 3.4, 414. Also see n.3422.
[245] Symmachus, *Relatio 3*, 10, 415.

Even in this passage, he tries to blur the distinction. Accepting the possibility of multiple roads instead of single one, he emphasizes the tolerance.[246] Moreover, he sees the debate as a confrontation between individuals rather than religions or separate groups. According to him, Christianity is not different than other ancestral religions which had been accepted and recognized by the Roman state. In this way, he follows the very Roman-pagan way indeed.

Ambrose, on the other hand, defines the dispute in religious terms. Being a bishop, he sees the Altar as a place for pagan rituals. He writes, "If it were a civil cause the right of reply would be reserved for the opposing party; it is a religious cause, and I the bishop make a claim."[247] He calls the altar of Victory as an "altar of an idol"[248] and a "heathen altar"[249], and he presents the altar as a threat to the Christian senators.[250] Because of its strong ties with pagan practices such as sacrifices, oaths and rites, the restoration of the altar, he claims, is an insult to Christians (senators) and God:

> "Since they [pagans] take pleasure in numbers they celebrate their sacrifices everywhere. To claim a sacrifice on this one altar, what is it but to insult the Faith? Is it to be borne that a heathen should sacrifice and a Christian be present? Let them imbibe, he says, let them imbibe, even against their will, the smoke with their eyes, the music with their ears, the ashes with their throats, the incense with their nostrils, and let the dust stirred up from our hearths cover their faces though they detest it. Are not the baths, the colonnades, the streets filled with images sufficient for them?"[251]

The passage lets us see that there was a visible presence of pagan or better non-Christian elements in the public spaces of Rome. Furthermore, it should be noted that

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[246] "Although he [Constantius II] himself followed another religion, he maintained its own for the empire, for everyone has his own customs, everyone his own rites." See Symmachus, 3.8, 415.
[247] Ambrose, 17.13, 413.
[248] Ibid, 412.
[249] Ibid.
[250] For the sections where he claims that the majority of the senate was Christian, see Ambrose, 17.9, 412; 18.31, 421. For the section where he saw the altar as a threat to "Senate of Christians", see Ambrose 17.8, 412.
[251] Ibid, 18. 31, 421.

Ambrose is uncomfortable with this specific altar due to its place. He is well aware of the importance of the altar for the pagan identity of the city and significance of the place where it stood. He goes further and indirectly threatens the emperor Valentinian II with the excommunication if the Altar is to be restored:

> "What will you answer a priest who says to you, "The church does not seek your gifts, because you have adorned the heathen temples with gifts. The Altar of Christ rejects your gifts, because you have made an altar for idols, for the voice is yours, the hand is yours, the subscription is yours, the deed is yours. The Lord Jesus refuses and rejects your service, because you have served idols, for He said to you: 'Ye cannot serve two masters. The Virgins consecrated to God have no privileges from you, and do the Vestal Virgins claim them? Why do you ask for the priests of God, to whom you have preferred the profane petitions of the heathen? We cannot take up a share of the errors of others.""[252]

Considering that the writer was the bishop of Milan, the priest who is given a speech in the text is nobody but Ambrose himself. If we are not wrong, the rejection by God and altar of the God can be read as a rejection from the communion. Therefore, it can be considered as a polite and political way to imply excommunication while not using the word itself.

Concerning Ambrose's construction of the self/other, the bishop clearly makes a distinction between the pagans and Christians in many occasions. The clearest example would be the passage where he uses the words 'you' and 'we' many times:

> "And what you seek by fancies, we have found out from the very Wisdom and Truth of God. Your ways, therefore, do not agree with ours. You implore peace for your gods from the Emperors, we ask for peace for the Emperors themselves from Christ. You worship the works of your own hands, we think it an offence that anything which can be made should be esteemed God. God wills not that He should be worshipped in stones. And, in fine, your philosophers themselves have ridiculed these things."[253]

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[252] Ambrose, 17.14, 413.

[253] Ambrose, 18.8, 418. I assume that these philosophers that are mentioned by Ambrose are Greek and Roman figures from Antiquity. Therefore, the text tells something about Ambrose's perception of pagan antiquity.

It is clear from the passage that Ambrose pictures the pagans as irrational people. He sets up a dichotomy of rationality and irrationality assigning the former to Christians. In another passage, he claims that pagans are seeking "the voice of God in dead animals"[254] and often defines them as a worshiper of idols[255] and as the ones who make bloody sacrifices. Finally, superstition is the other attribute of the pagans:

> "'Let them defend you, and be worshipped by us.' This it is, most faithful princes, which we cannot endure, that they should taunt us that they supplicate their gods in your names, and without your commands, commit an immense sacrilege, interpreting your shutting your eyes as consent."[256]

3.3 The role of past events in constructing a memory for the present

Thirdly, I want to examine the use of past events in the letters in question and the importance of this use for the memory politics. We should always keep in mind that since memory is a process of summarizing and rewriting, "the reconstruction of past always depends on present-day identities and contexts.[257] Now, let us examine how both authors construct their narrative of the past, starting with Symmachus:

> "Let us now suppose that Rome is present and addresses you in these words: 'Excellent princes, fathers of your country, respect my years to which pious rites have brought me. Let me use the ancestral ceremonies, for I do not repent of them. Let me live after my own fashion, for I am free. This worship subdued the world to my laws, these sacred rites repelled Hannibal from the walls, and the Senones from the capitol. Have I been reserved for this, that in my old age I should be blamed? I will consider what it is thought should be set in order, but tardy and discreditable is the reformation of old age.'"[258]

Here Symmachus transforms the city of Rome into a person giving a speech. While the personification of the city increases the impact of the speech, he also

[254] Ibid, 18.7, 418.
[255] Ibid, 18.2, 417.
[256] Ibid, 18.22, 420.
[257] Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering*, 14.
[258] Symmachus, 3.9, 415.

intentionally selects two historical events - attacks of Hannibal and the Senones - .[259] The common point of these two events is that they were well known threats to the city and occupied a place in the memory of the people of Rome. Symmachus does not only remind the audience of the past but also reconstructs the history in the context of his day. In the passage, Rome claims that the attacks of famous Hannibal and Gallic tribe, Senones, were repulsed due to the ancestral ceremonies and religious rites. In that way, he creates a memory of victorious events by putting them into Roman ancestral, traditional, if not religious, context.

Considering that Ambrose's letters (especially *Letter 18*) were written as an answer Symmachus' arguments, it is not surprising to see the re-reconstruction of the past events in his work too. Unlike Symmachus' relatively short story, Ambrose's answer can be considered as quite long.[260] He must have cared about it considerably that he spent great effort to deconstruct the narrative of Symmachus. In the first stage, he deconstructs the narrative of past by giving counter examples. He tries to convince the audience that there was no connection between victories and pagan gods. For instance, he underlines the entrance of the Senones to the city and asks "Where was Jupiter at that time? Was he speaking in the goose?"[261] Later, he mentions that Carthaginians and Romans were worshipping the same gods. Therefore, in his view, the situation naturally leads to contradiction: "If these sacred rites conquered in the Romans, then they were overcome in the Carthaginians; if they

[259] He is referring to march of Hannibal on Rome during the Second Punic War (218-201 BCE). For a bibliography on (especially) ancient sources, see Salmon, "Hannibal's March on Rome, 153-163. The Senones, on the other hand, was Gallic tribe who sacked Rome in early fourth century BCE. According to Livy, they managed to capture entire city, except the capitol. See Livy, *History of Rome*, 5.34-49.
[260] For his answer, see Ambrose, 18.4-7, 417-418.
[261] Ambrose, 18.5, 417.

triumphed in the Carthaginians, they certainly did not benefit the Romans."[262] After the deconstruction, he begins his reconstruction:

> "Rome has given no such charge. She speaks with other words. 'Why do you daily stain me with the useless blood of the harmless herd? Trophies of victory depend not on the entrails of the flocks, but on the strength of those who fight. I subdued the world by a different discipline. Camillus was my soldier, who slew those who had taken the Tarpeian rock, and brought back the standards taken from the Capitol; valour laid those low whom religion had not driven off. What shall I say of Attilius [Regulus], who gave the service of his death? Africanus found his triumphs not amongst the altars of the Capitol, but amongst the lines of Hannibal. Why do you bring forward the rites of our ancestors? I hate the rites of Neros …'"[263]

Ambrose too uses the same method and creates a fictional speech by the mouth of the city as well. Moreover, to strengthen the effectiveness of his narrative, he enriches the story with acts of individual soldiers and statesmen such as Camillus and Marcus Atilius Regulus, respectively. In short, in this version of the story, the military strength of the army is presented as the main factor behind Rome's victories. According to Ambrose, it is the soldiers who brought the victories, not the gods. Here, a more interesting question arises: What about the Christian God? Did not Christian God take a role in military affairs? I have no doubt that if one side of the battle had been Christian, Ambrose would not have brought forward such an argument. In this case, he probably did not want to create any polemic because the Christian God may have been seen as a supporter of one pagan party or the other. This shows how the selective nature of the memory enables people to use memory politics. The bishop constructs the past events/history without Christian God considering the present-day context. In other words, he 'forgets' the God.

As we already discussed, the significance of the concept of *forgetting* cannot be emphasized enough. I want to give one final example that demonstrate the role of

[262] Ibid, 18.6, 417.
[263] Ibid, 18.7, 417.

forgetting in memory politics. We saw that Symmachus put a great emphasis on the continuing ancestral traditions and their unbreakable bound with Ancient Rome. He sees the long history of Rome as a continuum without any break. It is most visible in the following passage:

> "Have I been reserved for this, that in my old age I should be blamed? I will consider what it is thought should be set in order, but tardy and discreditable is the reformation of old age."[264]

In his answer, Ambrose emphasizes the significance of character rather than old age or long history:

> "It is undoubtedly true that no age is too late to learn. Let that old age blush which cannot amend itself. Not the old age of years is worthy of praise but that of character."[265]

Later in his *Letter,* Ambrose gets to the point after a long preparation:[266]

> "Let them say, then, that all things ought to have remained in their first beginnings, that the world covered with darkness is now displeasing, because it has brightened with the shining of the sun. And how much more pleasant is it to have dispelled the darkness of the mind than that of the body, and that the ray of faith should have shone than that of the sun. So, then, the primeval state of the world as of all things has passed away, that the venerable old age of hoary faith might follow."[267]

He sets an analogy between the procession from night to day and the accession of the Christ. Does that mean that ancient Rome was in darkness, whereas present-day Rome was brighter? According to Ambrose' linear and progressive understanding of history, it is so. This is even visible in his use of memory politics. The only pagan Roman emperor that was remembered in the *letters* is Julian.[268] However, Julian reigned in the post-Constantine era; in other words, he became emperor after Christianity began to be supported and sponsored by the state. Clearly, not naming or

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[264] Symmachus, 3.9, 415.
[265] Ambrose, 18.7, 428.
[266] Ibid, 18.23-27, 420-421.
[267] Ibid, 18.28, 421.
[268] Ibid, 18.38, 422. He does not hesitate to give pagan leader names such as Cyrus and Hamilcar. Hence, it is not about being pagan, but pagan and Roman.

forgetting pagan emperors of pre-Constantine period may be an indication that Ambrose wants pagan Rome to stay in the past, or better in darkness! This can be called as Ambrose's rejection of (pagan) Roman memory, and he does this not by stating it explicitly, but by using the memory politics.

CHAPTER 4

VOICES FROM THE PROVINCES: THE CONVERSION OF THE TEMPLE OF APHRODITE IN APHRODISIAS IN CONTEXT

In the previous two chapters, we examined the struggle over the Serapeum in Alexandria and the Altar of Victory in Rome in the context of their spatial significance and their importance for the identity of two great cities of the Late Roman world. We also discussed the reflection of the struggle in ancient sources. We studied how the conflict over these two places were seen in the written sources. Since previous two examples come from two of the most populated centers of the empire, they were mentioned by many individuals of the period. At this point, one may ask whether the struggle over specific places between different parties or "memory wars" over the identity of the cities was limited to the imperial centers in the late antique world. We, as modern historians, hear the voices from the center more loudly, because most of the contemporary writers had a connection with the imperial circles, whether political or religious. In other worlds, the surviving evidence mostly belong to that class which reflected the voice of the center. Does it mean that we are totally ignorant of the similar struggles in the provinces? Aphrodisias sets a good example to prove the opposite. Thanks to the archeological excavations, we are informed about the conversion of the Temple of Aphrodite as well as the transformation of its identity from a pagan city to Christian one in late antiquity. As Smith rightly points out, the city of Aphrodisias presents a fairly good amount of material for studying the transformation of topography.[269]

[269] Smith, R.R.R., "Late Antique Portraits in a Public Context: Honorific Statuary at Aphrodisias in Caria, A.D.300-600", 155.

The case of Aphrodisias distinguishes itself from the previous two cases, because not only events took place outside the political, economic, and cultural epicenters of the empire, but also there are no extant narratives of the conversion of the Temple of Aphrodite in contemporary sources of the period. Fortunately, we have rich material evidence, especially inscriptions that allow us see the tension between different groups that finally resulted in the transformation of the urban center. Therefore, unlike in the previous chapters, our source material will be archaeological.

4.1 Home of Aphrodite welcomes all: Heterogeneity of the city

Aphrodisias, the sacred city of goddess Aphrodite, is located at the heart of the modern village of Geyre in the province of modern-day Aydın. The city was not isolated from the well-known settlements of western Asia Minor. It was located on the East of Ephesus, South-east of Smyrna and Sardis; and it was surrounded by the sacred centers such as Hieropolis and Heraclea Salbace (Figure 9). Although the long history of the city can be traced thousands of years before the Common Era,[270] we should concentrate on the Roman phase for our purposes. As the name of the city itself suggests, the city had a strong tie with the goddess Aphrodite. However, this relationship between the divinity and the city became visible in the second century BCE and we know that this name is first attested in the second century BCE.[271]

The city had the attention of the imperial authorities in the Roman period. This attention can be partially explained by the mythical association of goddess

[270] Joukowsky, *Prehistoric Aphrodisias: An Account of the Excavations and Artifect Studies*; Erim, *Aphrodisias: City of Venus Aphrodite*.
[271] For numismatic evidence, see Boyer, *The Roman Tetrakionion at Ancient Aphrodisias: An Analysis, Documentation, and Reconstruction Program*, 9; Erim, *Aphrodisias: City of Venus Aphrodite*, 26.

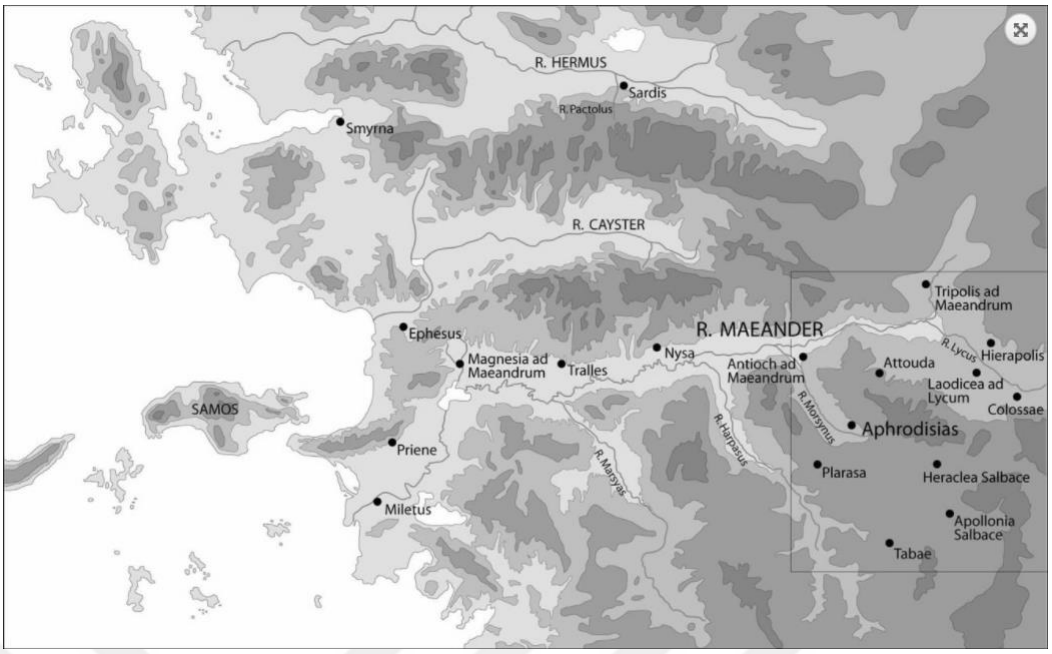

Figure 9. Geographical position of Aphrodisias.
Source: http://aphrodisias.classics.ox.ac.uk/history.html#prettyPhoto[gallery1]/2/

Aphrodite, or Roman Venus, with the city of Rome. Aeneas of Troy, who was the ancestor of the founders of Rome, was the offspring of the goddess Venus. An inscription, (the letter of Octavian which was also inscribed on the archive wall) demonstrates that the Temple of Aphrodite was deemed important and its significance as a cult center was recognized by the imperial authority:

> "…I was also informed that out of the loot a golden Eros, which had been dedicated by my father to Aphrodite, has been brought to you and set up as an offering to Artemis.
> You will do well and worthily of yourselves if you restore the offering which my father gave to Aphrodite…"[272]

The letter was sent by Octavian to Ephesus after the war against Labiennus. Octavian states that he knew how much Aphrodisians suffered and how horribly the public and private property was sacked during his struggle with Labiennus. He sent his 'collogue' Antonius to restore the losses of Aphrodisias.[273] We are informed that the golden statue of Eros, which was dedicated by Julius Caesar, was one of the valuable

[272] Reynolds, *Aphrodisias and Rome*, doc. 12, 102.
[273] Ibid.

things that was sacked by the enemy and transferred to Ephesus, more specifically to the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus. Reynolds claims that the interest in Aphrodisias would have been an indication of close relation of the goddess and the family of *Julii.*[274] This relationship became even more apparent during the reign of Augustus.[275] In any case, the inscription demonstrates the strong tie between the city and its deity, and indicates its recognition as an important religious center by the ruling family of the time.[276] Another relatively longer inscription on the archive wall, called *Senatus consultum de Aphrodisiensibus,* indicates the reasons behind the privileged and exceptional position of the city and expresses the 'privilege of freedom' to Aphrodisias. Moreover, the Temple of Aphrodite was given a new status, which was equal to that of Artemis at Ephesus.[277]

> "… Similarly, it is agreed by the Senate that the people of Plarasa and Aphrodisias, their children and descendants should themselves have and possess freedom and immunity from taxation in all matters on the legal basis which is that of a community with the fullest right and law, having freedom and immunity from taxation granted by the Senate and people of Rome, and being a friend and ally of the Roman people.
> The temple or precinct of the goddess Aphrodite which is in the city of the Plarasans and Aphrodisians, that temple or precinct is to be an asylum, with the rights and the religious sanctity which pertain to the temple or precinct of Ephesian Artemis at Ephesus, for an area of 120 feet surrounding that temple or precinct in all directions; that area is to be an asylum; and (it is agreed) that the community, and the citizens of Plarasa and Aphrodisias are to have, hold, use and enjoy all those lands, places, buildings, villages, estates, strongpoints, pastures, revenue which they had when they entered the friendship of the Roman People, and are to be free, and immune from taxation and the presence of tax-contractors."[278]

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[274] Ibid, 13f, 103.
[275] The subscript of Augustus to Samos clearly shows that he took special care to Aphrodisias. Reynold claims that these two inscriptions reflect the interest of Octavian towards Aphrodisias and the Temple of Aphrodite by naming just Aphrodisians rather than mentioning Plasarans and Aphrodisians. For the subscript of Augustus to Samos, see Ibid, doc. 13, 104: "You yourselves can see that I have given the privilege of freedom to no people except the Aphrodisians…".
[276] For the local response, see Ibid, doc. 32, 156. The first century CE inscription mentions the restoration of the dedications of Caesar' ancestors. Reynold concludes that it can only be the forementioned dedication of Julius Caesar. Hence, it can be said that the memory of the dedication was still recognizable publicly in later times.
[277] Ibid, 78.
[278] Ibid, doc. 8, 62.

We not only read that the people of Aphrodisias were given economic privileges, but also the Temple as an asylum became the focal point of the privileges. The inscriptions from the archive wall proves that both legal status and religious importance of the Temple scaled up during the late first century BCE.

Aphrodisias became the capital of the province of Caria during the early fourth century.[279] This new status of the city as an administrative center of Caria clearly suggests that the city maintained its centrality in western Asia Minor and did not lose its prosperity in the third century. In the early fourth century, the bishopric had already been established in the city.[280] The office of the bishop proves the existence of Christian population as well as the regional importance of the city. During the difficult times (late third and early fourth centuries), many cities struggled but Aphrodisias had a relative prosperity for the further three centuries.[281] Though in a transformed state, the city maintain its local significance until the seventh century. Dey explains significant transformation of the late antique cities as the "evolution from the 'curial city' to the 'post-curial' city."[282] Most of the financial and public duties of the local *curia* was replaced by imperial-appointed officers and burden of the local elites increased, especially in the fourth century.[283] Naturally, state officials invested money in more populated centers on games, festivals and commemorative monuments to increase their visibility.[284] Hence, it resulted in transformation of topography of capital cities. The display of power of the central authority became apparent with this influence and patronage of the state. This change is visible in

[279] Dalgıç, "Early Christian and Byzantine Churches", 367.
[280] Roueche, *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity: The Late Roman and Byzantine Inscriptions,* 15.
[281] Ibid.
[282] Dey, "Privileged cities: provincial, regional and imperial capitals", 164.
[283] Ibid, 165.
[284] Ibid, 167.

inscriptions and honorary statues of Aphrodisias.[285] However, as Boyer correctly points out, the city had already "lost much of its living history" in late fifth century with the conversion of its temple and without its cult.[286]

The multi-religious nature of Aphrodisias should be emphasized at this point, since we will be dealing with a transformation of a religious building in the coming pages. Broadly speaking, one can speak of three different religious groups in late antique Aphrodisias, namely Christians, pagans and Jews. Pagans constituted the majority of the population in the city in the early phase of late antique period, and they remained active and visible until the late fifth century, holding important offices and retaining considerable wealth.[287] Moreover, the festivals continued to be held. For instance, the inscription from mid- or late-fifth century refers to the ongoing pagan festivals in the city:

> "Stranger, sing of Dulcitius, the governor, giver of games and founder and lover of honour and Maioumarch, who, stretching out his strong hand, raised me too, who had suffered for unnumbered years."[288]

Christianization of the city was in progress, but in a slower pace.[289] The process took longer than in other cities of Asia Minor. It is safe to assume that Christianity spread faster in Asia Minor especially after the edict of Milan in 311 CE. and Aphrodisias was no exception to this.[290] We know that bishop of Aphrodisias, Ammonius, attended the Council of Nicaea in 325.[291] However, the sources that we have do not give satisfactory information about the Christians in the city before that date.[292] Of course, this does not mean that there was no Christian community in the

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[285] Ibid, 167.
[286] Boyer, *The Roman Tetrakionion at Ancient Aphrodisias,* 11.
[287] Dalgıç, "Early Christian and Byzantine Churches", 367.
[288] Roueche, *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity,* no. 40, 69.
[289] Further, see Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization, c.370– 629*, 52-73.
[290] Chaniotis, "The Conversion of the Temple of Aphrodite at Aphrodisias in Context", 246.
[291]Honigmann, "La Liste Originale Des Peres De Nicee, 48.
[292] Roueche, *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity*, 15.

city before. On the contrary, the accounts of two martyrs - Diodoretus and Rhodopianus - in Aphrodisias during the great persecution around 300 CE proves the existence of Christians in the pre-Constantine era.[293] It can be expected that both Christian population and its visibility in material culture - in turn the Christianization of the public space - increased in the course of time, considering the ideology of the central authority, that is, the increasing encouragement and support towards the new religion and increasing pressure towards the old ones. Increasing number of inscriptions that included the symbol of cross during late antiquity supports our claim.[294] Among them, one must be particularly emphasized: The honorary inscription of Aelia Flaccilla, who was the first wife of Theodosius I and augusta between 379-386 CE.

> "The Carians set up in their own metropolis the (statue of the) eternal Augusta, most dear to God, Aelia Flavia Flaccilla, the mistress of the inhabited world."[295]

> [Τ]ὴν αἰωνίαν καὶ Θεοφιλε[σ]τάτην Αὐγοῦσταν ν. Αἰλίαν Φλαβίαν ν. Φλακκίλαν τὴν δέσποιναν τῆς οἰκουμένης Κᾶρες ἵδρυσαν ἐν τῇ ν. ἑαυτῶν Μητροπόλει

The text, inscribed on the base, is significant for mainly three reasons. First, Roueche compares the inscription with the honorary inscription in Ephesus and the statue of augusta in Constantinople and concludes that it emphasizes the significance of the city as a provincial center.[296] Second, the original Greek inscription puts emphasis on the religious aspect of the augusta rhetorically. As it is seen in the first two lines, Aelia Flaccilla is defined by religious adjectives *αἰωνίαν καὶ Θεοφιλεστάτην* in the very beginning of the inscription that are followed by the political title *Αὐγοῦσταν.* If

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[293] Chaniotis, "The Conversion of the Temple", 246; Also see Roueche, *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity*, 15-16. Roueche discusses the names of the victims and possibility of two different dates over two sources. Although she states that the sources are confused and she finds the story of martyrdom untraditional, he accepts that existence of a Christian community is to be expected in the pre-Constantine period.
[294] Ibid, 246.
[295] Roueche, *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity*, no. 23, 45.
[296] Ibid, 46.

we take the sign of cross just below the inscription into account, the rest of the inscription is squeezed by two religious signs, one literary and another visual. From another perspective, even if the viewer was not literate, s/he could still get the intended religious message due to the symbolic content. Hence, the message that was conveyed by the statue and the base with its inscription was quite Christian. The religious memory of the augusta, constructed for the audience, was meant to be a display of power for the Christian community of the city because it demonstrates the overt support of the central power for the community. Third, it was the earliest "appearance of the sign of the cross in an official inscription" in the city.[297] Considering that it was found "at the north side of the east court of the baths" during the excavation of the Hadrianic baths,[298] the date (late fourth century) can be interpreted as a sign of relatively slow and gradual Christianization of the public space.

The existence of the Jewish community too can be traced in late antique material culture of the city. Chaniotis argues that all the evidence that we have for the Jews comes from late antiquity, specifically from the period between 330-500 CE.[299] Inscriptions and religious symbols such as menorah, drawn in public spaces, show that the Jews of the city were publicly visible. These inscriptions and symbols are to be found in the agoras, the Bouleuterion, the Sebasteion and the cemetery.[300] One of the symbols can be seen in figure 10. Chaniotis also makes an analysis of the evidence by examining the names on the inscriptions. He states that 39% of the Jews had biblical or Hebrew names; and most of the Christians (fourth to sixth centuries)

[297] Ibid, 46.
[298] Ibid, 45.
[299] Chaniotis, "The Conversion of the Temple", 247-248. For the Jewish community in Aphrodisias, see also Chaniotis, "The Jews of Aphrodisias: New Evidence and Old Problems", 209–242.
[300] Ibid, 247-248.

used the names of apostles, angels, evangelists and names related to the Christian faith.[301] Taking the names as markers of identity, he concludes that different religious groups used specific names to reflect their identity and separate themselves from the others.[302] The public visibility of Jews in late antique Aphrodisias shows that the race to win the control of the public space was not confined to two groups - pagans and Christians - , but included Jews too. Before studying the evidence of the competition over controlling the public space, we must examine the topography of Aphrodisias.

Figure 10. Representation of menorah on a column in the Sebasteion, dated to the fourth/fifth centuries. Source: Chaniotis, "The Conversion of the Temple", 268.

[301] Ibid, 256.
[302] Ibid.

4.2 Spatial analysis of the temple of Aphrodite and transformation of the city

Such an examination gives us an opportunity to examine the Temple of Aphrodite in the larger spatial context of Aphrodisias. My aim is to demonstrate that the Temple, which was located at the heart of the city center, occupied a significant position in symbolic and religious topography of the city. Moreover, I hope to show that the culture of commemoration played an important role in civic life of Aphrodisias. Intensive use of commemorative elements, which were very visible in public spaces, was one of the defining features of the late antique city. Therefore, the late antique city itself, as a unit, can be considered as a complex of memorial that reflects its past and identity.

Aphrodisias has been studied well by archeologists since 1961. Most of the public spaces and significant buildings has been identified thanks to archeological excavations since then.[303] The plan of the city-center shows that the public buildings of the city were grouped in two main areas in the north and in the south. While the northern part included some important public buildings such as the north agora, the Temple of Aphrodite, the Bouleuterion and the Sebasteion; the southern section mainly contained the south agora, the civil basilica, the theater, the theater baths and the tetrastoon (Figure 11). Since the two cult centers, the Temple of Aphrodite and the Sebasteion, were located on the northern section, we will focus on this section without ignoring the significance of the other section in terms of public activities. If we take the north agora as the center in northern section of the city, the agora may

[303] For further readings on the excavation projects and archeological examinations, see Smith, R.R.R., and Ratte, C., "Archeological Research at Aphrodisias in Caria, 1993", in *American Journal of Archeology*, Vol. 99, no. 1, 1995, pp. 33-58; *AJA* 100, 1996, pp. 5-33; *AJA* 101, 1997, pp. 1-22; *AJA* 102, 1998, pp. 225-250; Ratte, C., and Smith, R.R.R., "Archeological Research at Aphrodisias in Caria, 2002-2005", 713-751; Ratté, C., and De Staebler,P.D., "Survey Evidence for Late Antique Settlement in the Region around Aphrodisias", 123-137; Wilson, A. I., "Aphrodisias in the long sixth century", 197–221.

have not functioned as a usual market or meeting place in the early Roman period. The existence of (possibly) square-shaped altar or *heroon* at the center and the sunken pool or court in the southwest section of the agora may give the space extra function,[304] Thus, Ratte and Smith speculate that the place may have been used for the ceremonial functions.[305] Such public activities increased both the visibility of the pagan practices and the active participation of the pagans too. In the fourth or fifth centuries, the agora faced with major transformations. One of these major transformations was the destruction of the central monument (the altar or heroon), the detachment of the south stoa and the repair of the pool (or court) in the southwest section.[306] Vast amount of coin findings in the agora demonstrates that the place was actively used until the early seventh century.[307] Finally, it served as an agricultural area and possibly given to the use of the cathedral in later centuries (in the middle Byzantine period).[308]

The other important place which had a direct association with the agora was the Bouleuterion. It was the center for political body of the city where the councils held. Located on the north of the agora, the building was actively used until the end of the fifth century;[309] however, the findings of infant burials in the site demonstrates that it was out of use in the sixth century.[310] According to Ratte and Smith, the reason behind the place of burials might be related to "its proximity to the Cathedral."[311] The Sebasteion, on the other hand, was located on the east of the agora and it was the

[304] Ratte, C., and Smith, R.R.R., "Archeological Research at Aphrodisias in Caria, 2002-2005", 723.
[305] Ibid.
[306] Ratte and Smith "Archeological Research", 723.
[307] Ibid.
[308] Ibid.
[309] See Roueche, *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity*, 93-96; Ratte and Smith, "Archeological Research", 728.
[310] Ratte and Smith, "Archeological Research", 728.
[311] Ibid.

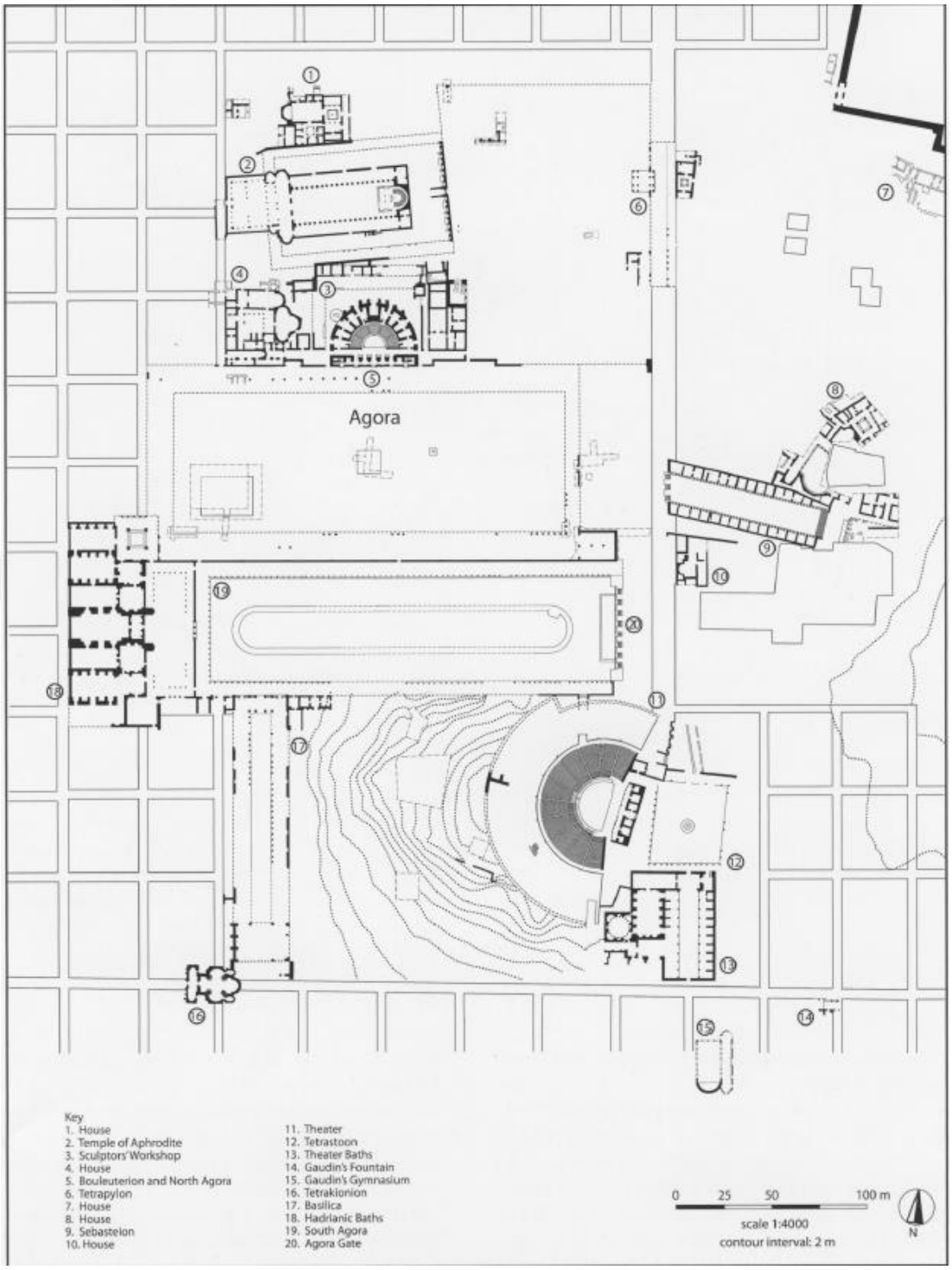

Figure 11: Plan of the city-center of Aphrodisias (Drawn by H. Mark). Source: Ratte and Smith, "Archeological Research", 716.

temple that served the imperial cult. It was also dedicated to Aphrodite as well as to the Roman emperors in the middle of the first century.[312] Being one of the two cult

[312] Smith, "Late Antique Portraits", 157.

centers in the city, it had reliefs that display many mythical stories including Aphrodite as the mother of Aeneas.[313] Later in late antiquity it lost its religious function.

Tracing the journey of the honorific statuaries in the city center provides us with crucial information about the topography and the use of public space for conveying the message of the powerful. In his influential essay, 'Late Antique Portraits in a Public Context: Honorific Statuary at Aphrodisias in Caria, A.D.300-600', Smith studies late antique honorific statuaries in terms of their places, inscriptions, clothing and artistic styles. He compares the late antique statuaries with the early and middle imperial ones and gives us an insight about the transformation of the public space during our period. Honorific statuaries were densely located in three different civic spaces (a) in front of the Bouleuterion, (b) east of the south agora and (c) in front of the theatre.[314] Assuming that the statuaries were erected in highly visited places to increase their visibility and to enlarge their audience, we can deduce that these civic places were the central and attractive ones where the interaction between the public and the place occurred. Furthermore, Smith proposes that these late antique statues were placed "in front of the old monuments" independently, rather than being part of them as it was the case in earlier period.[315] These statuaries were clearly meant to be seen by the public (Figure 12).

Later, Smith lists the differences between the new statues and the old ones: the new ones were not only physically different (smaller in size and number), but they were different in term of their aesthetics and the messages that are meant to be conveyed.[316] The older statuaries were more elegant and taller, and their base

[313] Hebert, *The Temple-Church at Aphrodisias*, 83.
[314] Smith, "Late Antique Portraits", 171.
[315] Ibid.
[316] Ibid, 160.

inscription emphasized the person's good deeds and virtues, whereas the late antique inscriptions in the bases barely spoke about the identity and the deeds of the subject.[317] Smith associates these changes to the changing political atmosphere of the empire and concludes that imperial and local Hellenic styles were abandoned, and the new ones were "oriented to the court culture of Constantinople."[318] Arguing that the location for the statuaries was not selected randomly, and that artistic choices had nothing to do with a decline in artists' ability, we can deduce that these transformations were intended. These statuaries carried the messages of the powerful in particular public spaces. They show how the emperors, governors and the elite wanted to be seen and to be remembered in the context of the new political mentality. These new types of actors reflected current politics of the time. As Dey points out these statues and inscriptions were about the members of the central authority rather than the local curia as before.[319] Furthermore, Smith interprets this as a transformation from local (and Greek) to central (and Constantinopolitan).[320] In other words, the civilian local leaders were replaced by the "authoritarian world of the central."[321] Statues reflected specific mentality towards politics. In addition to statues, their spatial position such as in front of Bouleuterion, can be considered as a display of power in the local politics. I find this deduction useful for the two concept that I examine in this thesis - the use of public space and memory politics - . Although I emphasize the construction of the religious identity more frequently in this thesis, the city of Aphrodisias constitutes a prominent example of another type of transformation: a political transformation. Material culture of the city provides us an

[317] Ibid.
[318] Ibid.
[319] Dey, "Privileged cities: provincial, regional and imperial capitals", 167.
[320] Smith, "Late Antique Portraits", 161.
[321] Ibid.

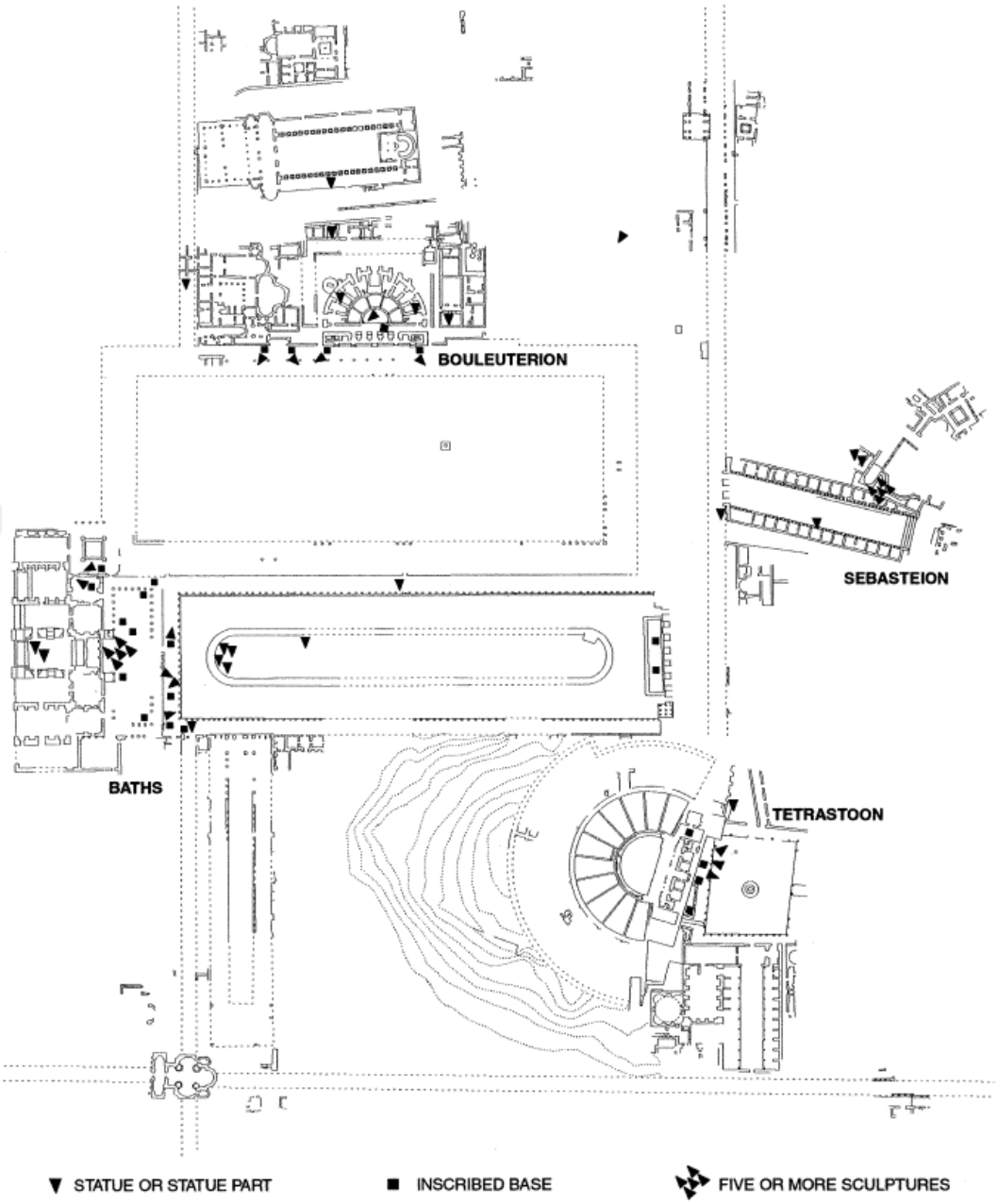

Figure 12. Plan of the findings of the late antique honorific statues and bases in the city center. (Drawn by H. Mark) Source: Smith, "Late Antique Portraits", 172.

extensive picture which demonstrates that not only the religious topography but also the civic spaces was transformed. At this point, I should remind the reader that the contestation over and the transformation of the religious public places can only be seen as part of a broader transformation.

The other significant monument that needs to be studied is the archive wall. The wall, made of marble blocks,[322] was located on the northern end of the theatre. Although it was initially built in the late first century BCE, the original function of the wall is not certain.[323] Reynolds dates the letters that were inscribed on the wall from middle of the second century to the late third century.[324] Thus, as the date indicates the main motivation behind the construction of the wall may not have been to store documents in the first place. Later, in third century, it was inscribed with official letters, or more generally, documents (Figure 13). By stressing the selective nature of the documents and their contents, Kokkinia claims that the wall cannot be seen as an archival storage, neither a public nor a private one.[325] Taking what was written in the wall into account,[326] the wall constructed the past of the city - or better reconstructs it - and it served as a reminder of the history of the city for the late antique audience. Thus, in this context, it may not be named as an official archive, but a commemorative monument or rather a 'memory wall'.

In short, the commemorative features of the city are visible in almost every corner of Aphrodisias. Thanks to its geographical position and its closeness to the marble-rich mountains, the public spaces of the city were adorned with statues, inscriptions and monuments, which are archaeologically well-documented. That feature of the city enabled us to reconstruct the topography of the city and to follow a number of transformations during late antiquity. Secondly, I mentioned how public

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[322] Reynolds, *Aphrodisias and Rome,* 33.
[323] Kokkinia, "The design of the 'archive wall' at Aphrodisias", 12.
[324] Reynolds, *Aphrodisias and Rome,* 33; For the discussion of dating, see: Ibid, 33-37. For the list of the letters inscribed on the Wall, see Ibid, 37.
[325] Kokkinia, "The design of the 'archive wall' at Aphrodisias", 10. She adds: "the layout of the dossier reflects the interests of those at Aphrodisias who gathered these official documents and presented them to the public in this specific monumental setting." See also Chaniotis, "The Perception of Imperial Power in Aphrodisias: The Epigraphic Evidence", 251-252.

[326] Imperial letters refer mostly to the privileged position of the city and emphasized the good relationship of the city with imperial power which was a great source of pride for the city.

spaces lost their initial functions and acquired new ones. Thirdly, the public spaces of late antique Aphrodisias experienced a total transformation; that is to say, not only religious but also political transformations took place. The conversion of the Temple of Aphrodite must be examined in the context of this total transformation. In other words, the conversion of the Temple was not a single, independent event, but was probably the most striking and vital ring of the chain of events.

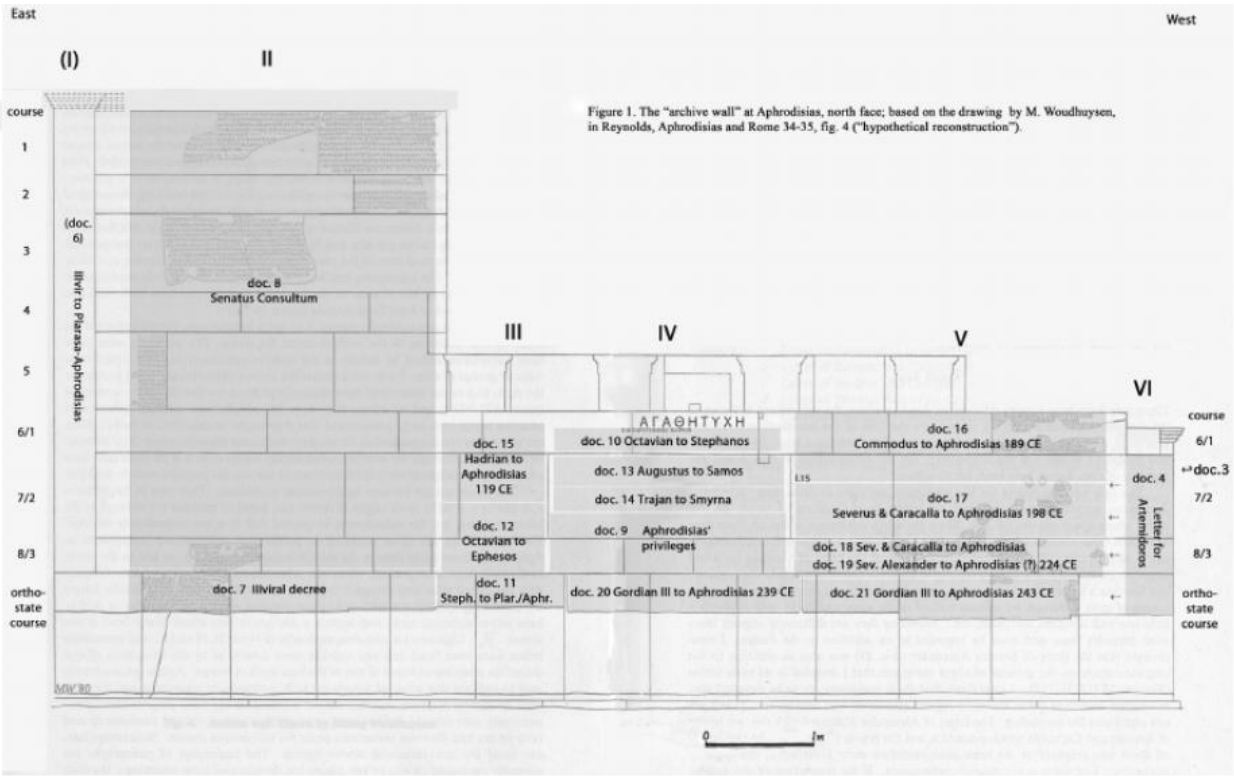

Figure 1. The "archive wall" at Aphrodisias, north face; based on the drawing by M. Woudhuysen, in Reynolds, Aphrodisias and Rome 34-35, fig. 4 ("hypothetical reconstruction").

Figure 13. Hypothetical reconstruction of the archive wall. Source: Kokkinia, "The design of the 'archive wall' at Aphrodisias", 55.

4.3 Identity erasure: Conversion of the Temple of Aphrodite

Located on the north of the Bouleuterion, the Temple was the most symbolic public space in the city. It was older than the city itself. When the city founded in later second/early first century BCE, the Temple of Aphrodite was already the most

important religious site in the region.[327] Moreover, Hebert claims that it was this importance that resulted in the selection of the site for the new city.[328] The name of the city, the sacred city of Aphrodite, itself proves the significance of the cult for Aphrodisias from the beginning. The city defined itself by its goddess. As stated before, the relation between the goddess and the mythical story of foundation of Rome and the family of *Julii* established a bond between Rome and Aphrodisias. This strong connection resulted in the political recognition of the city and its religious centrality in the broader region, and gave birth to a number of political advantages and privileges for the city. The reliefs in the Sebasteion as well as the documents on the archive wall serve as the manifestations of this strong identity of the city, which was formed around Aphrodite. The public spaces of the city were constructed to convey this image. On the other hand, the Temple's spatial centrality does not just come from its location; it also comes from the size of the space which it occupies. The west side of the Temple, which served as a court, belonged to the temple. The presence of the court was another reason for people to visit the area of the Temple of Aphrodite. The festivals and games[329] which were dedicated to the cult were the other factor increasing the sphere of influence of the temple, and providing an extra visibility to the Temple in the eyes of the participants as well as the audience. Hence, "the temple had remained, until its conversion, a focal point of interest"[330] and the pride of the pagans of Aphrodisias while it was a reason of embarrassment for the Christians of the city. The Temple constantly reminded the

[327] Hebert, *The Temple-Church at Aphrodisias*, 80.
[328] Ibid. For the foundation of the city, see Reynolds, *Aphrodisias and Rome*, 1-3.
[329] See Brody, *The Iconography and Cult of the Aphrodite of Aphrodisias*, 39-40; Brody, "The Cult of Aphrodite at Aphrodisias in Caria", 93-109.
[330] Chaniotis, "The Conversion of the Temple", 259.

pagan past and the pagan/civic identity of the city. In this context, the competition over the control of this particularly prominent place was inevitable.

It is certain that the conversion of the Temple to a church could not take place before the third quarter of the fifth century.[331] Most of the scholars date the conversion between late fifth and early sixth centuries.[332] Its conversion took place nearly a century after the destruction of the Serapeum in Alexandria, which demonstrates the slow pace of the transition in Aphrodisias. Furthermore, unlike the Serapeum, the fate of the Temple was not the destruction but conversion to a Christian cathedral. Dalgıç states that the transformation of the temple to the cathedral was not a simple process; it was a complex and an expensive one, requiring large-scale changes.[333] Cormack agrees that the conversion required "heavy engineering work."[334] The Temple was ionic in style and its short sides had eight columns while the long sides had thirteen columns. It was surrounded by wider colonnades which determined the dimensions of the temple as 8.5 meters to 31 meters. During the conversion, major architectural transformations were made. The Temple was extended in the west-east direction by repositioning the twelve columns which were placed in short side. That is, six out of eight columns in short sides were dismantled and these columns were used for forming the outer colonnades of the

[331] Finding of coins "provides a *terminus post quem* of the third quarter of the fifth century for the temple conversion." Hebert, *The Temple-Church at Aphrodisias*, 134. There was not a period in which the temple was unoccupied for decades before it was converted unlike many other temples in Asia Minor in late antiquity. The city's rich material remains, and archeological excavations conducted make it possible to reach this conclusion.
[332] See Hebert, *The Temple-Church at Aphrodisias,* 135; Chaniotis, The Conversion of the Temple", 259; Cormack dates it to the second half of the fifth century. Cormack, "Byzantine Aphrodisias: Changing the Symbolic Map of a City", 32; Dalgıç claims that it could not occur until 500 CE. Dalgıç, "Early Christian and Byzantine Churches", 367.
[333] Dalgıç, "Early Christian and Byzantine Churches", 370. For detailed study, see Hebert, *The Temple-Church at Aphrodisias,* 35-78.
[334] Cormack, "Byzantine Aphrodisias", 32.

cathedral.[335] The apse was located on the east side and the atrium was placed on the west end. Furthermore, the outer boundary of the cathedral was extended which reached the size of 28 meters to 60 meters (Figure 14). The porticoed roof and colonnade were dismantled on the northern section of the temple whereas the south temenos portico stayed untouched. Hebert claims that this transformation on the north side may have created new area for the additional buildings and provided new materials to be used in architectural changes of the cathedral.[336] The city did not just experience the conversion of this iconic temple to one of the biggest churches in the region,[337] but also the transformation of the Temples's wider space. The area to the east of the Temple was incorporated into the cathedral's property, and it "housed charitable institutions the Church sponsored."[338] Thus, the new cathedral that was dedicated to St. Michael the Archangel, became the seat of the bishop.[339] Hence, we witness the Christianization of the Temple with its larger space (not just the replacement of the Temple with a church but also erection of additional religious buildings).

This magnitude of the conversion project shows that it was not a simple conversion, but a rather significant transformation for the city. The Christian party may probably have seen the difficulty of erasing Aphrodite from Aphrodisias' memory and may have intended to replace it by creating a symbolically more powerful place. In other words, Christians did not content themselves with controlling the most important pagan space; they rather attempted to create a new

[335] Hebert, *The Temple-Church at Aphrodisias,* 75; Cormack, "Byzantine Aphrodisias", 32. Also see the official website of Aphrodisias excavations: http://aphrodisias.classics.ox.ac.uk/templeofaphrodite.html.
[336] Hebert, *The Temple-Church at Aphrodisias,* 76.
[337] Ibid, 75.
[338] Ibid.
[339] Ibid. For the dedication of the cathedral, see Hebert, *The Temple-Church at Aphrodisias,* 71-75.

regional monument to suppress the memory of the old one successfully. This final episode of controlling Aphrodosias' most symbolic space provided a final triumph for Christianity in the city. Lack of any material or written sign of the old religion after ca. 500[340] confirms that the city was no more the 'sacred city of Aphrodite', after it lost its Aphrodite!

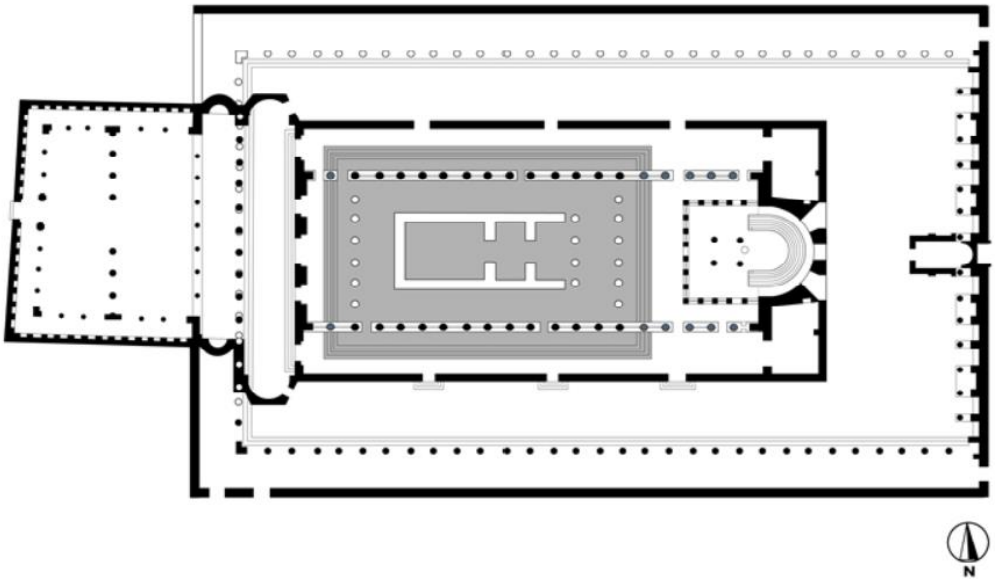

Figure 14. Plan of the temple and the church. The temple of Aphrodite is shaded in grey. Source: http://aphrodisias.classics.ox.ac.uk/templeofaphrodite.html#prettyPhoto[gallery1]/3/

Since literary sources are silent about the conversion of the Temple of Aphrodite, we cannot find any grievous or inspiring details, as we could for the case of the Serapeum and the Altar of Victory. Neither do we know whether the conversion led to a physical struggle between Christians and pagans, as it did during the destruction of the Serapeum. However, purposefully broken cult images,[341] which were found during excavations, may be interpreted as evidence of a possible Christian reaction and a physical confrontation.

[340] Hebert, *The Temple-Church at Aphrodisias*, 133.
[341] Cormack, "Byzantine Aphrodisias", 32.

Although we cannot hear the voice of any author about the conversion, it is possible to find traces of the transformation in inscriptions which were found in the site of the Temple/Cathedral. Three fragments which were found in the Temple of Aphrodite were assembled by Roueche. She argues that the surface where the name of the goddess was inscribed is worn, which might be a sign of intentional erasure of the name.[342] The inscription on the marble blocks which were probably from the main door of the Temple experienced the same faith.[343] Roueche claims that deliberate erasure must have occurred after the conversion. Moreover, donors' prayer inscriptions that were found on the east end of the Temple dating to late fifth or early sixth century reflect the new (Christian) function the place:[344]

1 ... ? -]iel help your servants Theodoretus and Cyriacus.
2 *a* ... to] all that love him[...
  b ... ?help] Theodoretus and Cyriacus [...
3 *a* Anastasius [...
  b ...] on behalf of myself and my household.
  c ... to] the household of AQ[astasius? ...
  d ...] archangel. Prayer[...
  e Lord [?help ...
4 ...] of Anastasius [.. .
5 ...] Lord, the God[.. .

Hence, the Christianization of the place after the late fifth or early sixth centuries is visible in the material culture of the Temple/Cathedral. The dates of the inscriptions concur with the date of the conversion. They provide us an evidence for both the capture of the place by the Christian party and the damnation of the memory of the goddess.

In conclusion, the Christianization of the landscape of the city is visible in the material evidence in the period between the mid-fourth and the early sixth centuries. The increasing number of the inscriptions with the sign of the cross, the conversion

[342] Roueche, *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity,* doc. 26, 149.
[343] Ibid, doc. 37, 162,163
[344] Ibid, doc. 92-96, 155-157.

of the Sebasteion, the removal of the altar or heroon in the north agora can be counted as the examples of these dramatic changes that the city experienced in late antiquity. These dramatic changes culminated in the conversion of the Temple of Aphrodite. However, the conversion of the Temple cannot be considered as a purely religious struggle over the physical space. Indeed, the change of the city name from Aphrodisias to Stavropolis after a few decades[345] and the erasing the name of *Aphrodisieis* from the inscriptions[346] (Figure 15) demonstrate that the conversion can also be taken as an attempt to erase the history of the city which is organically linked to the goddess Aphrodite. In this context, renaming the city as the 'city of the cross' was part of a larger plan to erase/forget the pagan identity of Aphrodisias and to reconstruct a new 'Christian' identity/memory. The erasing of the city's ancient name from the inscription on the archive wall, as seen below, was materially the most visible trace of this deliberate attempt.

Figure 15. Letter on the archive wall. Erased name of *Aphrodisieis* can be seen. Source: Chaniotis, "The Conversion of the Temple", 273.

[345] Ibid, 33. Roueche dates the renaming to the middle of the seventh century. See Roueche, 149-151.
[346] Chaniotis, "The Conversion of the Temple", 260.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Some of the transformations that the late antique world witnessed were so slow that they were not noticed by the people of the late antique society. Therefore, these transformations did not elicit immediate reaction among them. Neither the efficiency of the urban elites in running the cities (via curia) diminished in a week, nor the impact of the political changes orchestrated in Constantinople were felt in the provinces within a day. However, spatial changes in public spaces could be felt very intensively and in a very short span of time. For instance, for a conservative pagan senator in Rome who placed sacrifices on the Altar of Victory every day, its removal would be a very sudden and visible change that would affect his life and identity directly. People would recognize topographic changes better and give immediate reactions. If, for instance, the place or the monument was historical and meaningful for people, disputes among social groups would become inevitable. These confrontations were shaped by the memory of the place, a memory established by human interaction in time. Some of these places turned into symbols playing significant roles in the construction of identities. Thus, the transformation of these places/monuments meant an attempt to erase identities and memories as well as to construct new ones. In view of Price's four important concepts through which memories are constructed (objects, places, ritual behavior and textual narrative), I focused on places in the form of religious public spaces and textual narratives in the form of historical accounts/letters.[347] Throughout the chapters, I tried to show how

[347] Price, "Memory and Ancient Greece", 17.

much role spatial relations played in the religious transformation in these cities, and how past memory was (ab)used to legitimize the transformations in question.

Chapter Two was devoted to our first case, the destruction of the famous Serapeum complex, a sanctuary originally dedicated to the god Serapis but contained many buildings of various functions. The incident cannot be examined by itself independently from (a) the cultural/religious milieu of Alexandria, (b) the broader Christianization process in the city (c) the space around the Serapeum. Addressing these three points one by one, (a) the population of late antique Alexandria consisted of religiously and ethnically diverse groups. This heterogeneity of the city resulted in various confrontations between different parties. The expulsion of the Jews from Alexandria in 414-415 CE and the murder of female pagan philosopher Hypatia in 415 CE, which I discussed in relative detail, do not only demonstrate the existence of disputes between different groups, but also proves that non-Christian elements were quite visible and active in early fifth century Alexandria. (b) Considering that both incidents took place after the destruction of the Serapeum, the capture of the famous Temple by Christians did not result in the total Christianization of the population. However, the Christian party had undoubtedly already got the upper hand. The dispute over the Serapeum was not the single event, but decisive one in a longer process of religious transformation. Since Christianity had the support of the imperial power, the Christianization of the topography of Alexandria was inevitable, because politically favored groups and actors (the Christian party and bishops as its leaders) would want to dominate the public spaces of the city. Controlling the civic and religious places, which were frequently visited by Alexandrians, increased the visibility of these places and transformed the memory of these places. In other words, Christianization of the city's topography can be seen as an attempt to change the

identity of the city by erasing its pagan past in the mind of the people. Indeed, especially the fourth century witnessed both the construction of new churches and conversions of the old temples. The destruction of Serapeum can be seen as the last and most significant step in this process. (c) The Serapeum, as a complex, was not only important for its topographical position but it also had a wider Mediterranean-wide fame, welcoming huge crowds. The place was located on the highest position of the city, which could be seen from all directions and reflected the pagan identity and past of the city. The Serapeum changed not only through the transformations in its buildings, but also in activities, practices, and symbols involved in it (such as Christian processions, St. John's tomb, and the new meaning of the symbol of Ankh.) We saw in this chapter how the narratives on the Serapeum incident manipulated the memory of Homeric and Biblical tradition as well as the spatial concepts (up-down, open-close) to make judgements about the other and the self. It was interesting to see how the writers of the time of the incidences reflected their own memories. However, in the process of reflecting they constructed new memories for future generations by selecting what to remember and what to forget in a process of 'editing'. Last but not least, socio-political and religious backgrounds of the authors were one of the defining factors which shaped their narratives and selections, so did their memory politics. While Rufinus' account reflects the Christian point of view and he uses constructs the (Christian) memory, Eunapius' narrative includes pagan agenda and he draws on pagan motifs and terms to manipulate the incident purposedly. On the other hand, we witnessed how Socrates and Theodoret differ from each other while constructing the memory of the main actors behind the events although both of them wrote the Church History. Theodoret held a religious seat and most likely that is why

he put forward the ecclesiastical figures, while Socrates, living in the capital and being close to the court, reflected the imperial power as a main protagonist.

As shown in the third chapter, the removal of the Altar of Victory differs from the case of the Serapeum. Although the Altar was religious in its function, the place where the Altar stood was not a sacred but a political (civic) place. Furthermore, the removal did not lead to a physical confrontation between different groups; but it caused a dispute between powerful individuals, because the audience of the Altar consisted mostly of senators rather than masses. This does not mean that the non-senatorial population of Rome was totally out of picture. Since there were processions of the statue around the city, people of Rome could see the statue and recognize its significance. Therefore, although the altar was visible to senators mostly, it was also accessible to masses as well. When the famous dispute between Symmachus and Ambrose is examined from the perspective of memory studies, authors' use of memory politics becomes apparent. It would be very simplistic and only partially true to claim that the arguments that they used to justify their position were only the ideas of two individuals - one pagan and another Christian - . On the contrary, their argumentation reflected the self-view of the social group that they belonged to. In other words, we can see how the senatorial class/the Christian community perceived the incident and what the Altar meant to them. More interestingly, we witnessed that they both reconstructed the past events through rhetorical devices in order to explain a contemporary event as well as to engage in an otherization process – such as the personification of the city and creation of fictional speech from the mouth of the city by both authors.

Finally, the conversion of the Temple of Aphrodite in Aphrodisias in the fourth chapter provided us with a different scenario than the first two cases. First, we

do not have any literary source that narrated the events relating to the conversion. It is the general situation for the 'fate of temples' and public cults in Asia Minor, especially after the third century.[348] However, the city provides a great amount of material sources so that we can trace the steps of the transformation that occurred in the city. The commemorative nature of the city with its honorary statues, the archive wall and the vast number of inscriptions shows that use of memory politics by the powerful was not something rare and limited to written texts. Secondly, as the name of the city itself suggest, the Temple and its cult of Aphrodite were crucial for the history and identity of the city, a provincial city of some significance, but not comparable to Rome or Alexandria. It seems that the conversion of the Temple was part of a larger transformation of the city, which is proven by changes occurring in other parts of the city (such as the Heroon, the Buleuterion and the Sebasteion ae well as the new style of honorific statuaries). Erasing and forgetting, which occurred on the textual level in the previous chapters, can be traced here in flesh, or rather on stone.

This thesis presented three different cases of religious transformations: the destruction of the Serapeum complex, the removal of the Altar of Victory, and the conversion of the Temple of Aphrodias. I had for anaylsis three variant transformation processes (destruction, removal, and conversion) of three different types of places (a sanctuary complex, an altar in the senate house, and a temple) in three different cities (Alexandria which was the cultural metropolis of a centrally important province, Rome which was the capital of the Roman Empire, and Aphrodisias which was a medium-sized provincial city). This diversity in process,

[348] Talloen and Vercauteren, "The Fate of Temples in Late Antique Anatolia, 348.

function of place, and geography has been an advantage to see the differences throughout the thesis.

However, a few important points common to all three cases should be noticed here. First, the religious confrontations we examined could not be reduced to a simple dichotomy of Christians versus pagans. For instance, pagans, Jews and Christians fought with each other to dominate the civic life in Alexandria while the Jews of Aphrodisias were not a negligible factor in the equation. Secondly, the confrontations in question were not only religious but had political, giving a lot of opportunities to the powerful to convey public messages. 'Secular' figures such as the prefects of Alexandria and Rome were involved in the disputes, senators and emperors too. The removal of the altar was also a highly political phenomenon whose removal was seen by Symmachus as a threat to the Roman state, as well as the honorary inscription of Aelia Flaccilla from Aphrodisias that combined religious and political messages in one surface. Thirdly, the transformations discussed did not involve one single building or monument only, but spread like a web across meaningful spaces. The Altar of Victory consisted of two structures – the altar itself and the Statue of Victory; but both made sense as a united monument within the Senate building, which made sense in the Forum, which in turn made sense in the larger topography of the city of Rome. Likewise, as I showed in the Chapter Four, the conversion of the Temple of Aphrodite could be understood only in the larger context of a transforming city. In the end, one can see a total transformation in two senses: 1. A spatial transformation (of a place) within a larger spatial transformation (of a city), where the transformation of the place can be seen in the context of the whole city, as I showed most clearly in the case of Aphrodisias. 2. A transformation of a place in all of its architectural, religious, social and cultural components – both

physical and spiritual - like in the case of the Serapeum with its symbols of Ankh and processions.

The perspectives developed in this thesis can be applied to other cities such as Antioch, Ephesus and Constantinople. For instance, the destruction and burning of the Temple of Apollo in Antioch in the fourth century could present itself as a fourth case for the study of the role of space in late antique religious transformations. [349] The construction of Hagia Sophia by Justinian after the famous Nika riot might be studied to examine the correlation between memory politics and place. The Vestibule Mosaic which was located on the west door of Hagia Sophia and dated to tenth century may give us a clue about how the memory of Justinian was constructed as 'the emperor' together with Constantine the Great. Furthermore, the study may give a birth to new questions. Although the thesis mostly interested in the religious controversy between pagans and Christians, our approach may provide new perspectives on the intra-Christian controversies too. What about the politics of memory and contestation over public space among Arian, Nestorian and Monophysite groups in late antiquity? In later period, can we ask the same question for the iconoclastic controversy? How did both iconoclastic and iconophile parties employ the memory of buildings and the building of memories in their pursuit to dominate the public agenda?

[349] See Shepardson, *Controlling Contested Places: Late Antique Antioch and the Spatial Politics of Religious Controversy.*

APPENDIX A

TRANSLATIONS OF PRIMARY SOURCES IN CHAPTER TWO

1. Eunapius, *Lives of the Philosophers and Sophists*, trans. Wilmer Cave Wright, 419-427.

They had learned these very carefully by heart. And these books of theirs anyhow bore upon none of the ancient philosophers, but were wills and copies of wills, contracts of sales and suchlike documents, which are highly esteemed in that life which is prone to dissolute folly and licence. Thus it proved that Sosipatra could also divine correctly what should happen after these events. But I need not write down even the names of these men, for my narrative is eager to lead on to those that are not unworthy but worthy. An exception must be made of one of her sons; his name was Antoninus, and I mentioned him just now; he crossed to Alexandria, and then so greatly admired and preferred the mouth of the Nile at Canobus, that he wholly dedicated and applied himself to the worship of the gods there, and to their secret rites. He made rapid progress towards affinity with the divine, despised his body, freed himself from its pleasures, and embraced a wisdom that was hidden from the crowd. On this matter I may well speak at greater length. He displayed no tendency to theurgy and that which is at variance with sensible appearances, perhaps because he kept a wary eye on the imperial views and policy which were opposed to these practices. But all admired his fortitude and his unswerving and inflexible character, and those who were then pursuing their studies at Alexandria used to go down to him to the seashore. For, on account of its temple of Serapis, Alexandria was a world in itself, a world consecrated by religion: at any rate those who resorted to it from all parts were a multitude equal in number to its own citizens, and these, after they had worshipped the god, used to hasten to Antoninus, some, who were in haste, by land, while others were content with boats that plied on the river, gliding in a leisurely way to their studies. On being granted an interview with him, some would propound a logical problem, and were forthwith abundantly fed with the philosophy of Plato; but others, who raised questions as to things divine, encountered a statue. For he would utter not a word to any one of them, but fixing his eyes and gazing up at the sky he would lie there speechless and unrelenting, nor did anyone ever see him lightly enter into converse with any man on such themes as these.

Now, not long after, an unmistakable sign was given that there was in him some diviner element. For no sooner had he left the world of men than the cult of the temples in Alexandria and at the shrine of Serapis was scattered to the winds, and not only the ceremonies of the cult but the

buildings as well, and everything happened as in the myths of the poets when the Giants gained the upper hand. The temples at Canobus also suffered the same fate in the reign of Theodosius, when Theophilus presided over the abominable ones like a sort of Eurymedon Who ruled over the proud Giants, and Evagrius was prefect of the city, and Romanus in command of the legions in Egypt. For these men, girding themselves in their wrath against our sacred places as though against stones and stone-masons, made a raid on the temples, and though they could not allege even a rumour of war to justify them, they demolished the temple of Serapis and made war against the temple offerings, whereby they won a victory without meeting a foe or fighting a battle. In this fashion they fought so strenuously against the statues and votive offerings that they not only conquered but stole them as well, and their only military tactics were to ensure that the thief should escape detection. Only the floor of the temple of Serapis they did not take, simply because of the weight of the stones which were not easy to move from their place. Then these warlike and honourable men, after they, had thrown everything into confusion and disorder and had thrust out hands, unstained indeed by blood but not pure from greed, boasted that they had overcome the gods, and reckoned their sacrilege and impiety a thing to glory in.

Next, into the sacred places they imported monks, as they called them, who were men in appearance but led the lives of swine, and openly did and allowed countless unspeakable crimes. But this they accounted piety, to show contempt for things divine. For in those days every man who wore a black robe and consented to behave in unseemly fashion in public, possessed the power of a tyrant, to such a pitch of virtue had the human race advanced! All this however I have described in my *Universal History.* They settled these monks at Canobus also, and thus they fettered the human race to the worship of slaves, and those not even honest slaves, instead of the true gods. For they collected the bones and skulls of criminals who had been put to death for numerous crimes, men whom the law courts of the city had condemned to punishment, made them out to be gods, haunted their sepulchres, and thought that they became better by defiling themselves at their graves. "Martyrs" the dead men were called, and "ministers" of a sort, and "ambassadors" from the gods to carry men's prayers,-these slaves in vilest servitude, who had been consumed by stripes and carried on their phantom forms the scars of their villainy. However these are the gods that earth produces! This, then, greatly increased the reputation of Antoninus also for foresight, in that he had foretold to all that the temples would become tombs. Likewise the famous Iamblichus, as I have handed down in my account

of his life, when a certain Egyptian invoked Apollo, and to the great amazement of those who saw the vision, Apollo came: "My friends," said he, "cease to wonder; this is only the ghost of a gladiator." So great a difference does it make whether one beholds a thing with the intelligence or with the deceitful eyes of the flesh. But Iamblichus saw through marvels that were present, whereas Antoninus foresaw future events. This fact of itself argues his superior powers. His end came painlessly, when he had attained to a ripe old age free from sickness. And to all intelligent men the end of the temples which he had prognosticated was painful indeed.

2. Rufinus of Aquileia, *History of the Church*, trans. Philip R. Amidon, SJ, 462-477.

11.22. In Alexandria meanwhile fresh disturbances broke out against the church contrary to the faith of the times; the occasion was as follows. There was a basilica built for official use which was age-worn and quite untended, and which the emperor Constantius was said to have donated to the bishops who preached his perfidy; long neglect had so reduced it that only the walls were still sound. The bishop who had charge of the church at that time decided to ask the emperor for it so that the growth of the houses of prayer might keep pace with the growing number of the faithful. He received it and was setting about restoring it when some hidden grottoes and underground chambers were discovered on the site, which smacked more of lawlessness and crimes than of religious services. The pagans, therefore, when they saw the dens of their iniquity and caverns of their offenses being uncovered, could not bear to have these evils exposed, which long ages had covered and darkness had concealed, but began, all of them, as though they had drunk the serpents' cup, to rave and rage openly. Nor was it just their usual noisy demonstrations; they wielded weapons, battling up and down the streets so that the two peoples were at open war. Our side far outweighed the other in numbers and strength, but was rendered less violent by religious restraint. As a result, when many of ours had been wounded repeatedly, and some even killed, [the pagans] took refuge in a temple as a sort of stronghold, taking with them many Christians whom they had captured. These they forced to offer sacrifice on the altars which were kindled; those who refused they put to death with new and refined tortures, fastening some to gibbets and breaking the legs of others and pitching them into the caverns which a careworn antiquity had built to receive the blood of sacrifices and the other impurities of the temple.

They carried on in this way day after day, first fearfully and then with boldness and desperation, living shut up within the temple on plunder and booty. Finally, while they were spilling the blood of the city folk, they chose one Olympus, a philosopher in name and raiment only, as leader in their criminal and reckless enterprise, so that with him in the forefront they might defend their stronghold and maintain the usurpation. But when those charged with maintaining the laws of Rome and administering justice learned what had happened, they rushed to the temple in terrified agitation and asked the reasons for this rash behavior and the meaning of the riot in which the blood of citizens had been so wickedly shed before the altars. But [the pagans] barricaded the entrance and with confused and discordant voices replied with outcries rather than explanations of what they had done. Messages, however, were sent to them to remind them of the power of the Roman government, of the

legal penalties, and of the normal consequences of behavior of the sort, and since the place was so fortified that nothing could be done except by drastic action against those attempting such madness, the matter was reported to the emperor. Being more inclined to correct than to destroy the errant because of his great clemency, he wrote back that satisfaction was not to be sought for those whom their blood shed before the altars had made martyrs and the glory of whose merits had overcome the pain of their death; that being said, however, the cause of the evils and the roots of the discord which had risen up in defense of the idols should be extirpated completely, so that once these were eliminated, the reason for the conflict might also disappear. Now when this letter arrived and both peoples met together at the temple following a sort of short-term truce, no sooner had the first page been read out, the introduction to which censured the vain superstition of the pagans, than a great shout was raised by our people, while shock and fear assailed the pagans, each of whom sought to hide somewhere, to find alleys through which to flee, or to melt unnoticed into our crowds. Thus all who were there realized that God's presence lending boldness to his people had put to flight the demon's fury which had earlier raged among the others.

11.23. I suppose that everyone has heard of the temple of Serapis in Alexandria, and that many are also familiar with it. The site was elevated, not naturally but artificially, to a height of a hundred or more steps, its enormous rectangular premises extending in every direction. All of [the rooms], mounting to the ceilings on the highest level, were vaulted, and with the lamps fitted up above and the concealed sanctuaries divided each from the other, showed how they were used for various services and secret functions. On the upper level, furthermore, the outermost structures in the whole circumference provided space for halls and shrines and for lofty apartments which normally housed either the temple staff or those called *hagneuontes*, meaning those who purify themselves. Behind these in turn were porticoes divided off from each other in rows to form a quadrangle which ran around the whole circumference on the inside. In the middle of the entire area was the sanctuary, outstanding for its precious columns, the exterior fashioned of marble, spacious and magnificent to behold. In it there was a statue of Serapis so large that its right hand touched one wall and its left the other; this monster is said to have been composed of every kind of metal and wood. The interior walls of the shrine were believed to have been covered with plates of gold overlaid with silver and then bronze, the last as a protection for the more precious metals.

There were also some things cunningly and skillfully devised to excite the amazement and wonder of those who saw them. There was a tiny window so orientated toward the direction of sunrise that on the day appointed for the statue of the sun to be carried in to greet Serapis, careful observation of the seasons had ensured that as the statue was entering, a ray of sunlight coming through this window would light up the mouth and lips of Serapis, so that to the people looking on, it would seem as though the sun were greeting Serapis with a kiss.

And there was another trick of this kind. Magnets, it is said, have the natural power to pull and draw iron to themselves. The image of the sun had been made by its artisan from the very thinnest iron with this in view: that a magnet, which, as we said, naturally attracts iron, and which was set in the ceiling panels, might by natural force draw the iron to itself when the statue was carefully placed directly beneath it, the statue appearing to the people to rise and hang in the air. And lest it betray what was going on by quickly dropping, the agents of the deception would say, The sun has arisen so that, bidding Serapis farewell, he may depart to his own place." There were many other things as well built on the site by those of old for the purpose of deception which it would take too long to detail.

Now as we started to say, when the letter had been read our people were ready to overthrow the author of the error, but a rumor had been spread by these very pagans that if a human hand touched the statue, the earth would split open on the spot and crumble into the abyss, while the sky would come crashing down at once. This caused the people some bewilderment for a moment, until one of the soldiers, armed with faith rather than weapons, rose up with a two-edged axe he had seized and smote the old fraud on the jaw with all his might. A roar went up from both sides, but the sky did not fall, nor did the earth collapse. Thus with repeated strokes he felled the smokegrimed deity of rotted wood, which, upon being thrown down, burned as easily as dry wood when it was kindled. After this the head was wrenched from the neck and from the bushel, which was discarded, and dragged off; then the feet and the other members were chopped off with axes and dragged apart with ropes attached, and piece by piece, each in a different place, the decrepit dotard was burned to ashes before the eyes of the Alexandria which worshiped him. Last of all the torso which was left was put to the torch in the amphitheater, and that was the end of the vain superstition and ancient error of Serapis.

The pagans have different views about his origin. Some regard him as Jupiter, the bushel placed upon his head showing either that he governs all things with moderation and restraint or that he

bestows life on mortals through the bounty of harvests. Others regard him as the power of the Nile River, by whose richness and fertility Egypt is fed. There are some who think the statue was made in honor of our Joseph because of the distribution of grain by which he aided the Egyptians in the time of famine. Still others claim to have found in Greek histories of old that a certain Apis, a householder or a king residing in Memphis, provided ample food from his own store to the citizens when the grain ran out in Alexandria during a famine. When he died they founded a temple in his honor in Memphis in which a bull, the symbol of the ideal farmer, is cared for; it has certain colored markings and is called "Apis" after him. As for the *soros* or coffin in which his body lay, they brought it down to Alexandria, and by putting together *soros* and *Apis* they at first called him "Sorapis," but this was later corrupted to "Serapis." God knows what truth, if any, there is in all this. But let us return to the subject.

11.24**.** Once the very pinnacle of idolatry had been thrown down, all of the idols, or rather monstrosities, throughout Alexandria were exposed to the same kind of destruction and similar disgrace through the efforts of its most vigilant priest. The mind shudders to speak of the snares laid by the demons for wretched mortals, the corpses and the crimes uncovered in what they call "shrines," the number of decapitated babies' heads found in gilded urns, the number of pictures of the excruciating deaths of poor wretches. The pagans scattered in flight in their very confusion and shame when these were brought to light and displayed to public view, but even so, those who could bear to remain were amazed at how they had been enmeshed for so many centuries in such vile and shameful deceptions. Hence many of them, having condemned their error and realized its wickedness, embraced the faith of Christ and the true religion. To pass, for instance, over the other enormities committed elsewhere, the children violently killed and the virgins disemboweled for extispicy, I shall record only one of them, which was brought to everyone's notice as having been committed in the temple of Saturn; from it one may get some idea of the others not mentioned.

11.25. They had a priest of Saturn named Tyrannus. He used to tell whichever of the nobles and leading men who worshiped in the temple and whose wives attracted his lust that Saturn had told him (pretending that the deity had spoken in answer) that his wife was to spend the night in the temple. The one so informed, overjoyed that the deity had deigned to summon his wife, would send her to the temple elegantly adorned, and laden with offerings as well, lest she be spurned for coming emptyhanded. The wife was locked inside in full view of everyone, and Tyrannus, once the doors

were shut and the keys handed over, would depart. Then, when silence had fallen, he would make his way through hidden underground passages and creep right into the very statue of Saturn, entering through wideopen cavities—for the statue had been hollowed out in the back and was fastened snugly to the wall—and while the lamps were burning within the shrine, a voice from the hollow bronze statue would speak suddenly to the woman rapt in prayer, so that the unfortunate woman would tremble for fear and joy, thinking that she had been found worthy to be addressed by a deity so great. After the foul deity had spoken to her in whatever terms he chose to increase her fear or arouse her lust, the wicks would be snuffed by some device and suddenly all the lamps would go out. Then, descending upon the poor woman in her amazement and confusion, he would inflict upon her the adultery disguised by his impious speech. When he had carried on in this way for quite some time with all the wives of those wretches, it happened that one of the women of chaste character was horrified at the misdeed and, listening closely, recognized Tyrannus's voice, returned home, and reported the criminal deception to her husband. Furious at the wrong done to his wife, or rather to himself, he had Tyrannus charged and handed over to torture. With his conviction and confession and his secret misdeeds brought to light, shame and disgrace flooded all the houses of the pagans with the discovery of adulterous mothers, uncertain fathers, and illegitimate children. When all this was revealed and publicized, there was a rush to extirpate the crimes, too, along with the idols and shrines.

11.26. As for Canopus, who could list the outrages connected with its superstitions? There was what amounted to a state school of magic there under the guise of the study of the priestly writing, for so they call the ancient writing of the Egyptians. The pagans revered the place as a source and origin of demons to such an extent that its popularity was far greater than that of Alexandria. Now it will not be out of place to explain briefly how the tradition accounts for the error connected with this monster as well. They say that once upon a time the Chaldaeans made a tour carrying with them their god, fire, and held a contest with the gods of all the provinces, the winner of which should be regarded by all as god. The gods of all the other provinces were of bronze or gold or silver or wood or stone or whatever material is of course ruined by fire. And thus fire prevailed everywhere. When the priest of Canopus heard this, he thought of a clever plan. Earthenware water pots are commonly manufactured in Egypt which are densely stippled all over with tiny holes, so that when cloudy water trickles through them, the sediment is strained out and it becomes purer. He took one, stopped up the holes with wax, painted it over in various colors, filled it with water, set it up as a god, and on its top

carefully fitted the head cut off an old statue said to have been that of Menelaus's helmsman. Afterwards the Chaldaeans arrived, the contest was held, the fire was kindled around the water pot, the wax stopping the holes melted, the fire was quenched by the perspiring pot, and the priest's craft gave the victory to Canopus over the Chaldaeans. Hence the very statue of Canopus was in the form of a water pot, with tiny feet, a neck drawn in and, as it were, squashed, a bulging stomach, and an equally rounded back, and on account of this tradition he was worshiped as an all-conquering god. But whatever he may once have done to the Chaldaeans, now with the arrival of the priest of God, Theophilus, neither his perspiration nor his wax-covered tricks were of any avail; everything was destroyed and razed to the ground.

11.27. But nothing was done which resulted in the place becoming deserted. The dens of iniquity and age-worn burial grounds were demolished, and lofty churches, temples of the true God, were put up. For on the site of Serapis's tomb the unholy sanctuaries were leveled, and on the one side there rose a martyr's shrine, and on the other a church. I think it would be worthwhile to explain why the martyr's shrine was built.

11.28. In Julian's time the ferocity of the pagans sprang forth in all its savagery, as though their reins had gone slack. Thus it happened that in Sebaste, a city of Palestine, they frenziedly attacked the tomb of John the Baptist with murderous hands and set about scattering the bones, gathering them again, burning them, mixing the holy ashes with dust, and scattering them throughout the fields and countryside. But by God's providence it happened that some men from Jerusalem, from the monastic house of Philip, the man of God, arrived there at the same time in order to pray. When they saw the enormity being perpetrated by human hands at the service of bestial spirits, they mixed with those gathering the bones for burning, since they considered dying preferable to being polluted by such a sin, carefully and reverently collected them, as far as they could in the circumstances, then slipped away from the others, to their amazement or fury, and brought the relics to the devout father Philip. He in turn, thinking it beyond him to guard such a treasure by his own vigilance, sent the relics of this spotless victim to Athanasius, then supreme high priest, in the care of his deacon Julian, who later became bishop of Parentium. Athanasius received them and closed them up within a hollowed-out place in the sacristy wall in the presence of a few witnesses, preserving them in prophetic spirit for the benefit of the next generation, so that, now that the remnants of idolatry had been thrown down flat, golden roofs might rise for them on temples once unholy.

But after the death of Serapis, who had never been alive, which temples of any other demon could remain standing? It would hardly be enough to say that all the untended shrines in Alexandria, of whichever demon, came down almost column by column. In fact, in all the cities of Egypt, the settlements, the villages, the countryside everywhere, the riverbanks, even the desert, wherever shrines, or rather graveyards, could be found, the persistence of the several bishops resulted in their being wrecked and razed to the ground, so that the countryside, which had been wrongly given over to the demons, was restored to agriculture.

11.29. Another thing was done in Alexandria: the busts of Serapis, which had been in every house in the walls, the entrances, the doorposts, and even the windows, were so cut and filed away that not even a trace or mention of him or any other demon remained anywhere. In their place everyone painted the sign of the Lord's cross on doorposts, entrances, windows, walls, and columns. It is said that when the pagans who were left saw this, they were reminded of an important matter which had been committed to them from of old. The Egyptians are said to have this our sign of the Lord's cross among the letters which they call "hieratic," or priestly, as one of the letters making up their script. They state that the meaning of this letter or noun is "the life to come." Those, then, who were coming over to the faith out of astonishment at what was happening said that it had been handed down to them from of old that the things now worshiped would remain until they saw that that sign had come in which there was life. Hence it was the former priests and ministers of the temples who came over to the faith rather than those entertained by the tricks of error and devices of deceit.

11.30. Now it was the custom in Egypt to bring the gauge of the rising Nile River to the temple of Serapis, as being the one who caused the increase of water and the flooding; so when his statue was overthrown and burned, everyone of course unanimously declared that Serapis, mindful of this injury, would never again bestow the waters in their usual abundance. But so that God could show that it was he who ordered the waters of the river to rise in season, and not Serapis, who, after all, was much younger than the Nile, there began then such a succession of floods as never before recorded. And thus the practice began of bringing the measuring rod itself, or water gauge, which they call a *pe¯chys,* to the Lord of waters in the church. When these events were reported to the devout sovereign, he is said to have stretched out his arms to heaven and exclaimed with great joy, "I thank you, Christ, that this age-old error has been demolished without harm to that great city!"

3. Socrates Scholasticus, *The Ecclesiastical History*, Revised, with Notes, by The Rev. A. C. Zenos, D.D., 233-235.

5.16. At the solicitation of Theophilus bishop of Alexandria the emperor issued an order at this time for the demolition of the heathen temples in that city; commanding also that it should be put in execution under the direction of Theophilus. Seizing this opportunity, Theophilus exerted himself to the utmost to expose the pagan mysteries to contempt. And to begin with, he caused the Mithreum to be cleaned out, and exhibited to public view the tokens of its bloody mysteries. Then he destroyed the Serapeum, and the bloody rights of the Mithreum he publicly caricatured; the Serapeum also he showed full of extravagant superstitions, and he had the phalli of Priapus carried through the midst of the forum. The pagans of Alexandria, and especially the professors of philosophy, were unable to repress their rage at this exposure, and exceeded in revengeful ferocity their outrages on a former occasion: for with one accord, at a preconcerted signal, they rushed impetuously upon the Christians, and murdered every one they could lay hands on. The Christians also made an attempt to resist the assailants, and so the mischief was the more augmented. This desperate affray was prolonged until satiety of bloodshed put an end to it. Then it was discovered that very few of the heathens had been killed, but a great number of Christians; while the number of wounded on each side was almost innumerable. Fear then possessed the pagans on account of what was done, as they considered the emperor's displeasure. For having done what seemed good in their own eyes, and by their bloodshed having quenched their courage, some fled in one direction, some in another, and many quitting Alexandria, dispersed themselves in various cities. Among these were the two grammarians Helladius and Ammonius, whose pupil I was in my youth at Constantinople. Helladius was said to be the priest of Jupiter, and Ammonius of Simius. Thus this disturbance having been terminated, the governor of Alexandria, and the commander-in-chief of the troops in Egypt, assisted Theophilus in demolishing the heathen temples. These were therefore razed to the ground, and the images of their gods molten into pots and other convenient utensils for the use of the Alexandrian church; for the emperor had instructed Theophilus to distribute them for the relief of the poor. All the images were accordingly broken to pieces, except one statue of the god before mentioned, which Theophilus preserved and set up in a public place; 'Lest,' said he, 'at a future time the heathens should deny that they had ever worshiped such gods.' This action gave great umbrage to Ammonius the grammarian in particular, who to my knowledge was accustomed to say that 'the religion of the Gentiles was grossly abused in

that that single statue was not also molten, but preserved, in order to render that religion ridiculous.' Helladius however boasted in the presence of some that he had slain in that desperate onset nine men with his own hand. Such were the doings at Alexandria at that time.

5.17. When the Temple of Serapis was torn down and laid bare, there were found in it, engraven on stones, certain characters which they call hieroglyphics, having the forms of crosses. Both the Christians and pagans on seeing them, appropriated and applied them to their respective religions: for the Christians who affirm that the cross is the sign of Christ's saving passion, claimed this character as peculiarly theirs; but the pagans alleged that it might appertain to Christ and Serapis in common; 'for,' said they, 'it symbolizes one thing to Christians and another to heathens.' Whilst this point was controverted amongst them, some of the heathen converts to Christianity, who were conversant with these hieroglyphic characters, interpreted the form of a cross and said that it signifies 'Life to come.' This the Christians exultingly laid hold of, as decidedly favorable to their religion. But after other hieroglyphics had been deciphered containing a prediction that 'When the cross should appear,'—for this was 'life to come,'—'the Temple of Serapis would be destroyed,' a very great number of the pagans embraced Christianity, and confessing their sins, were baptized. Such are the reports I have heard respecting the discovery of this symbol in form of a cross. But I cannot imagine that the Egyptian priests foreknew the things concerning Christ, when they engraved the figure of a cross. For if 'the advent' of our Saviour into the world 'was a mystery hid from ages and from generations,' as the apostle declares; and if the devil himself, the prince of wickedness, knew nothing of it, his ministers, the Egyptian priests, are likely to have been still more ignorant of the matter; but Providence doubtless purposed that in the enquiry concerning this character, there should something take place analogous to what happened heretofore at the preaching of Paul. For he, made wise by the Divine Spirit, employed a similar method in relation to the Athenians, and brought over many of them to the faith, when on reading the inscription on one of their altars, he accommodated and applied it to his own discourse. Unless indeed any one should say, that the Word of God wrought in the Egyptian priests, as it did on Balaam and Caiaphas; for these men uttered prophecies of good things in spite of themselves. This will suffice on the subject.

4. Theodoret of Cyprus, *Ecclesiastical History*, Trans. B. Jackson.

5.22. The illustrious Athanasius was succeeded by the admirable Petrus, Petrus by Timotheus, and Timotheus by Theophilus, a man of sound wisdom and of a lofty courage. By him Alexandria was set free from the error of idolatry; for, not content with razing the idols' temples to the ground, he exposed the tricks of the priests to the victims of their wiles. For they had constructed statues of bronze and wood hollow within, and fastened the backs of them to the temple walls, leaving in these walls certain invisible openings. Then coming up from their secret chambers they got inside the statues, and through them gave any order they liked and the hearers, tricked and cheated, obeyed. These tricks the wise Theophilus exposed to the people.

Moreover he went up into the temple of Serapis, which has been described by some as excelling in size and beauty all the temples in the world. There he saw a huge image of which the bulk struck beholders with terror, increased by a lying report which got abroad that if any one approached it, there would be a great earthquake, and that all the people would be destroyed. The bishop looked on all these tales as the mere drivelling of tipsy old women, and in utter derision of the lifeless monster's enormous size, he told a man who had an axe to give Serapis a good blow with it. No sooner had the man struck, than all the folio cried out, for they were afraid of the threatened catastrophe. Serapis however, who had received the blow, felt no pain, inasmuch as he was made of wood, and uttered never a word, since he was a lifeless block. His head was cut off, and forthwith out ran multitudes of mice, for the Egyptian god was a dwelling place for mice. Serapis was broken into small pieces of which some were committed to the flames, but his head was carried through all the town in sight of his worshippers, who mocked the weakness of him to whom they had bowed the knee. Thus all over the world the shrines of the idols were destroyed.

5. Salaminius Hermias Sozomenus, *Ecclesiastical History*, Revised by Chester D. Hartranft, 631-633.

7.15. Paulinus, bishop of Antioch, died about this period, and those who had been convened into a church with him persisted in their aversion to Flavian, although his religious sentiments were precisely the same as their own, because he had violated the oath he had formerly made to Meletius. They, therefore, elected Evagrius as their bishop. Evagrius did not long survive this appointment, and although Flavian prevented the election of another bishop, those who had seceded from communion with him, still continued to hold their assemblies apart.

About this period, the bishop of Alexandria, to whom the temple of Dionysus had, at his own request, been granted by the emperor, converted the edifice into a church.(not just Serapeum also other places) The statues were removed, the adyta were exposed; and, in order to cast contumely on the pagan mysteries, he made a procession for the display of these objects; the phalli, and whatever other object had been concealed in the adyta which really was, or seemed to be, ridiculous, he made a public exhibition of. The pagans, amazed at so unexpected an exposure, could not suffer it in silence, but conspired together to attack the Christians. They killed many of the Christians, wounded others, and seized the Serapion, a temple which was conspicuous for beauty and vastness and which was seated on an eminence. This they converted into a temporary citadel; and hither they conveyed many of the Christians, put them to the torture, and compelled them to offer sacrifice. Those who refused compliance were crucified, had both legs broken, or were put to death in some cruel manner. When the sedition had prevailed for some time, the rulers came and urged the people to remember the laws, to lay down their arms, and to give up the Serapion. There came then Romanus, the general of the military legions in Egypt; and Evagrius was the prefect of Alexandria. As their efforts, however, to reduce the people to submission were utterly in vain, they made known what had transpired to the emperor. Those who had shut themselves up in the Serapion prepared a more spirited resistance, from fear of the punishment that they knew would await their audacious proceedings, and they were further instigated to revolt by the inflammatory discourses of a man named Olympius, attired in the garments of a philosopher, who told them that they ought to die rather than neglect the gods of their fathers. Perceiving that they were greatly dispirited by the destruction of the idolatrous statues, he assured them that such a circumstance did not warrant their renouncing their religion; for that the statues were composed of corruptible materials, and were mere pictures, and therefore would disappear; whereas,

the powers which had dwelt within them, had flown to heaven. By such representations as these, he retained the multitude with him in the Serapion.

When the emperor was informed of these occurrences, he declared that the Christians who had been slain were blessed, inasmuch as they had been admitted to the honor of martyrdom, and had suffered in defense of the faith.(commemoration direk) He offered free pardon to those who had slain them, hoping that by this act of clemency they would be the more readily induced to embrace Christianity; and he commanded the demolition of the temples in Alexandria which had been the cause of the popular sedition. It is said that, when this imperial edict was read in public, the Christians uttered loud shouts of joy, because the emperor laid the odium of what had occurred upon the pagans. The people who were guarding the Serapion were so terrified at hearing these shouts, that they took to flight, and the Christians immediately obtained possession of the spot, which they have retained ever since. I have been informed that, on the night preceding this occurrence, Olympius heard the voice of one singing hallelujah in the Serapion. The doors were shut and everything was still; and as he could see no one, but could only hear the voice of the singer, he at once understood what the sign signified; and unknown to any one he quitted the Serapion and embarked for Italy. It is said that when the temple was being demolished, some stones were found, on which were hieroglyphic characters in the form of a cross, which on being submitted to the inspection of the learned, were interpreted as signifying the life to come. These characters led to the conversion of several of the pagans, as did likewise other inscriptions found in the same place, and which contained predictions of the destruction of the temple. It was thus that the Serapion was taken, and, a little while after, converted into a church; it received the name of the Emperor Arcadius.

There were still pagans in many cities, who contended zealously in behalf of their temples; as, for instance, the inhabitants of Petræa and of Areopolis, in Arabia; of Raphi and Gaza, in Palestine; of Heriopolis in Phoenicia; and of Apamea, on the river Axius, in Syria. I have been informed that the inhabitants of the last-named city often armed the men of Galilee and the peasants of Lebanon in defense of their temples; and that at last, they even carried their audacity to such a height, as to slay a bishop named Marcellus. This bishop had commanded the demolition of all the temples in the city and villages, under the supposition that it would not be easy otherwise for them to be converted from their former religion. Having heard that there was a very spacious temple at Aulon, a district of Apamea, he repaired thither with a body of soldiers and gladiators. He stationed himself at a distance from the

scene of conflict, beyond the reach of the arrows; for he was afflicted with the gout, and was unable to fight, to pursue, or to flee. Whilst the soldiers and gladiators were engaged in the assault against the temple, some pagans, discovering that he was alone, hastened to the place where he was separated from the combat; they arose suddenly and seized him, and burnt him alive. The perpetrators of this deed were not then known, but, in course of time, they were detected, and the sons of Marcellus determined upon avenging his death. The council of the province, however, prohibited them from executing this design, and declared that it was not just that the relatives or friends of Marcellus should seek to avenge his death; when they should rather return thanks to God for having accounted him worthy to die in such a cause.

6. Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae,* trans. J. C. Rolfe, 299-309.

22.16.6-23. Egypt itself, which from the time when it was joined with the Roman empire has been governed by prefects in place of kings, is adorned by the great cities of Athribis, Oxyrynchus, Thumis, and Memphis, to say nothing of many lesser towns.

But the crown of all cities is Alexandria, which is made famous by many splendid things, through the wisdom of its mighty founder and by the cleverness of the architect Dinocrates. Alexandira önemi) The latter, when laying out its extensive and beautiful walls, for lack of lime, of which too little could at the time be found, sprinkled the whole line of its circuit with flour, which chanced to be a sign that later the city would abound with a plentiful store of food. There healthful breezes blow, the air is calm and mild, and as the accumulated experience of many ages has shown, there is almost no day on which the dwellers in that city do not see a cloudless sun. Since this coast in former times, because of its treacherous and perilous approaches, involved seafarers in many dangers, Cleopatra devised a lofty tower in the harbour, which from its situation is called the Pharos and furnishes the means of showing lights to ships by night; whereas before that, as they came from the Parthenian or the Libyan sea past flat and low shores, seeing no landmarks of mountains or signs of hills, they were dashed upon the soft, tenacious sandbanks and wrecked. This same queen built the Heptastadium, remarkable alike for its great size and for the incredible speed with which it was constructed, for a well-known and sufficient reason. The island of Pharos, where Proteus, as Homer relates in lofty language, lived with his herd of seals, lay a mile from the shore of the city, and was subject to tribute by the Rhodians. When they had come one day to collect this tax, which was excessive, the queen, who was ever skilled in deception, under pretence of a solemn festival, took the same tax-collectors with her to the suburbs, and gave orders that the work should be completed by unremitting toil. In seven days, by building dams in the sea near the shore, the same number of stadia were won for the land; then the queen rode to the spot in a carriage drawn by horses, and laughed at the Rhodians, since it was on islands and not on the mainland that they imposed a duty.

There are besides in the city temples pompous with lofty roofs, conspicuous among them the Serapeum, which, though feeble words merely belittle it, yet is so adorned with extensive columned halls, with almost breathing statues, and a great number of other works of art, that next to the Capitolium, with which revered Rome elevates herself to eternity, the whole world beholds nothing more magnificent. (hem complex olması hem de akılda nasıl kaldığı, ilk akla gelen temple

mesela) In this were invaluable libraries, and the unanimous testimony of ancient records declares that 700,000 books, brought together by the unremitting energy of the Ptolemaïc kings, were burned in the Alexandrine war, when the city was sacked under the dictator Caesar.

At a distance of twelve miles from Alexandria is Canopus, which, according to the statements of ancient writers, got its name from the burial there of Menelaüs' steersman. The place is most delightful because of its beautiful pleasure-resorts, its soft air and healthful climate, so that anyone staying in that region believes that he is living outside of this world, as oftentimes he hears the winds that murmur a welcome with sunny breath.

But Alexandria herself, not gradually (like other cities), but at her very origin, attained her wide extent; and for a long time she was grievously troubled by internal dissensions, until at last, many years later under the rule of Aurelian, the quarrels of the citizens turned into deadly strife; then her walls were destroyed and she lost the greater part of the district called Bruchion, which had long been the abode of distinguished men. From there came Aristarchus, eminent in thorny problems of grammatical lore, and Herodian, a most accurate investigator in science and Saccas Ammonius, the teacher of Plotinus, and numerous other writers in many famous branches of literature. Among these Didymus Chalcenterus was conspicuous for the abundance of his diversified knowledge, although in those six books in which he criticises Cicero, imitating the scurrilous writers of Silli, he makes the same impression on learned ears as a puppy-dog barking from a distance with quavering voice around a lion roaring awfully. And although very many writers flourished in early times as well as these whom I have mentioned, nevertheless not even to-day is learning of various kinds silent in that same city; for the teachers of the arts show signs of life, and the geometrical measuring-rod brings to light whatever is concealed, the stream of music is not yet wholly dried up among them, harmony is not reduced to silence, the consideration of the motion of the universe and of the stars is still kept warm with some, few though they be, and there are others who are skilled in numbers; and a few besides are versed in the knowledge which reveals the course of the fates. Moreover, studies in the art of healing, whose help is often required in this life of ours, which is neither frugal nor sober, are so enriched from day to day, that although a physician's work itself indicates it, yet in place of every testimony it is enough to commend his knowledge of the art, if he has said that he was trained at Alexandria. But enough on this point. If one wishes to investigate with attentive mind the many publications on the knowledge of the divine, and the origin of divination, he will find that learning of this kind has been

spread abroad from Egypt through the whole world. There, for the first time, long before other men, they discovered the cradles, so to speak, of the various religions, and now carefully guard the first beginnings of worship, stored up in secret writings. Trained in this wisdom, Pythagoras, secretly honoring the gods, made whatever he said or believed recognised authority, and often showed his golden thigh at Olympia, and let himself be seen from time to time talking with an eagle. From here Anaxagoras foretold a rain of stones, and by handling mud from a well predicted an earthquake. Solon, too, aided by the opinions of the Egyptian priests, passed laws in accordance with the measure of justice, and thus gave also to Roman law its greatest support. On this source, Plato drew and after visiting Egypt, traversed higher regions, and rivalled Jupiter in lofty language, gloriously serving in the field of wisdom.

7. Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyprus, *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection*, Trans. Benedicta Ward, 56-57.

1. The holy Bishop Epiphanius related that some crows, flying all around the temple of Serapis, in the presence of blessed Athanasius, cried without interruption, 'Caw, caw.' Then some pagans, standing in front of blessed Athanasius cried out, 'Wicked old man, tell us what these crows are crying.' He answered, 'These crows are saying, "Caw, caw", and in the Ausonion (or Latin) language, this word means "tomorrow".' He added, 'Tomorrow you shall see the glory of God.' Just afterwards, the death of the Emperor Julian was announced. At this news they all ran to the temple of Serapis crying out against him and saying, 'If you did not want him, why did you accept his gifts?'

2. The same related that there was a charioteer in Alexandria, whose mother was called Mary. In an equestrian fight he had a fall. Then getting up again he surpassed the men who had overthrown him and carried off the victory. The crowd cried out, 'The son of Mary has fallen; he has risen again and is the victor.' While these cries were still being heard, an uproar ran through the crowd in connection with the temple of Serapis; the great Theophilus had gone and overthrown the statue of Serapis and made himself master of the temple.

APPENDIX B

TRANSLATIONS OF PRIMARY SOURCES IN CHAPTER THREE

1. Ambrose, *Epistle XVII*, in Schaff, P., Wace, H. (eds.) *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers 10: Ambrose: Select Works and Letters*, 411-414.

AMBROSE, Bishop, to the most blessed Prince and most Christian Emperor Valentinian.

1. As all men who live under the Roman sway engage in military service under you, the Emperors and Princes of the world, so too do you yourselves owe service to Almighty God and our holy faith. For salvation is not sure unless everyone worship in truth the true God, that is the God of the Christians, under Whose sway are all things; for He alone is the true God, Who is to be worshipped from the bottom of the heart; for "the gods of the heathen," as Scripture says, "are devils."

2. Now everyone is a soldier of this true God, and he who receives and worships Him in his inmost spirit, does not bring to His service dissimulation, or pretence, but earnest faith and devotion. And if, in fine, he does not attain to this, at least he ought not to give any countenance to the worship of idols and to profane ceremonies. For no one deceives God, to whom all things, even the hidden things of the heart, are manifest.

3. Since, then, most Christian Emperor, there is due from you to the true God both faith and zeal, care and devotion for the faith, I wonder how the hope has risen up to some, that you would feel it a duty to restore by your command altars to the gods of the heathen, and furnish the funds requisite for profane sacrifices; for whatsoever has long been claimed by either the imperial or the city treasury you will seem to give rather from your own funds, than to be restoring what is theirs.

4. And they are complaining of their losses, who never spared our blood, who destroyed the very buildings of the churches. And they petition you to grant them privileges, who by the last Julian law denied us the common right of speaking and teaching, and those privileges whereby Christians also have often been deceived; for by those privileges they endeavoured to ensnare some, partly through inadvertence, partly in order to escape the burden of public requirements; and, because all are not found to be brave, even under Christian princes, many have lapsed.

5. Had these things not been abolished I could prove that they ought to be done away by your authority; but since they have been forbidden and prohibited by many princes throughout nearly the whole world, and were abolished at Rome by Gratian of august memory, the brother of your

Clemency, in consideration of the true faith, and rendered void by a rescript; do not, I pray you, either pluck up what has been established in accordance with the faith, nor rescind your brother's precepts. In civil matters if he established anything, no one thinks that it ought to be treated lightly, while a precept about religion is trodden under foot.

6. Let no one take advantage of your youth; if he be a heathen who demands this, it is not right that he should bind your mind with the bonds of his own superstition; but by his zeal he ought to teach and admonish you how to be zealous for the true faith, since he defends vain things with all the passion of truth. I myself advise you to defer to the merits of illustrious men, but undoubtedly God must be preferred to all.

7. If we have to consult concerning military affairs, the opinion of a man experienced in warfare should be waited for, and his counsel be followed; when the question concerns religion, think upon God. No one is injured because God is set before him. He keeps his own opinion. You do not compel a man against his will to worship what he dislikes. Let the same liberty be given to you, O Emperor, and let every one bear it with patience, if he cannot extort from the Emperor what he would take it ill if the Emperor desired to extort from him. A shuffling spirit is displeasing to the heathen themselves, for everyone ought freely to defend and maintain the faith and purpose of his own mind.

8. But if any, Christians in name, think that any such decree should be made, let not bare words mislead your mind, let not empty words deceive you. Whoever advises this, and whoever decrees it, sacrifices. But that one should sacrifice is more tolerable than that all should fall. Here the whole Senate of Christians is in danger.

9. If to-day any heathen Emperor should build an altar, which God forbid, to idols, and should compel Christians to come together thither, in order to be amongst those who were sacrificing, so that the smoke and ashes from the altar, the sparks from the sacrilege, the smoke from the burning might choke the breath and throats of the faithful; and should give judgment in that court where members were compelled to vote after swearing at the altar of an idol (for they explain that an altar is so placed for this purpose, that every assembly should deliberate under its sanction, as they suppose, though the Senate is now made up with a majority of Christians), a Christian who was compelled with a choice such as this to come to the Senate, would consider it to be persecution, which often happens, for they are compelled to come together even by violence. Are these Christians, when you are Emperor, compelled to swear at a heathen altar? What is an oath, but a confession of the divine power of Him

Whom you invoke as watcher over your good faith? When you are Emperor, this is sought and demanded, that you should command an altar to be built, and the cost of profane sacrifices to be granted.

10. But this cannot be decreed without sacrilege, wherefore I implore you not to decree or order it, nor to subscribe to any decrees of that sort. I, as a priest of Christ, call upon your faith, all of us bishops would have joined in calling upon you, were not the report so sudden and incredible, that any such thing had been either suggested in your council, or petitioned for by the Senate. But far be it from the Senate to have petitioned this, a few heathen are making use of the common name. For, nearly two years ago, when the same attempt was being made, holy Damasus, Bishop of the Roman Church, elected by the judgment of God, sent to me a memorial, which the Christian senators in great numbers put forth, protesting that they had given no such authority, that they did not agree with such requests of the heathen, nor give consent to them, and they declared publicly and privately that they would not come to the Senate, if any such thing were decreed. Is it agreeable to the dignity of your, that is Christian, times, that Christian senators should be deprived of their dignity, in order that effect should be given to the profane will of the heathen? This memorial I sent to your Clemency's brother, and from it was plain that the Senate had made no order about the expenses of superstition.

11. But perhaps it may be said, why were they not before present in the Senate when those petitions were made? By not being present they sufficiently say what they wish, they said enough in what they said to the Emperor. And do we wonder if those persons deprive private persons at Rome of the liberty of resisting, who are unwilling that you should be free not to command what you do not approve, or to maintain your own opinion?

12. And so, remembering the legation lately entrusted to me, I call again upon your faith. I call upon your own feelings not to determine to answer according to this petition of the heathen, nor to attach to an answer of such a sort the sacrilege of your subscription. Refer to the father of your Piety, the Emperor Theodosius, whom you have been wont to consult in almost all matters of greater importance. Nothing is greater than religion, nothing more exalted than faith.

13. If it were a civil cause the right of reply would be reserved for the opposing party; it is a religious cause, and I the bishop make a claim. Let a copy of the memorial which has been sent be given me, that I may answer more fully, and then let your Clemency's father be consulted on the whole subject, and vouchsafe an answer. Certainly if anything else is decreed, we bishops cannot

contentedly suffer it and take no notice; you indeed may come to the church, but will find either no priest there, or one who will resist you.

14. What will you answer a priest who says to you, “The church does not seek your gifts, because you have adorned the heathen temples with gifts. The Altar of Christ rejects your gifts, because you have made an altar for idols, for the voice is yours, the hand is yours, the subscription is yours, the deed is yours. The Lord Jesus refuses and rejects your service, because you have served idols, for He said to you: ‘Ye cannot serve two masters.’ The Virgins consecrated to God have no privileges from you, and do the Vestal Virgins claim them? Why do you ask for the priests of God, to whom you have preferred the profane petitions of the heathen? We cannot take up a share of the errors of others.”

15. What will you answer to these words? That you who have fallen are but a boy? Every age is perfect in Christ, every age is full of God. No childhood is allowed in faith, for even children have confessed Christ against their persecutors with fearless mouth.

16. What will you answer your brother? Will he not say to you, “I did not feel that I was overcome, because I left you as Emperor; I did not grieve at dying, because I had you as my heir; I did not mourn at leaving my imperial command, because I believed that my commands, especially those concerning divine religion, would endure through all ages. I had set up these memorials of piety and virtue, I offered up these spoils gained from the world, these trophies of victory over the devil, these I offered up as gained from the enemy of all, and in them is eternal victory. What more could my enemy take away from me? You have abrogated my decrees, which so far he who took up arms against me did not do. Now do I receive a more terrible wound in that my decrees are condemned by my brother. My better part is endangered by you, that was but the death of my body, this of my reputation. Now is my power annulled, and what is harder, annulled by my own family, and that is annulled, which even my enemies spoke well of in me. If you consented of your own free will, you have condemned the faith which was mine; if you yielded unwillingly, you have betrayed your own. So, too, which is more serious, I am in danger in your person.”

16. What will you answer your father also? who with greater grief will address you, saying, “You judged very ill of me, my son, when you supposed that I could have connived at the heathen. No one ever told me that there was an altar in the Roman Senate House, I never believed such wickedness as that the heathen sacrificed in the common assembly of Christians and heathen, that is to say that the Gentiles should insult the Christians who were present, and that Christians should be compelled

against their will to be present at the sacrifices. Many and various crimes were committed whilst I was Emperor. I punished such as were detected; if any one then escaped notice, ought one to say that I approved of that of which no one informed me? You have judged very ill of me, if a foreign superstition and not my own faith preserved the empire."

17. Wherefore, O Emperor, since you see that if you decree anything of that kind, injury will be done, first to God, and then to your father and brother, I implore you to do that which you know will be profitable to your salvation before God.

2. Symmachus, *Relatio 3*, in Schaff, P., Wace, H. ed., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers 10: Ambrose: Select Works and Letters*, 414-417.

1. As soon as the most honourable Senate, always devoted to you, knew that crimes were made amenable to law, and that the reputation of late times was being purified by pious princes, it, following the example of a more favourable time, gave utterance to its long suppressed grief, and bade me be once again the delegate to utter its complaints. But through wicked men audience was refused me by the divine Emperor, otherwise justice would not have been wanting, my lords and emperors, of great renown, Valentinian, Theodosius, and Arcadius, victorious and triumphant, ever august.

2. In the exercise, therefore, of a twofold office, as your Prefect I attend to public business, and as delegate I recommend to your notice the charge laid on me by the citizens. Here is no disagreement of wills, for men have now ceased to believe that they excel in courtly zeal, if they disagree. To be loved, to be reverenced, to be esteemed is more than imperial sway. Who could endure that private disagreement should injure the state? Rightly does the Senate censure those who have preferred their own power to the reputation of the prince.

3. But it is our task to watch on behalf of your Graces. For to what is it more suitable that we defend the institutions of our ancestors, and the rights and destiny of our country, than to the glory of these times, which is all the greater when you understand that you may not do anything contrary to the custom of your ancestors? We demand then the restoration of that condition of religious affairs which was so long advantageous to the state. Let the rulers of each sect and of each opinion be counted up; a late one practised the ceremonies of his ancestors, a later did not put them away. If the religion of old times does not make a precedent, let the connivance of the last do so.

4. Who is so friendly with the barbarians as not to require an Altar of Victory? We will be careful henceforth, and avoid a show of such things. But at least let that honour be paid to the name which is refused to the goddess—your fame, which will last for ever, owes much and will owe still more to victory. Let those be averse to this power, whom it has never benefited. Do you refuse to desert a patronage which is friendly to your triumphs? That power is wished for by all, let no one deny that what he acknowledges is to be desired should also be venerated.

5. But even if the avoidance of such an omen were not sufficient, it would at least have been seemly to abstain from injuring the ornaments of the Senate House. Allow us, we beseech you, as old men to leave to posterity what we received as boys. The love of custom is great. Justly did the act of

the divine Constantius last but for a short time. All precedents ought to be avoided by you, which you know were soon abolished. We are anxious for the permanence of your glory and your name, that the time to come may find nothing which needs correction.

6. Where shall we swear to obey your laws and commands? by what religious sanction shall the false mind be terrified, so as not to lie in bearing witness? All things are indeed filled with God, and no place is safe for the perjured, but to be urged in the very presence of religious forms has great power in producing a fear of sinning. That altar preserves the concord of all, that altar appeals to the good faith of each, and nothing gives more authority to our decrees than that the whole of our order issues every decree as it were under the sanction of an oath. So that a place will be opened to perjury, and this will be determined by my illustrious Princes, whose honour is defended by a public oath.

7. But the divine Constantius is said to have done the same. Let us rather imitate the other actions of that Prince, who would have undertaken nothing of the kind, if any one else had committed such an error before him. For the fall of the earlier sets his successor right, and amendment results from the censure of a previous example. It was pardonable for your Grace's ancestor in so novel a matter to fail in guarding against blame. Can the same excuse avail us if we imitate what we know to have been disapproved?

8. Will your Majesties listen to other actions of this same Prince, which you may more worthily imitate? He diminished none of the privileges of the sacred virgins, he filled the priestly offices with nobles, he did not refuse the cost of the Roman ceremonies, and following the rejoicing Senate through all the streets of the eternal city, he contentedly beheld the shrines with unmoved countenance, he read the names of the gods inscribed on the pediments, he enquired about the origin of the temples, and expressed admiration for their builders. Although he himself followed another religion, he maintained its own for the empire, for everyone has his own customs, everyone his own rites. The divine Mind has distributed different guardians and different cults to different cities. As souls are separately given to infants as they are born, so to peoples the genius of their destiny. Here comes in the proof from advantage, which most of all vouches to man for the gods. For, since our reason is wholly clouded, whence does the knowledge of the gods more rightly come to us, than from the memory and evidence of prosperity? Now if a long period gives authority to religious customs, we ought to keep faith with so many centuries, and to follow our ancestors, as they happily followed theirs.

9. Let us now suppose that Rome is present and addresses you in these words: “Excellent princes, fathers of your country, respect my years to which pious rites have brought me. Let me use the ancestral ceremonies, for I do not repent of them. Let me live after my own fashion, for I am free. This worship subdued the world to my laws, these sacred rites repelled Hannibal from the walls, and the Senones from the capitol. Have I been reserved for this, that in my old age I should be blamed? I will consider what it is thought should be set in order, but tardy and discreditable is the reformation of old age.”

10. We ask, then, for peace for the gods of our fathers and of our country. It is just that all worship should be considered as one. We look on the same stars, the sky is common, the same world surrounds us. What difference does it make by what pains each seeks the truth? We cannot attain to so great a secret by one road; but this discussion is rather for persons at ease, we offer now prayers, not conflict.

11. With what advantage to your treasury are the prerogatives of the Vestal Virgins diminished? Is that refused under the most bountiful emperors which the most parsimonious have granted? Their sole honour consists in that, so to call it, wage of chastity. As fillets are the ornament of their heads, so is their distinction drawn from their leisure to attend to the offices of sacrifice. They seek for in a measure the empty name of immunity, since by their poverty they are exempt from payment. And so they who diminish anything of their substance increase their praise, inasmuch as virginity dedicated to the public good increases in merit when it is without reward.

12. Let such gains as these be far from the purity of your treasury. Let the revenue of good princes be increased not by the losses of priests, but by the spoils of enemies. Does any gain compensate for the odium? And because no charge of avarice falls upon your characters, they are the more wretched whose ancient revenues are diminished. For under emperors who abstain from what belongs to others, and resist avarice, that which does not move the desire of him who takes it, is taken solely to injure the loser.

13. The treasury also retains lands bequeathed to virgins and ministers by the will of dying persons. I entreat you, priests of justice, let the lost right of succession be restored to the sacred persons and places of your city. Let men dictate their wills without anxiety, and know that what has been written will be undisturbed under princes who are not avaricious. Let the happiness in this point of all men give pleasure to you, for precedents in this matter have begun to trouble the dying. Does

not then the religion of Rome appertain to Roman law? What name shall be given to the taking away of property which no law nor accident has made to fail. Freedmen take legacies, slaves are not denied the just privilege of making wills; only noble virgins and the ministers of sacred rites are excluded from property sought by inheritance. What does it profit the public safety to dedicate the body to chastity, and to support the duration of the empire with heavenly guardianship, to attach the friendly powers to your arms and to your eagles, to take upon oneself vows efficacious for all, and not to have common rights with all? So, then, slavery is a better condition, which is a service rendered to men. We injure the State, whose interest it never is to be ungrateful.

14. And let no one think that I am defending the cause of religion only, for from deeds of this kind have arisen all the misfortunes of the Roman race. The law of our ancestors honoured the Vestal Virgins and the ministers of the gods with a moderate maintenance and just privileges. This grant remained unassailed till the time of the degenerate money-changers, who turned the fund for the support of sacred chastity into hire for common porters. A general famine followed upon this, and a poor harvest disappointed the hopes of all the provinces. This was not the fault of the earth, we impute no evil influence to the stars. Mildew did not injure the crops, nor wild oats destroy the corn; the year failed through the sacrilege, for it was necessary that what was refused to religion should be denied to all.

15. Certainly, if there be any instance of this evil, let us impute such a famine to the power of the season. A deadly wind has been the cause of this barrenness, life is sustained by trees and shrubs, and the need of the country folk has betaken itself once more to the oaks of Dodona. What similar evil did the provinces suffer, so long as the public charge sustained the ministers of religion? When were the oaks shaken for the use of men, when were the roots of plants torn up, when did fertility on all sides forsake the various lands, when supplies were in common for the people and for the sacred virgins? For the support of the priests was a blessing to the produce of the earth, and was rather an insurance than a bounty. Is there any doubt that what was given was for the benefit of all, seeing that the want of all has made this plain?

16. But some one will say that public support is only refused to the cost of foreign religions. Far be it from good princes to suppose that what has been given to certain persons from the common property can be in the power of the treasury. For as the State consists of individuals, that which goes out from it becomes again the property of individuals. You rule over all; but you preserve his own for

each individual; and justice has more weight with you than arbitrary will. Take counsel with your own liberality whether that which you have conferred on others ought to be considered public property. Sums once given to the honour of the city cease to be the property of those who have given them, and that which at the commencement was a gift, by custom and time becomes a debt. Any one is therefore endeavouring to impress upon your minds a vain fear, who asserts that you share the responsibility of the givers unless you incur the odium of withdrawing the gifts.

17. May the unseen guardians of all sects be favourable to your Graces, and may they especially, who in old time assisted your ancestors, defend you and be worshipped by us. We ask for that state of religious matters which preserved the empire for the divine parent of your Highnesses, and furnished that blessed prince with lawful heirs. That venerable father beholds from the starry height the tears of the priests, and considers himself censured by the violation of that custom which he willingly observed.

18. Amend also for your divine brother that which he did by the counsel of others, cover over the deed which he knew not to be displeasing to the Senate. For it is allowed that that legation was denied access to him, lest public opinion should reach him. It is for the credit of former times, that you should not hesitate to abolish that which is proved not to have been the doing of the prince.

3. Ambrose, *Epistle XVIII*, in Schaff, P., Wace, H. ed., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers 10: Ambrose: Select Works and Letters*, 417-422.

AMBROSE, Bishop, to the most blessed prince and most gracious Emperor Valentianus, the august.

1. Since the illustrious Symmachus, Prefect of the city, has sent petition to your Grace that the altar, which was taken away from the Senate House of the city of Rome, should be restored to its place; and you, O Emperor, although still young in years and experience, yet a veteran in the power of faith, did not approve the prayer of the heathen, I presented a request the moment I heard of it, in which, though I stated such things as it seemed necessary to suggest, I requested that a copy of the Memorial might be given to me.

2. So, then, not being in doubt as to your faith, but anxiously considering the risk, and sure of a kindly consideration, I am replying in this document to the assertions of the Memorial, making this sole request, that you will not expect elegance of language but the force of facts. For, as the divine Scripture teaches, the tongue of wise and studious men is golden, which, gifted with glittering words and shining with the brilliancy of splendid utterance as if of some rich colour, captivates the eyes of the mind with the appearance of beauty and dazzles with the sight. But this gold, if you consider it carefully, is of value outwardly but within is base metal. Ponder well, I pray you, and examine the sect of the heathen, their utterances, sound, weighty, and grand, but defend what is without capacity for truth. They speak of God and worship idols.

3. The illustrious Prefect of the city has in his Memorial set forth three propositions which he considers of force: that Rome, as he says, asks for her rites again, that pay be given to her priests and Vestal Virgins, and that a general famine followed upon the refusal of the priests' stipends.

4. In his first proposition Rome complains with sad and tearful words, asking, as he says, for the restoration of the rites of her ancient ceremonies. These sacred rites, he says, repulsed Hannibal from the walls, and the Senones from the Capitol. And so at the same time that the power of the sacred rites is proclaimed, their weakness is betrayed. So that Hannibal long insulted the Roman rites, and while the gods were fighting against him, arrived a conqueror at the very walls of the city. Why did they suffer themselves to be besieged, for whom their gods were fighting in arms?

5. And why should I say anything of the Senones, whose entrance into the inmost Capitol the remnant of the Romans could not have prevented, had not a goose by its frightened cackling betrayed

them? See what sort of protectors the Roman temples have. Where was Jupiter at that time? Was he speaking in the goose?

6. But why should I deny that their sacred rites fought for the Romans? For Hannibal also worshipped the same gods. Let them choose then which they will. If these sacred rites conquered in the Romans, then they were overcome in the Carthaginians; if they triumphed in the Carthaginians, they certainly did not benefit the Romans.

7. Let, then, that invidious complaint of the Roman people come to an end. Rome has given no such charge. She speaks with other words. "Why do you daily stain me with the useless blood of the harmless herd? Trophies of victory depend not on the entrails of the flocks, but on the strength of those who fight. I subdued the world by a different discipline. Camillus was my soldier, who slew those who had taken the Tarpeian rock, and brought back the standards taken from the Capitol; valour laid those low whom religion had not driven off. What shall I say of Attilius [Regulus], who gave the service of his death? Africanus found his triumphs not amongst the altars of the Capitol, but amongst the lines of Hannibal. Why do you bring forward the rites of our ancestors? I hate the rites of Neros. Why should I speak of the Emperors of two months, and the ends of rulers closely joined to their commencements. Or is it perchance a new thing for the barbarians to cross their boundaries? Were they, too, Christians in whose wretched and unprecedented cases, the one, a captive Emperor, and, under the other, the captive world made manifest that their rites which promised victory were false. Was there then no Altar of Victory? I mourn over my downfall, my old age is tinged with that shameful bloodshed. I do not blush to be converted with the whole world in my old age. It is undoubtedly true that no age is too late to learn. Let that old age blush which cannot amend itself. Not the old age of years is worthy of praise but that of character. There is no shame in passing to better things. This alone was common to me with the barbarians, that of old I knew not God. Your sacrifice is a rite of being sprinkled with the blood of beasts. Why do you seek the voice of God in dead animals? Come and learn on earth the heavenly warfare; we live here, but our warfare is there. Let God Himself, Who made me, teach me the mystery of heaven, not man, who knew not himself. Whom rather than God should I believe concerning God? How can I believe you, who confess that you know not what you worship?"

8. By one road, says he, one cannot attain to so great a secret. What you know not, that we know by the voice of God. And what you seek by fancies, we have found out from the very Wisdom and

Truth of God. Your ways, therefore, do not agree with ours. You implore peace for your gods from the Emperors, we ask for peace for the Emperors themselves from Christ. You worship the works of your own hands, we think it an offence that anything which can be made should be esteemed God. God wills not that He should be worshipped in stones. And, in fine, your philosophers themselves have ridiculed these things.

9. But if you deny Christ to be God, because you believe not that He died (for you are ignorant that death was of the body not of the Godhead, which has brought it to pass that now no one of those who believe dies), what is more thoughtless than you who honour with insult, and disparage with honour, for you consider a piece of wood to be your god. O worship full of insult! You believe not that Christ could die, O perversity founded on respect!

10. But, says he, let the altars be restored to the images, and their ornaments to the shrines. Let this demand be made of one who shares in their superstitions; a Christian Emperor has learnt to honour the altar of Christ alone. Why do they exact of pious hands and faithful lips the ministry to their sacrilege? Let the voice of our Emperor utter the Name of Christ alone, and speak of Him only, Whom he is conscious of, for, "the King's heart is in the hand of the Lord." Has any heathen Emperor raised an altar to Christ? While they demand the restoration of things which have been, by their own example they show us how great reverence Christian Emperors ought to pay to the religion which they follow, since heathen ones offered all to their superstitions.

11*a*. We began long since, and now they follow those whom they excluded. We glory in yielding our blood, an expense moves them. We consider these things in the place of victories, they think them loss. Never did they confer on us a greater benefit than when they ordered Christians to be beaten and proscribed and slain. Religion made a reward of that which unbelief thought to be a punishment. See their greatness of soul! We have increased through loss, through want, through punishment; they do not believe that their rites can continue without contributions.

11. Let the Vestal Virgins, he says, retain their privileges. Let those speak thus, who are unable to believe that virginity can exist without reward, let those who do not trust virtue, encourage by gain. But how many virgins have the promised rewards gained for them? Hardly are seven Vestal Virgins received. See the whole number whom the fillets and chaplets for the head, the dye of the purple robes, the pomp of the litter surrounded by a company of attendants, the greatest privileges, immense profits, and a prescribed time of virginity have gathered together.

12. Let them lift up the eyes of soul and body, let them look upon a people of modesty, a people of purity, an assembly of virginity. Not fillets are the ornament of their heads, but a veil common in use but ennobled by chastity, the enticement of beauty not sought out but laid aside, none of those purple insignia, no delicious luxuries, but the practice of fasts, no privileges, no gains; all things, in fine, of such a kind that one would think them restrained from enjoyment whilst practising their duties. But whilst the duty is being practised the enjoyment of it is aroused. Chastity is increased by its own sacrifices. That is not virginity which is bought with a price, and not kept through a love of virtue; that is not purity which is bought by auction for money, which is bid for a time. The first victory of chastity is to conquer the desire of wealth, for the pursuit of gain is a temptation to modesty. Let us, however, lay down that bountiful provision should be granted to virgins. What an amount will overflow upon Christians! What treasury will supply such riches? Or if they think that gifts should be conferred on the Vestals alone, are they not ashamed that they who claimed the whole for themselves under heathen Emperors should think that we ought to have no common share under Christian Princes?

13. They complain, also, that public support is not considered due to their priests and ministers. What a storm of words has resounded on this point! But on the other hand even the inheritance of private property is denied us by recent laws, and no one complains; for we do not consider it an injury, because we grieve not at the loss. If a priest seeks the privilege of declining the municipal burdens, he has to give up his ancestral and all other property. If the heathen suffered this how would they urge their complaint, that a priest must purchase the free time necessary for his ministry by the loss of all his patrimony, and buy the power to exercise his public ministry at the expense of all his private means; and, alleging his vigils for the public safety, must console himself with the reward of domestic want, because he has not sold a service but obtained a favour.

14. Compare the cases. You wish to excuse a decurio, when it is not allowed the Church to excuse a priest. Wills are written on behalf of ministers of the temples, no profane person is excepted, no one of the lowest condition, no one shamelessly immodest, the clergy alone are excluded from the common right, by whom alone common prayer is offered for all, and common service rendered, no legacies even of grave widows, no gifts are permitted. And where no fault can be found in the character, a penalty is notwithstanding imposed on the office. That which a Christian widow has bequeathed to the priests of a temple is valid, her legacy to the ministers of God is invalid. And I have

related this not in order to complain, but that they may know what I do not complain of; for I prefer that we should be poorer in money than in grace.

15. But they say that what has been given or left to the Church has not been touched. Let them also state who has taken away gifts from the temples, which has been done to Christians. If these things had been done to the heathen the wrong would have been rather a requital than an injury. Is it now only at last that justice is alleged as a pretext, and a claim made for equity? Where was this feeling when, after plundering the goods of all Christians, they grudged them the very breath of life, and forbade them the use of that last burial nowhere denied to any dead? The sea restored those whom the heathen had thrown into it. This is the victory of faith, that they themselves now blame the acts of their ancestors whose deeds they condemn. But what reason is there in seeking benefits from those whose deeds they condemn?

16. No one, however, has denied gifts to the shrines, and legacies to the soothsayers, their land alone has been taken away, because they did not use religiously that which they claimed in right of religion. Why did they not practise what we did if they allege our example? The Church has no possessions of her own except the Faith. Hence are her returns, her increase. The possessions of the Church are the maintenance of the poor. Let them count up how many captives the temples have ransomed, what food they have contributed for the poor, to what exiles they have supplied the means of living. Their lands then have been taken away, not their rights.

17. See what was done, and a public famine avenged, as they say, the sad impiety that what was before profitable only for the comfort of the priests began to be profitable to the use of all. For this reason then, as they say, was the bark shipped from the copses, and fainting men's mouths supped up the unsavoury sap. For this reason changing corn for the Chaonian acorn, going back once more to the food of cattle and the nourishment of wretched provisions, they shook the oaks and solaced their dire hunger in the woods. These, forsooth, were new prodigies on earth, which had never happened before, while heathen superstition was fervent throughout the world! When in truth before did the crop mock the prayers of the grasping husbandman with empty straw, and the blade of corn sought in the furrows fail the hope of the rustic crew?

18. And from what did the Greeks derive the oracles of their oaks except from their thinking that the support of their sylvan food was the gift of heavenly religion? For such do they believe to be the gifts of their gods. Who but heathen people worshipped the trees of Dodona, when they gave honour

to the sorry food of the woodland? It is not likely that their gods in anger inflicted on them as a punishment that which they used when appeased to confer as a gift. And what justice would there be if, being grieved that support was refused to a few priests, they denied it to all, since the vengeance would be more unbearable than the fault? The cause, then, is not adequate to bring such suffering on a failing world, as that the full-grown hope of the year should perish suddenly while the crops were green.

19. And, certainly, many years ago the lights of the temples were taken away throughout the world; has it only now at length come into the mind of the gods of the heathen to avenge the injury? And did the Nile fail to overflow in its accustomed course, in order to avenge the losses of the priests of the city, whilst it did not avenge its own?

20. But let it be that they suppose that the injuries done to their gods were avenged in the past year. Why have they been unnoticed in the present year? For now neither do the country people feed upon torn up roots, nor seek refreshment from the berries of the wood, nor pluck its food from thorns, but joyful in their prosperous labours, while wondering at their harvest, made up for their fasting by the full accomplishment of their wishes; for the earth rendered her produce with interest.

21. Who, then, is so unused to human matters as to be astonished at the differences of years? And yet even last year we know that many provinces abounded with produce. What shall I say of the Gauls which were more productive than usual? The Pannonias sold corn which they had not sown, and Phætia Secunda experienced harm of her own fertility, for she who was wont to be safe in her scarcity, stirred up an enemy against herself by her fertility. The fruits of the autumn fed Liguria and the Venetias. So, then, the former year did not wither because of sacrilege, and the latter flourished with the fruits of faith. Let them too deny if they can that the vineyards abounded with an immense produce. And so we have both received a harvest with interest and possess the benefit of a more abundant vintage.

22. The last and most important point remains, whether, O Emperors, you ought to restore those helps which have profited you; for he says: ‘Let them defend you, and be worshipped by us.’ This it is, most faithful princes, which we cannot endure, that they should taunt us that they supplicate their gods in your names, and without your commands, commit an immense sacrilege, interpreting your shutting your eyes as consent. Let them have their guardians to themselves, let these, if they can,

protect their worshippers. For, if they are not able to help those by whom they are worshipped, how can they protect you by whom they are not worshipped?

23. But, he says, the rites of our ancestors ought to be retained. But what, seeing that all things have made progress towards what is better? The world itself, which at first was compacted of the germs of the elements throughout the void, in a yielding sphere, or was dark with the shapeless confusion of the work as yet without order, did it not afterwards receive (the distinction between sky, sea, and earth being established), the forms of things whereby it appears beautiful? The lands freed from the misty darkness wondered at the new sun. The day does not shine in the beginning, but as time proceeds, it is bright with increase of light, and grows warm with increase of heat.

24. The moon herself, by which in the prophetic oracles the Church is represented, when first rising again, she waxes to her monthly age, is hidden from us in darkness, and filling up her horns little by little, so completing them opposite to the sun, glows with the brightness of clear shining.

25. The earth in former times was without experience of being worked for fruits; afterwards when the careful husbandman began to lord it over the fields, and to clothe the shapeless soil with vines, it put off its wild disposition, being softened by domestic cultivation.

26. The first age of the year itself, which has tinged us with a likeness to itself as things begin to grow, as it goes on becomes springlike with flowers soon about to fall, and grows up to full age in fruits at the end.

27. We too, inexperienced in age, have an infancy of our senses, but changing as years go on, lay aside the rudiments of our faculties.

28. Let them say, then, that all things ought to have remained in their first beginnings, that the world covered with darkness is now displeasing, because it has brightened with the shining of the sun. And how much more pleasant is it to have dispelled the darkness of the mind than that of the body, and that the ray of faith should have shone than that of the sun. So, then, the primeval state of the world as of all things has passed away, that the venerable old age of hoary faith might follow. Let those whom this touches find fault with the harvest, because its abundance comes late; let them find fault with the vintage, because it is at the close of the year; let them find fault with the olive, because it is the latest of fruits.

29. So, then, our harvest is the faith of souls; the grace of the Church is the vintage of merits, which from the beginning of the world flourished in the Saints, but in the last age has spread itself

over the people, that all might notice that the faith of Christ has entered minds which were not rude (for there is no crown of victory without an adversary), but the opinion being exploded which before prevailed, that which was true is rightly preferred.

30. If the old rites pleased, why did Rome also take up foreign ones? I pass over the ground hidden by costly building, and shepherds' cottages glittering with degenerate gold. Why, that I may reply to the very matter which they complain of, have they eagerly received the images of captured cities, and conquered gods, and the foreign rites of alien superstition? Whence is the pattern for Cybele washing her chariots in a stream counterfeiting the Almo? Whence were the Phrygian bards, and the deities of unjust Carthage always hateful to the Romans? And her whom the Africans worship as Celestis, the Persians as Nitra, and the greater number as Venus, according to a difference of name, not a variety of deities. So they believed that Victory was a goddess, which is certainly a gift, not a power; is granted and does not rule, results from the aid of legions not the power of religions. Is that goddess then great whom the number of soldiers claims, or the event of battle gives?

31. They ask to have her altar erected in the Senate House of the city of Rome, that is where the majority who meet together are Christians! There are altars in all the temples, and an altar also in the temple of Victories. Since they take pleasure in numbers they celebrate their sacrifices everywhere. To claim a sacrifice on this one altar, what is it but to insult the Faith? Is it to be borne that a heathen should sacrifice and a Christian be present? Let them imbibe, he says, let them imbibe, even against their will, the smoke with their eyes, the music with their ears, the ashes with their throats, the incense with their nostrils, and let the dust stirred up from our hearths cover their faces though they detest it. Are not the baths, the colonnades, the streets filled with images sufficient for them? Shall there not be a common lot in that common assembly? The faithful portion of the senate will be bound by the voices of those that call upon the gods, by the oaths of those that swear by them. If they oppose they will seem to exhibit their falsehood, if they acquiesce, to acknowledge what is sacrilege.

32. Where, says he, shall we swear obedience to your Grace's laws and decrees? Does then your mind, which is contained in the laws, gain assent and bind to faithfulness by heathen ceremonies? The faith is attacked, not only of those who are present but also of those who are absent, and what is more, O Emperors, your faith, too, is attacked, for you compel if you command. Constantius of august memory, though not yet initiated in the sacred Mysteries, thought that he would be polluted if he saw

that altar. He commanded it to be removed, he did not command it to be replaced. The removal has the authority of an act, the restoration has not that of a command.

33. Let no one flatter himself because he is absent. He who joins himself to others in mind is more present than he whose assent is given by bodily presence. For it is more to be united in mind than to be joined in body. The Senate has you as the presidents who convene the assembly, it comes together for you; it gives its conscience to you, not to the gods of the heathen; it prefers you to its children, but not to its faith. This is a love to be desired, this is a love greater than any dominion, if faith which preserves dominion be secure.

34. But perhaps it may move some that if this be so, a most faithful Emperor has been forsaken, as if forsooth the reward of merits were to be estimated by the transitory measure of things present. For what wise man is ignorant that human affairs are ordered in a kind of round and cycle, for they have not always the same success, but their state varies and they suffer vicissitudes.

35. Whom have the Roman temples sent out more prosperous than Cneius Pompeius? Yet, when he had encompassed the earth with three triumphs, defeated in battle, a fugitive from war, and an exile beyond the bounds of his own empire, he fell by the hand of an eunuch of Canopus.

36. Whom has the whole land of the East given to the world more noble than Cyrus, king of the Persians? He too, after conquering the most powerful princes who opposed him, and retaining them, when conquered, as prisoners, perished, overthrown by the arms of a woman. And that king who was acknowledged to have treated even the vanquished with honour, had his head cut off, placed in a vessel full of blood, and was bidden to be satiated, being thus subject to the mocking of a woman's power. So in the course of that life of his like is not repaid by like, but far otherwise.

37. And whom do we find more devoted to sacrificing than Hamilcar, leader of the Carthaginians? Who, having offered sacrifice between the ranks during the whole time of the battle, when he saw that his side was conquered, threw himself into the fire which he was feeding, that he might extinguish even with his own body those fires which he had found to profit him nothing.

38. What, then, shall I say of Julian? Who, having credulously trusted the answers of the soothsayers, destroyed his own means of retreat. Therefore even in like cases there is not a like offence, for our promises have deceived no one.

39. I have answered those who provoked me as though I had not been provoked, for my object was to refute the Memorial, not to expose superstition. But let their very memorial make you, O

Emperor, more careful. For after narrating of former princes, that the earlier of them practised the ceremonies of their fathers, and the later did not abolish them; and saying in addition that, if the religious practice of the older did not make a precedent, the connivance of the later ones did; it plainly showed what you owe, both to your faith, viz., that you should not follow the example of heathen rites, and to your affection, that you should not abolish the decrees of your brother. For if for their own side alone they have praised the connivance of those princes, who, though Christians, yet in no way abolished the heathen decrees, how much more ought you to defer to brotherly love, so that you, who ought to overlook some things even if you did not approve them in order not to detract from your brother's statutes, should now maintain what you judge to be in agreement both with your own faith, and the bond of brotherhood.

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