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Marcus Rautman, *From Polytheism to Christianity in the Temples of Cyprus*

Over his career Eugene Lane has contributed much to our understanding of the religions of the late classical world, and in particular to clarifying the evolution of Christianity within the context of the Roman empire. The complex relationships among adherents of differing belief systems, at varying times tolerant or antagonistic, have figured prominently in his courses at Missouri as well as in his research and writing. As he long ago recognized, the historical transition from classical religion to Christianity was not a uniform process but varied with myriad local factors, and can best be understood on the regional level. The island of Cyprus, which Gene visited during the Missouri expedition to Kourion in the early 1980s, provides material to explore this momentous social change in one neglected Mediterranean landscape.

Cyprus is an important witness to the early history of Christianity for many reasons. This large and geographically varied island lies near the center of the east Mediterranean, less than 100 km. from the coast of Syria and Palestine. Its status as a bone of contention among larger mainland powers dates back through classical times to late prehistory, when Mycenaean and Phoenician settlers were attracted by its location and natural resources. Acquired by the Hellenistic monarchs in the late 4th century, Cyprus passed to Roman control in 58 B.C.E. The new republican province was administered in 51-50 by Cicero during his term as proconsul of Cilicia, although he never actually resided here.¹ The island had always been one of the first stopping points for ships sailing west from Egypt and Palestine. The apostle Paul, accompanied by Barnabas, a native of the island, is credited with preaching in the Salamis synagogues and converting the proconsul Sergius Paulus to Christianity in Paphos. Returning to the island with John Mark, Barnabas was martyred and buried near Salamis.² Cyprus was reassigned by Diocletian to a consular governor reporting to Antioch and shared in the general prosperity of the east Mediterranean region following the eastward shift of government to Constantinople. Impressed by the miraculous discovery of the tomb of Barnabas around 488, the emperor Zeno granted the island's Christian population independence under its own archbishop, a privilege that continues to the present.³

Lying beneath the surface of political narrative, the evolution of Cypriot society during the 3rd and 4th centuries C.E. has been largely overlooked by the island's

historiographic traditions. Prehistory in general, and the Late Bronze Age in particular, have long been the main concern of historians and archaeologists. Students of classical Cyprus rarely deal with late antiquity, which is more commonly discussed as a prelude to the island's Byzantine and later medieval history.⁴ To some extent this reflects the availability of written sources. Strabo (*Geog.* 14.6.5), Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* 14.74, 18.12.67-68), and other authors clearly indicate the island's agricultural and mineral wealth.⁵ Besides passing remarks by Ammianus Marcellinus (*Res Gestae* 14.8.14) and John Lydus (*de Mag.* 2.29), the province was peripheral to the empire's political and cultural life, and could safely be overlooked by late classical authors--a tendency shared by modern historians. The literary tradition continued by Cypriot saints' lives reflects profoundly different material and spiritual worlds.⁶ As elsewhere in the Mediterranean, epigraphic sources dwindled during the later empire and became concentrated in provincial capitals at the expense of lesser cities. Archaeological accounts of classical Cyprus thus have tended to emphasize the major roads, cities, and sanctuaries of the high empire. Apart from floor mosaics with mythological subjects found in townhouses in the island's western parts, the great social and religious changes of the 3rd and 4th centuries are largely absent from the material record.⁷ Recent surveys and excavations suggest that this was an especially challenging time for local residents, with years of economic recession followed by famine, drought, and a series of devastating earthquakes that included major events in 332, 343, 365, and 370. By contrast, the 5th through early 7th centuries was a period of relative stability that was marked by urban reconstruction and expanding rural settlement, in both cases accompanied by the building of numerous churches, which lasted until the Arab campaigns of the mid 600s.⁸

The locus classicus for investigating the transition from classical religion to Christianity has long been the Roman temple. Situated amidst the bustling civic forum or the secluded rural sanctuary, temples have served as both the essential symbol and tangible reality of the religious conversion of the later Roman empire.⁹ The celebration of official cults in large public buildings stood in sharp contrast to the minimal needs of early Christian communities, whose earliest cult-specific places were adapted from private houses.¹⁰ Between Constantine's Edict of Milan in 312 and Theodosius' legislation of the 390s, as it rose from newly won legitimacy to a position of authority, the Church addressed public needs with a number of architectural solutions, of which the most influential was the basilica. Throughout this process classical temples exerted positive and negative influences on the development of the early Church, both as standing buildings and as unavoidable features of the classical landscape. Some temples were intentionally desecrated and demolished; others were abandoned to decay or find reuse for other purposes, including Christian worship. Of course, it is important not to take these physical structures as representing the whole of traditional religion, which extended in less visible but arguably more substantial ways throughout domestic life and rural society. As monumental statements of public cult practice, temples and sanctuaries constituted only the high-end of classical polytheism, the deluxe version that in attesting the vitality of a community both reflected and influenced broader social activities.¹¹ Across the Mediterranean the shifting currents of public life met in these buildings, whose varied fates reflect local concerns and traditions, in Cyprus as elsewhere.

The task of tracing the demise of classical sanctuaries presents special challenges, which appear especially acute in dealing with Cyprus. The few written sources pose obvious difficulties. The paucity of known inscriptions from the 3rd and 4th centuries reflects the downturn in public commemoration noted throughout the late empire. Chroniclers, apologists, and hagiographers provide accounts that can appear conflicting and highly localized, and in any event pertain primarily to the coastal cities. The Theodosian Code preserves changing imperial attitudes toward classical buildings, but through edicts that were issued in response to specific problems rather than as elements of a coherent policy. Archaeological evidence is no less ambiguous. It is often difficult to determine whether the physical deterioration of a temple occurred as the result of benign neglect or destruction by accidental or deliberate means. Crosses, monograms, and similar apotropaic images frequently were inscribed on walls and floors, but other, less visible measures also were taken to deconsecrate buildings.¹² In many cases the subsequent quarrying of sites for spoils has effectively scattered the architectural remains. Today the physical proximity of Roman strata to modern ground level, together with frequently uneven excavation records, can pose further problems for dating and interpretation.

Traditional religion in Roman Cyprus is known to have focused on three main shrines: the sanctuary of Aphrodite at Palaepaphos in the southwest part of the island, the temple of Aphrodite at Amathus on the south central coast, and the temple of Zeus Olympios at Salamis in the east (Fig. 1). All three sites preserve evidence of devotional practices dating back to the early Iron Age (ca. mid 11th to mid 8th centuries B.C.E.), but as cult centers they were given monumental form only under the Hellenistic rulers, who sought to solidify their control of the island in the 3rd and 2nd centuries.¹³ The primacy of these sanctuaries by the Roman period is confirmed by Tacitus (*Ann.* 3.62-63), who says that the Senate confirmed their rights of amnesty (asylia) in 22 C.E. Over the next two hundred years these cults increasingly became associated with the island's identity as a Roman territory. All three sites were renewed, embellished, and granted multiple donations. Images of the Palaepaphos sanctuary and the standing figure of Zeus Olympios appear both singly and paired on coins issued by the koinon Kyprion from the 1st through 3rd centuries. The heavy promotion of these primary shrines, together with temples of the imperial cult at Paphos, Kourion, and elsewhere, may be seen as part of Roman efforts to unify and consolidate the island province.¹⁴ Elsewhere minor cults of Greek, Phoenician, and more shadowy origin were observed in small temples and shrines, where they preserved territorial interests first established by independent Iron Age polities.

The most venerable of Cypriot shrines was the sanctuary of Aphrodite at Palaepaphos. Located on the fertile southwest coastal plain, Palaepaphos appears to have been an important religious center by the 13th century B.C.E., with the cult of a goddess becoming well established during the early Iron Age.¹⁵ The late 4th century B.C.E. founding and subsequent growth of the port city of (Nea) Paphos at Ktima, about 16 km. to the west, helped it flourish in Hellenistic and Roman times. Contemporary authors describe visits by pilgrims who landed at Paphos and reached the sanctuary by a sacred processional way lined with votive shrines.¹⁶ While today little survives of this famous religious center, excavations carried out in the late 19th

century and again during the 1970s have pieced together its early history and appearance in Roman times. The complex seems to have combined various Near Eastern, Anatolian, and Aegean elements, some of which dated back to late prehistory. Two long halls flanking an open shrine with an aniconic cultic stone are among the features depicted on engraved gems, medallions, and coins of Hellenistic and Roman date.¹⁷ Altars and votive monuments stood throughout the temenos. Significantly, local interest in preserving the cult's continuity seems to have privileged earlier remains, with the result that a freestanding temple was never constructed. A peristyle house built nearby in the early 1st century C.E. may have served as a residence for the priests.¹⁸ Titus and Domitian dedicated an altar to Aphrodite, whose identity became increasingly associated with the imperial cult. The sanctuary received other imperial donations from the time of Augustus through at least the Severans, but apparently declined during the 3rd century.¹⁹ The main halls, if still standing, must have suffered considerable damage from the earthquakes that shook Paphos in 332 and 342, and within a few years the complex seems to have been abandoned. Excavations have found traces of several suburban dwellings that grew up around the site during the late 4th and 5th centuries, but there is little evidence that the sanctuary itself was reoccupied in late antiquity.

Pilgrimage traffic to Palaepaphos naturally benefited the harbor city and Roman provincial capital of Paphos as well as its surrounding territory.²⁰ The city possessed its own shrines, of which the most important became the imperial cult. This grew out of the favor Augustus showed Paphos following an earthquake of 15 B.C.E. and Flavian support after another earthquake in 76/77 C.E. An inscription found near the site of the medieval castle known as Saranda Kolones attests a large temple in honor of Septimius Severus and Caracalla. Other temples dedicated to Aphrodite, Apollo, Artemis, and Asklepios are known to have stood within or near the city.²¹ The cultural prestige enjoyed by these and other cults may be seen in the extensive floor mosaics found in several sprawling residences in the western part of town.²² Presumably all of these buildings were damaged by the multiple earthquakes that rocked Paphos between 332 and 370, leaving much of it the ruinous field vividly described by Jerome.²³ The city's reconstruction was no doubt slowed by the move of the provincial governor to Salamis in the later 4th century. In his absence the local bishops, who are attested in council lists of 324 (Cyril) and 381 (Julius), likely became increasingly prominent in urban affairs. As seen elsewhere in the late empire, the increasing power of bishops marked an important stage in the establishment of the Church.²⁴ No doubt it was under episcopal leadership that the Paphos community built a large basilica in the newer, east part of town before the end of the century. This building, the probable cathedral later known as the Chrysopolitissa, had seven aisles, measured 48-53 by 38 m. in plan, and was preceded by an atrium. Within a few years a second large church, the Limeniotissa, also stood near the harbor.²⁵ Located peripheral to the older public quarters, these two large basilicas effectively sacralized this part of Paphos and gave it a new religious identity. They formed key landmarks of the late Roman city and announced the prominence of Christianity to visitors arriving by sea.

The site of Kourion (Curium), inhabited since the late Bronze Age, stands on a high coastal ridge about 40 km. east of Paphos. Like its Hellenistic predecessor, the

Roman city was organized around a hilltop public quarter overlooking a broad beach. No evidence attests the survival of earlier cults into Roman times, when the nearby sanctuary of Apollo Hylates rose to prominence. Recent excavations have identified three main building phases of the shrine, including its establishment in the Archaic period, expansion in the 3rd century B.C.E., and rebuilding during the early empire.²⁶ In its Roman form the sanctuary covered an area of about a hectare and included a sacred grove, bath, palaestra, and associated buildings. The temple of Apollo stood at the high north edge of the sanctuary. This was a small prostyle structure that apparently was built in Julio-Claudian times and reconstructed under Trajan, whose cult as Caesar was celebrated conjointly with Apollo in the divided cella of the Northwest Building. The temple stood on a platform measuring about 15 x 9 m. and looked south across the temenos. An 8 m. long ramp with steps led from the street to the porch, which was supported by four freestanding columns with Nabatean-style Corinthian capitals to a height of perhaps 7 m. Both podium and superstructure were built of local limestones, which builders employed in lieu of imported marble and other types of decorative stone. The cult does not appear to have been sustained, however, and by the 3rd or early 4th century the site was substantially abandoned.²⁷

The main city of south central Cyprus, Amathus, lies about 25 km. farther east. The seat of an independent kingdom in the Archaic period, Amathus was home to several cults, with a Heraeum and a shrine of the "Seven within the Stelae" surviving from the Hellenistic period into the 1st century C.E. The city's principal deity, whose cult had occupied the steep and rocky acropolis since the 7th century B.C.E., became known as Aphrodite. Little is known of her sanctuary's early appearance. By the late Hellenistic period a Doric portico and a small, related structure had been added to the complex and the goddess was being celebrated jointly with Sarapis and Isis. Tacitus and other classical authors attest the importance of the shrine during the early empire.²⁸ Recent excavations on the acropolis have exposed much of the original foundations and recovered enough fragments of its superstructure to suggest the temple's original appearance. Rebuilt in the late 1st or early 2nd century C.E., the limestone structure stood on a podium whose plan measured 32 x 15 m. The temple faced south with four freestanding columns, perhaps as tall as 12 m., and Nabatean-style capitals supporting a shallow porch before an enclosed cella with a small adyton in the back.²⁹ The temple and its cult were noted by Pausanias (9.41.2-5), but by the mid 200s unrepaired damage to the front stairs suggests that the complex was no longer being fully maintained. Certainly the sanctuary stood in poor condition, if not altogether empty, by the time Tychon, bishop of Amathus ca. 380-403, is said to have struggled with the local polytheist community.³⁰ The temple was apparently later deconsecrated and reoccupied: around the middle of the 5th century the entrance was changed and the building decorated with frescoes, mosaics, and marble plaques. By this time at least three other churches were gathered around the foot of the acropolis: a cemetery chapel in which Tychon was buried, and two large basilicas along the shore. In the early 7th century the acropolis structure was dismantled and some of its spoils were built into another small basilica nearby.³¹

Salamis, the largest city of Roman Cyprus, lies on the island's east coast, facing Syria. Excavated tombs in the royal necropolis attest the great wealth of this early Iron Age kingdom and the city's importance to the ruling Ptolemies. Salamis

continued to flourish under Roman rule, when its harbor, gymnasium, stadium, and theater were enlarged and combined with an amphitheater and bath complex in a northern public quarter. Much of this work was begun under Augustus, damaged by earthquakes in 76/77, and restored by Trajan and Hadrian.³² Throughout this period the city's ceremonial focus was the sanctuary of Zeus Olympios, which stood in the southwest quarter, close to the necropolis. The cult later was joined with the imperial family, and the image of Zeus Olympios appeared prominently on Roman coins.³³ The temple precinct was identified in the late 19th century and received brief but incomplete archaeological scrutiny in the early 1970s. Its plan, perhaps established in the late 2nd century B.C.E. but realized somewhat later, featured a raised temple that stood at the south end of a vast porticoed court. The peripteral hexaprostyle temple was built of local limestone and apparently completed in the 1st century C.E. It stood on a high podium measuring about 28 x 22 m. in plan. The porch was supported by twelve freestanding columns, probably limestone, with marble used for the Doric-Corinthian capitals and decorative details. A stepped ramp reached from the temple to the court with its flanking Corinthian porticoes, which seem to have functioned as part of the sanctuary. The entire complex measured almost 250 m. long by 60 m. wide, and dominated both the physical plan and urban identity of Salamis.³⁴

The later history of the complex is less clear. No doubt the temple was seriously damaged by the 4th century earthquakes. Naturally it did not share in Constantius II's campaign to restore his new provincial capital, now renamed Constantia, which focused on other public buildings. The temple probably was abandoned before or around the time Epiphanius (ca. 368-408) became bishop. No contemporary source mentions the building. The *Vita of Epiphanius*, which was composed in the later 5th or 6th century, refers to a temple known as Zeus Asphaleia near the necropolis, but it is not clear that this was still in service; elsewhere the text records amiable relations between polytheist and Christian groups at a time when most citizens would have been involved with urban reconstruction.³⁵ Epiphanius, for his part, likely provided the impetus for building an enormous new church to the northeast. Stretching more than 55 m. long by over 40 m. wide and perhaps preceded by an atrium, this large basilica had a narthex, five aisles, and upper galleries. Its scale and design seem to have been inspired by the recently completed cathedral of Constantinople, St. Sophia, and the Anastasis basilica in Jerusalem, and the church may well have been intended as the metropolitan cathedral. While its original dedication is uncertain, by the early 5th century the basilica was named in honor of the sainted bishop, who was buried in an attached building.³⁶ This seems to have become the new civic and religious focus of the city, and as the largest church on the island it exerted a strong influence on later Cypriot builders. The Zeus complex, meanwhile, was put to other uses. Parts of the porticoes were reconstructed and subdivided into small shops or residences.³⁷ The ramp and platform were renewed, apparently in the 5th century, and at least some of the temple walls remained standing as late as the 7th century. The suggestion that a church was installed atop the platform, while possible, rests on little evidence. Better documented is the construction of a small church over the east portico. This three-aisled building may have measured about 27 m. long by 17 m. wide, and was furnished with glass mosaics and marble revetment. The form of the sanctuary, with three projecting semicircular apses, suggests a construction date in the 5th or early 6th century.³⁸

Other Cypriot cults seem to have been of mostly local importance. A Domitianic inscription names a high priestess of all temples of Demeter on the island, although their locations are unknown.³⁹ Hellenistic and imperial inscriptions from Kition (Citium) on the southeast coast speak of cults of Asklepios, Artemis Paralia, and Zeus Keraunios.⁴⁰ The largest city of northwest Cyprus, Arsinoë, is credited by Strabo with a sanctuary of Aphrodite and Zeus that continued from the Archaic period into the early empire.⁴¹ Nearby Soloi, which had been inhabited since the early Iron Age, supported several temples of traditional Cypriot form, including one dedicated to Aphrodite and Isis that may have continued into Roman times. The future saint Auxibios lived in the city throughout the second half of the 1st century and reportedly converted to Christianity the flamen dialis of the Zeus temple near the north gate, although apparently without affecting the cult which persisted into the 2nd century.⁴² On the north coast neither Lapithos (Lapethus) nor Kyrenia (Ceryneia) seem to have hosted notable shrines apart from the imperial cult, although one or the other likely had a bishop by the end of the 4th century.⁴³ At the end of the Cape Andreas peninsula, beyond the small city of Carpasia, the sanctuary of Aphrodite Akraea mentioned by Strabo was still attested in the late 2nd century.⁴⁴ Rural shrines of Apollo (Opaon) Melanthios at Amargetti, north of Palaepaphos, Apollo Barbaros at Louroudjina, and Apollo Lakeutes at Pyla may have been maintained at least until the Severans.⁴⁵ The best known example of a surviving rural cult is the sanctuary of Zeus Labranios at Phasoula in the mountains above Amathus, where two Cypriot saints are said to have been martyred in the 4th century.⁴⁶

This written and material evidence, while limited in many ways, presents a fairly consistent picture of public religion in Roman Cyprus. The textual sources mention more than 20 temples, in addition to houses of the imperial cult, that were scattered across the island. The best known cults, those of Aphrodite at Palaepaphos and Amathus, Zeus at Salamis, and Apollo at Kourion, were pre-Roman survivals that were renewed and enlarged during the 1st and early 2nd centuries C.E. The imperial cult was celebrated at the provincial altar at Palaepaphos, in a large Severan temple in Paphos, and in various ways across the island.⁴⁷ The number of known religious dedications dwindled during the later 2nd and 3rd centuries, leaving only a handful of temples still in service by the time of Constantine's ascension. The cult of Aphrodite was a favorite target of Christian authors like Clement of Alexandria in the late 2nd century and is mentioned by Firmicus Maternus as late as ca. 350, yet by this time neither the aging Palaepaphos sanctuary nor the Amathus temple seems to have been particularly active. Information from the countryside suggests a similar decline of rural observances, with the latest known dedications taking place at Phasoula in the late 4th century.⁴⁸

The course of this cultural reorientation can be traced in the topography of individual sites. Most Roman cults occupied conspicuous urban landmarks that formed an important part of the local civic image. Each of these large and expensive buildings served a specific purpose and was maintained as long as it met community needs. In so far as can be determined, most Cypriot temples and sanctuaries were simply abandoned in late antiquity and superseded by churches built in other locations.

After 1500 years of continuous use, the Palaepaphos shrine apparently lapsed around the time of the mid 4th century earthquakes, when suburban houses began to be built nearby. The center of religious life in urban Paphos, which previously had focused on the temple of Septimius Severus and Caracalla, shifted southeastward, away from the upper city and toward the waterfront, where two large churches, one the cathedral, were built in the late 4th and early 5th centuries. The Apollo Hylates sanctuary outside Kourion was abandoned by the late 3rd or early 4th century, well before the new cathedral was begun in the 420s atop a civil basilica within the walled acropolis.⁴⁹ At Amathus, where the dilapidated Aphrodite temple on the acropolis may have stood empty by the mid 3rd century, Christianity appeared first around the urban periphery at the late 4th century cemetery church of Ayios Tychonos; within a few years two large basilicas, one perhaps the cathedral, were raised along the shore. The Zeus temple at Salamis apparently passed out of service around the mid 300s, shortly before the great church of St. Epiphanius was built to the north. This sequence of events suggests that traditional cults lost considerable vitality during the high empire. The 4th century earthquakes abruptly confronted Cypriot cities with the task of repairing structures that no longer sufficiently suited local needs; simply put, the costs of reconstruction exceeded the interest and ability to pay for them. Even though the physical remains are admittedly sparse, it may be significant that no sign of deliberate desecration has been reported. Reoccupation was limited in scope and occurred much later. The Amathus temple, for example, may have been deconsecrated and briefly reoccupied in the 5th century, but by the end of the 6th century it had been dismantled. The Salamis complex was adapted to other purposes before a church was built over part of one portico in the 5th or early 6th century.⁵⁰

This progressive abandonment of Cypriot shrines generally agrees with the hagiographic accounts. The *Vitae* of Saints Auxibios, Heracleides, and Spyridon of Trimithos, despite their varied dates and circumstances of composition, suggest that relations among different religious communities were relatively relaxed and without the violent confrontations seen elsewhere in the 4th century. The *Vita* of Epiphanius records the bishop's contact with remnants of the polytheist community at Salamis at a time when the Zeus temple had already passed from use.⁵¹ The moments of sharpest reported conflict belong to the later years of the century, when Theodosius began vigorously to promote the Church and close temples. This tension appears most vividly in the *Vita* of Tychon, which records lively clashes between the bishop and classical religionists at Amathus. Yet, the derelict condition of the Aphrodite temple at this time implies that some of these scenes may be embellishments by a later writer drawing upon incidents of intercommunal conflict on the mainland.⁵² Similarly, the floor mosaics found in houses at Paphos, Kourion, and elsewhere can be seen to reflect an acceptance among social elites of at least the images of classical mythology.⁵³ The prevalence of such attitudes, together with the apparent scarcity of functioning temples, suggests that traditional cults offered little resistance to the spread of Christianity.

This process of religious adaptation distinguishes Cyprus from its east Mediterranean neighbors. Some of the earliest examples of temple destruction took place in Syria, Palestine, and Egypt during this period. In the 320s Constantine replaced the temple at Mamre with a church and razed the temple of Aphrodite in

Jerusalem to make way for the Anastasis complex. Theodosius ordered the destruction of the Serapeion at Alexandria around 391. Crowds led by local bishops burned the Apollo temple at Daphne, outside Antioch, and the temple of Zeus at Apamea, both of which probably were replaced by churches. In Gaza bishop Porphyry incited the destruction of the city's temples, including the Marneion, in 402.⁵⁴ Despite these efforts participation in traditional cults is known to have continued into the 6th century along the Upper Nile and elsewhere.⁵⁵

The gradual atrophy of classical sanctuaries seen in Cyprus in some respects resembles what happened in Greece, another peripheral territory of the late empire. Here most rural shrines were left behind during the late Hellenistic and early Roman periods, although some saw renewed activity in later antiquity. The largest and most prestigious surviving sanctuaries at Delphi, Olympia, and Delos were uneventfully deserted over the 4th and 5th centuries, and only much later were small churches built nearby.⁵⁶ The picture in the cities is similar. A few urban sanctuaries may have been deliberately desecrated in the later 4th century but these sites seem to have been avoided afterwards.⁵⁷ Only on rare occasion was a temple seized for immediate Christian use. Around the early 6th century the cleric Jovian replaced an existing cult center at Palaeopolis on Corfu with a basilica, and in Athens a church complex was built at the Asklepieion.⁵⁸ The best known instances of temple conversion took place in Athens, where churches were set up in the Parthenon, Erechtheion, and Hephaisteion toward the end of the 6th or early in the 7th century, long after their cults had lapsed. Years after passing from active use, these standing temples by their monumental presence continued to shape urban life.⁵⁹

The deconsecration of Cypriot temples followed a different path. While a number of small, independent polis-cults and rural panhellenic sanctuaries survived in Greece, cults in Cyprus were based primarily in the cities. The island's successful incorporation into the framework of large Mediterranean empires, under first the Ptolemies and then the Romans, helped concentrate the island's population, economy, and religious structures at a small number of coastal settlements.⁶⁰ The centralization of cult at Paphos, Amathus, Kourion, and Salamis had both material and social consequences.

The most obvious result was the building of newly monumentalized sanctuaries by civic elites and external rulers. Yet unlike Greece, where monumental stone architecture had taken root by the 7th century B.C.E, Cyprus could not boast a continuous native tradition of large-scale construction. The lack of naturally-occurring marble and fine stone led builders of earlier sanctuaries to create small shrines set in open temenoi.⁶¹ In the event, the construction of large trabeated buildings in Hellenistic and Roman times did not prove well suited to this seismically active environment. The columnar limestone temples at Amathus, Kourion, and Salamis required extensive repairs within a century after being set up under the early emperors. All were in need of further work by the mid 3rd century, when a broad economic contraction across the east Mediterranean left urban curiales and magistrates unable to respond in effective ways.⁶²

The gravitation of people toward these coastal cities was of greater historical

significance. Several surveys have noted an expanding rural settlement pattern during Hellenistic and early Roman times, which was followed by a general contraction during the 2nd through 4th centuries.⁶³ This picture contrasts with available evidence from Greece and may reflect the more successful integration of the island into larger political entities. In Cyprus rural settlement began to decline around the time that the temples at Kourion, Amathus, and Salamis saw their final campaigns of reconstruction. Evidence of Severan prosperity, which often is taken to represent the apogee of Roman Cyprus, is overwhelmingly urban and may have come about at the expense of the countryside. Left behind would have been the many small cults of the chora, grounded in peaks, caves, and springs across the island, which had formed the traditional base of Cypriot religion. The widespread abandonment of these rural shrines, no less than the elaboration of public cults in the cities, set the stage for profound social and religious reassessments.⁶⁴

Ultimately the cultic consolidation of Roman Cyprus produced a new and cohesive episcopal structure for the island. It is unsurprising that Christianity took hold early near the three great sanctuaries mentioned by Tacitus, with both Paphos and Salamis represented by bishops at the Council of Ephesus in 324.⁶⁵ Its growth at Paphos, Amathus, and Salamis is clear from the activities of powerful bishops who organized their adherents, built large cathedrals, and inspired the hagiographical tradition that eventually would lead to ecclesiastical autonomy.⁶⁶ Twelve bishops were represented at the Council of Serdica in 343, and soon others were found at lesser settlements across the island, which became known for its rural clergy.⁶⁷ By the mid 5th century rural churches standing at Apendrika, Carpasia, Lapithos, Tamassos, Trimithos, Yialousa, and elsewhere tangibly document both the expansion of rural settlement and the successful Christianization of the countryside.⁶⁸

Seen in this light, the decline of classical temples in Cyprus reflects the island's history as a provincial territory dominated by external powers. By monumentalizing selected urban sanctuaries in an alien architectural language, Ptolemaic and Roman administrators placed traditional cults on a foundation that was ill-suited to the challenges of late antiquity. A weakened economy and imperial neglect during the 3rd century contributed to fundamental social realignments. Observing dramatic ideological shifts at the imperial center, town councils and magistrates chose not to maintain deteriorating sanctuaries, which were effectively closed by earthquakes during the mid 4th century. Instead, Cypriot bishops worked in the shadow of damaged temples at Paphos, Amathus, Kourion, and Salamis to resacralize urban space by building cathedrals and other large churches, often including burials, in renovated parts of their growing cities; as protector saints, Tychon and Epiphanius replaced Aphrodite and Zeus as bearers of civic--and insular--identity. Settlements and cult sites that had been left behind during the high empire were assimilated by an expanding rural population and proliferation of new churches during the 5th and 6th centuries. Policies of provincial definition, which had invested the public cults of Cyprus in its greatest cities, also laid the foundation for ecclesiastical independence in the Middle Ages.

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¹ Hill 227-30; Bagnall (1976) 38-79; Mitford (1980).

² Acts 13, 4-12; 15, 39; "Acta Barnabae," in Bonnet ed. 292-302 (presumably dating from the 5th or 6th century); Hackett 2-5; Hill 247-48; Mitford (1980) 1381.

³ Hackett 23-26; Hill 276-78; Chrysos 5-6; Petinos 139; Falkenhausen 25 n. 32.

⁴ Karageorghis 1969; cf. Megaw (1974); Papageorghiou (1985).

⁵ For other references to the island's natural resources see Wallace and Orphanides; Michaelides (1996) 146-48.

⁶ Delehaye; "Sancti Barnabae Laudatio Auctore Alexandro Monacho et Sanctorum Bartholomaei" and "Barnabae Vita e Menologio Imperiali Deprompta," ed. P. Van Deun, in Van Deun and Noret eds.; Falkenhausen 21-33.

⁷ Michaelides (1987) 12-45; Kondoleon; Cf. Hill 244; Mitford (1980) 1295.

⁸ >Megaw (1974, 1986); Chrysos 6-14; Papageorghiou (1993) 34-49.

⁹ Among the main contributions see Deichmann (1939); Frantz; Spieser; Hanson; Vaes; Saradi-Mendelovici; Caillet; Meier; Caseau.

¹⁰ Finney; White.

¹¹ E.g., MacMullen 32-73; Fowden (1998); Caseau 23-27.

¹² Meier; Trombley 1: 108-22; Caseau 21-22.

¹³ Hill 173-211; Bagnall (1976) 73; cf. Alcock (1993) 210-14. The temples at Amathus, Kourion, and Salamis were the first monumental urban temples built on the island since the Late Bronze Age; see Wright (1992a) 137-38, 186-88.

¹⁴ Hill 234; Mitford (1980) 1347-55; Mitford (1990) 2194-2202.

¹⁵ The discovery of Chalcolithic cult images in the area suggests the continuity of religious activities in the area from much earlier prehistory (Maier and Karageorghis 46, 81-102). The association with the Hellenic Aphrodite comes much later in classical times. The name Palae(a)paphos appears around the mid 2nd century B.C.E. (Mlynarczyk 23).

¹⁶ Strabo, Geog. 14.6; Mitford (1980) 1309-15; Maier and Karageorghis 270-82; Mlynarczyk 23-25 for sources.

¹⁷ Vessberg and Westholm 7-8; Maier and Karageorghis 84-85, 270-82; Wright (1992a) 185-86.

¹⁸ Maier and Karageorghis 280.

¹⁹ Tacitus, Hist. 2.2-4; Suetonius, Titus 5; Mitford (1980) 1313-15, (1990) 2178-83. The construction in nearby Paphos of a new Severan temple for the imperial cult likely contributed to the decline of the older sanctuary.

²⁰ Lund 140-41; Rupp 249-59.

²¹ Mitford (1980) 1312-13, 1354; Maier and Karageorghis 249-53; Mlynarczyk 142-51, cf. 218-22, 217.

²² I.e., the so-called (after their mosaics) houses of Orpheus and Dionysos (late 2nd/early 3rd century), the House of Theseus (3rd-5th centuries), the House of Aion (mid 4th century); see Daszewski; Michaelides (1987) 12-45; Kondoleon.

²³ "Ingressus ergo Paphum urbem Cypri, nobilem carminibus poetarum, quae frequenter terrae motu lapsa nunc ruinam tantum vestigiis, quid olim fuerit, ostendit." "Vita Sancti Hilarionis," PL 23.29-54 at 52; Soren and Lane 181. The individual temple sites have yet to be identified on the ground.

²⁴ Hill 250-51; Fowden (1978) 56-58; Falkenhausen.

²⁵ Maier and Karageorghis 291-95; Papageorghiou (1985) 305-307; Michaelides (1987) 33-35; Megaw (1988) 136-40.

²⁶ Vessberg and Westholm 9-10; Scranton 3-4; Mitford (1980) 1315-17, (1990) 2183-85; Soren ed.; Buitron-Oliver ed.

²⁷ Scranton 71-74; Soren ed. 42, 119-218; Wright (1992a) 166-73, (1992b) 273; Buitron-Oliver ed. 16.

²⁸ Mitford (1980) 1317-18, (1990) 2185-86; Aupert and Hellmann 20-21; Hermay (1988).

²⁹ Schmid; Aupert 157-60.

³⁰ Delehay; Usener; Aupert and Hellmann 26-32.

³¹ Pralong; Aupert 161-64.

³² Karageorghis (1969) 165-96; Michaelides (1987) 25-28; Wright (1992a) 150-58.

³³ Chavane and Yon 26-27 nos. 37-40; Mitford (1980) 1321-23, (1990) 2189-90; Yon 86-95.

³⁴ Munro and Tubbs 67-81, pl. VII; Vessberg and Westholm 8-9; Argoud, Callot, Helly, and Larribeau 123-41; Callot 363-66. For unresolved problems of design and date see Wright (1992a) 153-54.

³⁵ ἦν δὲ ναὸς ἐκεῖνος ἀρχαῖος, ὅστις ἐκαλεῖτο Διὸς Ἀσφάλεια. "Vita Sancti Epiphani," *PG* 41.23-116 at 89; Chavane and Yon 27 no. 40; Yon 87-88; Rapp 171-72. As also seen in Greece, the proximity of Christian burials to the temple suggests that the cult was no longer functioning; cf. Spieser; Caillet 196.

³⁶ Jeffery 344-49; Delvoye 313-17; Megaw (1974) 61-64; Papageorghiou (1985) 301-303. The building remains incompletely studied.

³⁷ A large cistern was built against the monumental north entrance, which later was incorporated into the late Roman fortification; Munro and Tubbs 72-73, 81-91; Callot 367.

³⁸ Munro and Tubbs 74, pl. VII; cf. Callot 366-67, fig. 3. The arrangement of the east end resembles a small group of churches found in northeast Cyprus (Aphendrika, Carpasia, and Yialousa), but may also reflect the influence of the great Syrian pilgrimage church at Qalat Siman.

³⁹ Claudia (Rhodocleia) Appharion; Mitford (1980) 1371.

⁴⁰ Mitford (1980) 1318-20, (1990) 2187-89. A lost inscription mentioning Zeus Keraunios may be as late as the 2nd or 3rd century.

⁴¹ Strabo, Geog. 14.6.3; Mitford (1980) 1329, (1990) 2193.

⁴² Strabo, Geog. 14.6.3; "Vita Sancti Auxibii" ed. J. Noret in Van Daun and Noret eds. 137-202, presumably 4th century or later; Gjerstad 399-582; Vessberg and Westholm 2-7; Mitford (1980) 1327-29, (1990) 2192-93; Wright (1992a) 162-65.

⁴³ Hackett 319; Hill 251; Mitford (1980) 1324-27, (1990) 2191.

⁴⁴ Strabo, Geog. 14.6.3; Mitford (1980) 1324, (1990) 2191.

⁴⁵ Hill 267-68; Mitford (1980) 1372-73, (1990) 2188-89; cf. Wright (1992b) 271-76. A fragmentary Roman lamp and coin of Arcadius and Honorius (ca. 395-408) were found at a sanctuary, perhaps dedicated to Apollo, at Potamia-Ellines near Idalion, but this shrine was little used after the Hellenistic period; see Karageorghis (1979). Signs of renewed activity at rural cult sites in Greece are discussed by Alcock (1994) 153-56.

⁴⁶ Aupert and Hellmann 23 no. 46; cf. n. 56 for source problems. For inscriptions and votive sculptures from the site see Mitford (1980) 1339 n. 239; Hermay (1992) 333-37.

⁴⁷ Evidence of the imperial cult is summarized by Mitford (1980) 1347-55.

⁴⁸ Clement of Alexandria, Protrepticus 2.13.4-14.2; Firmicus Maternus, De errore profanarum religionum 10. Cf. Maier and Karageorghis 285-297; Mitford (1990) 2201-02; Aupert 161.

⁴⁹ Megaw (1974) 60-61; Papageorghiou (1985) 308-310.

⁵⁰ In both cases the later church was built on the periphery of the original temenos, taking advantage of the temple's urban prominence; cf. Gregory 237.

⁵¹ Delehay; Halkin; Van den Ven 71; Papageorghiou (1993) 31; Rapp 180-82; Bakirtzis 40-41.

⁵² Fowden (1978); Trombley. John the Almsgiver, in writing his *Vita of Tychon*, likely was influenced by Persian campaigns in the Near East while he was patriarch of Alexandria (ca. 609-15).

⁵³ Mythological subjects in the houses of Aion (4th century) and Theseus (5th century) at Paphos, and in the Eustoleos complex (5th century) at Kourion have been interpreted as reflecting the tastes of either a die-hard polytheist enclave or Christian

families comfortable with their classical heritage. See Daszewski 38-45; Michaelides (1987) 40-45; Kondoleon; Caseau 35-36.

⁵⁴ Fowden (1978) 53-78; Trombley 1: 207-22.

⁵⁵ Gregory 234; Bagnall (1993) 251-55, 268-73; MacMullen; Fowden (1998) 558.

⁵⁶ Spieser 320; Gregory 236-37; Alcock (1994) 257-61.

⁵⁷ Spieser 320; Déroche; Caillet 196-97. The Asklepieion at Corinth and the Aphrodision at Argos seem to have been intentionally destroyed.

⁵⁸ Spieser 312; Gregory 237-39; Karivieri 900-905.

⁵⁹ Deichmann (1938/39) 127-39; Frantz; Spieser 310-11; Caillet 201-202; Meier 364-70; Caseau 33-35.

⁶⁰ Hill 175, 183-84; Bagnall (1976) 68-73; Mitford (1980) 1314, 1371; Mlynarczyk 149-51. From the early 2nd century B.C.E. the Ptolemaic strategos was high priest of all cults on the island, a practice continued under the Romans. In the same way the Cypriot cults of Apollo, Artemis, Zeus, and other Hellenic deities had become established only through external contact in late classical and Hellenistic times; Mitford (1990) 2208-09.

⁶¹ Gjerstad 17-23, 487; Wright (1992a) 186-88, 357-60, (1992b) 274-75; Reyes 28-32, 133-36.

⁶² For the decline (or redirection) of imperial benefaction and private euergetism see recently Garnsey and Whittaker 330-32. For evidence of an economic downturn in the 2nd-3rd centuries see Lund 140-43.

⁶³ Lund 140-43; Rupp 247-58. Occupation of the Paphos hinterland may have been sustained by its proximity to the provincial capital.

⁶⁴ For Cypriot survey data see Lund 141-42; Papageorghiou (1993) 35 n. 27; cf. Alcock (1993) 33-92; (1994) 261. The effect of increasing central authority at the expense of both cities and their hinterlands is noted by Fowden (1998) 548-58; Caseau 24-26.

⁶⁵ At Ephesus, Cyril of Paphos signed before Gelasios of Salamis and Spyridon of Trimithos (Hill 250; Petinos 132-34; cf. Hackett 243-44). The growth of Christianity at Paphos may both have attracted and been further encouraged by the presence of Hilarion, who came from Palestine to spend his last years nearby. The monastic presence on Cyprus (Falkenhausen 31) constitutes another point of contrast with contemporary Greece (Gregory 235-36).

⁶⁶ Hackett 370-432; Hill 273-76; Mouriki 255-56; Falkenhausen 24-30.

⁶⁷ Sozomen, *Hist. Eccl.* 7.19.2; Hill 248-51; Mitford (1980) 1375-83; Petinos 135-37. The general correspondence of episcopal sees with Iron Age poleis reflects the continuity of toponymy and topography, if not necessarily urban realities.

⁶⁸ Hill 251; Megaw (1974); Papageorghiou (1993) 34-35.