Christian Attitudes toward Pagan Monuments in Late Antiquity and Their Legacy in Later Byzantine Centuries

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The fate of classical monuments in late Antiquity has been studied against the background of hostility between Christians and pagans in the context of the Christianization of the Roman Empire. The disappearance of classical monuments has generally been viewed as a manifestation of the triumph of the Christian religion. Their destruction has been regarded as a result of deliberate attacks of the Christianized state, of fanatical bishops, monks, and common folk—those groups that had rejected the pagan cultural tradition.

In this paper I shall attempt to show that in late Antiquity Christians also had a positive attitude toward pagan monuments and transmitted this attitude to the Byzantium of later centuries. Hostility toward pagan monuments was far from being a general phenomenon, an officially adopted policy of the Christian state or of the Church. In many instances classical monuments fell into decay merely because they had been abandoned, whereas in other instances they were actually preserved, either because they had been transformed for Christian use or because of their artistic value. This assessment can be explained only if the subject is reexamined in the broader context of the cultural realities of late Antiquity. Conclusions from recent studies based on either archaeological evidence or literary sources will represent the starting point of this investigation. The nature of the available material and the evolution of Christianity within the Roman state impose a diachronic approach to the subject. One should also bear in mind that various local political and cultural forces produced divergent attitudes toward classical monuments.

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I

I shall first review the hostility of Christians toward pagan monuments on the basis of current bibliography and then examine what I shall call the “positive” attitude of the Christians. The historical evidence suggests that the peak of hostile actions against pagan monuments does not coincide with the “victory” of the Church at the beginning of the fourth century. Most of the attacks against them, on the part of the state as well as of the Church, are attested for the end of the fourth century and coincide with the oppressive measures taken by Theodosius I. It would seem that the Church merely responded to an initiative of the state. It has also been suggested that the Church had grown more confident because of internal reasons: it was not distracted by internal fights,

1St. Augustine, De consensu evangelistarum, 1.16 (CSEL 43, p. 22), referring to the middle of the 3rd century, mentions that already at that time Christians would have liked to see the destruction of all expressions of paganism (“eversion templorum et damnatio sacrificiorum et contractio simulacrorum”). On the attitudes of the early Christians toward pagan monuments, see T. C. G. Thornton, “The Destruction of Idols—Sinful or Meritorious?” JTS, n.s. 37 (1986), 121–24. For a general account of the attacks against pagan monuments and their transformation into Christian churches, see F. W. Deichmann, “Christianisierung II (der Monumente),” RAC 2 (1954), cols. 1228–41; idem, “Frühchristliche Kirchen in antiken Heilig tümern,” JDAl 54 (1959), 105–36.

2The attacks were started by Cyngius, praetorian prefect of Emperor Theodosius (A.D. 384–388). He destroyed temples and idols in the East and in Egypt; see R. MacMullen, Christianizing the Roman Empire (A.D. 100–400) (New Haven-London, 1984), 98; G. Fowden, “Bishops and Temples in the Eastern Roman Empire, A.D. 320–435,” JTS 29.1 (1978), 62–64. Libanius presents his actions as a result of the influence of his wife, who followed the advice of fanatical monks. But in a carefully formulated passage we discern the political reality that dictated his actions, namely, a law of May 385 (CTh, XVI.10.9): Libanius, Or. 30.3, 48 f. Cf. MacMullen, Christianizing, 98 note 54. Fow den, p. 77, also suggests that the Church was encouraged by imperial measures; the interference of the Church can also be explained by the incompetence of the decurions who were responsible for enforcing the law; ibid., p. 55.
and bishops had established control over their flocks.\(^5\)

The attitude of the state toward pagan monuments is related on the one hand to imperial religious policy, on the other hand to the cultural and social realities of the time. It has often been stated that the Christianization of the empire was a slow process. The emperors tried carefully to integrate Christians into the empire.\(^4\) The upper class, with its strong pagan character, could not be neglected.\(^5\)

Imperial ceremony and symbolism remained predominantly pagan for some time.\(^6\) It has been suggested that maintaining a pagan aspect helped to secure social order and presented better opportunities for conversion.\(^7\) Paganism still constituted a social and cultural force. Despite all the differences that separated the two groups, the interaction between them was extremely important. In recent years scholars have tended to emphasize the physical coexistence of pagans and Christians and the mutual influences of the two cultures more strongly than their conflicts and differences.\(^8\) It is in this context that we must examine the attitudes of the state and the Church toward pagan monuments.

Anti-pagan legislation began in the reign of Constantine.\(^9\) Restrictions on pagan worship became progressively more serious. In the beginning, imperial decrees were concerned with superstition, divination, and magic in connection with pagan ritual.\(^10\) It is generally accepted that superstition was widespread in late Antiquity.\(^11\)

The term superstitio designated foreign cults and religious beliefs among the lower classes, while in Christian writings it was generally used to indicate paganism.\(^12\)

Other measures against paganism included closing the temples, confiscating their property, and forbidding sacrifices and the worship of idols.\(^13\) Destruction of temples is not found in the early decrees. Isolated incidents are mentioned in other sources: for example, Constantine ordered the destruction of the temple at Mamre and the erection of a church on the site.\(^14\) A decree of the year 346

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3 MacMullen, Christianizing, 97.
6 S. G. MacCormack, Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity (Berkeley, 1981); for the Christian elements of imperial symbolism, see S. Calderone, "Teologia politica, successione dinastica e consecratio in età constantiniana," in Le culte des souverains dans l’empire romain (Genova, 1972), 246 f.
7 Cf. ibid., 109 f; 135-36.
10 CTh, IX. 16. 1-12 (a. 319-409); XVI. 10. 3 (a. 342), 9 (a. 385), 10 (a. 391), 12.1 (a. 392), 16 (a. 399), 17 (a. 399). See also R. Rémondon, La crise de l’empire romain de Marc Aurèle à Anastase, Nouvelle Clio 11 (Paris, 1970), 159–60; MacMullen, Christianizing, 96–97.
12 A. Momigliano, "Popular Religious Beliefs and the Late Roman Historians," Studies in Church History 8, Popular Belief and Practice: Papers Read at the Ninth Summer Meeting and the Tenth Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society, ed. G. J. Cuming and D. Baker (Cambridge, 1972), 5 f. For a similar view, see also Jones, LRE, 962. Bonner, "Paganism," 546, suggests that the use of the imprecise term superstitio in the imperial legislation was intentional.
14 Eusebius, Vita Constantini, III.51–53. Only six pagan sites are attested as having been attacked by Christians at the time of Constantine. In all these cases, extremely important reasons
explicitly mentions temples: those situated outside the city walls are to be preserved because of their connection with public entertainment, which had been established by long tradition. Some scholars saw practical considerations in the policy of the Christian emperors: the temples had to be maintained because they were centers for commerce, social activities, and political meetings.

The most important attacks against pagan temples are those by Cynegius, the destruction of the temples of Gaza by another imperial officer, and that of the Serapeum in Alexandria, destroyed after the clashes in 391 between Christians and pagans. It is only in 398 and 399 that imperial legislation treats the “problem” of pagan temples in a different manner: the temples in the country had to be demolished without disturbing the peace; the masonry could be used for other construction. In 407 imperial decrees ordered that idols be torn down, while the temples in the cities and in the countryside were to be designated for public use. It is important for our investigation to stress the conclusion of several recent studies: a systematic destruction of pagan sanctuaries was never the intention of imperial policy.

The attacks of the Church against the temples follow the same pattern. Destruction of pagan sanctuaries was not the result of an organized effort of the Church. It was occasional, and the work of local bishops, mostly in the East and in Africa. Notorious are the cases of Bishop Marcellus in Apamea (in 391 or 392) and of Theophilus, patriarch of Alexandria. It is certain that bishops had not been officially granted authority to destroy pagan sanctuaries. The first and only decree that authorizes bishops to interfere is that of the year 407/8, which refers to the prohibition of convivia. On the other hand, bishops, especially in the East and in Africa, often used the religious zeal of monks as a means of destroying temples. We also hear of the destruction of pagan shrines by newly converted Christians. The sources present such actions as a manifestation of their adherence to Christianity. Destroying the places of worship was also used as an alternative method of conversion when peaceful means of persuasion (preaching, miracles, etc.) or social factors (rewards, etc.) seemed insufficient.

In fact, several sources suggest that most of the temples were gradually decaying, not because of Christian attacks, but because they had already been abandoned. We hear of abandoned temples in an early period, before the triumph of Christianity. Pliny, in his Epistulae, X.96.10, insists that oppressive measures against the Christians would bring worshipers back to sanctuaries: “Certe satis constat prope iam desolata templo coepisse celebrari, et sacra sollemnia diei intermissa repeti passimque venire carnem victimaramus, cuius adhuc rassisimus emptor inveniebat.” The fourth-century description of the temple of Mithra in Alexandria by Socrates is revealing: the site was εις παλαιόν τῶν χρόνων ἐμίσσα καὶ ἴμμελμένος. Emperor Constantius donated the sanctuary ώς σχολαίον to the Church of Alexandria.

First the temples were stripped of their treasures, then they became dilapidated. The impression that we gain from the literary sources is confirmed by the archaeological evidence. Jean-Michel Spieser, in a survey of archaeological reports on sanctuaries in Greece, concluded: (1) Christians destroyed very few pagan temples in Greece (he does not count sanctuaries destroyed at a later date, since such destructions were not carried out with a hostile intent); (2) in a few cases

Cf. X.96.10; cf. Gowden, “Bishops.”


31 Cf., for example, the case of the sanctuary of Asclepius at Aegae in Cilicia, the columns of which had been removed by Christians: Zonaras, Epitome historiarum, XIII.12.30–34.

Among the few exceptions is the basilica of Paleopolis in Corfu (5th or even 6th century). In the inscription of consecration it is mentioned that the bishop Jovianus had destroyed pa-
in which temples were destroyed for religious aims, the sites of destroyed temples were avoided and Christians did not build churches on them (there is only one exception, the basilica of Palaeopolis in Corfu); and (3) with very few exceptions, churches were built on temple sites later, at a time when this could no longer have any anti-pagan significance.30

II

In investigating the cases in which Christians incorporated pagan monuments in their culture, I shall combine evidence from a variety of sources that have not been studied in this context. I shall limit myself to those that illustrate best the various aspects of the problem in its complexity.

First, it must be emphasized that classical monuments never ceased to be appreciated for their artistic value, especially by the educated classes. The Christian emperors decorated their capital with pagan statues from various cities of the empire. Cyril Mango, in a study of the significance of ancient statuary in Byzantine civilization, expresses his surprise at the collection of pagan statues by Christian emperors and remarks that it "constitutes something of a paradox."31 He suggests that the explanation lies in the ambiguous religious policy of the first Christian emperors. Christian thinkers developed an artificial explanation: according to Eusebius, pagan statues thus exposed were subject to public ridicule.32 Despite this statement, certainly dictated by one-sided Christian attitudes, Eusebius does not conceal what apparently was in everyone's mind, that is, the artistic value of these monuments: ἐπληροῦτο δὲ δύσλον πάσα ἢ βασιλεῖας ἐπώνυμος πόλις τῶν κατὰ πᾶν ἔθνος ἔντεχνος χάλκου φιλοκαλίας ὁφειρομένων.


32 Vita Constantini, III.54.

John Chrysostom, later in the same century, offers another "Christian" explanation why the pagan statue of the sanctuary at Daphne in Antioch had not been destroyed earlier by the Christian emperor: he wanted to demonstrate that only a victory won against an enemy when he is powerful and glorious is worthwhile.33 Socrates, in a similar way, tries to explain why Patriarch Theophilus of Alexandria ordered the erection of one of the pagan statues in a public place, when he had commanded that all others be destroyed: in this way the Hellenes would not deny that they had worshiped such gods in the past; it would also cause the pagan religion to be derided (ἐπί γέλωτι τῆς Ἐλλήνων θρησκείας).34 Theodoret, in his Graecarum affectionum curatio, states that pagans tried to hide pagan cult objects, while Christians exposed them in the agoras so that women and children would laugh (κωμῳδεῖτο) at the so-called gods.35 I should note here that a series of imperial decrees suggests that collecting statues from various monuments was a more general phenomenon in the fourth century, and it was limited neither to Christians nor to the capital. The first constitution dates from the year 365 (CTh, XV.1.14). It makes clear that collecting was frequently practiced in the provinces: the provincial governors were transferring statues, slabs of marble, or columns (transferendorum signorum vel marmorum vel columnarum materia) from smaller cities to the big cities (metropoles vel splendidissimae civitates) in order to decorate them (ornare).36 A series of laws concerning the violation of sepulchers supplements these points. In a decree of the year 357, penalties were inflicted upon those who "should remove from a tomb either stones, marble, columns, or any other materials to be used for building purposes, or should do so with the intention of selling them."37 From a decree of the year 363, we learn that people removed "the ornaments of tombs for the purpose of decorating banqueting halls or porticoes."38

The circumstances of this phenomenon cannot be easily discerned. It is a generally held view that there was a shortage of materials and qualified artists in the fourth century A.D. as a consequence of

33 PG 50, col. 561; cf. also col. 572.
34Socrates, HE, V.16.
35Theodoret, HE, X.58.
36Cf. also CTh, XV.1.19 (a. 376), 37(a. 398); Nov. Maj. IV in CTh, vol. 2 (a. 458); CI, 8.10.2 (a. 222), 7 (a. 363), and the restriction of Constatine regarding private houses 6 (a. 321).
37CTh, IX.17.4 = CI, IX.19.4: "Si quis igitur de sepulchro abulaleri saxa vel marmora vel columnas aliamque quamcumque materiam, fabricandi gratia sive id fecerit vendituros."
38CTh, IX.17.5 = CI, IX.19.5: “sed et ornamenta quaedam tricliniis aut porticulis aufferi de sepulchris.”
the economic crisis of the third century. This view is based on indirect information from a decree of Constantine by which artists and other specialized professionals were exempted from public services. It would appear that lack of artists is not sufficiently documented in the sources and that the breakup of public buildings can be explained differently. The phenomenon might be related to patronage and city finances: according to imperial legislation, the patrons of public works were mainly provincial governors who were interested in decorating their provincial capitals with ready-made material from cities. On the other hand, because of the decline of the decurions, the municipal administration lacked interest in protecting public buildings in the smaller cities. The diminishing importance of public space in late antiquity could also explain the breakup of urban public buildings. Various sources testify to an invasion of urban public space by private individuals: houses were built in formerly public areas, porticoes were closed by the erection of modest temporary or permanent dwellings, and so forth. Economic, administrative, and cultural changes have been suggested to explain this tendency. It may well be that the emergence and development of Christian art in the third and fourth centuries affected the production of non-Christian art, and that the phenomenon we have observed could also be explained as a natural reaction toward appropriating objects of art that already belonged to the past. It is certain that the texts do not connect the phenomenon with any hostile actions of Christians against pagans. Therefore, in the light of evidence from other sources, which testify to the appreciation of the artistic value of the pagan monuments by Christians, the phenomenon takes on a special significance.

Emperors Gratian, Valentinian, and Theodosius, for example, in a constitutio of the year 382, ordered that a certain temple at Osrhoene in Mesopotamia be kept open so that the public could enjoy the aesthetic value of the statues displayed there:

By the authority of the public council We decree that the temple shall continually be open that was formerly dedicated to the assemblage of throngs of people and now also is for the common use of the people, and in which images are reported to have been placed which must be measured by the value of their art rather than by their divinity; We do not permit any divine imperial response that was surreptitiously obtained to prejudice this situation. In order that this temple may be seen by the assemblages of the city and by frequent crowds, Your Experience shall preserve all celebrations of festivities, and by the authority of Our divine imperial response, you shall permit the temple to be open, but in such a way that the performance of sacrifices forbidden therein may not be supposed to be permitted under the pretext of such access to the temple.

In a constitutio of the year 399, Emperors Arcadius and Theodosius decreed that the ornaments of public works (publicorum operum ornamenta servari) be preserved. “If any person should attempt to destroy such works, he shall not have the right to flatter himself as relying on any authority, if perchance he should produce any rescript or any law at his defense. Such documents shall be torn from his hands and referred to Our Wisdom.” Another decree of the same emperors forbade the destruction of “temples which are empty of illicit things” (“Aedes inilitcis rebus vacuas nostrarum beneficio sanctionum ne quis conetur evertere”). But if sacrifices are still conducted there, then the idols must be taken down. A similar attitude to pagan temples and statues is attested as late as the sixth century. Justinian ordered Narses to destroy pagan temples in Egypt and to send the statues to Constantinople. Perhaps the most famous collection of ancient statues in Constantinople was that of the baths of Zeuxippus. The nature of these statues, different from those that traditionally decorated ancient baths, suggests that the intention of the collectors was to display objects of art.

40 CTh, XIII.1.41 (a. 334); 2 (a. 337).
41 Cf. Jones, LRE, 737 f. exp. 757–63; Liebeschuetz, Antioch, 167 f.; D. Claude, Die byzantinische Stadt im 6. Jahrhundert (Mu-

42 Cf. H. Saradi-Mendelovici, “The Demise of the Ancient Greek City and the Emergence of the Mediaeval City in the Eastern Roman Empire,” Classical Views 52, n.s. 7 (1988), 385–


46 CTh, XVI.10.8; “Aedem olim frequentiae dedicatum coeunti et iam populo quoque communem, in qua simulacra fere vosa non divinitate divinae, sed magnitudine humanae simulacra nescit.”
47 CTh, XVI.10.15.
48 Ibid., XVI.10.18 (a. 399).
It is striking that even ecclesiastics took a similar view. The fifty-eighth canon of the fifth council of Carthage (A.D. 401) urges the emperors to order that the idols of Africa be destroyed; the temples that are in the fields and in other remote places must also be destroyed, but only if they had been left without embellishments. The modern reader is surprised at the attitude of this official ecclesiastical text. A Byzantine scholast of the twelfth century, Zonaras, was obviously overwhelmed. He therefore invents an artificial interpretation of the canon mentioned above: “the canon does not imply that the temples with adornments had to be preserved.”

Julian, in Epistula 79, refers to Pegasus, the bishop of Ilium, who maintained the pagan temples of his city. He destroyed only a few building blocks in order not to arouse suspicion and to be able to save the rest (πέριφερε γὰρ οὖθαμοῦ τῶν ιερῶν ἑδὶκερῶς πλὴν ὄλγων παντᾶτας λιθῶν ἐκ καταλύματος, ἵνα αὕτη, σοβίζει ἐξή τὰ λοιπά). A constitutio of the year 365 issued by Valentinian and Valens suggests that in several cases Christians were actively involved in preserving pagan temples. Other Christian sources explicitly mention the beauty of pagan monuments.

Pagans, of course, regarded pagan monuments in much the same way. For example, in his Pro templis Libanius speaks about the beauty of a statue of Asclepius in the city of Beroea, destroyed by Christians, and he remarks that by destroying it, the Christians had deprived the city of its adornment (ἀποκοσμομόντες τὴν πόλιν). In his Antichichos he claims that “the palaces of gods are adornment and protection to the city.”

Eusebius expresses a similar idea using a similar vocabulary: τέμενος, οὐκ ἐν μέσαις πόλεων οὐδ’ ἐν ἄγοραις καὶ πλατείαις, ὁποία τὰ πολλά κόσμου χάριν ταῖς πόλεων φιλοτιμεῖται. In the year 359 the temple of Fortuna in Antioch was deprived of “its beauties” (μετὰ τῆς ἄλλης αὐξής). In the fifth century Eunapius, in his Vitae sophistarum, cites the prophecy of an Egyptian seer regarding the destruction of the Serapeum: “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. To all these prophecies time bore witness, and in the end his prediction gained the force of an oracle.”

Apart from these testimonials to the artistic significance of the classical monuments for Christians, other sources, mainly archaeological and hagiographical ones, reveal a more complex picture, namely, the re-use of pagan monuments by Christians. We should distinguish between the use of building materials of temples for churches and the establishment of churches on the sites of pagan sanctuaries. With reference to the first case, two explanations have been suggested.

(1) Slabs of marble from temples provided ready-made building materials for other structures. Convenience and financial motives could easily explain their use. Libanius, in his Funeral Oration over Julian, mentions that already at that time people were using stones of abandoned temples for building their houses. The constitutio of the year 397 ordered that building materials of temples be used for construction of public buildings (roads, bridges, aqueducts, city walls, etc.).

Archaeologists are often struck by the fact that ancient stones are incorporated into churches without any attempt to produce a symmetrical whole. Such asymmetrical arrangements suggest indifference toward the principles of classical aesthetics and architecture. The obvious conclusion is that Christian architects no longer appreciated the artistic value of the classical monuments. This conclusion of course leads to the suggestion that only...
financial reasons dictated the use of ancient slabs of marble. It also implies that early Christian artists and those to whom they addressed their work were indifferent to the aesthetic effects of such architectural arrangements. It has also been suggested that the re-use of classical slabs of marble shows "the qualities of dematerialized formal design that represent the spiritual ideals of the new religion." Perhaps another interpretation ought to be considered: the sculptural decoration of Byzantine churches is asymmetrical as a rule and the haphazard insertion of ancient stones in churches might have helped in producing this effect. Descriptions of Byzantine churches praise the ποικυλία as a basic characteristic of their decoration. It is interesting to note that later Byzantine sources express admiration at the re-use of building materials, especially columns from other monuments: Constantine the Rhodian wrote an enkomion of the church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople in which he praises the variety of the columns transported there from other places:

Toûς κύωνος δὲ τοὺς ἔξωνας καὶ τὴν φύσαν καὶ τὴν χρῶν πέλοντας, οὐκ ἔχω φράσα τοῦθεν τέ καὶ πώς ἄρα τύνος πάτας γένος φέρουντες ἡλίον εἰς Ἀποστόλοιν δόμοιν, οὐς ἄλλονυς ἄλλοδαστη τῆς φυιση ἴγαγες πάτας ἐκθήνει τέ καὶ ξινῆς.61

(2) Cyril Mango puts forward other interpretations based on observations of the use of ancient blocks of marble in later Byzantine churches: since the ancient stones were placed in highly conspicuous places in the churches, they were given a Christian reinterpretation, or apotropaic power was attributed to them. The literary sources, unfortunately, do not provide evidence that could explain this phenomenon with certainty.

The erection of churches on sites of pagan sanctuaries is an even more complex subject. Some literary sources testify to an early Christian founding of churches on such sites. Constantine set a prece-
dent when he ordered the destruction of the temple at Mamre and replaced it with a church. However, there is no evidence that for Constantinople he favored a systematic transformation of temples into churches. In Alexandria George, the bishop who succeeded Athanasius, was given permission to transform the temple of Mithra into a church. Gregory of Nazianzus transformed a temple into a church in his bishopric. According to literary evidence, the oracle of Sarpedon Apollo in Seleucia was converted into a Christian church in the first half of the fourth century. Sozomen states that Patriarch Theophilus of Alexandria intended to transform a temple of Dionysus into a church, while the Serapeum, stripped of its statues, was transformed into a church. At Gaza a church was built on the site of the Manneion after its destruction.

The Life of St. Porphyry by Mark the Deacon offers an interesting description of how Christians felt about the erection of churches on sites of pagan sanctuaries. After the destruction of the statues and other objects of worship in the Manneion by imperial agents, the Christians debated how to use the structure: some suggested that it be torn down, others that it be burned down, and yet others that the site be purified and sanctified by the erection of a church. Since they could not reach an agreement (νῦν πολλή περι τούτον ή σκέψις), the bishop ordered the people to fast and pray, expecting a divine revelation. In the evening a seven-year old child spelled out an oracle in Syriac: the temple must be burned down, since many crimes had been committed there, especially human sacrifices. Porphyry wanted to build a church on the site according to a revelation that he had earlier

63 Eusebius, Vita Constantinii, III.52–53; cf. also 58 (Heliopolis).
64 Cf. Dagron, Constantinople, 400–401.
65 Socrates, HE, II.12; Sozomen, HE, V.7. The temple was given to the Church of Alexandria by Emperor Constantius.
66 PG 36, col. 99 (Epigrammata, 30): Εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν, ὑπὸ κατεχόμενοι, μετασχηματισθέντοι παρ’ αὐτοῦ ἢ γὰρ νόος εἰδύλλου.
68 Sozomen, HE, VII.15.2–10. Different accounts by Socrates, HE, V.16; Rufinus, HE, XI.22.
69 Sozomen, HE, VII.15.
70 Grégoire et Kugener, Mare le Diacre, § 66.
when he visited Empress Eudocia in Constantinople.71 Some Christians agreed with him, but others wanted to see the place abandoned. They left the decision to God. In fact, a letter from the empress contained both wishes and promises of financial support and a cruciform plan for the church that matched the actual plan of the Marneion.72 The miracle convinced the Christians that they should erect their church on the site. This account contains an interesting detail: the saint ordered that slabs of marble from the most sacred part of the temple be used as pavement in the front yard of the church, so that people as well as animals would step on them.73 It is possible, however, that this account reflects later interpretations, since the Life was apparently written after 554.74

In the Life and Miracles of St. Thecla, three places of pagan worship are said to have been transformed into Christian churches: the temples of Sarpedon Apollo, of Athena on the acropolis of Seleucia, and of Zeus. The exact dates remain uncertain,75 which is true for most of the pagan sites transformed into churches. Unfortunately archaeology does not support the literary evidence for the early replacement of pagan sanctuaries by Christian churches. The poor preservation of early Christian architectural structures causes serious difficulties in dating this process with precision. We have seen that, according to the study of Spieser, the archaeological evidence in Greece suggests a later replacement of pagan temples by churches. Spieser concludes that this phenomenon can be explained neither by Christian hostility against the pagan cult nor as a manifestation of Christian victory; he suggests a different explanation for it: lack of available land in the cities and towns, because of the reduction of their size caused by the invasions at the end of late Antiquity.76

In other locations it was often a matter of convenience.77 In Egypt the famous temple of Philae was transformed into a church in the reign of Justinian.78 Archaeologists have reached similar conclusions about Christian churches erected on the sites of pagan sanctuaries in Asia Minor.79 In the past scholars had recognized similarities between the pagan cult and the Christian one that replaced it at the same site, and concluded that the Church had systematically transformed pagan sanctuaries into churches. This view has long ago been refuted.80

Scanty literary evidence suggests a theological interpretation. Churches on pagan sites were considered to have purified the “polluted” places. Libanius testifies to this idea: τοὺς δὲ (νεώς) βεβήλους ἀποφήνας πόρνης ἐνοικεῖν ἐδοξε.81 According to an imperial decree of the year 435, all pagan sanctuaries in which pagan cults were still performed “shall be destroyed by the command of the magistrates, and shall be purified by the erection of the sign of the venerable Christian religion.”82 Theodoret explains in this way the use of building materials from pagan temples: οἱ δὲ τούτων ἰλια καθωσιώθησαν τοῖς τῶν μαρτύρων σημαίας.83 Statues were often treated in a similar way: drawing the sign of the cross on the forehead of statues appears to have been a common practice.84

Hagiographical sources often mention saints moving into deserted pagan temples in the countryside for shelter. In connection with this, they describe their spiritual fights against the demons that inhabited the temples. One of the earliest cases is the establishment of St. Thecla in the temple of Sarpedon in Seleucia.85 In the Life of St. Matriona (5th–6th centuries) the saint moved into

71Ibid., § 45.
72Ibid., § 75.
73Ibid., § 76. On the Vita of Porphyry, cf. the thoughts of R. Van Dam, “From Paganism to Christianity at Late Antique Gaza,” Viator 16 (1985), 1–20, regarding the conflict between Christianity and paganism within a specific community.
77Dagron, Thècle, 83.
an already deserted temple near Beirut because she preferred to be consumed by demons rather than be found by her husband.80 The temple was inhabited by idols and demons, whom she succeeded in turning away by her holy and pure conduct (ἡ πολιτεία τῆς ἡ ἀγάλητη καὶ ἡ ἁγνεία ἡ λαμπρᾶ),87 St. Daniel the Stylite settled in a pagan temple at Anaplon near Constantinople. He heard from local people that the temple was inhabited by demons who caused all kinds of damage to the inhabitants of the area, especially shipwrecks. The saint was inspired by the Holy Spirit, and after recalling the struggles of St. Antony, the founder of monasticism, and of his pupil Paul against the demons, he entered the temple like a soldier fighting against a great number of barbarians. Three days later he succeeded in driving them away, and remained in the temple for nine years.88 Other sources testify to an early settling of deserted pagan temples by hermits.89 The saints consolidated their positions at such sites by performing miracles. The moral was clear: the Christian religion was superior.90 These sources also imply that there were practical considerations in choosing a former pagan sanctuary as an abode: they provided a convenient retreat.

At the end of the period under investigation, symbolic interpretations of the settlement of saints at pagan sites are attested. For example, in the older version of the Life of St. Alypius the Stylite, at the time of Herachius, the saint settled in an ancient pagan cemetery in a deserted area outside Adrianopolis in Paphlagonia. In spite of the presence of demons, he decided to stay there. A funerary monument representing a mythical animal (tauroleon) on a column was particularly appealing to him. He spoke to the statue with affection (ἡδὲ καὶ προσηνὴ διαλεγόμενος) and embraced it: “I greet you, very precious to me; worthless, you have been assigned for use as a funeral monument by those who built it; I welcome you, because being a cornerstone you are appropriate for me; you have been made such a cornerstone by God and are marvelous to look at. I greet you, stone, in Christ, because Christ himself, the unshaken power, is called ‘true’ stone, on which I wish to support my feet. I have chosen this place as a residence in eternal rest.”91 Symeon Metaphrastes, in a later variation of the Life, gives a slightly different interpretation of the saint’s preference for the tombstone: it was suitable to his needs since he was preparing himself for voluntary death.92 The end of the story is equally interesting: the saint brought from the city an icon of Christ, a cross, and a lever; he demolished the monument and replaced it with the cross and the icon, so that the enemy army of the demons would be an object of ridicule (γελότο καὶ πατζοστο). Then, following a vision, he built on the site a church dedicated to St. Euphemia.

It is difficult to trace the attitude of the uneducated Christians because the sources that are produced by and express the feelings of the lower classes are intended for a certain milieu, that of the monks who in their religious zeal promoted a complete detachment from the pagan tradition. Generally it was believed that pagan temples and statues were inhabited by demons.

In late Antiquity both pagans and Christians believed in the existence of demons (daemones), minor gods whose power was ambivalent. Pagans considered them their companions and protectors, but their power could sometimes be destructive.93 For Christians the demons had an evil nature; they were dangerous enemies and could cause illusions.94 Pagan and Christian literature of late An-

80 Acta SS, Nov. III, p. 798A.
84 Cf. MacMullen, Christianizing, 26 f.
tiquity is replete with references to the supernatural power of the demons. And, most important for our purpose, the lower classes and uneducated people as well as the intellectuals believed in them. Libanius explains epidemics and riots by the actions of ἀναμοναί.[95] St. Augustin is a case in point.[96] In the hagiographical sources, one of the most remarkable activities of the saints was to expel demons from pagan temples. In the Life of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, a pagan priest called demons into a temple with the usual rite (τὴν συν-ήθη προσάγωντος θεωρεῖσαι), but St. Gregory cast them out by spelling Christ's name. The pagan priest tried in vain to call the demons back; the saint, in order to demonstrate the superiority of the Christian religion, was alone able to do so.[97]

In some instances, descriptions of these incidents are enriched with revealing details. After the destruction of the Serapeum, the temples of Canopus were transformed into a monastery. The first monks who settled there were invited by Bishop Theophilus from Jerusalem, but they were unable to handle the demonic illusions. Native monks were then called in because it was believed they had the expertise to neutralize the local demons.[98] A hermit of the fourth century, Macarius, settled in a deserted temple. At night, using a mummy for a pillow, he became the target of demons, who called him by a woman's name. A demon of the pagan mummy took part in this game. But the hermit did not give up. He beat the mummy and turned the demons away.[99] In the Life of St. Daniel the Stylite, demons attacked him with stones for two days, while they tried to intimidate him with clamor and sounds. The third day they created illusions (φαντασμα) and threatened him with swords. Then the saint expelled them with prayers, and they flew before his face in the form of bats.[100] One should note that the idea of expelling demons from a place in order to establish a new cult there is an old one. For example, according to tradition, the first colonists of Byzantium expelled the local demons with sacrifices.[101]

Statues were also inhabited by demons. I would emphasize here that already in ancient Greece we find evidence of an animistic concept of statues.[102] In late Antiquity various sources, both pagan and Christian, testify to the general conviction that statues were animated. St. Augustine, in his Epistula 102.3, offers an interesting description: “Does anyone imagine that idols have any sense of perception? Yet, when they are set in lofty shrines to be honoured, and are waited on by those who pray and offer victims, dumb and lifeless as they are, they give the illusion of moving and feeling, and greatly increase the veneration of the crowd, on which their cult so greatly depends.”[103] This conviction was shared by both uneducated and educated people. Eunapius mentions a story told to Emperor Julian regarding such a miracle: the philosopher Maximus, in the presence of several of his colleagues, performed a religious rite so that the statue of the goddess smiled and then laughed, and the candles that she held in her hands were lit up.[104] For the Christians, of course, the demons inhabiting pagan statues were malevolent.[105] But the pagans of late Antiquity considered statues to be a kind of talisman because of the power of the spirits that resided in them.[106]

III

Superstition, however, prevailed in the long run. It has been shown that in later Byzantine periods pagan statues were accorded magical powers, and

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[99] Apophthegmata patrum, PG 65, col. 268D.
[104] Eunapius, Vite so-phil-i-tarum, VII.2.9–10: ἀφοριστικά τὸ πρῶτον ἔμειναι τὸ δημοσίους, εἴτε καὶ γέφυρα ἵνα τὸ βασιλεύουν . . . καὶ τῶν λόγως ἐβαθανεῖ τὸ φῶς ταῖς λαμπάται περιφλέγομεν.
[105] Cf. Grégoire and Kugener, Marc le Diacre, §61: the demon of the statue of Aphrodite, once a cross had been presented, came out of the statue, breaking it into pieces. Cf. also the prayer of St. Gregory the Thaumaturgus: the demons are everywhere in nature, on the mountains, in caves, rivers, etc., and in altars, in baths, at crossroads, etc.: A. Strittmatter, “Ein griechisches Exorzismusbuchlein, Ms. Car. c 143b der Zentralbibliothek in Zürich, II,” OrbChr 26.2 (1932), 127–44 (esp. p. 129, line 12).
were believed capable of causing calamities and disasters. The evidence of the sources mentioned above, however, suggests that this was not a medieval interpretation, "a new 'folkloristic' significance" of the pagan monuments, but rather a continuation of a concept rooted in the pagan religious beliefs of late Antiquity. The continuation into medieval times of such pagan beliefs in connection with the monuments is also attested in some Christian sources from the end of late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. In the seventh century, for example, Anastasius Sinaites mentions that "the telesmata histamena of the magician Apollonius were still practiced, some for fending off animals and birds that could do harm, others for diverting the stream of rivers flowing irregularly, while others were regarded as capable of averting (apotropoia) destruction and harm to men." G. Dagron has shown that statues attributed to Apollonius are mentioned in many later Byzantine sources, and he notes the "débordement de l'Antiquité sur le Christianisme." One should note, however, that not all Byzantines believed in the magical power of the statues of Apollonius. Choniates describes a bronze eagle in the Hippodrome that was believed to have served the rites of Apollonius; it was brought to Constantinople in order to save the city from snakes. His description, however, does not imply that he believed in the magic powers of the statue: "it was a new craft, a magnificent and meretricious product of his witchcraft . . . , using filthy lewdness, which had guided demons and all those who believe in his secret rites." Although such sources express the attitudes of the common people, at about the same time the attitudes of the educated toward pagan monuments appear to be more complex than is usually believed. The break with classical tradition by the end of the sixth century is a well-documented phenomenon. The institutions of the ancient cities had by that time disappeared. Education and literature had become Christian. The empire had become a wholly Christian one; the seventh and eighth centuries, the Byzantine "dark ages," are thus characterized. We no longer hear of collections of statues. Generally the literary evidence conveys the impression that pagan monuments were repudiated or that they were nothing more than objects inhabited by demons and spirits. To our surprise, there is archaeological evidence which suggests that sometimes they meant more than that to educated Byzantines. In the recently excavated church of St. Stephen at Um er-Rasas in Palestine, pagan monuments had been deliberately included in the decoration of its floor, which consisted of mosaics depicting buildings representative of certain cities. In one of them, a pagan temple (identified as that of Zeus Hypsistos) was chosen as best representing the city of Neapolis, the see of a bishop of Palestine Prima. A temple of


110 Cf. Dagron, Constantinople, 104 f.


112 Cf. Saradi-Mendelovici, "Demeise" (above, note 42), 365–401.

113 It has been stated that there are no collections of antiquities after the 5th century A.D. (Mango, "Statuary," 70). One should mention that in the 6th century Justinian ordered Narses to destroy pagan temples in Egypt and to send their statues to Constantinople (above, note 46). Cf. also Dagron, Constantinople, 144. For a later period, see the remarks of Cameron and Herrin, Constantinople, 46, and A. Cutler, "The Mythological Bowl in the Treasury of San Marco at Venice," Near Eastern Numismatics, Iconography, Epigraphy and History: Studies in Honor of George C. Miles (Beirut, 1974), 235–34, esp. 254.

Pan stood for an Egyptian site.\textsuperscript{115} Inscriptions in the church date from the years 756 and 785. The \textit{Parastaseis syntomoi chronikai} and the \textit{Patria Constantinopoleos} offer valuable information for our investigation. Ph. Koukoules and C. Mango have shown that superstitious beliefs regarding pagan monuments were prevalent: it was believed that statues were inhabited by demons and were to be avoided because they could harm people. Sometimes the statues were destroyed as the result of such superstitious beliefs.\textsuperscript{116} We find similar attitudes toward ancient monuments in the eighth-century commentaries of Cosmas of Jerusalem on the poems of Gregory of Nazianzus.\textsuperscript{117} Such attitudes were held by uneducated and educated Byzantines alike.\textsuperscript{118} In this respect again, in Byzantium of the eighth and ninth centuries, things did not change much from late Antiquity. Ancient monuments, both statues and buildings, were objects of superstitious beliefs, while at the same time they were admired for their artistic value. For example, George Cedrenus praises the statue of Apollo at Daphne in Antioch (ὁ γὰρ ἐκεῖσε θαυμαστὸν ἔργον Βρούξιδος ἀγάλματος, δὲ μήτης ἄλλος ἴσων στάχθησαν).\textsuperscript{119}

However, we notice the distance that separates the Byzantines from the original meaning of the pagan statues, when we read that they wrongly identified them with Byzantine emperors or other Christian figures.\textsuperscript{120} Arbitrary interpretations of representations of pagan gods and heroes might equally be considered as suggesting ignorance of classical mythology. For example, according to the \textit{Patria}, Athene is represented with a helmet because her wisdom is invisible, and with an olive branch ὡς καθαριστής αὐτῆς σώσας σοφίστος γὰρ ἤλις ἡ ἐλαία. The Gorgon is represented on her chest to designate the ταχῦ τοῦ νοὸς.\textsuperscript{121} Such interpretations do not, however, suggest detachment from and ignorance of the classical tradition: the Byzantines simply followed a certain literary tradition from late Antiquity. In the Ἐγκαλάμων of Porphyry, for example, we find similar interpretations of ancient statues.

The \textit{Parastaseis} and the \textit{Patria} allow us to make three other observations regarding the position of classical monuments in Byzantium. (1) Subjects of superstition were not only pagan statues, but also Christian ones. For example, Zenon, looking at a statue of Valentinian, stated that Caesars who were not represented in statues were not lucky.\textsuperscript{122} (2) Ancient statues were displayed in public places not only because they were considered a kind of talisman with apotropaic powers, but also because they were objects of admiration; they were erected εἰς θέαν, εἰς θέαμα, θέας χάρων, etc.\textsuperscript{123} We understand, therefore, why in our source ϑαυμαστὸν means εἰδολότης.\textsuperscript{124} (3) The \textit{Patria} explicitly mentions artistic considerations for some pagan monuments. Constantine, for example, displayed all the statues transported from various temples and cities for the decoration of Constantinople (ἐς διασκορπίσμα τῆς πόλεως).\textsuperscript{125}

In later centuries we often hear of pagan monuments in the works of \textit{literati}. Several sources testify that interest in classical monuments never disappeared in Byzantium. A few texts have been selected which best illustrate this attitude. In a letter of Emperor Theodore II Lascaris, the ancient city of Pergamum is contrasted to the poverty of the contemporary city. The emperor praises the glory and prosperity of the ancient city, the ingenuity that produced its magnificent buildings, the wisdom that they express; he admires the beauty (φασιότερα) of the ancient monuments. The houses of its contemporary inhabitants appear like mouse holes (μύον τρῆγκα).\textsuperscript{126} It has been sug-


\textsuperscript{118} Cf. ibid., 32. For a contrary view, see Mango, “Statuary,” 59 ff.

\textsuperscript{119} Cedrenus, \textit{Bonn ed.}, I, p. 536, lines 100–12.

\textsuperscript{120} \textit{Parastaseis}, § 61 (p. 138, lines 13–17); \textit{Patria}, II, § 78 (p. 190, line 19–p. 191, line 3); \textit{Parastaseis}, § 68 (p. 150, lines 1–6); \textit{Patria}, II, § 47 (p. 176, lines 7–10); § 87 (p. 196, lines 3–6).

\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., § 3. Cf. also § 4, 5, 6 etc.; § 45: Καὶ ὁ περιβλεπτὸς οὕτως κόινῳ καὶ ἡ στῆλη τοῦ Ἀττάλωνος, δόμαν ἧλιος ἐσφάγιαν αὐτὴν δὲ μέγας Σανταντένος εἰς τὸ ὀνόμα αὐτοῦ, θέρα, εὐ ἐκ ναφαλῆ ἥλιος ἐν τοῖς τοῦ Χριστοῦ δόμαν θάντον, ὡς ἧλιος τοῖς πολλάς ἐκλάμοιν. (Cf. Cameron and Herrin, \textit{Constantinople}, 216–17; R. Krautheimer, Three Christian Capitals [Berkeley, 1988], 62 ff. For a different interpretation of ancient statues, see Theodoret, \textit{Gestavarum affectionum curatio}, VII.7: they were intended to instruct uneducated pagans.)

\textsuperscript{122} \textit{Parastaseis}, § 51; cf. also § 74 (\textit{Patria}, II, § 34); \textit{Patria}, II, § 29; III, § 37 (p. 230, lines 23–24), 200.

\textsuperscript{123} Cf. \textit{Parastaseis}, § 13 (p. 76, lines 2–3), 37 (p. 98, lines 13, 15; p. 100, line 11), 39 (p. 104, line 3), 50, 57 (τὰ εἰδῶλα συγκόλαζον [Κωνσταντίνος] εἰς μέρος αὐτούργια ῥάξαραν εἰς τὸν αὐτὸ μαμάμον εἰς θέαν ῥάξαν: pp. 152–34), etc.

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., § 41 (p. 110, line 19). For other terms used to designate statues, cf. Cameron and Herrin, \textit{Constantinople}, 33.

\textsuperscript{125} \textit{Patria}, I, § 62 (p. 145, line 20); cf. also § 68 (p. 149, line 2).

\textsuperscript{126} Theodorus Ducae Lascaris Epistulae CCXVII, ed. N. Festa (Florence, 1898), 107–8; Ἐλληνικῆς γὰρ μεγαλονόσος ῥάξαρε τιτάν.
gested that this description of ancient Pergamum was the result of a new interest in Antiquity in the Palaiologan Renaissance.127 Surprisingly, we find a similar attitude toward classical monuments in a text of the tenth century, which has escaped the attention of scholars. Theodore, bishop of Kyzikoς, in a letter addressed to Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus, describes the vestiges of ancient Kyzikoς in words similar to those of Theodore II: “the houses were destroyed, the walls were collapsed; there were many ruins and great columns, overturned remains of stelai and tombs, as well as pieces of broken inscriptions; on account of their letters, there are faint vestiges of ancient prosperity; their size is remarkable.” The bishop contrasts this picture of ancient glory and prosperity with the contemporary inhabitants of the site who were not educated and who did not have the virtue (ἀρετή) of the Ancients. They could only claim that they were their descendants.128

In the eleventh century, on the occasion of the collapse of the temple of Kyzikoς caused by an earthquake, Michael Attaliates expresses his admiration for its solid construction, its beautiful stones, the superb harmony of its parts, its size, and its good preservation.129 Maximus Planudes later visited the temple and complained that there was no one around who could show him its underground structure.130 The monuments of Athens are praised by Michael Akominatos.131 The De signis of Nicetas Choniates expresses the same ideas. Manuel Chrysoloras, in a letter addressed to Demetrios Chrysoloras, explains how his admiration for classical monuments must be understood: he does not admire the beauty of the bodies but that of the creative mind who produced them (‘Ὅτι σοὶ σωμάτων κάλλη θυμαμάζομεν ἐν τούτοις, ἄλλα νοῦ κάλλος τοῦ πεποιημένος’).132

It has been shown that collections of pagan statues (which would certainly testify to their artistic appreciation by educated Byzantines) are not mentioned in late Byzantine sources.133 However, the physical proximity of the Byzantines to pagan monuments is attested in many texts in all periods of their history. In addition to the sources mentioned above, the following texts deserve our attention. In the Life of Patriarch Eutychius (d. 582), a mosaic of Aphrodite in a private house was destroyed only when the owner decided to transform it into a monastery.134 According to the Life of St. Theodore of Sykeon, in a village a marble sarcophagus that contained the remains of ὕθθων Ἐλλήνων had been used by the villagers as a water fountain. But they needed the saint’s intervention to eliminate the demon who was the guardian of the deceased. The hagiographer explains that the saint allowed the use of the pagan sarcophagus ὡς χρήσμον όν εἰς τὴν τοῦ ὑδάτιον ύποστηρίγμον.135 In the eleventh century Psellus tried to read and interpret an ancient inscription.136 Manuel Chrysoloras read ancient Greek inscriptions in Rome; his archaeological interest was clearly motivated by “national pride.”137 John Eugenicus, in an ἐκφρασις komes, mentions the vestiges of a so-called palaia kome located not far from the


128 Acta SS, April I, p. 311, § 54.
129 A.-J. Festugière, Vie de Théodore de Sykeôn (Brussels, 1970), pp. 94–95, § 118.
131 PG 156, col. 56C–D: “A πάς τοις ἕν μιαμένω ἐπὶ ἐξ’ Ἀθηνῶν αὐτῶν καὶ τῆς ἄλλης Ἐλληνας δύο ἑκεχομεθα: καὶ ἄλλα δέ μισοράς ἑοντα Ἐλληνικος γραφήσει καὶ τυσβεθέντα, ὅν τε φρόνος τόν μετὰ πολλὰ ἅλλως τινα κατεχομεθα· ἐπ’ ἀποκεκαμένων Ἐλληνικως τοιαῦτα τό ἐπ’ Ἑνώθη, Ἐρυθρων, ὕδως ὅθανασθ.”
Byzantine site that he describes. One could see there "vestiges of a wall, towers, a theater, ancient buildings and statues." The familiarity with forms of ancient art is manifested not only in classicalized forms of Byzantine art objects but also in literature. Emperor Zeno the Isaurian, for example, is compared with Pan: ἦν γὰρ ὁ Ζήνων τῆς κακίστης καὶ εἰδεχθοῦς γενέσεως τῶν Ἰςαύρων, διότι τε καὶ εἰδεχθέσιτος, ὡσπερ Ἐλλήνως ζω-γραφοῦ τὸν Πάνα τραγοσκελή καὶ δασοκήμην, τὴν χρονίαν μέλας, τὴν ἥλιαν ἀσύμβλητος, ὀργυλός, μνησίωτας καὶ οὐδόνος μεστός. It appears from these examples that Christian attitudes of late Antiquity toward pagan monuments were transmitted to the Byzantines of later centuries, the only difference being that some attitudes have been emphasized at different periods. The conclusion of Herbert Hunger regarding Byzantine literature may also be applied to Byzantine attitudes toward pagan monuments: “The Byzantines felt closer to Christianity and late Antiquity (5th and 6th centuries) than to pagan Antiquity.”

We may thus discern various attitudes toward classical monuments in late Antiquity. Some were destroyed as a result of religious intolerance, while others were re-used by Christians for practical purposes or for their artistic value. Was this ambiguity the result of a confusion that one would naturally expect in a period of transition? I believe a similar phenomenon in Christian literature offers the explanation. Despite the various warnings of the dangers of pagan literature for Christians and suggestions for a radical departure from classical tradition and education, Christian authors never ceased studying classical texts and using them as examples to be imitated. The phenomenon is well known and has often been discussed. My intention here is merely to draw attention to the similarities between the Christian attitude toward pagan literature and that toward classical monuments. This intimate relationship between pagan literature and pagan religion was also stressed by the pagans. Libanius, for example, in his Oratio XIII.1, writes: “In company with the worship of the gods, Sire, there has also returned reverence for the practice of eloquence, not merely because eloquence is perhaps no small part of such worship, but also because you have been inspired toward reverence for the gods by eloquence itself.”

In conclusion, I would venture to suggest another explanation for this ambiguous attitude toward classical monuments, especially the re-use of temples by Christians: the Christian concept of the sacred was simply a very different one from that of the pagans. The problem is related to extremely difficult questions of religious belief and practice. I must limit myself at this point to only a few manifestations of it. It is known that building materials from sacred places were used in pagan Antiquity for the construction of, for instance, city walls, in cases of emergency. The literary evidence does not suggest a similar treatment of Christian religious buildings. Reactions of pagans and Christians to sacred places during periods of crisis offer an interesting insight into their religious beliefs. Thucydides, for example, describes the sacrileges of the Athenians during the plague: in their desperation, they neglected the ιερὸ καὶ δόσια, the funerary customs, and generally they committed illegal and immoral acts (ἐπὶ πλέον ἄνομας). Similar reactions of the Romans in periods of plague and war are offered by Livy. By contrast, according to Procopius, the plague of 541–2 impelled the Christians to excessive displays of religiosity and obedience to the law.

In order to illustrate the pagan attitude toward “the sacred” in late Antiquity, a few examples must suffice. Archaeological evidence suggests that as early as the first century A.D. the cult of the Heraion of Samos had declined and that in the sanctuary itself a private house was built. Later in the fourth century, Libanius in his Pro templis recom-

141 Cf. above, note 8.
143 Cf. a rare case of a church that had been included in the imperial palace by Emperor Tiberius, recorded in the Panegyrici, §2 = Patria, §107.
144 Thucydides, II.52–53.
145 Livy, IV.XXX.9–11; XXV.6.12–12.
146 Procopius, Pers., XXIII.12 f.
147 Cf. Spieser, “La christianisation,” 318. In the 3rd century imperial legislation forbade sales of sacred places: Cf. IX.19.1 (a. 241). For a parallel in the Christian legislation, cf. Nov. Just., 120.7.1, which forbade the sale of monasteries in order to be...
mends re-using pagan temples to house the munici-
pal administration: "They are at least build-
ings, even though not used as temples. Taxa-
tion, presumably, required offices of collection: so let
the temple stand and be the collection office, and
keep it from demolition."\textsuperscript{148} He himself could have
established his school in a temple in 354.\textsuperscript{149} The
temple of Fortuna in Antioch was also used by pro-
fessors of rhetoric for their courses, and was a
meeting place for merchants in the time of Julian.
It was no longer a "sacred" place.\textsuperscript{150} In the fifth
century Zosimus describes how the Romans de-
stroyed the most sacred of their statues during the
siege of Rome by Alaric.\textsuperscript{151} Although the act cer-
tAINly had a political significance, it no doubt re-
veals a concept of the sacred quite different from
that of the Christians.

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\textsuperscript{148} Or. XXX.42.
\textsuperscript{149} Or. 1.102.
\textsuperscript{150} Cf. L. Petit, \textit{Libanius et la vie municipale à Antioche au IVe siècle après J.-C.} (Paris, 1955), 197 note 7, who concludes that the
temple had already been used as a basilica.
\textsuperscript{151} Zosimus, V.41.6–7. Sacrileges in periods of Christian reli-
gious conflicts, such as iconoclasm, constitute distinct cases and
should be studied separately.